Every member of the Lord’s church must be involved in proclaiming the gospel of Christ. The words “proclaim” or “preach” in the Greek is *kerusso* which is defined as: “to be a herald, or in general to proclaim, to publish or preach.” As per the Great Commission given by our Savior in Matthew 28:19-20 and Mark 16:15-16, we must *kerusso* in order to be pleasing to God the Father. The proclaiming of the gospel must bring every Christian joy and satisfaction, not dread and fear.

**Faithful In Our Proclamation**

As soldiers in the army of Christ, we must always be faithful to proclaim His gospel to a lost and sinful world. It is true we are to be examples or lights to the world that it may see our good works and glorify our Heavenly Father (Matt. 5:14, 16). However, being a good example is not actually proclaiming or preaching the gospel of Christ. In 2 Timothy 4:2, Paul makes it clear that the Word must be preached with urgency. This charge was given because Paul knew (by inspiration) that men would not endure sound doctrine, but would turn their ears from the Truth. The gospel of Christ is the only thing that will bring salvation to an individual (Rom. 1:16). If obedience to the gospel of Christ is, the only way one can free oneself from the bondage of sin, what else should motivate us to faithfully proclaim His gospel?

**Fervent In Our Proclamation**

_Fervent_ in the Greek carries the meaning, to be hot, or to boil. For us to be fervent in our proclamation, we must be ardent or zealous in our preaching of the gospel. We must display a fervency of spirit in our proclaiming the gospel of Christ. In other words, we must be excited to...
share the Good News with friends or family. As valiant soldiers, we must boldly proclaim and defend the Truth. To fervently proclaim the Truth does not mean that we are to preach with an arrogant or superior attitude. Our attitude must be one of love and compassion toward those who are needful of the gospel.

**Fearless In Our Proclamations**

We, as Christians, must be fearless or without fear in our proclaiming the Word of Truth. We must always be brave, valiant, and virtuous soldiers of Christ, confident that we are never alone in the war against Satan. God’s prophets of old were threatened, beaten, imprisoned, and killed because they spoke the Word of God. The apostles of Christ likewise were threatened, beaten, imprisoned, and killed for the gospel’s sake. Yet, the prophets of God and the apostles of Christ fearlessly proclaimed the message that saves. Today, when we proclaim the gospel of Christ we must do so without fear. It is our responsibility to teach and preach the gospel that saves to our associates, friends, and families. The proclamation of the gospel must be preached **Faithfully, Fervently, and Fearlessly** if we are to have Heaven as our eternal home.

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**TONGUE CONTROL**

*Al Brown*

“If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain” (Jam. 1:26).

In this passage, James addressed what has always been a very persistent and difficult problem for Christians. Those to whom he wrote had been taught all their lives that the whole of religion was bound up in external rituals and deeds. His readers were deeply religious. Their former religion (Judaism as taught by the rabbis) touched almost everything they did. They took great care lest they become ceremonially defiled, but they paid little attention to the condition of the heart.

Jesus often encountered this fallacy during His ministry. He was the Master Teacher, but He had little success in correcting it. When Jews obeyed the gospel, it was difficult for them to abandon this philosophy of religion and embrace the lofty moral purity of mind and body to which they were called under the “perfect law of liberty.” The religion of the Pharisees was, as Jesus said, one of saying and not doing (Mat. 23:3). Like their former mentors, these brethren had not learned that God was to be served with a pure heart and a blameless life as well as with devout worship. In reality, this great truth was taught in the law and the prophets (Lev. 19:2, 17; Isa. 1:11-20; Mic. 6:6-8), but the rabbis of Israel had chosen to ignore it.

James' admonition has not lost its relevance over the years. So many (including brethren) are content with a religion of external rituals. At the same time, they ignore the importance of pure hearts, righteous lives, and good works. God has always wanted His people to worship Him by certain prescribed forms (Lord’s Supper, prayer, singing, etcetera). In this passage (1:26), James is stressing that worship without the other is vain religion.

It should be noted that the man James describes is not insincere; he has deceived himself. The verb means that he fancies (or supposes) that his religion is acceptable to God when, in fact, it is empty, futile, and worthless. James does not imply that control of the tongue is the only Christian attribute, but that it requires such dedication a person who is successful in this can master any other requirement. Is there anything that can illustrate his point more vividly? No Christian has such: control over his tongue that he is never in danger of misusing it.
As always, Satan is there to deceive him into thinking that the tongue does not really have such a potential for evil, and, even if one does say vile or vicious things, he is still a good Christian.

How many times, for instance, do Christians think it is better to tell a white lie than to hurt someone’s feelings? God says, “putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour” (Eph. 4:25). There are no extenuating circumstances that justify any kind of deception! Walking the narrow path of truth and sincerity is never easy. Lying in its grosser forms may be eliminated from one’s life, but extreme care and a large amount of determination are still required to always speak the truth.

Obviously, the same thing applies to other sins of the tongue. A slanderous tongue, an envious tongue, a profane tongue, or a filthy tongue are all indications that something is rotten within. A destructively critical tongue, a tongue that sows discord among brethren, or one that plants distrust in marriages betrays the same wickedness within.

A man may believe it does not matter what he says or how he says it. He may deceive himself into thinking mere words are not very important. He may attempt to justify a harsh, unkind, cutting tongue by claiming he only says what he thinks. No one doubts he is saying what he thinks, but what he should realize is that such speech reveals how unregenerate his heart is. Jesus said, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Mat. 12:34).

The person who does not control his tongue may seem very devout in other ways. He may (and probably does) think of himself as a good Christian, for the deception is real. He may cherish the noblest of sentiments and be able to convey these thoughts to others. The most sublime sentiment is worthless, however, if it cannot be translated into everyday life. James says such a person’s worship is vain; in other words, it is an idle, empty, useless, unreal thing—a counterfeit of genuine worship. He may have exceptional talents and be willing to use them, but his worship is still vain. The most powerful sermon, the most beautiful voice in song, or the most comforting words in prayer cannot erase or atone for the sin that lies in his heart.

James’ language is very strong in this verse. Some will no doubt tremble as the force of it sinks into their hearts. If this is true with you, you not only need to hear these words but act on them. Everyone is confronted with the danger of having an uncontrolled tongue. If he does not “keep his mouth” as with a bridle (Psa. 39:1), he is deceiving himself. All his hymn-singing and sermon-hearing is offensive to God. His soul is in great peril, for Jesus showed the role words will play at the last day: “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” (Mat. 12:36).

Deceased

THERE’S A WORLD TO BE WON FOR CHRIST

It is 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 20 miles each day! If you were to drive 50 miles per 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 another 30,000 miles!

Look out your front door! See lost souls! Read John 4:35.

Author Unknown
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Martha Wilcoxson, Geneave Dean, Floy Dell Lindesmith, Tim Lamb, Fran Waters, and Fred Stancliff.

READING/INVITATION
January 12, 2000
Reading: Michael Wilkes
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
January 19, 2000
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Dusty Wilkes

MARK THESE DATES
January 9, 2000–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
January 10, 2000–Baby Shower for Vanessa Liddell, at 7:00 P.M., in the general purpose building. See Nancy Loy and Sharon Caine for details.
January 10, 2000–Visitation Group 3 meets at 7:00 P.M., in the zone room.
January 16, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
January 17, 2000–Visitation Group 1 meets at 7:00 P.M., in the zone room.
January 24, 2000–Visitation Group 2 meets at 7:00 P.M., in the zone room.
January 31, 2000–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 P.M. in the general purpose building. A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting. Make plans on attending and help support our visitation program for the new year.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Fruit
THE VIRGIN BIRTH—MYTH OR MIRACLE?

Guy N. Woods

The virgin birth, for the devout Bible believer, is one of the most cherished and, at the same time, one of the most essential features of our faith. Believed, every important characteristic of the movement for which our Saviour died falls easily and properly into place; rejected, it is, and must ever be, but another of the world’s false religions. Here, faith is put on trial; at this point is determined whether one accepts the miraculous on which so much is to follow in the sacred narrative, or repudiates it, and all the rest as fanciful and mythical stories.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the radical school of historical criticism, to which everything smacking of the supernatural is distasteful, should attack, with special vehemence, the narratives of the virgin birth of our Lord. These devotees of disbelief have long been with us, and their attacks on the historic faith have often been effectively refuted; more recently and from among us have risen those so enamored with “modern speech” versions of the Scriptures (whose translators were often of the school of destructive higher criticism), that they reject the doctrine that the Lord is the only begotten Son of God and deny that His birth of a virgin is a part of Messianic predictions.

Specifically, they allege that in the great Emmanuel prophecy of Isaiah 7:14, “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel,” as older versions render it, the passage should more properly read, “a young woman shall conceive and bear a son.” Since a “young woman” is not necessarily a “virgin,” they would thus strike from that pre-eminently vital prophecy the doctrine of the
virgin birth of Christ. That which prompts the
effort of the higher critics is obvious: if they can
succeed in ridding the prophecy of Isaiah of any
suggestion of virginity in the birth of Jesus, the
way opens to them to deny all supernaturalism
in the birth of the child mentioned in the proph-
ecy. This is precisely the procedure of those
among us who question the traditional render-
ing, who insist that the fulfillment was local and
current with the utterance of the prophecy, and
who urge that “young woman” more properly
translates the Hebrew original than does the
word virgin.

Their effort fails for a number of reasons:
(1) Hebrew literature furnishes no instance of
the word almah (rendered “virgin” in Isaiah
7:14), to indicate a married woman or a non-
virgin. An induction drain from all of its biblical
occurrences necessitates the conclusion that it
can mean only “an unmarried woman and a true
virgin”(Psa. 68:15 “damsels”; Exo. 2:8 “maid”;
Pro. 30:19 “maid”; Gen. 24:43 “virgin”; Song
of Sol. 1:3, 6:8 “virgins”; Isa. 7:14 “virgin”).
Martin Luther, in his characteristic style, once
said, “If a Jew or Christian can prove to me that
in any passage of scripture almah means ‘a
married woman,’ I will give him one hundred
Florins.” Orr, in his classic work on the subject,
quotes Luther’s statement and adds significantly
that the one hundred florins have never been
claimed! (2) Even more significant, however, is
the fact that about three hundred years before
the Lord came to the earth the Septuagint
translators rendered the word almah by the
Greek word parthonos which can only signify
“a virgin.” The irresistible force of this is
apparent when it is considered that the Septua-
gint version is a translation from Hebrew into
Greek and was done by some of the most
eminent scholars of the Hebrew people. Let it be
remembered also that this translation was done
before there was any argument over the meaning
of the word, or any reason for a Jew to evade its
obvious and proper import.

(3) Most significant of all, and conclusive of
argument in rising above all reasonable doubt
that the prophecy of Isaiah regarding the birth of
a virgin, is Matthew’s inspired commentary
thereon. After having related the details of the
Lord’s birth, he added: “Now all this was done,
that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of
the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin
shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son,
and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which
being interpreted is, God with us” (Mat. 1:18-
23). Not to be overlooked is the American
Standard Version’s rendering of Matthew’s
statement: “Behold, the virgin shall be with
child.” The specific virgin of Isaiah’s prophe-
cy—and not another! Being Emmanuel (“God
with us”), He can be no other than our Lord who
came down from heaven and who entered upon
this existence by being born of the virgin Mary.
Matthew’s unquestioned affirmation thus
(a) demonstrates that the birth of Jesus to Mary
established the messianic character of Isaiah
7:14; (b) identifies the virgin of the passage with
Mary; and, (c) proves that any translation of
Isaiah 7:14, by any word or words signifying
anything less than the virginal character of the
Lord’s earthly mother (as do most of the so-
called modern speech versions of the Bible), is
both false and fatal to one’s faith.

It is painful, and the situation ought to occa-
sion the most serious thought and action on the
part of those who love the Lord and respect the
truth of His Word, that there are those among us,
in ever increasing numbers, who are being
influenced greatly by liberal and modernistic
theologians to deny the Messianic character of
Isaiah 7:14. Our Christian schools were, by
much sacrifice on the part of faithful brethren,
established to defend the faith, and they have
been in times past bastions of truth in the fight
for a pure faith and a faultless practice. Their potential in this respect is exceedingly great; their ability to influence and to lead away from the primitively pure gospel is equally awesome; and it should never be forgotten that these institutions have been in the forefront of every major apostate movement that has plagued the churches of Christ. Men have no right, either morally, legally, or spiritually to teach error who have been employed to teach the truth; and those who yearn for forbidden paths and who prize of academic freedom should also remember that there is such a thing as academic honesty, and if they cannot conscientiously teach that for which they accepted employment, they ought to have the candor and the decency to quit—not corrupt unsuspecting children of Christian parents who often do not learn until too late that their offspring have been offered up on the altars of liberalism, modernism, and permissiveness. Deceased

“OH, MY GOD!”
Charles Broyles

Hardly a day goes by that we do not hear someone exclaim, “Oh, My God!” Whether at work or school, the bank, supermarket, or even the church parking lot, we hear this expression repeatedly. Television, no doubt, is the chief offender, with nearly every game show, soap opera, situation comedy, prime time drama, and movie featuring the phrase.

“Oh, My God!” has become a faddish and clever saying. It is used to register alarm, surprise, delight, dismay, sarcasm, and almost every kind of response. Probably some cannot imagine why. Why does “Oh, My God!” grate so upon our ears?

Young people, we do well to consider the faith and devotion manifested by men and women from the long ago; several of these are singled out and presented as examples for Christians today (Heb. 11). They insisted on using reverence and humility while addressing Deity. Abraham approached God with these words, “Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes” (Gen. 18:27). Jacob marked each place that the Lord spoke to him with a stone or altar, recognizing that even the plot of ground was sacred because the Lord had revealed Himself there (Gen. 28:17). Can you imagine the patriarchs referring to God in the offhanded manner that is prevalent today? Jehovah God is to be reverenced! (Heb. 12:28); woe if we respect not God ( Isa. 45:9).

Although we are not under the Law of Moses today (John 1:17), we worship and serve the same God revealed to the Hebrew fathers. We should have the posture of godly fear and awe that were shown by Peter before Jesus (Luke 5:8) and the apostle John on Patmos (Rev. 1:17).

The Jews sought to protect and preserve the sacredness of God’s name. In the centuries before the birth of Jesus, they decided to stop pronouncing it altogether so that its usage would not become common and ordinary. Should we as young people show less respect and regard for our Heavenly Father?

“Oh, My God!” goes beyond such euphemisms as “Goodness!” or “Gracious!” or “Gee!” or “Golly!” (which are also wrong to use). The reason is that it is not a euphemism, it is not attempt to disguise the reference to God. If “Oh, My God!” is not a vain usage of God’s name, what in the world is?

Our speech reflects our character and attitude (Mat. 12:34-35). Let us refuse to be guilty of showing an empty and low regard for the God of Heaven! “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).
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Martha Wilcoxson, Geneave Dean, Fred Stancliff, and Jacklynn Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s mother).

READING/INVITATION
January 19, 2000
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Dusty Wilkes
January 26, 2000
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Henry Born

MARK THESE DATES
January 16, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
January 17, 2000–Visitation Group 1 meets at 7:00 P.M., in the zone room.
January 24, 2000–Visitation Group 2 meets at 7:00 P.M., in the zone room.
January 31, 2000–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 P.M., in the general purpose building. A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting. Make plans now to attend and help support our visitation program for the new year.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Fruit

PSALM 117:1-2
“O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD.”
Satan’s Letter of Encouragement

Lennie Reagan

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Lukewarm,

I am so glad you took my suggestion this past winter and did not bother too much about attending the services and activities of the Lord’s church during the freezing cold weather. You had the right idea about the possibility of getting sick or maybe slipping on the sidewalk from the ice and snow. Now, by all means, you must avoid getting out too much in this summer heat. You might overheat or you might even perspire from your air-conditioned car to the air-conditioned building and you know how sick you may become going from cool to hot back to cool. You must stay well if you are going to work every day and you cannot afford to miss a day at work. The heat will not bother you as you go about your other activities such as shopping, visiting family, and friends, or even going on recreational outings. You know how important it is for everyone to get away for a while. So, you go right ahead and work around the house as you need to do on your days off and then on Sundays and Wednesdays you can travel, visit, sleep, or just lounge around the house. I mean, after all, you have worked all week long. You poor thing!

I realize that the health problems you have may be somewhat of an inconvenience at times; but, just think of all the services of the church you can miss by blaming your absence on not feeling well! Who can blame you for that? The fact that you are able to go to the store, work, cook and clean house, cut grass, and do many other things should not slow you down from using your illness to miss services.

Now, I need to prepare you for what is going to happen next. The members of the church will send cards, letters, make phone calls, and even visit you because you have been missing ser-
visits. They will plead with you to repent and come back to the Lord (just like you ever left) before you lose all desire of spiritual matters. And they will tell you that they love you. Just who do they think they are? Do not believe them when they say that you are teaching your children it’s okay to miss services. When they tell you that your missing services is a bad influence on your neighbors and friends, deny it! Besides, your neighbors are not your concern. If you were to confess that you have been unfaithful, regardless if you have missed one or fifty-two services because of what they call neglect, I can’t tell you how silly and embarrassing that would be for you.

Here is what you need to do. If you will keep telling them, “I know that I need to come back,” I will keep giving you lies (I meant to say excuses) to miss. If you miss a service every now and then just to be missing, act like the members are wrong for showing concern for your absence. Get mad, blame them, the elders, the preacher, blame anyone or anything; but, it is not your fault! But above all, do not repent!

Your friend and father of lies,
B. L. Z. Bub
(P.S. I did not mean anything by the lukewarm thing. You don’t have anything to worry about.)

Adapted

THINK ON THESE THINGS
Pat Patterson

In the long ago it was Solomon who wrote concerning man: “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Pro. 23:7). The apostle Paul wrote, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Phi. 4:8). Thus, there can be no doubt concerning the importance that is placed upon our thinking. For this reason we must realize that we can allow our thinking to be shaped and changed by our peers, by evil influences, and even by money! For a moment, please consider these pertinent passages:

1. “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11).
2. “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Cor. 15:33).
3. “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).
5. “Beware of men” (Mat. 10:17).
6. “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mat. 16:26).
8. “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and

Visitation Group
Get-together
January 31, 2000, at 6:00 P.M., in the general purpose building.
A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting. Make plans now to attend and bring you suggestions on improving the visitation program.
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” (Mat. 6:19-21).

9. “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).

10. “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (Jam. 4:4).

These are by no means all of the verses that could be used to raise our awareness concerning areas that influence our lives by the way we think. Time and time again, all of us have heard the familiar phrase that is usually used in a context of improper activity. “They just did as they were taught.”

With that thought in mind, who then can deny the importance that must be placed upon Bible study? What better way to instill proper values, morals, and ethics in the lives of our children than to begin from the earliest opportunity we are afforded as parents to teach them God’s Word. Remember, it was said of Timothy: “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 3:14-15). As parents, we must assume the responsibility of “Train[ing] up a child in the way he should go” (Pro. 22:6). We would do well to take advantage of all the opportunities to ensure that our children are receiving instruction and proper training by noting the instruction of Deuteronomy 6:4-7,

Hear, O Israel: The L ORD our God is one L ORD: And thou shalt love the L ORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 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.

Not only should parents provide those opportunities at home, but they should also be supportive of planning done by the elders who take seriously their responsibility to “feed the church” (Acts 20:28) in providing classes adapted to the age of the group being taught. Every Christian making up the body of Christ, purchased by His blood, should also take seriously the command to “study to shew thyself approved unto God” (2 Tim. 2:15). Even so, sometimes (and once is too many) teachers will report that it is hard to teach a child as they should because their parents allow them to miss more than they attend! Usually, it will be these same parents several years later who will be distraught over the unfaithfulness of their children and will try to shift the blame by saying, “The church has failed!” How much heartache and how many times will this have to be repeated before the lesson is finally learned: An unfaithful example begets an unfaithful follower! After all, “They only did what they were taught!” Paul stated it this way, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7).

Let us encourage everyone to take advantage of all opportunities for growth by study (1 Pet. 2:2; Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6). Let us determine not to be conformed to this world, but rather “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). Let us remember to keep our hearts with all diligence “for out of it are the issues of life” (Pro. 4:23). Let us always remember as parents, that our children will most likely “do as they have been taught”!

PO Box 690; Sapulpa, OK 74067
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Martha Wilcoxon, Geneave Dean, Fred Stancliff, Floy Dell Lindesmith, Alice Williams, Hairston and Joyce Brantley, and Jacklynn Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s mother). George Dodd (Ray Dodd’s brother) is terminally ill.

READING/INVITATION
January 26, 2000
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Henry Born
February 2, 2000
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Paul Brantley

MARK THESE DATES
January 24, 2000–Visitation Group 2 meets at 7:00 P.M., in the zone room.
January 31, 2000–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 P.M., in the general purpose building. A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting. Make plans now to attend and help support our visitation program for the new year.
February 7, 2000–Visitation Group 3 meets at 7:00 P.M., in the zone room.
February 13, 2000–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
February 14, 2000–Visitation Group 1 meets at 7:00 P.M., in the zone room.
February 20, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
February 21, 2000–Visitation Group 2 meets at 7:00 P.M., in the zone room.
February 28, 2000–Visitation Group 3 meets at 7:00 P.M., in the zone room.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Fruit
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHURCH

Burt Groves

The church which Jesus built (Mat. 16:18) must retain the splendor which God gives. Many look to those outside for keys which open opportunities for growth. Can you imagine Paul consulting with worshippers of Diana in Ephesus to learn how to reach more people with the gospel? Would he have written Demas, who abandoned him, because of his love for this world, to learn better ways of preparing people for heaven? Jesus promised Peter and the other apostles the keys to the kingdom (Mat. 16:19). Obviously those keys were the gospel, the Word of God. Since all truth was given to the apostles (John 16:13), we turn to the New Testament to learn what the church must do to grow as God wills. There we learn that Christ’s church must be:

A Praying Church

The power to grow does not abide in us unless we abide in Christ. “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). Jesus prayed lengthy prayers. “And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God” (Luke 6:12). Jesus also prayed brief prayers. “Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). How can one follow Jesus without praying? “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Mat. 7:7). We must pray for God’s will to be done in us and others (1 John 5:14).

People misunderstand prayer. Someone decides to marry a worldly person and explains, “I prayed, and I know God wouldn’t let me feel this
NEW ARRIVAL

Tony and Vanessa Liddell are the proud parents of a baby boy, Ethan Bret, born on January 25, 2000. Ethan is 20 inches long and weighed 7 lbs. 4 oz.

The grandparents are Louis and Jane Herrington of Pensacola, FL, and Bobby and Joan Liddell of Memphis, TN.

Our heartfelt prayers and congratulations are extended to all.

A Serving Church

No one follows Jesus without serving (Mark 10:45). Too many men equate leading a prayer or serving the Lord’s supper as working for the Lord. A serving church is people doing far more than participating in worship. God calls His people to participate in “every good work” (Col. 1:10).

Jesus summarized the work of the church in what we call the great commission (Mat. 28:18-20). The church must preach Christ to the lost that they might be save and teach the saved that they might not be lost. Church buildings alone do not attract the lost to the gospel. Church buildings can deceive. Once, Christians thought: “If only we had better facilities we could accommodate more people in our services and lead more to Christ.” Limited facilities can limit outreach, but so can buildings which shout of the affluence of the members. Affluence attracts the affluent, but not to the Lord. All help the preaching of Christ with attendance, listening carefully and prayerfully, and bringing others to hear Christ preached.

Often efforts to reach others seem wasted. Charles Kettering, inventor of the starter for autos and later research chief of General Motors, said late in his life that failures were valuable and agreed with his son who said that the highly educated were not likely to be inventors. Why? They are conditioned not to fail: an inventor can fail 999 times, but if he succeeds once he has achieved his goal (Smithsonian, Vol. 19, No. 4, p. 135). Christians must be willing to fail in the quest of souls for Christ.

Teaching others requires filling oneself with God’s Word until it overflows in one’s speech and conduct. Remember the urgency of God’s business (Rom. 12:11). Working diligently, Jesus warned that a day was coming when no one can work (John 9:4). Saints who neglect the salvation of sinners also neglect their own salvation (Heb. 2:3). Those who rationalize their lack of service need to learn that faith working by love avails (Gal. 5:6).

A Giving Church

What we give for Christ counts for us. “Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account” (Phi. 4:17). No one can earn salvation, but everyone can follow Him who did. God calls Christians to give generously, thoughtfully, cheerfully and faithfully (2 Cor. 9:6-8). How many people are lost today because prosperous Christians are not as generous as they should be?

First, we must give ourselves to the Lord. The sinner gives himself by repenting of his sins and declaring his trust in Jesus by submitting to baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Saints give themselves by living for Christ in worship, morals, benevolence, and evangelism!
Visitation Group
Get-together
January 31, 2000, at 6:00 P.M.,
in the general purpose building.
A covered-dish meal will precede
the meeting. Make plans now to attend and bring you suggestions
for improving the visitation program.

UPWARD AND ONWARD
Tony Boyd
Christians are challenged at every stage of our
development to move ever upward and onward.
From the very beginning, the Christian journey is
one of actively seeking improvement and growth.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were
baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his
death? Therefore we are buried with him by
baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised
up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even
so we also should walk in newness of life. For if
we have been planted together in the likeness of
his death, we shall be also in the likeness
of his resurrection” (Rom. 6:3-5). Paul’s clear teaching
that as we rise from the watery grave of baptism
we are to live a new life, one totally different
from before.

As we grow in Christ, our journey is also a
forward one. “Brethren, I count not myself to
have apprehended: but this one thing I do, for-
going those things which are behind, and
reaching forth unto those things which are before,
I press toward the mark for the prize of the high
calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phi. 8:13-14).
Our upward journey requires us to constantly
press forward, toward new challenges and ex-
periences within the body of Christ.

The ultimate goal of course, is heaven. The
only way to reach heaven is by moving upward
and onward. We cannot afford to remain satisfied
with past accomplishments, nor with present
conditions. “Therefore leaving the principles of
the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto
perfection; not laying again the foundation of
repentance from dead works, and of faith toward
God” (Heb. 6:1).

An old song that is favored by many, is titled
“Higher Ground.” It says, “I’m pressing on the
upward way, new heights I’m gaining every day.
Still praying as I onward bound, Lord plant my
feet on higher ground.”

Is that your prayer for your life today?
HCR 81 Box 75; Salem, MO 65560

RESTORING JOY
There could be nothing more tragic than the
loss of a soul. God has done so much to insure
the salvation of our souls (John 3:16; 1 John
3:16). Do you not think that we ought to do all
that we can to aid and attain that provision? There
are a number of things that we can do to insure
the joy of salvation.

1. I can make sure that I am faithful to God in
all phases of my life (Rev. 2:10; 1 Cor. 15:58).
2. I can try with all of my might to help others
maintain their faithfulness by encouraging them
(Heb. 10:24).
3. I can do everything possible to help restore
the erring child of God (Gal. 6:1-2; 1 Cor. 5:1-5).
4. I can look for opportunities to teach others
the saving message of the gospel (Mat. 28:18-20).
Let’s be involved in restoring joy to the lives
of those that we love.

Copied
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Martha Wilcoxson, Geneave Dean, Fred Stancliff, Hairston and Joyce Brantley, and Floy Dell Lindesmith. George Dodd (Ray Dodd’s brother) is terminally ill.

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to William Weekley in the death of his brother, Charles Henry Weekley, Jr., on January 21, 2000. Please keep William and his family in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
February 2, 2000
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Paul Brantley
February 9, 2000
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Scot Brazell

MARK THESE DATES
February 7, 2000–Visitation Group 3 meets at 7:00 P.M., in the zone room.
February 13, 2000–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
February 14, 2000–Visitation Group 1 meets at 7:00 P.M., in the zone room.
February 20, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
February 21, 2000–Visitation Group 2 meets at 7:00 P.M., in the zone room.
February 28, 2000–Visitation Group 3 meets at 7:00 P.M., in the zone room.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Fruit
CHRIST DIED IN VAIN IF

The apostle Paul wrote the Galatians letter to warn the church against false teachers. The primary false teaching was that the Gentile Christians must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses to be saved. Paul writes to warn against falling from grace by turning back to the law (Gal 5:4). Paul reasons in the text that if the law could save Christ died in vain (Gal. 2:21). Christ died in vain "if" many of the doctrines of today are true—"if.

As noted above, Christ died in vain if the law saves. If one could be saved by the Old Testament law, then the death of Christ was unnecessary, thus in vain. The law could not (cannot) save (Gal. 3:21; 5:3-4). The law was given because of transgressions until Christ came and was only a shadow of that which was to come. (Gal. 3:19; Heb. 10:1). The law was taken out of the way and replaced by the law of Christ (Col. 2:14; Rom. 7:5-7; Heb. 8:6-13; 2 Cor. 3:6-18).

Christ died in vain if there is no resurrection.

If there is no resurrection, there is no eternal life. If there is no eternal life, there is no real salvation. Our faith is vain, because it is in a risen Savior. All preaching of Christ is vain, if there is no resurrection (1 Cor. 5:12-21). If there is no resurrection, Christ is still in the grave and has not destroyed him who has the power of death (1 Cor. 15:16-17, 22-26). Therefore, if there is no resurrection Christ died in vain.

Christ died in vain if we can be saved without the shedding of blood. There are those who deny the need or necessity of blood. Some have gone so far as to remove the mention of it from their songs. Was the shedding of blood necessary? Yes. Without the shedding of blood, we could not be saved (Heb. 9:12-22; 10:4, Rom. 3:25; 5:9; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:19).

Christ died in vain if the church is unnes-
sary. If one can be saved outside the Lord’s church, Christ died in vain. All the saved are in the church (Acts 2:47). Christ died for the church (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25-27; Gal. 1:4), to save it. 

Christ died in vain if morality alone will save one. How many times have you heard some talk about a person, and say, “If anyone will be saved this person was.” They talk about the goodness of that individual. Surely, one must be a good person (live a good moral life) (Tit. 2:12). But will morality alone save? No, because all have sinned (Rom 3:10, 23). And only the blood of Christ can save one from their sins (1 Pet. 1:19). The blood of Christ is applied to one’s sins in obedience to the gospel (Rom. 1:16; 1 Pet. 1:19-22).

Christ died in vain if you die lost. He died in vain as far as you are concerned. He died that you might be saved, but you refused His sacrifice.

WHAT SHALL WE GIVE?
Shan Jackson

Before we can truly be useful to God we must meet Him face to face. Before we can accomplish any great thing we must go to God and find His will. Moses met Him at the burning bush and we meet Him through His inspired Word, but we must meet Him nonetheless.

And when we meet Him what shall we give? All David had was a sling, but with God’s help that sling brought down a mighty giant and a mighty nation. All Jonathan had was a sword but with God’s help that sword also brought down the heathen. All Rahab had was a basket; all Dorcas had was some material; all Paul had was dedication and desire.

Anything and everything we have, being willing to use, God will glorify. Men and women surrounded by common things which God can make uncommon is usage.

Ask a farmer what he has as he stands before the open furrows of his field. His answer, “Only seeds.” But seeds, as is the Word of God, are designed to be planted, and, the Lord will give the increase.

PO Box 904; Palacios, TX 77465

SEEKING THE LOST

NOTHING in all of the world is more important than soul-saving! If the church could be fully convinced of this, we not only could, but we would literally saturate our community and the world with the saving message of the gospel.

Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). Brethren, do we not realize that Jesus knew what was really important in this life? And remember, He left us an example, that we should follow (1 Pet. 2:2).

But, as a general rule, what do you think most members are doing in the matter of saving souls? The fact of the matter, far too many are doing nothing. It is true, that most are doing almost nothing about the most important thing in the world.

God has placed upon our shoulders this important work. If the saving message is to be heard, it must come from the church, “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15).

Author Unknown

ARE YOU READY FOR THE JUDGMENT DAY?
Gary Colley

Many have been the jokes about the “dooms-day man” going about with his sign saying, “The World Is Coming to An End”! The modern man just does not want to be bothered. But likewise some, who claim to believe the
Lord will return, are failing to prepare. So many hear the gospel regularly, but put off obeying! There are also a host of Christians who began in the church with good intentions to follow the Lord, but the “cares, riches, and pleasures of this life” caused the Word of God to be choked out of their lives (Luke 8:14). Therefore, they will not be in the number of “the wise virgins,” but among the foolish who were closed out of the joys and blessings of Heaven (Mat. 26:1-13).

Though no man knows the time when the Lord will return (Mat. 24:36), and not even that “Jesus Is Coming Soon” as some sing without knowledge, still we must not forget the Lord’s promise to return and His exhortation to be ready (John 14:1-3; Acts 9-11)! Have we forgotten that when our life is removed from our bodies, all probation time for preparation is past; that we shall then wait in Hades (place of the unseen spirits) for the Judgment?! “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). Of the eternal separation of that day, Jesus said, “And these [wicked] shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Mat. 25:46). “All” will appear before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10-11)!

The words of this article are not just new-fangled thought! The book of Jude records by inspiration that these warnings were sounded all the way back to Enoch, the seventh from Adam! He prophesied saying:

Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage. But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen (Jude 14-25).

ARE YOU READY FOR THE JUDGMENT DAY???

GRACE IS CONDITIONAL

Some cannot comprehend that the grace of God is compatible with works. They surmise that if salvation is by the grace of God, it cannot be by works. On the contrary, salvation is both by grace and works. These works are not works of human merit or works of the law of Moses, but they are works of righteousness (Acts 10:35) which are the conditions God established for man to obey. God extends His grace upon certain conditions.

Suppose a particular rich man tells a young friend that he will give him a million dollars if he would name his first child after him. If and when his friend meets the condition, will he actually earn the million dollars? No! One does not earn a million dollars simply by naming a child after someone. It was a gift, he simply received the gift by meeting the conditions. So it is with the grace of God. To receive the grace of God, obey the gospel and work the works of righteousness.

Author Unknown
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Martha Wilcoxson, Geneave Dean, Hairston and Joyce Brantley, and George Dodd (Ray Dodd’s brother).

READING/INVITATION
February 9, 2000
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Scot Brazell
February 16, 2000
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Bill Cline

MARK THESE DATES
February 7, 2000–Visitation Group 3 meets at 7:00 P.M., in the zone room.
February 13, 2000–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
February 14, 2000–Visitation Group 1 meets at 7:00 P.M., in the zone room.
February 20, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
February 21, 2000–Visitation Group 2 meets at 7:00 P.M., in the zone room.
February 28, 2000–Visitation Group 3 meets at 7:00 P.M., in the zone room.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Fruit

WORTH PONDERING...
A religion that does not depend completely upon the power of the gospel, the adequacy of Scripture, and the effectiveness of preaching cannot result in the salvation and sanctification of souls.
MEETING TIMES

SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP

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, Richard Parker
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

A LITTLE SCRIPTURAL COUNTING

Jerry Moffitt

From our earliest days in school we learn to add and subtract. It would redound to their glory if brethren and all religious people practiced simple mathematics in religion. God does not demand calculus, trigonometry, geometry, or even algebra. A little simple arithmetic will do. He said, “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it” (Deu. 4:2; see also Deu. 12:32; Pro. 30:6; Gal. 1:6-9; 1 Pet. 4:11; Mat. 15:13; 2 John 9-11; and Rev. 22:18, 19). Let us notice:

The Work of the Church

The work the Lord specified for the church to do is plainly delineated in the New Testa-
candles, burning of incense, holy water, the sign of the cross, prayer to the dead, humming, dedication of babies, Christmas and Easter as holy days, and all other shades of Judaism, paganism, and strange inventions of rebellious man (Mat. 15:7-9).

**Offices in the Church**

These are easily counted in Scripture. One, there are bishops, and two there are deacons (Phi. 1:1). Three, there are evangelist (Eph. 4:11). Four, there are teachers (Acts 13:1). To be scriptural, we must subtract deaconesses, presidents, cardinals, a special priesthood, denominational pastors, and padres. Away with popes, archbishops, nuns, Very Right Reverends, and holy orders. May we further be satisfied with brethren, Christians, saints, and disciples (Acts 15:14; Acts 22:26).

May God give us courage to add the things from heaven, and the resolve to subtract those things from men. May we exhibit humility toward those we charge to imitate our efforts.

123 Sabine; Portland, TX 78374

**THE LORD’S SUPPER:**

*ITS OBSERVANCE*

*Andy Kizer*

At least four different religious ideas are connected with our observance of the Lord’s supper. All of these have very deep significance.

First, the communion is always associated with prayer. When He set up this act of worship, Jesus, our example, gave thanks for each of the elements of the communion service. The serious prayers uttered when we commune with the Lord involve thanksgiving and petition.

The second important element to remember in the communion service is the element of fellowship. In this practice there is fellowship with each other as members of God’s chosen family; fellowship with God, the Father, and fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ. Matthew 26:29 suggests that since the establishment of the kingdom on the day of Pentecost, our Lord has been meeting with His disciples. In some way, He is present when we all come together to participate in the communion.

The **third element of the Lord’s Supper is to be found in the fact that it is a memorial.** Paul speaks of this in 1 Corinthians 11. This institution is the perpetual reminder that we are saved by the blood of Christ. When we partake of this meal we remember that Jesus died on the cross. We remember that on that cross He shed His blood for us, for the remission of our sins. God wants us to keep that memory alive.

Finally, the communion service is a declaration. When we partake, as Paul states in 1 Corinthians 11, we declare our faith that Jesus will come again. The Lord’s Supper is observed in a spirit of hope with an attitude of optimism on the first day of every week. “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come” (1 Cor. 11:26).

**CHRISTIANS ARE ESTABLISHED BY PREACHING THE GOSPEL**

*Joseph D. Meador*

A number of men have given up preaching the gospel and are preaching “the signs of the time.” We refer to preaching from the magazines, newspapers, or books. Such sermons have been presented on such diverse themes as: The Need for Greater Environmental Consciousness in God’s World, Foreign Policy and the State of Israel, and How to Relax and Loosen-Up.
It is not uncommon to hear personal development theory taught directly out of popular self-help books instead of the gospel of Christ. Rarely is any specific text of the Bible mentioned.

Modern Preaching Versus the Gospel

Modern preaching theory, with emphasis on staging an emotionally-charged performance, complete with mood lighting, smoke, and mirrors is one symptom of the change which has taken place among us. The emphasis is on the method rather than on the message.

Another preaching theory seeks to transform the preacher into a country or folk storyteller. The message may be one of common sense and dry wit, but in using this method of entertainment the preacher teaches precious little about the gospel.

Usually such methods are employed because the preacher involved has given himself over to delivering a non-offensive, passive, and ambiguous message with the purpose of keeping the brethren satisfied and coming back! This was a problem in Paul’s day—the give-them-what-they-want not what-they-need philosophy (2 Tim. 4:1-8).

The Problem

Preaching styles are not the problem. The trends in many pulpits today are symptoms of a much worse condition. The problem in the pulpit, and in the pews, is a lack of genuine faith in the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of the Bible as God’s pattern for salvation. That is the real problem.

The “Old Jerusalem Gospel” has become obsolete and irrelevant, in the minds of some. Its usefulness has faded, and it is a curiosity of the past.

In many congregations a synthesis between the gospel and various psychological and social betterment theories has occurred. This has been mixed with a heady dose of “unity in diversity” which has resulted in an anti-gospel message touted as a “new gospel for a new church.”

However, the gospel as preached by Jesus Christ and His apostles is not a mere historical message (as the liberal dialecticians among us are now teaching in many “Christian” schools). Its teaching is far from obsolete (John 12:48-50; 20:30-31; Gal. 1:6). The gospel, proclaimed by faithful preachers, continues to be a spiritually, ethically, and morally powerful message which is centered in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel has exclusive power to save the obedient soul.

“So...I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:15-16).

The enduring Word of God is the standard by which all will be judged. It shall never pass away. “But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you” (1 Pet. 1:25).

Let us never substitute for “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).

Let us never seek to be spiritually strengthened by trendy preaching, which is husk and not kernel. Rather, let us diligently seek a return to hearing the authentic Word. This will strengthen us and save others. This is the mission of the church.

8900 Manchaca Road; Austin, TX 78748

BIBLE CLASSES

The spring quarter for the Bible classes held on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening will commence in March. Make plans to attend.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Geneave Dean, Martha Wilcoxson, George Dodd and Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s brother and sister). Hairston Brantley will have tests on February 14 and possible surgery on February 16. Bill Waters (Leon Water’s father) is in Baptist Hospital. Jacklynn Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s mother) is not doing well. Maria Bonaparte (the Crowe’s neighbor) has lung cancer.

READING/INVITATION
February 16, 2000
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Bill Cline
February 23, 2000
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Bill Crowe

MARK THESE DATES
February 13, 2000–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
February 13, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
February 20, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
February 20, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
February 27, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Vegetable and Chicken Soups

1 SAMUEL 26:24
“And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.”
There is an adage that says, “The spoken word is like the last opportunity, it doesn’t come back.” And oh, what a true statement that is! Brethren, how many times in our lives have we made some remark and almost immediately regretted the utterance? In all likelihood it is a fault we have succumbed to numerous times through the years. But words once spoken cannot be recalled. So we honestly try to lessen the impact by saying: “I didn’t mean it”; “That’s not what I intended to say”; “I take it back,” etc. Sometimes this helps and sometimes the damage has been done.

Is it any wonder our Lord said, “For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh...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” (Mat. 12:34-37). Without a doubt, our speech is a very important part of our Christian life. And being human, we are sometimes rash; our speech is no exception. It often times leaves something to be desired. But is our speech beyond our control, or can it be measured by choice? The Bible indicates that the latter is the correct response. And the voice of Scripture rings out with this affirmation. Solomon said, “Be not rash with thy mouth...a fool’s voice is known by multitude of words” (Ecc. 5:2-3). The great apostle Paul proclaimed: “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Col. 4:6). Commenting on this verse one brother said:

Of particular importance in the Christian’s relationship with those outside the church is his speech, which is indicative
of his character and provides an avenue for influence. Paul reminds his readers that their speech should always be gracious or “acceptable.” The unique character of Christian speech is then further defined: Christian speech should be seasoned with salt (The Living Word Commentary, Vol. 11, p. 100).

And James said we could and should bridle our tongues: “If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain” (Jam. 1:26).

Brethren, we seldom get in trouble for what we do not say, but rather for what we do say and how we say it. Let us not render our religion vain by false and/or careless speech. Let us determine to measure our speech and to heed the words of the little children’s song, “Be careful little tongue what you say.”

LAZYBONES
John W. Moore

Are you lazy? Would Solomon have identified you as a “sluggard” (translated lazybones in the NRSV)? What does it mean to be lazy or a sluggard? Let us take the following biblical test:

1. Do you lie around all day with nothing to do? The Hebrew word atsal—translated “sluggard” means to sit idly.

2. Do you chronically dislike simple exertion, such as getting up to get dressed, answer the phone, etc., even though you are both mentally and physically healthy? The Hebrew word atsal also means to be indolent, which can be defined as just described. Consider the words of Solomon, “As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed. The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth” (Pro. 26:14-15).

3. Do you have to always be told to do something before you do it? Listen to Proverbs 6:6-8, “Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.”

4. Do you wait around until the last minute to accomplish a task? “How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man” (Pro. 6:9-11).

5. Do you budget your time and money to meet the needs of the future? “The sluggard will not bow himself as it is hot; and as he saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets” (Pro. 26:13). “The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason” (Pro. 26:16).

6. Do you make excuses for your lack of work, accomplishments, etc.? “The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets” (Pro. 26:13). “The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason” (Pro. 26:16).

7. Do you lie around all day with nothing to do? The Hebrew word atsal—translated “sluggard” means to sit idly.

8. Do you always in want, with no means to supply? “The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat” (Pro. 13:4; 6:11).

9. Does your employer grimace at your work? “As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him” (Pro. 10:26).

10. Do your possessions and physical appearance reflect neglect and inattention? Hear the observations of Solomon: “I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding: And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I...
looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man” (Pro. 24:30-34). “He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him” (Ecc. 10:8).

11. Are your talents unused or unrefined? In Matthew 25:26, the Lord identified the unprofitable servant as lazy because he did not use his talents.
I sincerely hope that none of us could consistently answer yes to any of the above questions. A consistent yes is a true indicator that one is slothful, lazy, or a sluggard; and if we remain in this state, we will lose our souls (Mat. 25:30).

Let us not waste time or be lazy, for there is much to do as a servant of the Lord and as a citizen in His kingdom.

A FATHER’S ADVICE

“Teach them as many of the seven hundred thousand words of the English language as you have time to, but the greatest word is God; the longest word: eternity; the nearest word: now; the darkest word: sin; the swiftest word: time; the meanest word: hypocrisy; and the deepest word: soul.”

Author Unknown

WHEN DO YOU STUDY YOUR BIBLE?

When do you study your Bible? It is sad when some among us don’t know why we believe, or worse, don’t know what we believe. Too many so-called Christians rely on the “faith of their fathers” and do not really have our own faith. Why? The reason is obvious: “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). And unless we, individually, spend some time in the BOOK, we will never develop our own faith.

Many of our young people are lost to the world because when confronted with temptation and the pleasures of the world they do not have a faith that is based upon personal knowledge. Study your Bible every day. Search for God’s answers to life’s problems. Grow in your faith as you feed on God’s Word. It is then that we can share that conviction with others.

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psa. 119:11).

Author Unknown

GOD’S AUTHORIZED WORSHIP

Colossians 3:17

1. LORD’S SUPPER—The New Testament and early church history record that Christians met on the first day of every week (Sunday) to worship God and remember Christ (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-34; 16:1-2).

2. PRAYERS—(Acts 2:42; Phi. 4:6-7; 1 The. 5:17-18).

3. SINGING—God’s Word authorizes only vocal music and specifically singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12). The New Testament shows no use of mechanical instruments of music in worship to God by the church Christ established. Church history notes no such use for nearly 700 years after the New Testament was completed. It is an innovation of men, not of God.

4. GIVING—Free-willed, cheerful, generous, and every week (Acts 20:35; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8: 9).

5. PREACHING OF THE WORD—The gospel of Christ, not men’s doctrines nor entertainment, saves and strengthens us (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Rom. 10:17; 1 Cor. 1:18-23).

Author Unknown
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Geneave Dean, Martha Wilcoxson, Hairston Brantley, George Dodd and Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s brother and sister). Bill Waters (Leon Water’s father) is in Baptist Hospital. Jacklynn Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s mother) is not doing well. Maria Bonaparte (the Crowe’s neighbor) has lung cancer. Lou Gafford has been diagnosed with cancer of the kidneys.

READING/INVITATION
February 23, 2000
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Bill Crowe

March 1, 2000
Reading: Bill Gallaher
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

MARK THESE DATES
February 20, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
February 20, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
February 27, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Vegetable and Chicken Soups

GENESIS 2:1-3
“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”
“WE’RE ALWAYS HERE, UNLESS WE’RE GONE!”

W. Kent Graham

A local business in Atoka, Oklahoma, has an advertising slogan which proclaims, “We’re always here, unless we’re gone!” Every time I see this commercial I cannot help but think of some of our beloved brethren. The story is told of a Christian who was compelled to extol his faithfulness in worshiping God. He rightly asserted that every faithful child of God is present and an eager participant at every designated Bible Study and Worship Assembly. He professed that those who were unnecessarily absent from any assembly of the saints were suffering from spiritual illness. Supporting his proclamation, he said of his family, “We’re always here, unless we’re gone!”

This well meaning Christian’s message produced a resounding “hollow ring” as it was heard throughout the classroom auditorium. Those whom he was trying to convince and persuade knew well that the man had failed to complete his sentence. He should have said, “We’re always here, unless we’re gone fishing!” They knew that he was in worship as long as he felt like being there. Occasionally, he and his family did not come for “whatever” reason. He was not overly concerned about the effect of his family’s absence on the congregation, nor was he very concerned about the effect of his decision on his children’s respect and reverence for God. Very likely, he figured that he would just be doubly devoted to God sometime in the future.

Although this individual may have meant well, he was lacking in spiritual maturity, and was somehow blinded to his own unfaithful
NEW BIBLE CLASSES BEGINNING

Bible classes for the spring quarter will begin Wednesday, March 1 and Sunday, March 5. Make plans now to attend these classes.

**Sunday Schedule**

| Adults I  | Romans I   | Paul Brantley |
| Adults II | Acts II    | Michael Hatcher |
| Adults III| Acts I     | Louis Herrington |
| New Converts | Studies In Christian Doctrine And Practical Christian Living | Bill Gallaher |

**Wednesday Schedule**

| Adults I  | Judges & Ruth | Michael Hatcher |
| Adults II | I Samuel      | Bill Crowe |
| Adults III| II Samuel     | Ray Foshee |
| New Converts | Studies In Christian Doctrine And Practical Christian Living | Bill Gallaher |
PROUD GRANDPARENTS

Shelby and Jennette Nall are proud to announce the birth of their grandson, Jackson Wade Nall, born on February 20, 2000, to Michael and Glenda Nall of Pensacola, FL. Jackson weighed 5 lbs. 6 oz. and was 19 inches long.

Our heartfelt prayers and congratulations are extended to all.

DOES THE BIBLE REALLY SAY WHAT WE THINK IT DOES?

Steven D. Cline

“There’s never been a man on the moon! The only man on the moon is the one God put there for burning sticks on the Sabbath Day!”

So was I told by an old gentleman back in the mid-70s. Actually, the Bible never mentions such an occurrence. It was simply an example of what an individual believed the Bible said.

You may be quite startled to know that there are many expressions that good and honest folk affirm are in the Bible but actually are not. Very briefly, the following are but a few: “Before the end of time, you will not be able to tell the seasons apart.” “Never put the price of a dog in your pocket.” “Every tub shall stand on its own bottom.” “Mary Magdalene was a prostitute.” “Blood is thicker than water.” “Once a man, twice a child.” “The Bible itself says it can’t be understood.” “You can repent between the saddle and the stirrups.” “Jesus had a ruddy complexion.” “One thousand years shall pass, but not thousands.” “Weaker but wise.” “Three wise men came to visit baby Jesus at the manager.” (Actually, the number of wise men is never given. By the time they reached Bethlehem, moreover, the small family had moved into a house (Mat. 2:1-12).

In order to be pleasing to God, we must do His will. Jesus one time said in John 7:17, “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.” The Bible has been given to us in order for us to learn the will of God. We are told in 2 Timothy 2:15, “Study [give diligence] to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing [handling aright] the word of truth.”

It is one’s responsibility to God and himself to take the time and make the effort to learn the will of God. In the last day we will be judged, not by our ignorance of what the Bible teaches, but by the words of Christ Himself (John 12:48). Let us remember that the holy Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation (2 Tim. 3:15). Let us remember as well that God sees it as a noble act to study and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:11).

The Word of God is quick, or alive, powerful and sharper than a sword with two edges (Heb. 4:12). In fact, Stephen calls the Scriptures the “lively oracles” or the living Word in Acts 7:38, and Peter says “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11). Thus, let us take great care when we say such things as “Eve ate an apple” or “The Bible says you can be saved by faith alone,” for to say such, is to make God’s Holy Word say that which it does not.

Copied
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Geneave Dean, Martha Wilcoxson, Hairston Brantley, Lou Gafford, George Dodd and Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s brother and sister), Bill Waters (Leon Water’s father), Jacklynn Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s mother), and Maria Bonaparte (the Crowe’s neighbor).

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Ray Dodd and his family in the death of his brother Jack Dodd on February 21, 2000. Please keep Ray and his family in your prayers and help them in any way you can.

READING/INVITATION
March 1, 2000
  Reading: Bill Gallaher
  Invitation: Dale Cunningham
March 8, 2000
  Reading: Andrew Hatcher
  Invitation: Ray Dodd

MARK THESE DATES
February 27, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
March 5, 2000–Men’s Class at 5:00 P.M., in room 1.
March 5, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
March 12, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
March 12, 2000–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
March 19, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Vegetable and Chicken Soups
CONTENTMENT

Al Macias

We live in a world that is moving so fast that we sometimes wish we could get off (at least for awhile), but we cannot. We live in a world where it seems many are rushing to get to nowhere. We live in a world in which people have more than they ever had and yet still want more. What has happened to contentment? What has happened to being satisfied with the basics of life? Is it wrong for people to want to have more and more and more? Let us go to the Scriptures and see what God’s Word says about having and wanting more and never being satisfied.

In 1 Timothy 6:6-11, the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, and to all of us, about contentment and about gain. First of all, Paul said that “But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content” (1 Tim. 6:6-8). In these verses, and the verses that follow, we find out where many of us have gone wrong. We find out just exactly what God sees as being sufficient for our lives while we journey through this earth. Who else would know better than God Himself what is best for us in this world of ours? God created us and He knows the dangers that await us every day we spend in this life. Therefore, we should heed whatever He has to say about contentment and about wanting more and more and never being satisfied.

Paul says first of all that godliness with contentment is great gain. We can easily see that even contentment by itself is not sufficient, but rather godliness with contentment should be our goal. Now the question we all must ask ourselves is how was Paul using the word godliness here? Godliness is anything we do to try to be more like God. That is to be like God in character. In the beginning, we read in the book of Genesis that...
God made us in His own image; and when man sinned, he was no longer in the image of God. But God, being the loving God that He is, made it possible for man then and man now to be able to get rid of sin and again be like Him. It is through the Word of God that we learn how to be Godly. And it is when a person is trying to be Godly that he will see things as God sees things and therefore will be content with whatever God says in His Word. How content are you?

8900 Manchaca Road; Austin, TX 78748

SOLDIERS OF CHRIST, ARISE!

Alton W. Fonville

In the Ephesian letter the apostle Paul is encouraging brethren to prepare themselves for the battle with the devil which is before them. In chapter 6, beginning with verse 11, Paul says, “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” In the verses following he describes what that armour is, and says (to you and me): “Stand therefore.” In verse 16 he says, “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”

Paul is describing the behavior of a soldier for the Lord and some of his duties. He is not speaking of something strange to him. He spoke from first-hand information. In Philippians 2:26 he speaks of himself as a fellow-soldier.

From a brief look at the life of Paul it is evident that a soldier of the cross of Christ has some work to do. Being a soldier is not a passive job. It is not enough to enroll in an army and sit down. We must stand for something. We must be active against the wiles of the devil.

We must first realize that the devil is alive and well today and is out there all around us, working with all his forces to overtake us. If we do not realize that important fact, we are likely to be overtaken. The devil is subtle and sly. He knows how to catch us in our weak moments. He knows how to deceive us into following him.

What does a good soldier have to do to prevent being overtaken by the devil? We must study God’s Word so we will know what there is to do. We must come to realize that there are false teachers on earth today, teaching their ungodly lies. We must be willing to obey the commands of God relating to these false teachers wherever they are found. They may be so close to us that we fail to realize that they are of the devil and not of the Lord. False teachers are at work in the family of God—the church. Only a casual opening of the eyes will show that is true. But when false teachers invade our own families, we are more prone to overlook it rather than deal with it as Jesus told us. Jesus said in Matthew 10:34-37, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. To be a good soldier of the Lord, we must be ready to stand against the actions and teachings of our own children when necessary—no matter how it hurts. We must not shrink back simply because it is our family. We must be strong in the Lord and obey the commands to “withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly” (2 Th. 3:6). This soldier must be strong and obey that command even if it divides his own family, just as he is supposed to obey it when it relates to the family of God. Being a good soldier is refusing to be entangled in the affairs of this world (2 Tim. 2:4). To be entangled with our earthly family to the degree we refuse to obey God, is not being a good soldier of Christ.

It is time for the soldiers of Christ to arise and...
stand for something. Stand against the devil and his angels; stand for Christ and His church which He will present to Himself “not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:27). Soldiers! Do not let the church be spotted. Do not let it have blemishes or wrinkles. Let us put back on that armour which may have been laying idle for many years and let us serve the living God. Arise!

HC 33 Box 140; St. Paul, AR 72760

WHEN WE KNOW WE HAVE 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 rich 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 in to 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 inwardly strive for acclaim of this world rather than the approval of the Lord, 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 unwilling to forgive another for offending me, I have lost my “first love.”

Author Unknown

A CHILD PRAYS

“I’m just a little child, eight years old. I’ve been doing a lot of thinking, and I am worried. Please God, I know you can help me with these things I just don’t understand.

It’s about Mommy and Daddy, God, that I’ve been wondering. I love them both, and they love me, I know. I want to know if they are going to heaven when they die. They sure do want me to go, because they send me to Bible school every Sunday and then they come to worship. But God, I don’t understand why Mommy and Daddy do not go to Bible study, too. And Sunday nights, when Johnny and Mary and their mamma and daddy go to church again, my mamma and daddy either stay home and watch television or visit some friends. Is this all right, God? I have read in the Bible where Jesus said that we must seek Him first—and I am worried.

Another thing, God—in Bible school, my teacher taught me how important it is to pray, and to think You for our food and everything that we have. But, I’ve never heard my daddy pray! Is this all right, God? I guess I’m just kinda mixed up—I think Mamma and Daddy are the best in the whole world, and I want to be just like them when I grow up. I love you God!”

Author Unknown
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Geneave Dean, Martha Wilcoxson, Hairston Brantley, Lou Gafford, George Dodd and Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s brother and sister), Bill Waters (Leon Water’s father), Jacklynn Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s mother), and Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor).

READING/INVITATION
March 8, 2000
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Dodd
March 15, 2000
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Foshee

MARK THESE DATES
March 5, 2000–Men’s Class at 5:00 P.M., in room 1.
March 5, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
March 12, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
March 12, 2000–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
March 19, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
March 19, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
March 25, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
March 29, 2000–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 P.M.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Vegetable and Chicken Soups
DOES CHRIST DEMAND SACRIFICE?

Jerry Bates

It seems many people in this country have the attitude of wanting something for nothing. They want all the material blessings others have, but they are not willing to sacrifice and work for them.

They want this country to be strong and powerful, but are not willing to sacrifice to maintain that strength.

Major Sullivan Ballou of the Union Army, in 1861, once wrote a letter to his wife. One paragraph that he wrote is significant.

I have no misgivings about or lack of confidence in the cause in which I am engaged, and my courage does not halt or falter. I know how strongly American civilization now leans on the triumph of the Government, and how great a debt we owe to those who went before us through the blood and suffering of the Revolution. I am willing, perfectly willing, to lay down all my joys in this life to help maintain this Government and to pay that debt.

A week later he made the ultimate sacrifice—his own life. In the next 130 years many others made a similar sacrifice. Often, it is not pleasant to sacrifice, but we all realize that from time to time sacrifice must be made for the country to remain strong.

The same is true in the Lord’s Kingdom. We want to be part of that kingdom, but are we willing to sacrifice for it? We want God to make all the sacrifices. We bless and praise God for His grace and mercy in sending His Son to die on the cross. Yet when it is suggested that we must likewise make a sacrifice, we somehow think that it is unfair and unjust for God to expect us to give up something. Jesus made it plain that to be His disciple involves hardship and sacrifice.

“If any man will come after me, let him deny
himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23). “And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27). The cross is not some physical burden or illness which inevitably comes to everyone. It is the voluntary hardship or sacrifice that we make for the good of others and God’s Kingdom.

The Bible is full of examples of people who made sacrifices for their faith. Hebrews 11 gives several examples of great men and women of faith. Each of them suffered hardships and sacrificed for his/her faith. John the Baptist made the ultimate sacrifice when he told Herod that it was not lawful for him to have his brother’s wife (Mat. 14:4). According to tradition, all of the apostles except for John paid the same price, being put to death for their faith.

Service to God has always cost man something. David is referred to as a “man after God’s own heart.” He once made the statement that he would not offer a sacrifice to God which cost him nothing (2 Sam. 24:24). Each of us is to be a living sacrifice to God (Rom. 12:1). Can we be a living sacrifice if we do not give up something?

We teach our children the old proverb: “Anything worth having is worth working for.” We encourage our young people to be great scholars or athletes. Yet, to be a scholar involves self-discipline and years of lonely study and work. To be a great athlete involves countless hours of practice which no one ever sees. Salvation is assuredly worth having (1 Cor. 2:9), therefore, we ought to be willing to sacrifice and work for it, doing God’s will.

We should be encouraging our youth to be willing to make that sacrifice. What are you sacrificing for God? Are you willing to bring your life into conformity with the Word of God? Are you sacrificing materially so that the gospel can be spread throughout the world? Are you sacrificing your time to learn the Word of God and teach your neighbor about Christ? Are you using your talents in service to God? See Mark 12:30-31.

Matthew 19:16-30 records the case of the rich young ruler coming to Christ. He also wanted to follow Jesus. But when asked to make the same sacrifice the apostles made, he went away sorrowful. For him salvation cost too much. For many alive today salvation costs too much. The sacrifice is too great. However, Jesus promises us that if we are willing to make the sacrifice the rewards are worth it. “And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life” (Mat. 19:29). Are you willing to sacrifice for Christ?

PO Box 753; Palestine, AR 72372

**IF YOU DO NOT WANT DIVORCE**

If you do not want a divorce, put your mate first. I shudder when I hear a woman say, “Oh, I put my children ahead of everything!” You should put your husband first, knowing that the greatest gift you can ever bestow upon your son or daughter is the security which comes from knowing that mother and daddy love each other.

If you do not want a divorce, learn to express your love to your mate. Love is never out of style or out of date. There is no taboo on tenderness in any culture. A man or woman needs to be loved no less at fifty than on his or her wedding night.

If you do not want a divorce, learn to live within your means. It is a fine thing to do with, but it is even better to be able to do without successfully! Refuse to live beyond your income or to become a compulsive buyer. Piling up debts has a way of breaking down a marriage.

If you do not want a divorce, learn to build, not blast, the self-esteem of your partner. Practically all of us from time to time, wonder about our worth. In those moments, nothing is so dam-
aging as the discovery that the one person who ought to know and love us best is the very person who puts us down!

If you do not want a divorce, then do not marry a mate with the idea of reforming him or her. It has been my studied conclusion that very few people are ever changed by the simple action of walking down a marriage aisle.

If you do not want a divorce, then learn to compromise with each other. Never forget that the sweetest words ever to fall from human lips are, “I’m sorry, please forgive me.”

If you do not want a divorce, then seek and find common goals and directions. We live in a day when each does “his own thing,” the wife going in one direction, the husband another, with rarely the twain meeting. Do things together.

If you do not want a divorce, then reject interference from in-laws and relatives.

Author Unknown

RESTORING THE CODE OF DECENCY
Neal Pollard

While holding a meeting in north Alabama, this writer had the pleasure of visiting in the home of an elder of a nearby congregation. His two teenage daughters were truly refreshing. They did not attend their high school prom, did not swim with boys at the public pool, and positively never wore clothes that were immodest. These were not strange girls. They were pretty, popular girls heavily involved in all kinds of school activities. They were confident and courageous. No doubt these girls will live rich, full, and joyful lives.

In The Visitor, the Adamsville, Alabama church bulletin, Tim Rice writes under the date of February 21, 1995:

A substitute teacher I know recently overheard some cheerleaders at school say something like the following: “I feel sorry for Jane [not her real name]. She is a member of the church of Christ. She can’t wear short dresses. Her parents would not let her go to the prom. Why, even when her family goes on vacation, they don’t go to the beach where the action is, they go off by themselves. And she wears spandex pants when she goes swimming there. She can’t go to any of the pool-parties we have because her parents don’t think it’s right to go mixed swimming. She doesn’t smoke or do any of the fun things. And she goes to church all the time.”

Will she be warped or rebellious? Will her parents’ strictness cause her to snap or go wild? Or, have we let the voice of the world convince us that chaste, conservative, and wholesome values ruin young lives?

The woman this writer married was raised like those elders’ daughters and “Jane.” She is normal in every way. She has always received great respect from world and church, male and female! She has no difficulty faithfully believing the truth about the ever-present danger of producing lust through activities like mixed swimming, dancing, or brief attire (cf., Gal. 5:19; 1 Pet. 4:3; 2 Cor. 12:21; Webster’s New World Dictionary definition of “lasciviousness”). She has adopted 1 Timothy 2:9 as her code of decency, being modest from the inside out and putting her emphasis on wearing the whole armor of God and not the bikinis, mini’s, tight, and slight attire of the world!

Yes, television and movies have desensitized us with half-clothed, unclothed, and up close men and women, as if such were natural and acceptable. The summertime dress code of the world suggests that we are free to do whatever pleases us. The invitation of the devil’s sermon is: “Come unto me, nude and uninhibited, and I will give you popularity, acceptance, and freedom.” Woe to the Christian who swallows that lie!

PO Box 745; Mechanicsville, VA 23111
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Geneave Dean, Martha Wilcoxson, HAirston Fansley, Lou GafFord, Paul Fansley, George Dodd and Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s brother and sister), Bill Waters (Leon Water’s father), Jacklynn Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s mother), and Maria Bonaparte (the Crowe’s neighbor).

READING/INVITATION
March 15, 2000
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Foshee
March 22, 2000
Reading: Brantley Johnson
Invitation: Louis Herrington

MARK THESE DATES
March 12, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
March 12, 2000–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
March 19, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
March 19, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
March 25, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
March 29, 2000–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 P.M.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat

25TH ANNUAL BELLVIEW LECTURES
Sad Statements Of The Bible
June 10-14, 2000
CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE ALIKE

David P. Brown

Men may misunderstand the Bible in as many different ways as there are people to read it. But God did not intend such misunderstanding. In matters of obligation to God, all men must be in total agreement. Jesus said, “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48). The Word of God will read that exact same way on the day of judgment as it does now and vice versa.

Actually, the question should be: “Can we understand the Bible?” When we understand, we will be alike, Paul made this clear to the Ephesians when he wrote, “How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)” (Eph. 3:3-4; also see 1 Tim. 3:14-17; Acts 17:11; John 5:39).

When men orally, or in written form, teach that men cannot “understand the Bible alike,” they are writing for one reason—to bring about understanding on the part of their audience! But what do they expect of their audience? They want every one to “understand alike” that “everyone cannot understand the Bible alike”!!! We shall not belabor such nonsense.

Seeing it is not God’s fault, why do people misunderstand the Bible? The answer is not far from any of us. Please note the following simple requisite to the understanding of the scriptures—“an honest and good heart” (Luke 8:15).
In this parable the Word of God is said to be the seed of the kingdom (v. 11) It did not change as it was sown “by the wayside”; “on the rock”; “among thorns” or “on the good ground” (Luke 8:5-8). The first three places the seed fell represents dishonest hearts they were not good because they were not honest.

Before one is going to “hunger and thirst after righteousness” and thereby “be filled” (Mat. 5:6), there must be the integrity of heart (intellect, will, conscience, and emotions). Jesus said, “If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching” (John 7:17). Seeking the truth for merely academic reasons will not bring understanding. There must be the will to comply with what is learned before full understanding is possible.

Jesus spoke of those who did not understand because they would not. Jesus said that their hearts had “waxed gross.” They had lost their honesty because of idols in their hearts. Such idols were more important to them than understanding God’s truth (Mat. 13:13-15).

Paul further emphasized this regarding the departure of the Gentiles from God. Paul wrote, “because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and ... into this trap. The “reprobate mind” of Romans 1:28 is a direct result of an dishonest heart. Also consider Hebrews 5:11-14.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 Paul tells of those who do not have a “love of the truth” and that “had pleasure in unrighteousness.” Such will never understand God’s truth. Integrity of the heart will prevent this from happening.

Why do people persist in misunderstanding, though they have been exposed to the truth? Surely this study of God’s Word gives us the answer as to why such is done and what we must do to continue to understand God’s will for our lives. The writer of Proverbs penned: “But the path of the righteous is as the dawning light, That shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Pro. 4:18). He also wrote: “Keep thy heart with all diligence; For out of it are the issues of life” (Pro. 4:23).

The people who understand the Scriptures as they relate to our salvation will believe and practice the same things. The dishonest heart will not understand and will set about to justify itself with such nonsense as: “We cannot understand the Bible alike.”

People can be honestly and sincerely wrong, but that honesty will not let them be happy and content in their error. It will drive them toward the truth. Having confronted the truth one of two things must be given up. In order to keep one’s honesty, truth will take the place of error regardless of the cost. But if in coming to the truth, the error is found to be more comfortable, error will remain to the exclusion of truth, honesty and sincerity. The heart thereby is darkened!

Our understanding or misunderstanding of God’s saving truth is directly related to an honest or dishonest heart. Yea, verily, we are totally responsible for what we believe and practice!

BAROMETERS OF SPIRITUALITY

Jack Gray

When we think of the measuring gauge of spiritual temperature within a congregation, we usually focus on the attendance and contribution. Admittedly these do tell a great deal. They are “the proof of our love” and tremendously important. I have been very conscious recently of other indications of spiritual strength or weakness within a congregation, and I felt you would be
interested in what visiting people many times look for in us. It may help us to evaluate our own congregation.

When do members arrive at the building? I like to arrive at a meeting service on the first night at least 30 minutes early and observe the people as they arrive. It will tell you a lot about the fellowship within the congregation and how precious it is to the members. When most people arrive within the last five minutes before the service is to begin, you begin to see duty and obligation...rather than a love for the Lord and a desire to associate with brethren.

What is the attitude of the congregation toward advertising and promotion? It seems invariably true that those who are not willing to spend are not willing to be spent in God’s service. If members are stingy with money in promoting evangelism, you can be sure that they will not want much involvement in other ways either. Perhaps even worse, it reflects their true attitude toward souls. When a congregation uses cheap advertising materials or has objections to money spent in soul winning, you can be sure that the real problem is in not really believing in the value of a single soul. If the soul is really the most precious thing in the world, what Christian could possibly object to another $100 used in a proven method to save another soul?

Does the congregation really appreciate biblical preaching and teaching? Are they more interested in “plays and games?” Do they obviously want ear-tickling lessons? Do they want the best lesson for the prospect and the erring or do they only selfishly consider what they like and what benefits them personally? Much can be learned from such attitudes.

When our barometer of spirituality is read, how do you feel we measure up in these critical areas? Can you think of ways for making improvements?
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Geneave Dean, Martha Wilcoxson, Hairston Brantley, Lou Gafford, Paul Brantley, Iris Gallaher, George Dodd and Willodean Gamm (Ray Dodd’s brother and sister), Bill Waters (Leon Water’s father), Jacklynn Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s mother), and Maria Bonaparte (the Crowe’s neighbor).

READING/INVITATION
March 22, 2000
Reading: Brantley Johnson
Invitation: Louis Herrington
March 29, 2000
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Tim Lamb

MARK THESE DATES
March 19, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
March 19, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
March 19-24, 2000–Gospel Meeting at Jay Church of Christ, Jay, FL. Terry Joe Kee from Jonesboro, AR, will be speaking. Sunday: 10:00 A.M., 11:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. Monday-Friday: 7:00 P.M. A potluck will be held after the morning service. Singing will be held at 5:30 P.M.
March 25, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
March 29, 2000–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 P.M.
April 9, 2000–Dinner on the Grounds and Singing, after the morning service.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat
ARE WE LED BY THE SPIRIT?

Mel Futrell

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Rom. 8:14). Does the Spirit give direction to us today? Does the Spirit lead/guide us today? Must I be led by the Spirit? Should I be filled with the Spirit? To all of the above, we answer YES. In fact, since those led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God, the converse would also be true—those not led by the Spirit God are not the sons of God. Are there not then strong implications from this verse concerning those who are not led by the Spirit of God? I believe so, and this latter statement is possibly one we have given too little attention to.

The reasonable question that inevitably arises from the discussion of this verse is: “How are we led by the Spirit?” The simple and wholly scriptural answer is by the Spirit—revealed word of God. And to be led by the Word of God is to do as the Spirit directs in the Word. This of course necessitates study of the Word on our part. Yet, as plain and direct as the Scriptures are on the leadership role of the Holy Spirit through the Word, there have been and will continue to be those among us who by their statements lead me to conclude that they are insisting on some additional leading or leadings of the Spirit, independent of the Word. Please note just a few of these statements:

Being led by the Holy Spirit of God does not involve our “doing” things as much as it requires our “letting” him work in us” (Terry Rush, The Holy Spirit Makes No Earthly Sense p.66).

The church must be open to the invigorating presence of the Spirit’s fresh breezes through our sometimes study worship experiences (Rubel Shelly and Randall Harris, The Second Incarnation, Howard Pub., 1992, p. 132).

Of course, the words of the Spirit given in the
Scriptures are an integral part of the Spirit’s leading. But there is more. The Holy Spirit guides us in ways beyond the words written in the Bible (Joe Beam, Seeing The Unseen, Howard Pub., 1994, p. 269).

Please understand, it is not the act that saves us. But it is the act that symbolizes how we are saved! The invisible work of the Holy Spirit is visibly dramatized in the water (Max Lucado, In The Grip Of Grace, Word Pub., 1996, p. 115).

Now brethren, the above statements clearly articulate a leadership of the Spirit apart from the Word. But, thankfully, none of these men is our authority in religion.

It is somewhat revealing to me that those brethren who hold to an additional leading by the Spirit apart from the Word never appear to say with certainty how this is done. Is it a still voice in the night? Does the leading come through a vision or dream? Or is it just a warm cozy feeling? But if they can not be certain as to how the Spirit is leading them, how can they be certain He is leading them? You see, if one speculates that the Spirit leads in some way independent of the Word, he must then rely upon something other than the Word to defend his position. If not, why not?! And if he attempts this then subjective feelings and hunches are given equal status with objective Truth. Consider this, suppose two different people get two distinct and opposing leading/messages from the Spirit, who or what will determine which of them is correct? And what if the leading they get contradicts the teachings of the Spirit in Scripture, who wins out? These are valid questions that need to be answered. Brethren, if the Holy Spirit operates upon an individual in conviction, conversion, or sanctification apart from the Word then the Bible, which is all Scripture God-breathed, is not able to thoroughly furnish us unto every good work. Is that what some are implying or just a flat out saying? Do some believe the Holy Scriptures are inadequate to save and sanctify man? Please consult the following chart for an accurate picture of the Spirit’s operation via the Word.

**THE SPIRIT THE WORD**

1. Quickens | John 6:63 | Psalm 119:50
2. Begats | John 3:5-6 | 1 Peter 1:23
3. Sanctifies | 1 Peter 1:2 | John 17:17
4. Leads | Romans 8:14 | Psalm 119:105
5. Comforts/ Strengthens | Ephesians 3:16 | Romans 15:4; Acts 20:32
6. Indwells | Ephesians 5:19 | Colossians 3:16

In the final analysis, all direction, guidance, and leadership of the Spirit is done through the Word of God, the Spirit’s sword (Eph. 6:17). And this sword is powerful (Rom. 1:16), active (Heb. 4:12), and all-sufficient (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Brethren, to “walk...after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:1), or to “walk by faith” (2 Cor. 5:7) is to be led by the Spirit, and this only by the Word.

959 Alford Ave; Birmingham, AL 35226

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**25th Annual Bellview Lectures**

**Sad Statements Of The Bible**

June 10-14, 2000

The Ramada Limited (8060 Lavelle Way; 850/944-0333) is providing a special rate for individuals attending the Bellview Lectures offering the following price (tax not included): $45–1 to 2 people per room. When calling for reservations be sure to tell them you are attending the Bellview Lectures.

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“GOOD ADVICE FROM 1915”

**Henry Devere**

“Let us, dear brethren, keep the old gospel plow moving, let us plow deep and wide. Do not cut and cover. Plow every inch of the ground, and the church will have fewer unconverted men and women in it.”
Do not try to add men and women to the church. God will do this if the material is right. I fear there are many in the church, so to speak, that God did not place there. Let us be careful how we build. Let us look more to quality than quantity. Do not beg people. If you once begin this way when you have ceased begging, they will go pouting.

Do not try to pull them in, for if you do, when you quit pulling, they will backside. Do not try to fiddle people into the church, when you quit fiddling, they will fiddle out.

Just preach the gospel plainly and completely to the people and keep right on preaching (Rom. 1:16; 2 Tim. 4:1-4). Fill the honest seeking heart full of the truth and such will obey. Dishonest-hearted people the devil will keep and God’s simple plan for their salvation will not be accepted by them. Preach the gospel and be happy; never quit!”

Copied

“YOU CAN NOT GET THERE FROM HERE!”

Ted J. Clarke

You have heard the story of the man who stopped at a farm house and asked directions to a certain place. Supposedly, the farmer had heard of the place, but looked at the traveler and said, “Yeah, I know of the place, but you can’t get there from here.” That would be like driving on a one way street and coming to an intersection that had all of the street signs shown above. You could not go on straight because it says do not enter; you cannot turn right or left; nor can you make a “U” turn. You discover that you are really going the wrong way! Well, you may think that this whole idea is impossible, but it is not any more impossible than telling someone that he/she cannot get to one place from another. Yet, we sometimes think that some people cannot get to heaven because of where they are in their lives.

The truth is that anybody who wants to be saved can be saved, if they are willing to do God’s will in the matter. If you know the right directions you can get to any spot in the world, assuming that you are willing to do your part.

John 3:16 assures us that God truly has loved the whole world. Second Peter 3:9 asserts that God wants everyone to find their way to heaven. Everyone you see is a person whom God wants to be saved!

Look at those who were saved in the Scriptures. Those guilty of crucifying Christ were saved (Acts 2:36-41). Saul of Tarsus, who was a murderer and blasphemer, was saved (Acts 7:58-8:2; 1 Tim. 1:13-16). People who were homosexuals, drunkards (same as drug abusers), idol worshippers, common thieves, and robbers, men and women who were sexually immoral—all of these kinds of people were saved by the gospel and can still be saved today—if they are willing to obey the Lord and give up their sinful ways of life! The apostle Paul, after describing the kinds of wickedness above, said to the Corinthians, “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11).

Brethren, let us never act as if or tell certain people that they cannot get to heaven from here, regardless of how wicked they may be. Let everyone know that they can get to heaven, give them the proper directions from wherever they are and let God’s word work (Heb. 4:12).

When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life in such a manner that when you die the world cries and you rejoice.

P.O. Box 251; Mammoth Springs, AR 72554
SICK AND SHUT-IN

Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Geneave Dean, Martha Wilcoxson, Hairston Brantley, Lou Gafford, George Dodd and Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s brother and sister), Bill Waters (Leon Water’s father), Jacklynn Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s mother), and Maria Bonaparte (the Crowe’s neighbor).

SYMPATHY

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Elaine Maxey and her family in the death of her mother, Rita Williamson, who passed away on March 11, 2000. Please keep Elaine and her family in your prayers and help any way you can.

READING/INVITATION

March 29, 2000
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Tim Lamb

April 5, 2000
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Tony Liddell

MARK THESE DATES

March 29, 2000–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 P.M.
April 2, 2000–Men’s Class will meet at 5:00 P.M., in room 1.
April 2, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
April 9, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
April 9, 2000–Dinner on the Grounds and Singing, after the morning service.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED

Canned Meat
AMERICA IS BOILING FROGS

Paul Sain

Possible you have heard the story of how to boil a live frog. You do it gradually. If you put a frog in water that is already boiling, he will jump out. However, if you put the frog in tepid water, he will find it comfortable and stay. Then increase the temperature gradually. As the water gets hotter, the frog hardly notices and gets used to the hotter water until, finally, he is boiled to death.

I am fearful that America is “boiling frogs”—and we are the frogs.

We are so desensitized to the glorification of evil on the electronic screen, that hardly anything is unacceptable if it is done in the name of entertainment.

If you think I am overstating the case, take a look at an average day’s fare on television. There are things commonly seen on TV which my grandfather would have quickly labeled pornographic! And I dare you to take count of the cursing, sex between unmarried people, and the taking of God’s name in vain which are done daily in the homes of America through this captivating medium. And this is to say nothing about violence and crimes.

Disregard, for the moment, the impact that this can have on adults. What is such going to do to the thinking and values of the children who get a steady diet of it from early childhood through the teenage years? And, if you are inclined to say that TV does not influence us, then explain the enormous amounts advertisers pay. They are sure that you are influenced by what you see and hear.
There is a “boiling of frogs” going on in theaters also. In 1939, Clark Gable shocked America with one curse word in “Gone With The Wind.” In the 1960s Abbott and Costello were required to change the ending to their famous “who’s on first?” routine and replace a curse word with a euphemism. But, oh, how things have changed since then. The profanity in movies now is atrocious, including most with a PG-13 rating, and some with a PG rating.

In a different direction, consider this: In 1969, “Midnight Cowboy” was rated X in its original release. Now it carries a less restrictive R rating, and, as one newspaper reporter stated it, “might even earn a PG-13 if it should catch the ratings board in a generous mood.” You see, what was once “X” is now “R” and will, one day soon, be “PG-13.”

The explicit sex scenes (which always involve a sinful situation), the graphic violence, and the vile language are senseless and debasing, yet more and more acceptable to a numb and jaded society. One has to wonder how much we will accept in the name of entertainment!

What’s that I smell? Something boiling? Boy, it’s getting hot in here: Rrrribbit!

THAT PRECIOUS INSTITUTION CALLED THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The beloved and divine institution called the church of Christ should be found and enjoyed by all the world! Many have found this treasured “Pearl” of great price and are now enjoying its blessings (Mat. 13:44-46). That was the intention of its purchaser, founder, and builder. He gave His all that the gospel might be delivered to the world and that the New Testament might be ratified with lost man (Mat. 26:28). He sent His chosen apostles to preach the terms of pardon to all men everywhere and invited all to come in order that they might accept His grace, mercy, and love (Mat. 28:18-20; John 6:44-45). This body, the church, called out to live differently from the world, is the place in which Heaven has placed salvation (Eph. 5:23). Paul taught the Corinthians, and Christians today:

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

Sadly, some have never found the New Testament church. Whatever be the reason, they are the losers. We must strive to reach them with the gospel. Prejudice, family raising, error, the desire for worldly pleasure, fame or money, etc., have caused many to never investigate the evidence of the Bible. They have no taste for spiritual things. These seem to believe that if they never get serious about future eternal matters. God will overlook them in judgment. Such is not the case (2 Cor. 5:10-11).

Others have found the church revealed for the salvation of lost man, but have not rendered obedience to the gospel. Seemingly, they have decided that they want no part of Christianity and have rejected it. Their opinions and feelings are that one can be saved outside as well as in, if they just live a moral life and are “honest and sincere.” And when it comes to religion, they say they believe that one church or way is as good as another. These deceive themselves into believing that error
is as good as Truth, that man’s ways are equal to God’s way, and that “one church is as good as another.” Of course Jesus said, “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

Many have tasted the blessings in Christ and His church, by obedience, but after awhile they quit studying, serving, and giving, and fall away. What a terrible waste it is for one to be sought and bought by a loving, sacrificing, dying Saviour, and then to turn back from these blessed and honored positions to the dregs of the world! Thus, many lose their souls, the souls of their families, and the friends who follow them. Paul teaches that those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame (Heb. 6:4-6).

Author Unknown

USTA-GONNA-OUTGHTA

Dear reader:

There are these three really nice guys, see. They are pleasant enough to meet, easy to talk to, and seem good as gold. They almost always smile. They are friendly enough. But they are deadly! They will kill a church...or any other group. Even a family. Or a marriage. But, their specialty is destroying the church.

The first one’s name is USTA. You hear his name pop up all the time. Usta is the guy who only a few years ago was in there pitching, doing the work, supporting the cause. I meet him everywhere and he is always telling me how he “usta” go to church and “usta” be in Bible School. He also usta pray and usta take his family to worship and study. Usta is deader than a doornail. The church can do nothing on what Usta offers.

Then there is Gonna. He’s loaded with good intentions. He is gonna get started back to worship. Just as soon as things slack up a little bit he is gonna bring his wife and children and come to church. But, last Sunday was too cold and next Sunday he is gonna be out of town. Any day now he is gonna get things right. Gonna is a killer. He is the one who is responsible for keeping the kids home from worship. He does not do anything...but he is gonna!

The third one’s name is Oughta. Oughta is always one step from getting the job done. He knows what should be done and what he oughta be doing but he does not do it. He starts things and then fades out. A lifetime passes and he manages to convince himself that oughta is as good as doing.

Be on the lookout for these three killers. They have been found guilty of the eternal spiritual destruction of millions and are known to be at large at present. If you see one of them...like in your mirror...turn him in to the Father at once!

Copied.

25th Annual
Bellview Lectures
Sad Statements Of The Bible
June 10-14, 2000

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SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Geneave Dean, Martha Wilcoxson, Hairston Brantley, Lou Garford, George Dodd, Willodean Gann, and Connie Koise (Ray Dodd’s brother and sisters), Bill Waters (Leon Water’s father), Jacklynn Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s mother), and Maria Bonaparte (the Crowe’s neighbor). Iris Gallaher and Harold Staples have medical tests scheduled for March 27.

READING/INVITATION
April 5, 2000
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Tony Liddell
April 12, 2000
Reading: Harold Maxey
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

MARK THESE DATES
April 2, 2000–Men’s Class will meet at 5:00 P.M., in room 1.
April 2, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
April 2, 2000–Gospel meeting at Foley Church of Christ, Foley, AL. Stanley Ryan of Columbiana, AL, will be preaching. Sunday: 9:30 & 10:30 A.M., 6:00 P.M.; Monday-Thursday: 7:30 P.M.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS
Daylight savings time begins on April 2. Remember to set your clocks ahead one hour before going to bed on Saturday.
CONTROVERSY:
THE CHURCH’S
NEW TABOO

Chuck Pearson

It is an unspoken rule. It is one of those topics which brethren shun, and would like to pretend does not exist. It causes many members of the church today to squirm in their seats, and get defensive. It is also the bane of every “change agent” and “wolf in sheep’s clothing,” for without it, they would go unchallenged in their quest to destroy the body of Christ! This new taboo of the church of Christ is controversy.

So many brethren seem amazingly uncomfortable with controversy. They would like to just wash their hands of it, and get on with their comfortable, unchallenging, and blissfully ignorant existence. Change agents, on the other hand, adamently fear controversy. They have a good reason to! Controversy is what calls attention to their false doctrines and divisive motives. It makes brethren aware of their tactics, and actually causes the faithful to refute their heresy, and stand firm for the truth! In either case, controversy has become taboo, and those who attempt to be controversial are labeled as troublemakers.

The problem here is that controversy is at the very core of the gospel! Jesus was about the most controversial person in Israel during the time He was on the earth! What about when He overturned the tables of the moneychangers in the temple (Mat. 21:12-13)? Or how about when He pronounced the woes upon the scribes and Pharisees (Mat. 23:13-33)? Was this not controversial? What can we say about Peter and the other apostles when they were brought before the Sanhedrin for preaching the gospel? Peter answered to them: “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). Was this not controversial?
in the extreme?

Today, when faithful brethren attempt to stand firm for biblical truth, and defend the gospel, the response (sadly, from their own brethren!) is often “that is too controversial!” Folks, the Bible is controversial by definition! Try telling most secular people today that the world was created in six days and see what happens! Better still, try telling about two-thirds of the world’s population that two thousand years ago the Son of God came to this earth, was nailed to a cross, died for our sins, rose from the dead, sits at the right hand of God today in heaven, and that through Him we might have eternal life if we believe and obey His Word. Will this not stir up quite a bit of controversy? If you do not believe me, go tell it to a Muslim and watch his reaction!

Brethren, to be a faithful Christian is to be controversial. The gospel message is not compatible with worldliness. Christians are to be “not of the world” (John 17:16), as Jesus also was not. When this happens, there is going to be controversy!

What should we do? Shy away from controversy and let the world go unconfronted by the gospel? God forbid! The church has a message to share with the world. The bride of Christ can only teach that message effectively to alien sinners if we ourselves are a distinct people, shaped by God’s Word, and not afraid to be controversial!

What about within the church itself? Are we to shy away from controversy among our own brethren? Again, God forbid! If our brethren are digressing from the truth, should we not try to warn them and lead them back? What happens to our teaching if we ourselves are no longer a pure, distinct people? Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?” (Mat. 5:13). This is going to cause controversy! But it must be done!

What about false teachers? When a wolf comes into one of our pulpits, are we just going to sit there and do nothing while he leads people astray because it would be “too controversial” to confront him? What about Paul’s instructions to the church in Rome: “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Rom. 16:17)? Again, this is going to cause controversy! But it must be done!

We cannot be afraid of controversy, brethren! Yes, it may be uncomfortable, and people might get offended. But what of their souls? Is not our temporary comfort and people’s hurt feelings a reasonable price to pay when we are talking about eternity? As we have been instructed in the Scriptures, let us be bold and “earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 3)!

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE POTTED PLANTS?

O. J. Russell

This story is true—only the names and places have been withheld to protect the guilty! A congregation moved into a new building with gleeful delight and some degree of pride over the elegant surroundings in which they would worship. Someone supplied two beautiful five-foot plants to adorn the front of the new auditorium.

Some months following the opening service in the new building, to the dismay of the elders and building committee, the plants disappeared. Said elders and said committee sounded the alarm. The congregation was bombarded with announcements. Men were deputized to seek the whereabouts of the plants which was lost. Apologies were made to the donors of the decorative plants. For two months the missing potted plants became the conversation piece of the church at worship and at home. The search was intensified and the announcements and pleadings seemed unending.

The quest ended quite abruptly when the local preacher dared to solve the problem. It took nerve to do it! Since the potted plants had not been
found and obviously were not going to be, he arose following a long announcement about the lost decorations and said, “We have heard a great deal about the missing plants that were lost. For two months, at every service, announcements have been made and people have earnestly looked to that which is lost. For years we have known that sheep have strayed from the flock. Prodigal sons are away from the worship and the Bible declares that they are lost. Each soul missing here today is more valuable than the whole world—and yet we have not heard one announcement nor have we seen anxious concern about Mary Smith, John Brown, or Sam Jones whose eternal welfare may hang on our concern. If we had put forward one-tenth the energy in locating the lost souls of this flock that we have the lost potted plants, surely the angels in heaven would rejoice!” Sufficient to say, no other announcements were made about the plants.

BELLVIEW LECTURES

The Twenty-fifth Annual Bellview Lectures, *Sad Statements Of The Bible*, will be held *June 10-14, 2000*. Twenty-nine will be speaking: Keith A. Mosher, Sr.; David P. Brown; Harrell Davidson; Terry M. Hightower; John Priola; Eddie Whitten; Lynn Parker; Guss Eoff; Harold Bigham; Ronnie Hayes; Howell Bigham; Ted J. Clarke; Joel Wheeler; Ira Y. Rice, Jr.; Clifford Newell; David Jones; Eddy Craft; Gary Grizzell; Carl Garner; Curtis A. Cates; Tom Wacaster; Tim Nichols; Joseph D. Meador; Michael Hatcher; Michael Light; Noah Hackworth; Paul Vaughan; Joe Galloway; and, Bobby Liddell. The following men will be writing lessons for the lectureship book but will not be speaking: Gary Summers and Bob Sweeten.


If you are planning on attending the Bellview Lectures be sure to make your motel reservations now. Ramada Limited (8060 Lavelle Way) offers the following price (tax not included) $45—1 to 2 people per room. Their phone number is 850/944-0333. When calling for reservations be sure to tell them you will be attending the Bellview Lectures. Pensacola is a great place to take your summer vacation and at the same time attend the Bellview Lectures. For further information please contact the office by phone, mail, or at our e-mail address (bellviewcoc@bigfoot.com). Check out our web site listed below for more information. We hope to see you in June.

(http://members.tripod.com/bellviewcoc)
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Geneave Dean, Martha Wilcoxon, Hairston Brantley, Lou Gafford, George Dodd, Willodean Gann and Connie Koise (Ray Dodd’s brother and sisters), Bill Waters (Leon Water’s father), Jacklynn Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s mother), and Maria Bonaparte (the Crowe’s neighbor). Harold Staples is scheduled for further tests.

READING/INVITATION
April 12, 2000
Reading: Harold Maxey
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
April 19, 2000
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Dusty Wilkes

MARK THESE DATES
April 9, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
April 9, 2000–Dinner on the Grounds and Singing, after the morning service.
April 9, 2000–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
April 16, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
April 16, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
April 23, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
April 30, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Vegetables
WHO IS SATAN?

Clint Brown

Satan is described by our Lord as “the ruler of this world” (John 14:30—NKJV). Paul says Satan is “the god of this world” (2 Cor. 4:4), and “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2). From these Scriptures alone we gain the one the Bible calls “the devil,” or Satan.

From the above stated passages we know that Satan is real, that he is in the world, that he is powerful, that he works in people, and that he influences us to disobey the will of God. While the Bible teaches these things, there are still many people claiming to be Bible believing Christians who teach that Satan is not real, that there will be no ultimate judgment for him or for his followers, and that there is no such thing as eternal punishment in hell. It seems that Satan is living up to his description by holding a powerful influence in these peoples’ lives and causing them to disobey God’s will through false teaching. However, we should not be swayed by the false musings of the populace. We have God’s inspired Word concerning the reality of Satan and his schemes.

Satan is pictured as the deceiver of the world. The Bible describes “that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan” as one “which deceiveth the whole world” (Rev. 12:9). He was “that serpent” who deceived the woman in the garden and introduced sin into the world (1 Tim. 2:14). This is the same one who now deceived the world into the sin of believing that we are not the handiwork of a Creator God, but are elevated animals on an evolutionary ladder. It is Satan who deceives the population into the sin of determining that the thing in the womb can be destroyed if it is expedient for the woman. Do you still wonder from whence the evil influences in this world come? Indeed “the whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 John 5:19).

Undoubtedly, the greatest weapon that Satan has is deceiving us into denying his very
existence! No one likes to be deceived. But it is obvious that the world has fallen prey to the devil’s schemes because they are not equipped to defend themselves against his wiles with the Word of God. Like Eve in the garden, if we treat God’s Word as trivial, fictional, or mythical, we will surely fall into deception with the world of los humanity.

Satan is seen as the enemy of truth. If we let him, Satan will snatch the Word of God from our hearts (Mark 4:15). He wants to blind our minds to the light of the gospel (2 Cor. 4:4). Put simply, he will deceive those who “because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2 Th. 2:9-12). Satan is truth’s enemy. He hates truth because he is the father of lies. And everyone who does not receive the truth is of their father, the devil (John 8:44). Nevertheless, many brethren are falling for his lies. Many are compromising the truth of the gospel for entertainment oriented worship. Striving to “connect with culture” they are “selling out the Savior.” Appealing to the felt needs of the people rather than meeting their real needs shows the extent to which Satan has influenced us against the truth. The serpent is once again active in the lives of people to persuade them to disobey divine directives.

But those who know God’s Word “are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Cor. 2:11). We know that as he works against the truth of God, Satan will transform “into an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14). Therefore, we need not give in to the devil’s attacks on truth. While many, because of their allegiance to Satan, will not “endure sound doctrine,” we must “preach the word” of God’s truth (2 Tim. 4:2-5).

The Bible shows Satan as the great discourager of the brethren. Peter says the devil is “our adversary” who walks about “as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). One of the ways Satan seeks to devour us is through discouragement. Though God’s Word assures us that the trials and hardships of this life are for the benefit of the faithful Christian (Jam. 1:2-4), the devil will use them for our hurt. While Job probably suffered more sudden devastation than anyone else in history (except for our Lord), he nevertheless gives us a great example of patience in the midst of trials. Satan afflicted this man with the death of his children, the destruction of his livelihood, and finally the deterioration of his health, but the godly Job proves to us that Satan can be overcome (Jam. 5:11). Submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you (Jam. 4:7). Peter teaches us to “resist stedfast in the faith” (1 Pet. 5:9). Though Satan is powerful and active in the world today trying to discourage God’s people, we have the blessed promises of our Lord who has “destroy[ed] him that had the power of death” (Heb. 2:14). Indeed, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Rom. 8:31).

Satan is real. Satan is cunning (Gen. 3:1). Satan is powerful. But Satan is not all-powerful. There is only One who has all power and authority. God has only allowed Satan to continue his deceit until the eternal purpose of God is complete (Eph. 3:11). We would be foolish to think that Satan does not exist. But, we would be more foolish to live like it. Since God will ultimately sentence Satan and his followers to eternal punishment in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10, 15), “what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness” (2 Pet. 3:11)?

WHAT KEEPS YOU FROM BIBLE STUDY?

Have you heard about William McPherson? A dynamite charge blew up in his face. Damage was severe. He lost his hands. Part of his face was left numb. Realizing how much the Bible meant to him, he set out to find a way he could read it. Without hands he tried to use his lips to read Braille, but numbness made that impossible. He
When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life in such a manner that when you die the world cries and you rejoice.

Discovered he could use his tongue to decipher the Moon Type system of dashes. This method left his tongue bleeding and very sore, but he kept at it. Gradually it became easier and he learned to read. In sixty-five years he was able to read the Bible through four times with his tongue.

Now, what is it that keeps you from reading and studying the Bible? Is it the TV schedule, ball games, or other self-interest that prevents us from Bible reading daily? Are these things really the problem? The story of William McPherson makes it clear that we do what we want to do. The one who will not read has no advantage over the one who cannot read.

Via “Plainview Proclaimer”

**BELLVIEW LECTURES**

The Twenty-fifth Annual Bellview Lectures, *Sad Statements Of The Bible*, will be held June 10-14, 2000. Twenty-nine will be speaking: Keith A. Mosher, Sr.; David P. Brown; Harrell Davidson; Terry M. Hightower; John Priola; Eddie Whitten; Lynn Parker; Guss Eoff; Harold Bigham; Ronnie Hayes; Howell Bigham; Ted J. Clarke; Joel Wheeler; Ira Y. Rice, Jr.; Clifford Newell; David Jones; Eddy Craft; Gary Grizzell; Carl Garner; Curtis A. Cates; Tom Wacaster; Tim Nichols; Joseph D. Meadow; Michael Hatcher; Michael Light; Noah Hackworth; Paul Vaughn; Joe Galloway; and, Bobby Liddell. The following men will be writing lessons for the lectureship book but will not be speaking: Gary Summers and Bob Sweeten.


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READING/INVITATION
April 19, 2000
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Dusty Wilkes
April 26, 2000
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Henry Born

MARK THESE DATES
April 16, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
April 16, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
April 23, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
April 30, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
May 7, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
May 14, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Vegetables
A CHRISTIAN FATHER IS A PROTECTOR

David Macy

Ordinarily we only hear about a man protecting his family physically. We often hear the question: “What would you do if someone broke into your home and attacked your family?” “Would you kill them or would you stand by and let your family be abused?” I am sure there are several different opinions on this subject. But the point is, most people think of a father’s protection in terms of physical protection, but a Christian father protects his children in several ways. You could beat the stuffing out of everyone who tried to abuse your family in any way, and still be a poor all around protector.

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12). A Christian father protects his family spiritually. He stands between them and the ferocious powers of darkness. The possible assault of a man or even men against a family is nothing compared to the daily assault of Satan and all of his evil forces. But even the old devil himself is forced to recognize the authority of the husband and father in the home and his God-given role as protector.

I wrestled with Satan often to protect my precious children and without the strength which Jesus gives I would have lost the battle every time.

A Christian father also protects his family mentally and emotionally. He stands against anything which would be detrimental to their emotional health. Pornography is detrimental and destructive so he stands against pornography. Dirty movies are detrimental so he stands against dirty movies. False teaching is detrimental so he stands against false teaching. I know from experience that it is very difficult to keep any child, and es-
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especially teenagers, away from evil influences, and even some participation in things which you do not approve, but just strongly voicing your disapproval carries much more weight than you may realize.

A real life father who protects in the true sense is a rarity today, but what a beautiful thing it is when you find one and observe his words and action which are far more precious than a great abundance of riches to his family. They are safe on many fronts while most families are being bombarded with little or no protection, and often are completely destroyed. Yes, one Christian man can do worlds of good.

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4820 Appalachian Hwy; Blue Ridge, GA 30513
attending the Bellview Lectures.

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YOU TEACH A LESSON

John D. Cox

Many people teach lessons without realizing that they do. We do very few things without teaching by the example we set. An old saying goes like this: “Actions speak louder than words.” We have all heard some loud professions concerning Christianity, but they were drowned out by the actions of the one making the profession. When you deliberately absent yourself from any service of the church, you teach lessons by your absence. This is true whether it be on Sunday morning Bible study, Wednesday night services, Sunday night services, or any other time set aside by the church for such services.

Notice some of these lessons:
1. You teach that this particular Bible lesson is unimportant.
2. You teach that what you do is more important than studying the Word of God.
3. You teach that a person can be a faithful Christian and still not be interested in the study of the Bible.
4. You teach that you already know as much as you want to know about the Bible.
5. You teach that, in your opinion, you have nothing to offer to others in Bible study.
6. You teach that you are completely indifferent as to the success or failure of that particular study period. In fact, people will come nearer getting the idea that you want it to fail.

These lessons and others are taught to others both in the church and out of the church, when you have the opportunity to attend Bible study and choose not to do so. My brother, what kind of lesson are you teaching?

PLEASE COME HOME

Some of you who are reading this were once dedicated Christians. Your love for Christ and His causes burned bright. Your faith was real and strong. Your life was being built upon Christ and directed by His Word. The church was at the center of your activities. But, that has all changed now! You see the old Christian friends once in a while, but it is not the same. Every now and then you get the urge to return to Christ but you put it off “for a while.” I am convinced that you were happier when you were a faithful Christian and that some day you intend to return to Him—hope the following suggestions will hasten that day:

First, you must face up to it. You have left the Lord! You are no longer faithful to Him! You are no longer living the life of a Christian!

Second, face up to what that means. It means that you are facing life without God’s help and without the blessing of prayer (1 Pet. 3:12). You have got to “go it alone”! And if you die in your present condition, your eternal abode will be with the Devil and his angels (Mat. 25:41).

Third, your course of life will determine the course of life of others. If you remain as your are, your family will be greatly influenced in that direction. If you return to the Lord, chances are some of them will also. You are not just “deciding for yourself”!

Fourth, it is easier now to return than it will ever be. The longer you are away, the more difficult the return. So do it NOW! Do not wait another minute.

Author Unknown
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SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Ray Dodd and his family in the death of his brother, George Dodd, who passed away on April 12, 2000. Please keep Ray and his family in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
April 26, 2000
   Reading: Shelby Nall
   Invitation: Henry Born
May 3, 2000
   Reading: Richard Parker
   Invitation: Paul Brantley

MARK THESE DATES
April 23, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
April 30, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
May 7, 2000–Men’s Class at 5:00 P.M., in room 1.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Vegetables
MEETING TIMES

SUNDAY:
9:00 A.M. BIBLE CLASSES
10:00 A.M., 6:00 P.M. WORSHIP

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, Richard Parker
MISSIONARY: Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

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Man”; Matthew 26:74; “My God My God Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me”; Matthew 27:46; “God Heareth Not Sinners”; John 9:31 Unconcerned With Sin; 1 Corinthians 5:2; “So Soon Removed”; Galatians 1:6-9; “They Will Not Endure Sound Doctrine”; 2 Timothy 4:2-3; “Demas Hatch Forsaken Me”; 2 Timothy 4:10; Dead Thinking They Were Alive; and, Revelations 3:1; and, Sad Verses Not In The Bible.

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CONVERSATION ABOUT BEER DRINKING

I was speaking to a teenager at a high school conference and one fellow came up to me and said, “Now, Doc, I don’t drink, and I don’t intend to drink, but actually, what is wrong with a friendly glass of beer?”

I said, “Do you know anything about the chemistry of alcohol?” “No,” he said, “I don’t.” I said, “Alcohol is one of the greatest blessing God ever gave us.” “Is it? I thought it was just a curse,” he said.

“No, it is a great blessing. The two reagents on a chemist’s reagents rack which he uses as solvents are alcohol and water. Alcohol dehydrates and it dissolves. It is a marvelous thing. The photographic industry, tinctures, dyes, medicines, all kinds of things make use of alcohol.

There are about 19 kinds of commercial alcohol which brilliant chemists have developed, and we produce them by the tons. The kind of alcohol you drink is one type (ethyl), and the kind you put in your radiator is another kind (methyl). But all alcohols are poisons. In the body, they are going to cause ill effects. The reason is that they dehydrate and they dissolve.

Have you got a little imagination? Let us do a little chemical experiment here in your imagination. Let us take 16 bottles. In the first eight let us put alcohol and in the last eight let us put water. Over here we will see that alcohol dissolves, and here that it hardens.

Take, for example, some kind of fat and put it on water. It will just float around. What if we put fat in alcohol? Shake it up and it will dissolve. Take some resin, put it in alcohol, shake it up and it will dissolve. It goes to the bottom of water and stays. What happens to camphor? It floats on the water. Put it in alcohol and it will dissolve. We have fat, resin, and camphor. They will dissolve in alcohol. Put a green leaf in alcohol and it will take the color out. Now put these things in water and nothing happens. Now shift over here. Put a little bit of bread in alcohol. What will happen? It will get hard. Put a piece of meat in alcohol. What will happen? It will get hard, it dehydrates, it takes the water out of the meat.

Now this dehydrating and dissolving are the characteristics of alcohol which make it a great blessing. But, friends, when it goes down your gullet, it does not know if it is inside or outside. As soon as it gets in there it begins to work in the
same way. It is not affected by gastric juices. It is absorbed through the walls of the stomach into the bloodstream and all your nerves and your brain are bathed with it. Every nerve has fatty substance called lipoid and the moment alcohol touches it, what happens? The alcohol dissolves it. When you dissolve the covering and insulation of the nerves, it is just like a telephone exchange with the insulation off; you do not get the message through to the proper source. This is why men stagger. They call for their right leg to act and the left leg gets the message. When alcohol goes into the heart of the nerves, that happens to be like the white of an egg. Alcohol cooks it. Alcohol is a great harm to the human body and mind because of these two properties of dissolving and dehydrating. Furthermore, alcohol is a narcotic, a deterrent of normal body functions. It is poison which adversely affects our judgment and self-control. It is, we believe, a harm to our offspring because it poisons the life-giving cells."

We talked for half an hour; and finally the teenager said, “Sir, that’s the first time I have ever had an intelligent answer as to why I shouldn’t drink beer. Thank God you told us.”

Via “The Saluter”; Dresden Church of Christ; 501 Evergreen, Dresden, TN 38225

THANK YOU FOR THE PETUNIA

Flower shows feature flowers from the earliest tulips to the last poinsettia, but no one ever exhibits a petunia. Brides carry flowers from the edelweiss of the mountains to the lilies of the valley, but no bride would consider carrying a petunia. Everyone ignores the petunia, but it goes right on blooming. It is time for someone to appreciate it.

Church leaders should be sensitive to flowers, because flowers remind them of people. In fact, any group of people has about as many varieties of plants as does the garden. Every group has its “roses” which must be handled with kid gloves to avoid pain or hurt. Every group has its “Irises” which are susceptible to rot if they are not constantly in the sunshine. There are “shrinking violets” that need to be encouraged, the stubborn “glads” that cannot be bent once their stem is set, and the tender “morning glory” which blooms in splendor at the beginning of the day and fades by noon. Every variety of folk need some special attention to make them bloom...except the petunia.

So you can understand why “petunias” are so dear to any church leaders’ hearts. They are those folks who go on doing their part without special attention. No one fusses over them or pampers them or cultivates them. No one praises them for their dependability or loyalty. But, like the petunia in the garden, they do not seem to mind. They cause no trouble, they create no commotion; they just keep blooming the best they can.

So, at the end of an especially difficult and disappointing day there rises from the church leaders a very special prayer, “Dear Lord, thank you for Petunias!”

Via the “Highland Village”

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RESTORED
Harold Maxey was restored on April 23, 2000. Please keep Harold in your prayers and offer encouragement.

READING/INVITATION
May 3, 2000
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Paul Brantley
May 10, 2000
Reading: Joshua Wilkes
Invitation: Scot Brazell

MARK THESE DATES
April 30, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
May 7, 2000–Men’s Class at 5:00 P.M., in room 1.
May 14, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
May 21, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
May 28, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Vegetables
A NOBLE PURPOSE FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

Thomas B. Warren

Marriage is not a relationship whereby two partners stand with their backs to one another, each using marriage only for his own selfish purposes. Neither is marriage to be pictured by two persons facing one another that they worship one another. They are to worship God, not one another. Instead of these two erroneous views, marriage is better considered as two people standing side-by-side facing toward heaven, with resolve to help one another to be happy in this life, to help one another walk closer to God. All the various aspects of marriage should be pointed toward this goal. Mature people can help one another to this goal. Immature people will drive one another away from it. “As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose children ye now are, if ye do well, and are not put in fear by any terror. Ye husbands, in like manner, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor unto the woman, as being also joint-heirs of the grace of life; to the end that your prayers be not hindered” (1 Pet. 3:6-7).

Marriage may well be compared to a book. You know the cover of a book does not always accurately convey just what the contents are. Artists are hired to make the cover as attractive as possible, but the book itself may be very dull and uninteresting. Some of the chapters may be very interesting while other chapters are not. Some of them may be very exciting, while some of them may be very dull. But a good book has a goal; it has an aim. Just so it is with marriage: a good marriage has a goal.

The best marriages have the goal of helping
one another to heaven. To this end, husbands and wives should be obedient to God. They should obey God as the Bible directs. They should worship in their homes together. Side-by-side they should have their eyes on Christ, the author and finisher of our faith, and they should help one another deal with all of the complex problems and profound relationships of husbands and wives; they should help one another to walk that pathway that leads to everlasting life.

P.O. Box 937; Seagoville, TX 75159

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I AM A NEWCOMER WON'T YOU PLEASE

Smile at me as I walk in the door. You are my first impression of the church, during the first few moments I am in your building, and this first impression will probably stay with me a long time.

Help me find my place in the service. I will not find your help an intrusion. In fact, I will remember your kindness.

Speak to me during the after-service fellowship time. I know you want to see your friends, but I may find it hard to believe that you truly care for each other unless I first see evidence that you care for the stranger in your midst.

Tell me good things about the church, your elders, deacons, and ministers. I want to believe that I have come to a place where people love each other and where they believe that they are doing something exciting and important for the Lord.

Notice me even if I am not family. I do not want to feel invisible just because I am unmarried, a single parent, a teenager, or an older person.

Talk to me again the second week when I come back and the third and fourth. I am still not a part of your church family.

Invite me to become a part of some church activity or small group. I need more contact with the church family.

Author Unknown

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“Sad Statements Of The Bible”
June 10 - 14, 2000

Saturday, June 10
7:00 PM What Makes A Sad Verse? Keith Mosher
7:45 PM “What Is Truth?”; John 18:38 David Brown

Sunday, June 11
9:00 AM “Rivers Of Waters Run Down Mine Eyes”; Psa. 119:136 Ira Y. Rice, Jr.
10:00 AM Cannot Enter The Land; Deu. 24:4 John Priola

Lunch Break

Dinner Break

Monday, June 12
9:00 AM “Mine Own Familiar Friend”; Psa. 41:9 Joel Wheeler
10:00 AM “Ichabod”; 1 Sam. 4:21-22 Harold Bigham
11:00 AM “We Will Not Walk Therein”; Jer. 6:16 Eddy Craft

Lunch Break

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9:00 AM “Departed Without Being Desired”; 2 Chr. 21:20 Ted Clarke
10:00 AM Another Generation Which Knew Not Jehovah; Jud. 2:10 Eddie Whitten
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10:00 AM “So Soon Removed”; Gal. 1:6-9 Noah Hackworth
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Lunch Break

3:30 PM Open Forum

Dinner Break

7:00 PM When Fellowship Is Broken; Gen. 3 Harrell Davidson
7:45 PM “Is It Nothing?”; Lam. 1:12 Gary Grizzell

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7:45 PM “Absalom, My Son, My Son Absalom! Would God I Had Died For Thee”; 2 Sam. 18:33 Ronnie Hayes
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Martha Wilcoxson, Hairston Brantley, Lou Gafford, Louis Herrington, Harold Staples, Willodean Gann and Connie Koise (Ray Dodd’s sisters), Jacklynn Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s mother), Maria Bonaparte (the Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), and Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law).

READING/INVITATION
May 10, 2000
Reading: Joshua Wilkes
Invitation: Scot Brazell
May 17, 2000
Reading: Michael Wilkes
Invitation: Bill Cline

MARK THESE DATES
May 7, 2000–Men’s Class at 5:00 P.M., in room 1.
May 14, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
May 21, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
May 28, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
May 29, 2000–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 P.M., in the general purpose building. A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Peanut Butter and Jelly
HE CARETH FOR YOU

Noah A. Hackworth

One of the most touching, comforting passages in the New Testament is unquestionably 1 Peter 5:7: “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” More literally the passage reads: “All your care cast upon him, because with him there is care about you.” “Casting” translates the word epirripto (aorist tense, a once-for-all act) which means our cares are “deposited” with the Lord. Berry uses the word epirripsantes (having cast) which more clearly brings out the aorist. “Anxiety” is from merino or merimnan which is seemingly connected with merino which means “to draw in different directions, anxious care, distractions.” Here is a splendid example:

Therefore I say unto you, be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value then they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life? And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious
Michael Hatcher has been invited to go to Murmansk, Russia, this year and teach in the Bible College there. To do this, he will have to raise a travel fund. If you would be willing to help, please send your checks to Bellview Church of Christ marked for the Hatcher Travel Fund. Thank you in advance for your help.

for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof (Mat. 6:25-34).

God’s people are at times frustrated, distracted by worldly cares, and pulled in different directions, and what is to be done when this occurs? What many people do is head for the psychiatrist’s office for some time on the couch and a brain analysis. What can more profitably be done is for the “right thinking Christian” to take these cares and cast them upon the Lord once for all. This is what is to be done when suffering is more than can be handled. This is what must be done when the burden or the cross we must bear gets too heavy. Paul offers similar teaching: “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2). “For each man shall bear his own burden” (Gal. 6:5). There is a different Greek word used in these passages. In the former it is the word bare. In the latter it is portion. In the former the burden can be borne by the individual person with no required help. But in the latter the burden (load) is too heavy and help is needed. Our Lord is available twenty-four hours a day. He is always ready to receive our requests (cf., Isa. 55:6; Phi. 4:6).

When the Lord said, “And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Mat. 28:20), He meant that He is with us always, every day, all the days, pasas tas hemeras, until the completion of the age. The Lord hovers above us watching over us. He walks beside us sharing our load with us. He is under us supporting us, and He walks behind us encouraging us. An unknown author has written:

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking across the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two set of footprints in the sand: one belonging to him, and the other to the Lord. When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the lowest and saddest times in his life. This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it. “Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you’d walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don’t understand why when I needed you most you would leave me.” The Lord replied, “My son, my precious child. I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you.”

This is a vast universe God has created and each one of us is only a speck in it, but God in His Omniscience knows exactly where we are and what is going on in our lives. He loves each one of us as though there was only one to love. Whatever cares and burdens we bear, and there are many, let us take advantage of the advice given to us by the Holy Spirit through Peter: “All your care having cast upon him, because with him there is care about you.”

5342 West La Vida Court; Visalia, CA 93277
“Sad Statements Of The Bible”
June 10 - 14, 2000

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7:45 PM “What Is Truth?”; John 18:38 David Brown

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2:00 PM Improper Leaders; Jer. 5:31 Clifford Newell
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SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Martha Wilcoxson, Hairston Brantley, Lou Gafford, Louis Herrington, Harold Staples, Harold Maxey, Cliff Carroll, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Jacklynn Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s mother), Maria Bonaparte (the Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), and Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law).

READING/INVITATION
May 17, 2000
Reading: Michael Wilkes
Invitation: Bill Cline
May 24, 2000
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Bill Crowe

MARK THESE DATES
May 14, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
May 21, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
May 28, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
May 29, 2000–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 PM in the general purpose building. A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting.
May 31, 2000–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 PM.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Peanut Butter and Jelly
SENIORS...
GO FORTH TO LIFE
Gary Colley

With a voice of congratulation, a word of praise, a tear of joy for you, and a shining star of hope, we extend the thought to this article.

Years of work and accomplishment have come and gone, at times with hardly a notice! But here it is! The time parents and young people have looked toward with anticipation. We wanted the goal for you, but with a tinge of sadness it has come and we are proud of your perseverance. The finality of this part of your preparation has made the difficulties that were encountered along the road all worthwhile!

The church of Christ has been an intrinsic part of your lives. By God’s inspired Word, it has taught you to realize you will not be tempted above what you are able to bear (1 Cor. 10:13). That the Lord’s teaching, believed, and received into your hearts, sustains you in times of indecision and helps you in the solution of your problems (1 Pet. 5:7). It has taught you honesty and integrity that the world so needs today: telling the truth is better than lies; keeping your word will be approved wherever you may go; paying your debts will make you right in the sight of God and man; not taking that which belongs to others, even their good name, is the way to live; and being fair in your dealings with others will give you many happy days. Purity and maturity are continual goals of those who would live godly in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 3:12).

But the Lord’s church should be the center of your lives! That which Christ built and gave His blood to purchase is of more value than any possession of earth or accomplishment in life. To be upright in the sight of man is important, but to be right before God is a million times
more important! Jesus said, “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mat. 16:26). While living the Christian life, decisions come much easier: What job shall I take? Who shall be my associates? Who shall I marry? And, and on and on we could go. “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecc. 12:13).

We are all proud of you! We want the best for you! All that now stands between you and the top of the ladder, is the ladder! Place your foot on each step with care and “Go forth to life.”

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE
Our congratulations are extended to Michael Wilkes who will be graduating from the Home Schooling Program on May 20. Michael plans on attending Pensacola Junior College.

CONSIDER THIS
Clint Brown
If there was ever a man who could play “second fiddle” well, it was John the baptizer. As one of the most unsung heroes of the Bible record, his example of courage is often neglected, left out, and even forgotten. How many sermons have been devoted to John the baptizer? How many books have been written about him? Yet, this man filled the role of forerunner to the Son of God!

It was prophesied that this man would come...
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7:45 PM  “What Is Truth?”; John 18:38  David Brown  

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Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Martha Wilcoxson, Lou Gafford, Harold Staples, Cliff Carroll, Nancy Travis, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Jacklynn Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s mother), Maria Bonaparte (the Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), and Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law).

READING/INVITATION
May 24, 2000
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Bill Crowe
May 31, 2000
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

MARK THESE DATES
May 21, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
May 21, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
May 28, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
May 29, 2000–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 PM in the general purpose building. A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting.
May 31, 2000–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 P.M.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Peanut Butter and Jelly
WHAT WILL HELP ONE EXCEL AS A CHRISTIAN?

Curtis A. Cates

It is my belief that most Christians wish to make their lives as effective for the Lord and His cause as possible. We are not satisfied with the ordinary, just being mediocre. “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might” (Ecc. 9:10). We want to give God our full measure, using to the greatest possible potential the talents He has given us. What will help us please him in this way?

One, the Christian must have “God within.” Enthusiasm. “What do ye more than others?” (Mat. 5:47). Do we go the extra mile (Mat. 5:39-44)? Let Christ be seen in you (John 3:1-2; Mat. 5:13-16; Acts 6:10).

Two, the Christian must prepare for effective, dedicated service. If you have the ability and potential to preach, develop those talents (2 Tim. 2:2). If you have the ability to teach Bible classes, prepare yourself (Heb. 5:12-14; 2 Tim. 2:15). If you can carry a tune, young men, develop as good song leaders. And, what a need we have to develop as great elders and deacons (1 Tim. 3:1-15)! Use your talents, brethren.

Three, the child of God must be confident in the Lord. “And who is sufficient for these things?” (2 Cor. 2:16). Paul knew that in the Lord and with His help (Phi. 4:13), he was sufficient. The Spirit strengthens us through His Word, through faith (Eph. 3:16-17; Rom. 10:17; Eph. 6:17). Realize, dear reader, that you (as Esther) may be raised up “for such a time as this” (Est. 4:14). Stand in the gap, dear friend!

Four, Christians must have the courage of their convictions. The Christian soldier is not afraid of criticism. In fact, the Lord tells us the faithful will undergo persecution (Mat. 5:10-12;
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE
Our congratulations are extended to Mary Carroll who will be graduating from Pine Forest High School on May 25, 2000.

MICHAEL HATCHER INVITED TO TEACH IN MURMANSK, RUSSIA
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VISITATION IS THE KEY!
Visitation is the key that opens many doors. It opens the door to new friendships as we visit newcomers and visitors. It opens the door to Bible studies with those who have not obeyed the gospel. It opens the door to cheerfulness when we visit with those who are sick or shut-in.

It opens the door of communication with those who visit who have become discouraged or wayward. It opens the door of heaven for those who visit, for our Lord said that those who visited the sick, the hungry, the naked, would enter into that wonderful place.

Visiting is more than entering a physical door. It means going into another’s heart and life when the proper doors are opened. Those who visit others are going to them with a heart of love, care and helpfulness.

This week, why not make several visits, and experience the benefits and beauty of visitation?

Author Unknown

(Editors Note: Make plans now to attend the Visitation Group Get-together on May 29 at 6:00 P.M., in the general purpose building. A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting.)
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Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Martha Wilcoxson, Elaine Maxey, Lou Gafford, Diana Brazell, Harold Staples, Cory Crowe (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s grandson), Jacklynn Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s mother), Willodean Gann and Connie Koise (Ray Dodd’s sisters), Maria Bonaparte (the Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gercan (Ray Foshee’s friend), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law). Ray Foshee is in Sacred Heart Hospital.

RESTORED
Harold Maxey and Dale Cunningham were restored on May 22, 2000. Please keep them in your prayers and offer encouragement.

READING/INVITATION
May 31, 2000
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

June 7, 2000
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Ray Dodd

MARK THESE DATES
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May 29, 2000–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 PM in the general purpose building. A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting.
May 31, 2000–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 P.M.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Peanut Butter and Jelly
THE DIGNITY
OF PREACHING
Leon Cole

Unless I have misread and misunderstood the Bible, it places great emphasis on the work of preaching. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18). “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2). “But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching” (Tit. 1:3). “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

There are great examples of preaching in both the Old and the New Testament. John the Baptist preached so powerfully that people went out to hear him from Jerusalem, Judea and the entire region round about Jordan. Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount contains more quoted phrases than any discourse. Think of Peter’s proclamation of the gospel recorded in Acts 2. We have Stephen’s sermon, which cut men to the heart in Acts 7. Several sermons preached by Paul are recorded. He reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgement to come. He proclaimed how that God has appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness.

Preaching then, is serious business. If God chose and ordained it as the means of proclaiming salvation to the world it ought to be approached with dignity and decorum. Verily, it should not be reduced to sideshow carnival antics.

It has been my unfortunate lot, in recent years; to witness in the church what has been called preaching. I know that preaching is unique in that a degree of the personality is seen in the delivery. But when speakers prance, preen, and cavort and act like they have St. Vitus Dance it detracts from
NEW BIBLE CLASSES BEGINNING

Bible classes for the summer quarter will begin Sunday, June 4. Make plans now to attend these classes.

Sunday Schedule

| Adults I       | Romans II | Jim Loy  |
| Adults II     | Romans I  | Paul Brantley  |
| Adults III    | Acts II   | Michael Hatcher  |
| New Converts  | Studies In Christian Doctrine And Practical Christian Living | Bill Gallaher  |

Wednesday Schedule

| Adults I       | I Samuel  | Bill Crowe  |
| Adults II     | II Samuel | Ray Foshee  |
| Adults III    | I Kings   | Michael Hatcher  |
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“*If you find yourself loving any pleasure better than your prayers, any book better than the Bible, and any house better than the house of God...any persons better than Christ, or any indulgence better than the hope of heaven...take alarm.*”

Thomas Guthrie

any truth that might be presented. The emphasis is to be on the message not the messenger. Of course, there is something to be emotional and excited about in the gospel. But when Jesus preached on the mountainside, He sat and quietly taught. When men resort to cheap theatrics and conduct a service more like a political rally than one of religious instruction, something is wrong. Paul said that his preaching “was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom...That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (1 Cor. 2:4-5).

We are not crying out against eloquence (Apollos had it). We are not deploring pathos and emotion (Paul had it—Acts 20:32). Certainly we do not mean preachers should not be touched with compassion for the lost (Jesus was). We are simply saying, keep preaching on the lofty plain where it belongs and leave the antics and the shenanigans to politicians and talk-show hosts and hostesses.

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10:00 AM “Ichabod”; 1 Sam. 4:21-22  Harold Bigham
11:00 AM “We Will Not Walk Therein”; Jer. 6:16  Eddy Craft
Lunch Break
1:30 PM “Demas Hath Forsaken Me”; 2 Tim. 4:10  Joe Galloway
2:30 PM Elders Feeding Themselves; Eze. 34:2  Carl Garner
3:30 PM Open Forum
Dinner Break
7:00 PM “Curse Ye Meroz”; Jud. 5:23  Lynn Parker
7:45 PM Dead Thinking They Were Alive; Rev. 3:1  Bobby Liddell

Tuesday, June 13
9:00 AM “Departed Without Being Desired”; 2 Chr. 21:20  Ted Clarke
10:00 AM Another Generation Which Knew Not Jehovah; Jud. 2:10  Eddie Whitten
11:00 AM “Only Evil Continually”; Gen. 6:5  Terry Hightower
Lunch Break
1:30 PM “Jerusalem, Jerusalem”; Mat. 23:37  Tom Wacaster
2:30 PM “They Will Not Endure Sound Doctrine”; 2 Tim. 4:2-3  Paul Vaughn
3:30 PM Open Forum
Dinner Break
7:00 PM When Fellowship Is Broken; Gen. 3  Harrell Davidson
7:45 PM “Is It Nothing?”; Lam. 1:12  Gary Grizzell

Wednesday, June 14
9:00 AM Unconcerned With Sin; 1 Cor. 5:2  Michael Light
10:00 AM “So Soon Removed”; Gal. 1:6-9  Noah Hackworth
11:00 AM “Who Made Israel To Sin”; 1 Kin. 14:16  Howell Bigham
Lunch Break
1:30 PM “No King In Israel”; Jud. 17:6  Guss Eoff
2:30 PM “My God My God Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me”; Mat. 27:46  Joseph Meador
3:30 PM Open Forum
Dinner Break
7:00 PM “Weighed In The Balances, And Found Wanting”; Dan. 5:25-27  Curtis Cates
7:45 PM “Absalom, My Son, My Son Absalom! Would God I Had Died For Thee”; 2 Sam. 18:33  Ronnie Hayes
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Martha Wilcoxson, Elaine Maxey, Lou Gafford, Harold Staples, Ray Foshee, Willodean Gann and Connie Koise (Ray Dodd’s sisters), Jacklynn Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s mother), Cory Crowe (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s grandson), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Madeline Quinn (Diana Brazell’s mother), and Gina Cates (Allen and Diana Brazell’s daughter).

READING/INVITATION
June 7, 2000
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Ray Dodd
June 14, 2000
Bellview Lectures

MARK THESE DATES
Jun 4, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
Jun 4, 2000–Men’s Class meets at 5:00 P.M., in room 1.
Jun 18, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
Jun 18, 2000–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
Jun 25, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
June 25, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Peanut Butter and Jelly
CONSEQUENCES OF WORLDLINESS
Mark K. Lewis

A culture obsessed with technology will come to value personal convenience above almost all else, and ours does...Among [the] consequences...is impatience with anything that interferes with personal convenience. Religion, morality, and law do that, which accounts for the tendency of modern religion to eschew proscriptions and commandments and turn to counseling the therapeutic sermons; of morality to be relativized; and of law, particularly criminal law, to become soft and uncertain. Religion tends to be strongest when life is hard, and the same may be said of morality and law. A person whose main difficulty is not crop failure but video breakdown has less need of the consolations and promises of religion (Robert Bork, Slouching Towards Gomorrah, p. 9).

Robert Bork is not a New Testament Christian, of course, but the above quote has provided some insightful thought regarding modern American culture and the effect of worldliness of religion. American society, including the church of the Lord, has become, in the past generation, increasingly obsessed with creature comforts; such a statement is self-evident and needs no proof. The results in the church are quite apparent: declining church attendance, less emphasis on law and commandment keeping, and more emphasis on love and grace counseling as a vital part of the church’s ministry watered down preaching and increased fellowship activities—all of these are designed to accommodate the convenience and pleasure of man, rather than seeking to please God. But, very few are interested in pleasing God anymore, and thus, many leaders in the church today think that, in order for us to survive, we must meet worldly
Man half-way: give him what he wants in exchange for his paying for our high-priced preachers and exorbitant buildings. As Bork says, most Americans’ greatest problem today is not where is their next meal coming from (thus creating dependence upon God), but what happens if my television breaks down before the Super Bowl. Such a mind-set means there will be very little interest in religion.

People who live for personal convenience do not want religion interfering. In modern hedonistic America, religion and morality are the biggest enemies; in the church, this translates into rebellion against “hard preaching,” commandment keeping, law, and the strait and narrow. Now fellowship denominations because lines are either not to be drawn or are to be blurred into indistinction—line drawing is “inconvenient,” may offend someone, may hurt someone’s feelings— in other words, cause some worldly human to not be happy with their present condition. And above all else, American democracy means the “pursuit of personal happiness without restraint or guidelines.” Self-esteem, feeling good about one’s self, positive spiritual attitudes are in; anything, that means, anything at all which inconveniences man or his inner being, are out.

The Bible, of course, has not changed, and those who value personal comfort more than serving God are in serious spiritual condition. The admonition to “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world” (1 John 2:15) is still the doctrine of Christ. “Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more” (1 Th. 4:1). American democracy and cultural norms are not the standard by which God’s people are to judge things or live; we must learn to look past the fleeting norms and passing fancies of men and never forget the timeless truths of the word of the Lord. But unfortunately, many are saturating themselves with the values of this age rather than drinking deeply and letting their minds be influenced by the teachings of Christ. When we spend one hour a week in church, and 167 in the world, there is not much chance that we are going to be able to resist the devil’s lies.

“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). Not a popular doctrine in the world today, and increasingly unpopular among God’s people. But still the truth by which we shall be judged on the final day!

Michael Hatcher has been invited to go to Murmansk, Russia, this year and teach in the Bible College there. To do this, he will have to raise a travel fund. If you would be willing to help, please send your checks to Bellview Church of Christ marked for the Hatcher Travel Fund. Thank you in advance for your help.
Saturday, June 10
7:00 PM What Makes A Sad Verse? Keith Mosher
7:45 PM “What Is Truth?”; John 18:38 David Brown

Sunday, June 11
9:00 AM “Rivers Of Waters Run Down Mine Eyes”; Psa. 119:136 Ira Y. Rice, Jr.
10:00 AM Cannot Enter The Land; Deu. 24:4 John Priola
Lunch Break
2:00 PM Improper Leaders; Jer. 5:31 Clifford Newell
3:00 PM “God Heareth Not Sinners”; John 9:31 Michael Hatcher
Dinner Break
7:00 PM “Neither Could They Blush”; Jer. 6:15 David Jones
7:45 PM “Depart From Me”; Mat. 25:41 Tim Nichols

Monday, June 12
9:00 AM “Mine Own Familiar Friend”; Psa. 41:9 Joel Wheeler
10:00 AM “Ichabod”; 1 Sam. 4:21-22 Harold Bigham
11:00 AM “We Will Not Walk Therein”; Jer. 6:16 Eddy Craft
Lunch Break
1:30 PM “Demas Hath Forsaken Me”; 2 Tim. 4:10 Joe Galloway
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Wednesday, June 14
9:00 AM Unconcerned With Sin; 1 Cor. 5:2 Michael Light
10:00 AM “So Soon Removed”; Gal. 1:6-9 Noah Hackworth
11:00 AM “Who Made Israel To Sin”; 1 Kin. 14:16 Howell Bigham
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SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Martha Wilcoxson, Elaine Maxey, Lou Gafford, Harold Staples, Ray Foshee, Wilodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Jacklynn Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s mother), Cory Crowe (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s grandson), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Madeline Quinn (Diana Brazell’s mother), and Gina Cates (Allen and Diana Brazell’s daughter).

READING/INVITATION
June 14, 2000
Bellview Lectures
June 21, 2000
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Ray Foshee

MARK THESE DATES
Jun 18, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
Jun 18, 2000–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
Jun 25, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
June 25, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Fruit

ADDRESS CHANGE
Jay and Carmen Worley’s new address is: 8990 North Davis Highway Apt. 73; Pensacola, FL 32514. Please update your directory.
WHEN GOD IS LEFT OUT

Bill Brandstatter

Another horrible shooting in a school has shocked this nation. The events in Denver are almost beyond belief. Many are asking, why? I asked myself the same question. Then I asked another question: “Why didn’t this kind of thing happen when I was in high school?” We had children with problems. We had kids who were outcasts and ridiculed. We had classmates who were considered “freaks.” But no one shot anybody. We had fellow students who were from broken homes and abusive parents. We knew of kids in school who had alcoholic parents. I was raised in the wild 1960s. But no one brought a gun to school. So why the problem today? After doing some thinking and praying I have arrived at what I think are three rather valid reasons why this sort of insanity is going on today.

First, when God is left out, problems and Satan will come in. This is true throughout the history of the world. Bibles cannot be handed out in our schools today. Prayer cannot be made openly in a classroom. The Ten Commandments once posted, have been banned from schools. Yet, it is alright to hand out birth control information to 13-year-olds. It is okay to graphically instruct junior high kids on how to have safe sex. It is permissible to give out free abortion information counseling to children as young as 14 without parental consent, but it is wrong to give the child a Bible. God has been taken out of the school and problems and Satan have come in.

Second, when discipline disappears so does control. When I was a boy if I disobeyed my teacher I went to the principal’s office. If he spanked me, dad did also when I got home. Now, there is no corporal punishment. Spanking is banned in many schools. Now “positive and
MICHAEL HATCHER
INVITED TO TEACH IN
MURMANSK, RUSSIA

Michael Hatcher has been invited to go to Murmansk, Russia, this year and teach in the Bible College there. To do this, he will have to raise a travel fund. If you would be willing to help, please send your checks to Bellview Church of Christ marked for the Hatcher Travel Fund. Thank you in advance for your help.

313 Circle Drive; Vienna, IL 62995

A PARABLE

There once was a godly woman, who was a good cook. Each day she took well-prepared dishes to some of her neighbors. Although her neighbors could tell the food was good to eat, they refused to touch the food she prepared. Naturally, this woman asked why her meals were not being eaten. She received this reply, “You are such a good cook and seem to enjoy cooking so much, we just did not think it important or necessary to eat what you had prepared.”

There once was a congregation that possessed many dedicated, hardworking teachers. Each week these teachers would study hard to bring well-prepared lessons and minds to Bible school to share with their classes. Although the Word of God was being taught, many members of the congregation did not attend the Bible classes. When asked why, they replied: “The teachers just seem to enjoy teaching so much and since our time is so valuable, we just did not think it important or necessary to become involved in a class.”

Which story is the most absurd?

Author Unknown

“HI, REMEMBER ME?”

Glenn Colley

Be careful what you say and do. You never know who might be watching.

Last Wednesday morning I spoke for the chapel at the Memphis School of Preaching, and a preaching student approached me to introduce himself. He said he had seen me recently with Caleb, my son, at the Tennessee Department of
Safety, where we were getting Caleb’s driver’s license. Now that had been a frustrating experience. People were packed in that little building waiting while patience wore thin, and the crowd was swelling. The machines which printed licenses were not working right, the lines had dissolved into just large groups of people with their arms folded over their chests. To make it worse, the staff became confused and began servicing people who had waited ten minutes while those who had waited an hour and a half continued to stand.

And this young preaching student was there. I did not know him, but he knew me, and now, two weeks later, I was at his school talking about preaching. I cannot tell you how glad I was that I did not lose my cool when waiting for that driver’s license! Imagine the impression I would have left if I had given in to the frustration and shown my anger to those people.

My point is simple: Remember who you are everywhere you go. Do not just talk about being a Christian, act like a Christian. You never know which stranger will turn out to be someone you will need to later teach or encourage.

And one more thing—the Lord is always watching.

THE SECRET OF THEIR SUCCESS

In an assembly of preachers, a man who preaches for a large congregation was asked to share what the large church was doing to promote such growth. Each preacher got his pen ready to take notes of each fantastic program and idea that made the large congregation tick.

However, a very unexpected answer was to be given. The speaker said, “We have no organized programs, no promotions, no drives, no advertising, and no buses.”

In stunned amazement someone suggested that the preacher must surely do a lot of personal evangelism. Again they were surprised when the preacher said that he did not do an excessive amount of visiting. He indicated that most of his time was spent in studying for his classes and sermons. Of the last 50 people who had been baptized, the preacher had only worked personally with two of them.

The secret of their success was very simple and in keeping with biblical examples. They believed in the priesthood of all believers and this leaves them free to develop their own work and ministry. They work on the principle that each one has a gift from God and that he ought to develop a work around that gift involving those of like interest. Of course, considerable encouragement is given for each member to develop his talents and use them in the work of the Lord.

Indeed, this large congregation did have a lot of work going on, but it was developed in a spontaneous way by the members themselves. Most of the growth has come through Bible studies when the church members invite a few members and several non-members into their home to study the Word of God. They selected a book of the Bible or a topic and then studied through it. Many such groups are in progress.

This concept gets back behind a strong tradition of how “church work” is to be done. It gets back to biblical model and, most important, it works practically.

No one has to wait around for someone to start a project and put a deacon, or elder, or preacher in charge. Each member allows the Lord to use his/her talent and the congregation grows for God gives the increase. I believe this system has great merit and should demand our immediate attention. If not, why not?

Author Unknown
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Martha Wilcoxson, Elaine Maxey, Lou Gafford, Harold Staples, Ray Foshee, Willo Dean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Jacklynn Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s mother), Cory Crowe (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s grandson), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Madeline Quinn (Diana Brazell’s mother), and Gina Cates (Allen and Diana Brazell’s daughter).

READING/INVITATION
June 21, 2000
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Ray Foshee
June 28, 2000
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Louis Herrington

MARK THESE DATES
Jun 25, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
June 25, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Fruit

ADDRESS CHANGE
Scot Brazell’s new address is: 3007 East Gadsden Street; Pensacola, FL 32503. Please update your directory.
VISION FOR THE HOME

John Moore

The home is the foundation of human civilization. If a country possesses homes that are pure and stable, then that country will be stronger and greater. When homes are weak and dysfunctional, the nation will experience greater difficulties of crime, rape, divorce, murder, molestation, drugs, and corruption. Individual citizens are component parts of any country or national entity, and those individuals become who and what they are as a result of their familial influence and nurturing. If the principles and values of truth, integrity, honesty, love, and purity are absent in one’s formative and adolescent years, then little hope can be maintained for that individual to become a productive and contributing member of society. The home is the molding mechanism for character and self-esteem. It is the place where one should learn about fairness and mutual respect for his/her fellow man. When these values are neglected or abandoned, there will be devastation in the form of moral decay, a weakened government and a dejected and demoralized people.

Valueless homes produce a valueless society where fear and corruption are pervasive and where evil is triumphant. Bankers, lawyers, merchants, carpenters, doctors, plumbers, educators, preachers, and even presidents were once pure and wholesome little infants and children. Their beliefs about the world and their outlook on life are the result of their nurturing. Their views about right and wrong and good and evil are formed from what they have seen, read, or been taught. While man is not destined or bound by the past; and while we do have the power to change, we must recognize the powerfully significant impact of the forces within the family unit.
that penetrate our hearts and minds to mold our thinking and influence our behavior, and thus influence our society.

For nations to be strong, for churches to be true, for communities to be civilized, they must all recognize the significance of the home. The future status of these institutions will be dependent upon what is believed and practiced in the home. Consequently, our homes must see their importance and essential role and plan for the future. Families must have a vision for the future, for “where there is no vision, the people perish” (Pro. 29:18). Indeed, the values of peace, prosperity, and well being before God will vanish if families, as well as leaders, educators, etc., do not consider and make provision for the future.

Do we as parents, as a church, as a community, as a nation want peace? harmony? love? goodwill? safety? Do we want our children to go to heaven and to experience a life full of purpose and meaning? Do we want our sons and daughters to be happy and optimistic about the future while possessing a confident assurance about whom they are what they are doing here and where they are going? If so, then we must have a vision for the future. A vision that first and foremost begins with God. In Proverbs 29:18, vision has reference to revelation; and so if God’s Word does not take priority in our current activities and plans for the future, then we will perish as a nation, home, or church. However, if we keep the law, there will be happiness (Pro. 29:18b).

FROM SAN QUENTIN
Advice To Young People
On Temptation

Perhaps you may say that I am a poor man to be giving advice, for now at the age of twenty-four, I am an inmate of San Quentin Prison. However, I feel that I have learned something that may be of aid to young people in keeping them from making the mistakes that I have made and preventing much suffering on their part and their loved ones.

1. When you are tempted to disregard the advice of your elders, remember that they have your interest at heart. Their many years of experience has given them wisdom. Do not keep your problems to yourself, but, take them to your elders, they are willing to help you.

2. Establish a program of church work in which you will take an active part. It is necessary that your greatest interest be in the church lest the attractions of the world lead you astray. This interest in the church and its work will keep your mind on the things that are really worthwhile in life.

3. Find your recreational activities with Christians. In every young person there is a desire for recreation and entertainment. This should be encouraged within the church rather than with young people of worldly desires.

All are inclined to take the path of least resistance, but, I wish to assure you that this path can lead to nothing but unhappiness and sorrow. It must be remembered that anything worth having is worth working for and, upon reaching your
goal, great is the pleasure of being able to say, “There is a job well done of which I need not to be ashamed.”

May I encourage Christians to work among the many prisons. It is a great opportunity to help the cause of our Lord.

Author Unknown

A LOOK BEHIND THE FIG LEAVES

Sam Dilbeck

In recent years, many have claimed that society dictates what is modest. Their arguments go something like this: “During the Victorian Age, it was considered immodest for a woman to reveal her ankle or wrists in the presence of a man. Moreover, in many middle eastern countries the women are required to wear full length dresses, veils and shawls that only reveals their eyes. In such countries and times it would be wrong for Christians to not wear veils or to show their ankles.” Thus, “society dictates modesty.” The folly of this argument can be shown by its conclusion. For example, if an African tribal custom dictated that women be unclothed, then the Christian woman living and working with that tribe would be compelled to be modestly naked as well. Americans rarely dress like other cultures.

Aside from this, the lesson that God sends from the fig leaves is that society does not dictate what is modest. God, since the foundation of the world, has declared what is right, not man (Isa. 45:19; Jer. 10:23; Pro. 14:12). This includes the way mankind is to dress. In the Garden, after the sin was committed, Adam and Eve constituted the whole of society on every scale, local, area, continental, and even world-wide. Thus, if society dictates what is modest, God should have allowed Adam and Eve to keep their aprons. However, God saw a need to change their clothes; He replaced their foliage vesture with “coats of skin” (Gen. 3:21).

Many Christians have succumbed to the notion that if the clothes cover just the right area, then everything else can be uncovered. For men, it is considered enough to have only his lower body covered. He can remove his shirt in public with little or no repercussion from society and even from many Christians. The woman is expected to cover the same area and is also expected to cover part, or all, of her upper body.

What has not helped the matter is how artists of the ages past have placed the fig leaves on their images of Adam and Eve. According to most conceptions, Adam only needed one strategically placed leaf and Eve only needed three. Contrary to these artistic impressions, Adam and Eve both covered only the area below their waists (apron means clothes that hang from the waist). What is more, the text said they “sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons” (Gen. 3:7). This means a collection of leaves were sewn together as a bunch. However, many modern people only consider the artists’ renditions and conclude that since Adam and Eve only needed to cover a few small sections, then that is all they have to do as well.

The leaves leave us a lesson—a few properly placed scraps of material are not enough to escape immodesty. Adam’s and Eve’s clothes, though modest by today’s societal standards, did not cover enough to please God. After He rebuked them for their transgression, God made them both coats of skin (Gen. 3:21). This shows that they simply did not have enough covered. After God was finished, Adam had more than shorts and bare chest, and Eve had more than a bikini. God had them wearing full coats. Placement is not the end-all of modesty, it also includes quantity—a rule God instituted and taught when He replaced the fig leaves.

P.O. Box 219; Leonard, TX 75452
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Martha Wilcoxson, Elaine Maxey, Lou and Buster Gafford, Harold Staples, Ray Foshee, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Jacklynn Ayliffe (Carl Ayliffe’s mother), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Madeline Quinn (Diana Brazell’s mother), and Gina Cates (Allen and Diana Brazell’s daughter).

RESTORED
Tony Liddell was restored on June 18. Please keep Tony in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

READING/INVITATION
June 28, 2000
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Louis Herrington
July 5, 2000
Reading: Bill Gallaher
Invitation: Tim Lamb

MARK THESE DATES
July 2, 2000–Men’s Class at 5:00 P.M., in room 1.
July 2, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
July 9, 2000–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
July 9, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Fruit
PRAYERS AT THE LORD’S TABLE
William S. Cline

Men who lead public prayer have a special responsibility to think what they are going to say so the congregation can follow them and say “Amen” to what is said. Not only should the prayer be thought out, it should also be spoken out. Too many times this writer has had trouble hearing the public prayer from the front pew.

At this writing I am concerned about the prayers that are offered at the Lord’s table. It is my conviction that too often our prayers are stereotyped. They come forth as mere words that have been memorized through the years and instead of being the thoughts of the person they are the sweet soundings and words that have been handed down through the generations. We have all noticed this. When brother “A” was called upon to pray, we knew, word for word, what he would say. When brother “B” was called upon to lead the prayer the same was true of him. I have seen children that had memorized the prayers of certain brethren and made a game of quoting them! Brethren, this ought not to be.

The prayers at the Lord’s table are blaring examples of lack of thought and memorized words and phrases. How many times does the second prayer begin, “In like manner, Father.” And nine times out of ten there has been no manner expressed in the first prayer or in a short talk at the table. Admit it brethren, practically all of us are guilty of this.

In our prayer at the Lord’s table we usually take time to tell Christians what the bread and the fruit of the vine represent, as if they did not already know. If we are not doing it for the sake of Christians then who are we doing it for? Must
we tell God what the items represent? Must we preach to the non-Christian in the prayer? How often do we address our prayer to God and then talk of Him shedding His blood on the cross? How often do we ask God to bless the bread and the fruit of the vine? This was done nearly 2,000 years ago. Why not follow the Lord’s example? When He took bread, He gave thanks. We should do the same: Give thanks for the bread and the fruit of the vine.

The prayer at the Lord’s table is not the time or place to pray for “all the sick and afflicted the world over.” It is not the time to pray for “all the missionaries on foreign soil or in difficult fields.” This is not the time for a general prayer. It should be a specific prayer for a specific purpose.

Brethren, please do not misunderstand me. My writing here is not to rebuke. My purpose is not to make fun. God forbid that I should ever do such a thing! I am concerned about our worship. Men only improve when they are taught to do so. Do not let what has been said cause you to become so self-conscience that you cannot lead a prayer. On the other hand do try to improve in your leading prayer. All of us have room for improvement.

Deceased

IT IS TIME TO CONTEND

Eddie Whitten

Do you remember 1906? For those who have been in the church long enough to know, 1906 was the year the First Christian Church was recognized as a separate entity from the church of Christ. Division had occurred over the use of the instrument of music in worship to God. This is just a symptom of a greater peril—the authority of the Bible in what we do in worship.

Bible authority is being swept aside again! Many of our congregations are following a social approach to worship, sacrificing the blood of Jesus for a self-satisfying, self-gratifying lip service to God. The attitude is of “What can the church do for me?” rather than, “How can I be of service to the church?” This departure from the principles of Christianity has swept and is sweeping many away into a void of humanism where each man is his own standard. Jesus takes a back seat to every whim, and man becomes the captain of his own destiny.

Jude was aware of this kind of departure. He warns repeatedly of those who had followed the same course. He implores that the faith be contended for. He cites the terrible end of those who departed from the faith. We have no reason to believe that those who depart from the faith today will not suffer the same consequences. Let us not have another 1906! Let us contend for the faith. It is all that we have!

3616 Brown Trail; Bedford, TX 76021

THREE TIMELESS QUESTIONS

David South

During one of his lectures at the Freed-Hardeman University Lectureship in 1998, George Bailey made reference to that famous preacher of yesteryear, Gus Nichols. Whenever brother Nichols was asked to do counseling of any sort (biblical, marital, financial, etc.) he always began by asking three questions. He insisted that if the answer to any one of the three questions was “No” then there would be no reason to continue with the counseling session. As I considered these three questions, I realized that they are good questions for all of us to answer every day of our lives.
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Tina Foshee in the death of her sister, Agnes Denney, on June 20, 2000. Please keep Tina and her family in your prayers.

We rejoice with Kristin Caine in her decision to put on Christ in baptism on June 25, 2000. Please keep Kristin in your prayers and offer her encouragement.

Carl Ayliffe was restored on June 21, 2000. Please keep Carl in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

Allen and Diana Brazell’s new address is: 4625 Dean Drive; Pace, FL 32571. Their telephone number is 994-1028. Nancy Travis’ new address is: 4245 Beau Terra Lane; Pensacola, FL 32514. Her telephone number is 471-0920. Martha Wilcoxson’s new address is: Galleria Oaks Guest Home; 570 Southland Drive; Birmingham, AL 35226. Please update your directory.

1. Do you really want to do what is right? In every aspect of your life, do you really want to do what is right? What is your standard and goal as a spouse? As a parent? As a child? As a boss? As an employee? As a neighbor? As a citizen? “Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates” (2 Cor. 13:7).

2. Are you ready for the Bible to tell you what is right? Of course we recognize that the Bible is the standard for what is right. It is imperative that we turn to the Holy Scripture for the proper instructions. Our behavior in every part of our lives must be based on biblical guidance. One is reminded of David’s attitude reflected in Psalm 119:128: “Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.”

3. Are you willing to do what the Bible says right now? Good counsel does no good if it is not heeded. Procrastination will damage any worthwhile endeavor. For example, marriages grow weaker by the minute if good principles of strength are ignored or delayed. The Bible plainly states that it is a sin to know to do good and not do it (Jam. 4:17). Procrastination is especially deadly when it comes to spiritual matters. “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2).

Paul Stewart knew the law. He taught criminal justice at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. He held a bachelor’s degree, a law degree, and a master’s degree. Authorities arrested Stewart at his home the other day. It seems that when he left New York about 11 years ago, he also left eight felony convictions. The charges included burglary, larceny, and desertion from the Army.

Interesting situation: Stewart knew the law, he taught the law, the problem was, he did not keep the law. This story often applies to religion. I may be a member of the church, professing to be a Christian. But, until I apply His truths to my life, I am not His disciple. Jesus said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 7:21).
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Martha Wilcoxson, Elaine Maxey, Lou and Buster Gafford, Harold and Lucille Staples, Ray Foshee, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), and Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law).

READING/INVITATION
July 5, 2000
Reading: Bill Gallaher
Invitation: Tim Lamb
July 12, 2000
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Tony Liddell

MARK THESE DATES
July 9, 2000–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
July 9, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
July 16, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
July 16, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
July 23, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
July 30, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
July 31, 2000–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 P.M., in the general purpose building. A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Fruit
WHY PEOPLE LEAVE CONGREGATIONS

Darrell Conley

Although I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, and have been wrong about many things, the perspective and experience of forty-four years of preaching and before that of growing up in a preacher’s home give me a viewpoint not everyone has. I have preached full-time for nine churches and, while I was at home, my father preached for twelve more. I have also had the advantage of a number of talks with my brother and son who are both full-time preachers, and with a number of friends who have been preachers and elders for a number of years. The consensus of their views and mine is to be found in this article.

The majority of people leave a congregation because they move out of the area. They have no choice. A number of years ago, people as a rule would spend their entire lives in one congregation or two. I will never forget Raymond Hamby, who was in his forties at the time and an elder of the Chestnut Drive congregation in Atlanta, Georgia, telling me that my going there was the first time he had ever been involved in hiring a preacher. He had grown up in the Moreland Avenue congregation where W. D. McPherson was still preaching after some thirty-five years and had finally as an adult moved to Chestnut Drive where J. C. Townsend was already the preacher and would remain so for a total of twelve years, until I went there. Hamby died at age seventy, still an elder at Chestnut Drive, having been a member of only two congregations. Now people move all over the country, often not of their own free will. Of necessity, they must change congregations. May the Lord
BOOK CORNER

The library has recently added several new books for members of the congregation to check out. Those books are: *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* by Norman Geisler; *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations* by Paul Lee Tan; *Church Growth: Man’s Ways or God’s Way?* by Curtis A. Cates (editor); *Return To The Old Paths* by V. Glenn McCoy; *The New Foxe’s Book of Martyrs* by John Foxe; *Dispelling The Darkness, Misconceptions Concerning: Satan, the Occult and the Dead* by Greg W. Harmon (editor); *The Hub Of The Bible: Remaining True To Acts 2* by Barry Gridler (editor); *Holy Spirit on Christian’s spirit* by Gary Grizzell; *The Christ Of The Bible—The Gospel Of Christ And Let Us Refuse The Evil And Choose The God* by Cliff Lyons (editor); “For God So Loved The World,” “The Unchanging Kingdom Of God In A Changing Age,” “Building The Christian Arsenal,” and “Building The Christian Arsenal II” by Monte Evans (editor); *Seeing The Invisible* by William S. Cline; *The Biblical Prophets Including Revelation, He Leadeth Me, and Victory In Jesus* by Leon Stancliff; *God’s Messages Bible Commentary—Acts* (Vol. 3), *Romans* (Vol. 4), *1 and 2 Corinthians* (Vol. 5), *Galatians-Colossians* (Vol. 6), and *1 Thessalonians-Philemon* (Vol. 7) by Leon Stancliff; and *Sad Statements Of The Bible* by Michael Hatcher (editor). Reference books can only be used in the library.

If you are interested in any of these books or any of the others in the library please see the librarian (secretary) to check them out.
God’s people. Some think that they should be made elders and when they are not, pout and leave. Others cause a division and start a new congregation, which may or may not make a go of it.

These days the church has many within it who are more liberal than the Bible is—that is, they loose where it binds. Such people are leading many into apostasy. Others (some in reaction) are antis—that is, binding where the Bible does not bind. Both extremes will cause us to lose our souls. We have no business remaining in congregations where these things are supported.

The Church Is Not Hurt

I have never known the church to be hurt or diminished by those who removed themselves because they got angry, because they got their feelings hurt, or because they taught false doctrine. On the contrary, the church was always helped and strengthened when they left. Though sometimes diminished in size, it was strengthened in spirit.

What a shame that all those in a congregation cannot remain faithful to it and mature in the Lord! As I think of some people who have left congregations where I have been, I am grieved. I wish they had stayed and behaved themselves. Some of them did many good works. Some were immature as well. We pray for their repentance, for their continued growth, and for their and our eternal salvation.

ALCOHOL

Thomas F. Eaves, Sr.

“Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Pro. 20:1). “Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine. Those who go in search of mixed wine” (Pro. 23:29-30). Alcohol inhibits one’s faculties (Pro. 23:33-34). Alcohol anesthetizes (Pro. 23:35).

Alcohol is involved in approximately: 30% of all suicides; 50% of all homicides; 68% of manslaughters; 52% of rapes and sexual assaults; 48% of robberies; 62% of assaults; 49% of all violent crime. (The Nat. Inst. On Alcohol Abuse & Alcoholism quoted by The Tennessean, Sunday, Sep. 14, 1997, p. 3F).

Alcohol is the cause of much tragedy in our society. In 1995 and 1996, highway fatalities hovered around 42,000 each year, reversing a trend earlier in the decade when fatalities dipped to fewer than 40,000 annually. Of these fatal crashes, alcohol was involved in more than 40%, or approximately 17,000 deaths each year in ’95 and ’96 (Sheriffs, Jan-Feb 1998, p. 17).

“How many alcohol-impaired driving incidents occur in the United States each year? While no one knows the accurate number, the best estimate to date is over 123 million annually, according to a study published in the Jan. 1997 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)” (Sheriffs, Jan-Feb, 1998, p. 17).

Alcohol Is a Drug! Ethyl Alcohol found in beer, wine, and whiskey is a depressant drug which dulls the inhibitions and decreases the powers of self-evaluation and self control.

What is the answer to this great problem? “Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, When it sparkleth in the cup, When it goeth down smoothly” (Pro. 23:31). Also read Habakkuk 2:15; Romans 13:13; Galatians 5:21; and Ephesians 5:18. If you never take the first drink you will never become an alcoholic or an abuser of alcohol.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Martha Wilcoxson, Elaine Maxey, Lou and Buster Gafford, Harold and Lucille Staples, Ray Foshee, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law).

RESTORED
Tim Lamb and Larry McDaniels were restored into Christ on July 2, 2000. Please keep them in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
July 12, 2000
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Tony Liddell
July 19, 2000
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

MARK THESE DATES
July 16, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
July 16, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
July 23, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
July 30, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
July 31, 2000–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 P.M., in the general purpose building. A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat
HISTORICAL EVIDENCES

Gary W. Summers

She was 21, single, poor, and pregnant. Too poor, in fact, to afford even a back-alley butcher in her home state of Texas, where abortion was then illegal. Too poor to travel to California, where the procedure was permitted. Supposedly pregnant from a gang rape, she filed a suit challenging the Texas abortion law, then went ahead and reluctantly had her child, who was put up for adoption.

This is the history of Norma McCorvey, the “Jane Roe” whose lawsuit led to the Supreme Court’s 1973 landmark Row v. Wade decision legalizing abortion on demand. Now, McCorvey, and abortion-rights activist, has admitted to columnist Carl Rowen that her gang rape story was a fabrication to bolster her legal claim. Like so many other young single women in her predicament, McCorvey says, she became pregnant “through what I thought was love.”

Jesse Whitlock wrote the above two paragraphs, citing as his source U.S. News and World Report (Sept. 21, 1987, p. 13). This information, as well as the chart across the page, appeared in the August 24, 1989, issue of The Edifier.

As most people are probably aware, Norma McCorvey has recently (1995) changed her views: she is now thoroughly pro-life. These historical notes are of great value since an entire generation has now grown up with abortion being legal.

Historically, people have seen a need to protect life before birth. Hippocrates, in the fifth century B.C., wrote the “oath” which doctors have used for a long time: “I swear by Apollo Physician, by Asclepius... I will use treatment to help the sick according to my ability and judgment, but never...
with a view to injury and wrong-doing. Neither will I administer a poison to anybody when asked to do so, nor will I suggest such a course. Similarly, I will not give a woman a pessary to cause abortion" (The Abortion Holocaust, p. 142).

Christians, by A.D. 150, mentioned specifically this sin in The Didache: "Thou shalt not murder a child by abortion nor kill them when born" (The Apostolic Fathers, pp. 123-124). Of course, the New Testament is our authority, but this quotation shows that brethren were consistent with the Bible. Doctors under the rule of the Third Reich were required to destroy life, as well as conduct grotesque experiments on the living. Perhaps this fact explains the wording of the Declaration of Geneva, which was passed in 1948: “I will not permit considerations of religion, nationality, race, party politics, or social standing to intervene between my duty and my patient; I will maintain the utmost respect for human life, from the time of conception; even under threat, I will not use my medical knowledge contrary to the laws of humanity. I make these promises solemnly, freely, and upon my honor" (Abortion: Questions and Answers, pp. 184-185).

It is time once again to restore the respect for life—from the womb—that our forefathers found necessary to protect.

312 Pearl Street; Denton, TX 76201

WE’RE ALL GOING TO THE SAME PLACE

Clint Brown

Before I became a Christian I attended the “Church of God” denomination. One evening following the services I accompanied one of the couples to a fast food establishment where we sat to eat. While we were eating, a group of people came in from a local Baptist congregation and sat down across the aisle. After exchanging smiles and pleasantries something was brought up about the differing beliefs of the two groups. When it became obvious that we disagreed on several areas of doctrine, one lady said, “Oh well, we’re all going to the same place—we’re just taking different roads to get there.”

As one who had just recently become a “religiously-minded person,” I had often wondered why there was such a great diversity of belief systems when we all claimed to follow only one authoritative document—the Bible. It was obvious to me that you did not have to be a master of Aristotelian logic to figure out that something was not right. If everyone was following only what they claimed to follow, they would not teach two diametrically opposed things in regard to how a person is saved. They would not teach opposing doctrines concerning how to approach God in worship, or a hundred other doctrinal essentials. God is the Author of the Bible, not of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33).

So you can imagine my reaction to the lady’s statement in the restaurant. It was time to get to the bottom of this mess and iron out the contradiction. Upon looking into the various religious organizations, I came across a gospel preacher who lovingly, but very plainly showed me what the Bible said about certain false doctrines that characterized the “Church of God” denomination. Foremost among them was the use of female leadership in the mixed assembly (there was a woman preacher at the “Church of God” at the time). Having read and studied these passages, it was obvious to me that a person does not have to be a genius to understand them.

I presented this material to the woman preacher, as well as to a respected gentleman of the “Church of God,” but got this statement: “Besides this, our doctrine is not very different from ‘church of Christ doctrine.’” Instead of directly dealing with the passages at hand, they chose rather to hold up the banner of denomi-
NEW ARRIVAL

Horace and Sheila Myrick and Neva Bryant are proud to announce the birth of their great-granddaughter and great-great-granddaughter (respectively). Alia Paige Janes was born on July 7, 2000, to Jessie and Tiffany Janes of Pensacola, FL. Alia weighed 8 pounds 5 ounces. Our congratulations is extended to all.

nationalism.

So what is the truth about the assertion that we are all going to the same place, but on different roads? Is it true that the various sects are all following only the Bible when it comes to the essential of Christianity? Is it safe to be “not very different” from Bible doctrine? I want to discuss each of these points in reverse order.

First, to say that “Church of God” doctrine is not very different from “church of Christ doctrine” (their way of saying “Bible doctrine”) is laughable. They are about as similar as night is to day. However, is it safe to be merely “close” to Bible doctrine? When Agrippa told Paul “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (Acts 26:27)? When Jesus informed the scribe that he was “not far” from the kingdom was He implying that the man was in a saved condition (Mark 12:34)? The truth is that “close” does not count when it comes to spiritual essentials. The essentials must be in place for our lives to be right with God. “Close” will not cut it.

Next, is everyone who claims to follow only the Bible for their faith and practice actually doing so? Hardly! When I showed these friends that the denominations are not following the Bible only, I heard the popular comeback that “the churches of Christ are not all identical either.” They say, “Some meet at 9:00 and some meet at 10:00 am. Some have preaching before the Lord’s supper, some afterward.” However, we are dealing with the essentials of the faith. Matters of obligation, not matters of option. We may differ on whether to stand or sit when taking the Lord’s supper, but we cannot differ on the essentiality of its “first day of the week” observance (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). We may differ on using blue hymn books or red hymn books, but we cannot alter or modify the Lord’s command to sing (Eph. 5:19). Realizing that there are areas of Christianity that are essential in pleasing God, we can readily see that the denominational world is not following the Bible only in these matters. The Bible and their feelings—yes. But the Bible only—no.

Finally, what of the statement “We’re all going to the same place, we’re just taking different roads to get there”? Jesus said, “I am the way...no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). If Jesus is the only way, and the Bible is the only way of knowing His will, then it is ridiculous to talk about taking “different roads” to arrive at the same spiritual destination.

Having said all of that, there is a sense in which we are all going to the same place. We are all going to the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10), and Jesus said there are only two roads that lead there, the broad and the narrow (Mat. 7:13-14).

Which road will you take to the Judgment? The way of the cross, or the way of the world? He has reconciled us “in one body by the cross” (Eph. 2:16). Anyone not found in that “one body” is taking the way of the world. Denominationalism does not represent the “one body” of Christ—it represents contradiction and confusion. I will choose to take the narrow way of the cross and be a part of that one body who follows the Bible alone. That is my desire for all the sincere souls of this world.
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Martha Wilcoxson, Elaine Maxey, Lou and Buster Gafford, Harold and Lucille Staples, Fred Stancliff, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), and Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law).

READING/INVITATION
July 19, 2000
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
July 26, 2000
Reading: Brantley Johnson
Invitation: Dusty Wilkes

MARK THESE DATES
July 23, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
July 30, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
July 31, 2000–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 P.M., in the general purpose building. A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat

I would rather fail in the Cause that someday will triumph, than triumph in a cause that someday will fail.
“Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ” (2 Cor. 2:14).
FORSAKING ALL

Danny Box

“So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33).

When we look up the word forsake we note that it means to “give up something formerly held dear; to renounce; to leave altogether; to abandon.” In the context of this verse we hear our Lord saying that unless we give up all that we have formerly held dear, and leave it altogether we cannot be counted as one of His followers. Let us look together at what we must forsake if we hope to please the Lord.

I must Forsake “My Church.”

Matthew 15:13 tells us that every plant which God has not planted shall be rooted up. The Lord promised to build one church (Mat. 16:18) and that is exactly what He did, and if we want to be saved we must be a part of His church and not “My Church.”

I must Forsake “My Parents.” The Lord, in Matthew 10:37, tells us that if we love mother or father more that Him we are not worthy of Him. We cannot put anyone or anything before our love and service to the Lord. We must “seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness” (Mat. 6:33), and give Him our first-fruits, and not let anyone stand in our way of doing right.

I must Forsake “The Doctrines of Men.” If we teach for doctrine the commands of men, then we are worshiping the Lord in vain (Mat. 15:9). The Word of the Lord was given to us “for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” so we might be “complete” furnished with all that we need to do right (2 Tim. 3:16-17). If we teach and preach anything else we will stand condemned.

I must Forsake “All Worldliness.” John said, “Love not the world, neither the things that
are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15).

James said that if we are friends of the world we are the enemy of God (Jam. 4:4). No man can serve two masters. No man can serve God and the world, so we must forsake this world and keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

I must Forsake “My Way.” Jeremiah said that the way of man is not in himself and that man could not direct his own steps (Jer. 10:23). There is only one way that leads to eternal life and that Way is the Lord. No man can get to the Father except through Him. Will you not Forsake all, and Surrender to the Lord before it is too late?

10985 Country Haven; Cottondale, AL 35453

A SUMMARY OF THE BIBLE
Franklin Camp

There are some things one needs to carefully consider as one engages in the study of the Bible. This book which we are studying is no ordinary book. It may affect us in one of two ways: properly studied and applied, it will affect us for good in time and eternity; the improper study of it will cause one to lose one’s soul.

The Bible is every man’s book. It is not intended for some special group. But not only is the Bible every man’s book, it is written for the average person. Scholars may study it, but it is not written necessarily with scholars in mind.

No one ever outgrows the Scriptures. The more one studies them, the wider and deeper they become. The Bible is a book which enables one to look into eternity. The best evidence of the inspiration of the Bible is to be found between its covers. No one will ever be a useful Christian unless one is a student of the Bible.

Matthew Henry said, “The Scriptures were written not to make us astronomers, but to make us saints.” It is no wonder the Paul urged Timothy to study the Scriptures, “rightly dividing,” or handling aright, the Word of truth, that he might be an approved workman before God.

The Bible is the greatest book in the world. It is the most accessible, and in it one finds truth that can be found in no other book.

The Bible is the only book that can give a satisfactory explanation of God, the world, man, sin, salvation, service, and life here and life hereafter.

The Bible acknowledges man’s faults, it is patient with man’s weaknesses, it is severe with man’s sins, and it is honest with his virtues and his hopes.

To own the Bible is to be rich. The study, to know, and to trust the Bible is to find life. To study the Bible is to be wise; to obey it, to be strong.

To know the Bible and to handle it aright is the greatest accomplishment within the reach of any person. One may know English, astronomy, literature, music, sociology, and philosophy; but if one does not know the Bible, one has failed in the only subject that brings all things into their proper relationship and that enables one to know life at its best.

The one who seeks to know the Bible will endeavor to study its contents book by book, meet its characters as they unfold through its pages, study it types, its doctrine, its topics, paragraphs, sentences and words. This is a lifetime work.

The Bible is the one book that can save many a heartache. The following was found on the flyleaf of a Bible placed by the Gideons in a motel in Birmingham, Alabama: “May God bless the man who placed this book here. I am a young lady twenty-one years old, fatherless and motherless. Tonight this book saved me from taking a wrong step. May the next reader find it the
comfort that I did."

There is no greater accomplishment in life than to be able to rightly divide the Word of truth. It is worth all the sacrifice that is necessary to give to such a study. One can never be great in the true sense of that word who does not know the Word, love it, live it, delight in it, and teach it without perversion and without misrepresentation.

The one who studies this book and knows how to handle it is in a position to render the greatest service in the world. No wonder Paul told Timothy: (1) to study, (2) to be a workman, and (3) to seek to be approved of God. There is no higher ambition on earth.

The Bible is a mirror that enables us to see ourselves. It is food which supplies the strength that we need, a lamp to guide our way, a hammer to break and to build, a sword to fight and to defend, the seed to plant and grow, and the goal to own and to become our reward.

There are no experiences in life for which the Bible does not furnish a passage. May these thoughts lend encouragement to all of us to become diligent students of the Word that we may know the way of life and find the life that is life indeed.

WHY SHOULD I PLACE MEMBERSHIP?

Wayne Price

"Why do I need to place membership; I’m already a member of Christ’s church?" "I’m a member of the church ‘at large,’ and I believe that is enough," another proclaims. That question is a good one, surely deserving an answer.

In times past, when people moved from one congregation to another, they often took with them a letter of recommendation. It was a good practice, for it served to introduce one (or a family) to the new congregation, and informed the new congregation that the bearer was faithful.

Whatever happened to such a practice? If it was a good idea then, why is it not also a good idea today? Obviously, it would assist the elders to do their work in a better way. They are shepherds of the flock, (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4; Heb. 13:17), yet it is hard at times for them to even figure out who is in their flock, and who is not.

Sometimes sheep (Christians) move into an area, worship with the local church for a while, then “shop around” for a few years for greener pastures. Are they a part of the local flock just by virtue of their moving into the area? Surely not! The fact is, some still consider themselves members of the congregation back home. Do the shepherds “back home” watch for their souls? The answer is obvious! Local elders may wonder: “Is that sheep in our flock, or does he belong in another local flock overseen by other elders?” Perhaps some of these “suitcase” Christians just want to become lost in the crowd, which may explain their refusal to place membership with the local congregation.

A number of years ago, a family moved to a new city, and placed membership with the local church there. On the card submitted to be read to the congregation, they stated they desired to be part of the oversight of the local shepherds to watch in behalf of their souls. We recommend this practice as worthy of emulation.

If all members would follow such a policy, the first eldership would know that they were no longer responsible for these sheep, while the second eldership would know that their job of watching after the welfare of their sheep was greater now. But at least both would know which sheep were in their flock!

P.O. Box 760; McLeod, OK 74851
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Lou and Buster Gafford, Harold and Lucille Staples, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), and Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law).

READING/INVITATION
July 26, 2000
Reading: Brantley Johnson
Invitation: Dusty Wilkes
August 2, 2000
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Henry Born

MARK THESE DATES
July 30, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
July 31, 2000–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 P.M., in the general purpose building. A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat

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.”
MAN’S CHOICE OR GOD’S?

Lennie Reagan

As we look to the Word of God the evidence for singing as a specific requirement should be clear. Jesus and His disciples sang in the upper room (Mat. 26:30), Paul and Silas sang in prison (Acts 16:25), Paul taught that singing glorifies God (Rom. 15:9), singing is used as a teaching tool one to another (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), singing is described as “the fruit of our lips” as we offer praise to God (Heb. 13:15), and singing is parallel to praying, thus, stressing the vocal praise to God (Jam. 5:13). All of these passages form an unbroken chain of authority for worship to God in singing without any additions to or subtractions from His command.

It is unsuccessfully argued that to hold to the divine directives for vocal singing without any additions or subtractions is to fail to understand how it was done in the first century. Those who seek to modernize our singing, accuse that the church today has turned first century, spiritual, up-beat, high energy singing into a dull, boring, lifeless hour of agony. ... As with most questions, the solution is found in an open and honest heart who seeks to submit to what the Bible teaches.

The wording of the instruction from the mouth of Christ reminds us of the parameters of...
worship: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). Thus, we correctly come to the conclusion that we must worship God as He is pleased and not by the whims of men—it is God’s choice. Yet, we have the spiritual descendants of Cain, Nadab, Abihu, and Uzziah. The advocates of error, instead of following the guidelines and authority of Peter, Paul, James, and John, seek to draw new boundaries which seem to fit the new and expanded concepts of what God meant to say.

Paul, in writing to the church at Ephesus instructs: “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God” (Eph. 5:18-21). The command in verse 18 is to “be filled with the Spirit” and verses 19-21 tell us how that in manifest.

“Be filled” is translated from the Greek word plerousthe and it means to influence fully, possess fully. It is interesting to note that the verb plerousthe is used as the second person, plural, present imperative which is literally translated “ye all are to be filled.”

In verses 19-21, Paul gives five plural participles with imperative force which agree with the verb plerousthe. What that means is that Paul’s instructions included all of the saints and that:

- All of you speaking
- All of you singing
- All of you making melody
- All of you giving thanks
- All of you submitting yourselves

Additionally, the participles heautois rendered “to yourselves” (Eph. 5:19), and heautou rendered “one another” (Col. 3:16), are reflexive reciprocal pronouns and demand an interchange of actions. This type of word usage eliminates the proposed abuse by those who suggest that the Bible allows special music such as choirs, special singing, and other innovations. The Bible authorizes congregational singing. Thus, if the Bible authorizes congregational singing, all other singing has been excluded from the worship service because it has not been authorized.

Some will attempt to make an argument for

**A LITTLE BOY IN CHURCH**

A little boy in church today is a busy little lad.
He often tries the patience of his mother and his dad.
He fumbles in his pockets; he needs some gum to chew.
He whispers something funny; he’s underneath the pew.
He draws a picture of a cat; it looks more like a bird.
The preacher, preaches on and on; he hasn’t heard a word.
But try one’s patience he will, he’s lovable and dear.
He can’t sit still for very long. But aren’t we glad he’s here!

The above may sound really familiar to many of us. And I know that sometimes parents feel as if they are hindering others in worship. Just remember that this is the best place to train our children to worship God. You sure cannot train them outside the assembly. So just keep up the good work and train them in the way they should go (Pro. 22:6). You would be surprised at what they are learning from you.

Author Unknown
adding the mechanical instrument of music based on the phrase “making melody.” This phrase is translated from the Greek psallontes and from the root word psallo. Pershbacher defines psallo in the Old Testament as to move by a touch, to twitch, to play on a stringed instrument; to sing music; however, in the New Testament it is defined “to sing praises.” Vines agrees with Pershbacher’s definition and assigns the application of psallo to twitch, twang, then to play a stringed instrument, as it was used in the Old Testament. However, in the New Testament definition of psallo would be incorrect and also dishonest as we are under the New Testament Law of Christ.

The music to be produced in worship is vocal music (speaking with enunciation and articulation of words) and is to be directed to God and fellow Christians. The source of the music is the heart and the heart is the instrument which accompanies the vocal music. The Bible authorizes us to sing, nothing more, nothing less.

PO Box 321; Coldwater, MS 38618

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING???

Tim Smith

You are missed when you are away from the assembly! Think about it, what with all the teaching in the New Testament on setting an example and exerting influence, not to mention the passages requiring of us full devotion to the Cause of Christ, what does your absence say?

What does your absence say to the children of our congregation? Does it tell them that “seek ye first the kingdom of God” (Mat. 6:33) is important? Does it tell them that you love the Lord “with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind”? Does it encourage them to shine their light before others? When they fail to see you in the assembly, what message will they learn?

What does your absence say to the adult members of the church? Does is tell them that, although God’s people are assembling, you have something better to be doing with your time? Just what is that “something better”? And what about the things you are withholding from them? The Bible speaks of worship as a time when we pray together (Acts 2:42), sing together (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), commune together (1 Cor. 11), give together (1 Cor. 16:1-2), and study together (Acts 20:7; 2 Tim. 4:2-4). If you are not present, you cannot participate in these together activities. You steal from yourself the fellowship of the brethren, but you also steal from the brethren your participation in the worship.

What does your absence say to the preacher and the Bible Class Teacher? Does it tell them that, though they worked hard on their lessons, you had something more important to attend to than worship or Bible Class? Just what is that “something more important”? Will it still be more important come Judgment Day?

And, lastly, what does your absence say to the Lord? Will He understand the reason you give for absenting yourself from the assembly? He knows the truth, we cannot fool Him! If you are “too tired” for the assembly, would you equally be “too tired” for work? If it were a family reunion instead of an assembly of the saints, would your excuse keep you from attending? If it were an “Iron Bowl” ticket in your hand instead of a Bible, would your “excuse” prevent your attending? Would Jesus, the One who bore His Cross to Calvary, really understand the “excuse” you are offering and excuse your absence? Think about it.

127 Enon Road; Webb, AL 37376
SICK AND SHUT-IN

Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Lou and Buster Gafford, Harold and Lucille Staples, Jean Flesher, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), and Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law).

SYMPATHY

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Ray Dodd and his family in the death of his cousin, Junior Tittle, on July 20, 2000. Please keep Ray and his family in your prayers.

PLACED MEMBERSHIP

Al and Jean Flesher have place membership with the Bellview congregation. Their address is: 1012 Avia Lane; Pensacola, FL 32507. Their telephone number is 497-1426. Please update your directory.

READING/INVITATION

August 2, 2000
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Henry Born

August 9, 2000
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Paul Brantley

MARK THIS DATE

July 31, 2000—Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 P.M., in the general purpose building. A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED

Canned Meat
OF MOLDY CHEESE AND RAT POISON

Tyler Young

When it becomes necessary to undertake the unpleasant but crucial task of pointer the spotlight of truth on brethren who are perverting the gospel and dividing the church, some in the church will object that such is unwise, if not unbiblical. Though they may concede that a certain preacher, congregation or brotherhood event may be the source of false teaching, they wonder why we cannot simply look beyond the error being taught and acknowledge the good that is done by these brethren.

On a certain level, we can appreciate the good done not only by false brethren and even denominational organizations. Some who are steeped in false religion do a great deal of good for the culture, for example, by lobbying for pro-life legislation. We can learn from the works of a Presbyterian scholar. And some lectureships or workshops in the church may have many good classes and lessons during their programs.

But when it comes to false teaching in the church the biblical mandate is clear. We must avoid them and warn others who may be deceived by their “smooth and fair speech” (Rom. 16:17-18; 2 John 9-11). When it came to those who arise “speaking perverse things,” Paul said, “Watch,” and that he “ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears” (Acts 20:28-32).

Wherever brethren got the idea that we need not warn about false teachers, it certainly was not from the Bible (Phi. 3:2; 1 Tim. 1:18-20; 2 Tim. 2:16-18; 2 Pet. 2:1ff).

It is true that one can scrape mold from a horn of cheese to find what is beneath the surface to be delicious and edible. It is also true that rat poison...
contains 98% edible material, and only 2% deadly elements. For all the nourishment the rat may get from the 98%, the 2% will still kill if ingested with the rest.

False teachers advocating error on otherwise good programs are doing more than making those programs moldy. They are poisoning souls with deadly error. Love for truth and souls requires we warn: “Beware. The cheese may look good, but a little poison is enough to kill.”

L. Duane Canby

The prophet Micah lived and preached in the 8th century before Christ. His burden was for the lost state of the kingdom of Israel. Idolatry was running rampant: the priests were racketeering upon the people, and God’s law was forgotten. As a result, Israel was riding for a fall. In Micah six the prophet called the people to hear Jehovah’s controversy against them, and in verse three the Lord said, “O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me.” Just as Israel had forsaken the divine way because they were tired of it and wanted something different, so many today are departing from God’s will for the same reason and are bringing upon themselves His wrath.

Weary of God’s Name

God had given His people His name, for Israel means “God preservers.” Israel, however, cared little about that. Instead, they were speaking the language of Baal and Ashteroth. Today, we face the same problem. Multitudes are discontent with being just Christians. They want some other appellation as well. Thus, they honor doctrines and systems which are not of God just as Israel did. Beginning at Antioch, the disciples were called “Christians.” This is the new name of Isaiah 62:2. There is salvation in no other (Acts 4:12). The church is the bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11:2) and, therefore, should wear His name and no other. Faithfulness demands as much. But, people are tired of the Lord’s name and want to wear human names, which gender division and apostasy.

Weary of God’s Way of Worship

The law of Moses gave Israel specific instructions regarding the worship of God. This worship had become virtually nonexistent, and what did exist was largely half-hearted formality. Israel wanted something new and different, so they borrowed from their pagan contemporaries and built altars to idol gods in the high places of Canaan. How striking is the parallel to modern worship. The houses of worship today are often as forsaken as the temple in Jerusalem. New Testament worship is to be in “spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). This means that with fervent sincerity and love we are to engage in the five scriptural items of worship: teaching the gospel, singing praise to God, giving as we have been prospered, partaking of the Lord’s supper, and prayer. But, millions today change the teaching to entertainment or lectures on human philosophy, or politics. Mechanical instruments are added to the singing and sometimes substituted for it altogether. Giving is largely set aside in favor of carnivals, bingo games, rummage sales, etc.; the Lord’s supper is omitted or altered; and prayer is changed from a force to a farce.

Weary of Obedience to God’s Law

At one time Judah actually lost the book of the law and later discovered it in the days of King Josiah. Israel as a whole had become so weary of obeying God that they forgot what obedience demanded. Today, who can find a single gospel command that many people who pose as Christians have not, in their weariness of it, perverted or omitted altogether? Some have become so tired of the worship and work of the church that they have decided to entertain themselves and the world instead. Baptism was too much trouble, so
sprinkling and pouring was substituted. Even that was too wearisome to many, so they forgot it altogether. “Going to church” has become so tiresome that many have decided to worship beside their radios or in the wide-open spaces. In any case, the results will be just as tragic as they were for ancient Israel, for the principle is the same.

**Weary of God’s Restraints**

Everyone knows what it means to become weary of parental restraints and to threaten to do as we please when we get a chance. Many have made the sad mistake of enacting those threats. With the heavenly father the problem is similar. Israel refused to be limited to God’s will. They denied the reality of punishment and did as they pleased. Today, we live in a world that thinks that a “thou shalt not” is an insult to scientific psychology. We hear of free love, trial marriage, and social salvation. Inhibitions are unpopular relics of the past. The wonderful blessing of freedom has gone to seed. Any sensible, mature person can see that the restraints of his parents were intended for his own good and protection. Likewise, any spiritually mature person can see the value of God’s restrictions and will be happy to respect them whether they are doctrinal or moral. The Lord has given us “all truth” (John 16:13). He forbids that we alter it in any way (Gal. 1:6-8). The anathema of heaven awaits anyone or church that refuses to abide within the realm of divine authority.

**Weary of the Plan of Salvation**

Salvation to Israel meant the availability of the physical needs of life, freedom from the oppression of their adversaries, and the hope of the coming Messiah. The conditions involved in the physical needs at least, were summarized in faithful obedience to the law of Moses. But, Israel was tired of this plan and sought to obtain God’s blessing without it. They spurned the warnings of the prophets and complacently went toward certain destruction. The moral man finds further obedience most wearisome and trusts in his works alone for salvation regardless of what he believes. Denominationalism has found baptism a nuisance and has taught salvation by faith only. Nominal members of the Lord’s church have found repentance too great a chore and while paying lip service, have sought salvation on faith and baptism alone. As a result, the threat of worldliness to the identity of the church is as great as anything else. We need thorough conversion in heart as well as in form. Then, and only then, will obedience to the Lord be more a joy than a duty, and one will not sin like Israel by being tired of God.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-4

“Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.”
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Lou (in Sacred Heart Hospital, room 229) and Buster Gafford, Harold and Lucille Staples, Jean Flesher, Willeodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), and Ann McMalley (Marge Williams’ aunt).

BAPTIZED
We rejoice with Shannon Meador in her decision to put on Christ in baptism on July 26, 2000. Please keep her in your prayers and offer encouragement. Shannon’s address and telephone number are: 706 West Avery Street; Pensacola, FL 32501; 444-9928.

READING/INVITATION
August 9, 2000
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Paul Brantley
August 16, 2000
Reading: Harold Maxey
Invitation: Scot Brazell

MARK THESE DATES
August 6, 2000–Men’s Class will meet at 5:00 P.M., in room 1.
August 6, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
August 13, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Vegetables
I'M A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST TOO!

Monte L. Evans

As we go about our daily activities in a friendly, upbeat manner, we sometimes encounter individuals with whom we are able to strike up a casual conversation. As the conversation matures, questions are sometimes asked regarding employment, school, religion, etc., no doubt, at one time or another, each one of us has had the opportunity to state: “I’m a member of the church of Christ” only to hear from the other party: “I’m a member of the church of Christ too!” In days long since past, this response would have produced a feeling of comradery, togetherness, and a special bond. Great joy would have been experienced by encountering an individual with a honest heart, a submissive demeanor toward the Savior, and one who had the ability to discern the Truth. Sadly, when the words, “I’m a member of the church of Christ too!” fall upon our ears, we wonder and say to ourselves: “Exactly what do you mean by that statement?” In an era long since gone we would know very well what was meant by that statement. However, in 2000 the statement: “I’m a member of the church of Christ too!” can and does have numerous definitions and interpretations. In order to have a better understanding of what is meant by the statement: “I’m a member of the church of Christ too!” one is almost forced to ask, “Are you a member of a congregation whose leadership adheres or upholds or is silent regarding controversial subjects like:

1. That one may drink alcohol socially without committing sin (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21)?
2. The doctrines of Bales, Fuqua, Billingsly, and Woodroof regarding divorce and remarriage (Mat. 19:9; 5:32; Mark 10:11-12)?
3. The A.D. 70 Theory (The second advent of Christ has already taken place in the year A.D. 70)?
4. The importance of modesty (1 Tim. 2:9-10)?
5. That all we do in life is worship?
6. That defending the Faith is not important (Jude 3)?
7. That the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) and the gospel according to John are not a part of the New Testament Canon?
8. That a person is saved by grace only (1 Pet. 3:21)?
9. That the barbarism of “cell groups” or “glory groups” (1 Cor. 11:20)?
10. That “children’s church” or “children’s Bible hour” is not a separation from worship period (Acts 20:7)?
11. That baptism is not essential for salvation (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21)?
12. That fellowship with the denominations is not sinful (2 John 9-11)?
13. That the eldership is to be concerned only with their own congregation and not be concerned with what is taking place in the brotherhood (1 Cor. 16:13; Heb. 13:17; Tit. 1:9-11)?
14. The idea that the eldership is to be concerned only with their own congregation and not be concerned with what is taking place in the brotherhood (1 Cor. 16:13; Heb. 13:17; Tit. 1:9-11)?
15. That the celebrating of “Christmas” and “Easter” as religious holidays?
16. The administering of church discipline (2 Thc. 3:6, 14-15; 1 Cor. 5)?
17. The marking (the acknowledgment) of false teachers (Rom. 16:17)?
18. The dangers of attending the International Soul Winning Workshop or the Nashville Jubilee and other events where known false teachers speak heresy (1 Cor. 15:33)?
19. That one is not to judge others (John 7:24)?
20. That the Holy Spirit operates in a direct way on the heart of an individual, separate and apart from the Word of God (Col. 3:16)?
21. That angels help individual’s find/choose a spouse?
22. That we live in an age of the miraculous (1 Cor. 13)?
23. That women may serve as elders and or deacons, teach before a mixed assembly, lead prayers, lead singing, and serve on the Lord’s Supper before a mixed assembly (1 Tim. 2:11-14)?
24. The use of a choir during the worship period (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19)?
25. The amount of questions one might ask after hearing: “I’m a member of the church of Christ too!” could easily take up several pages. However, at this time space is at a premium.

The purpose of this article is not to ridicule or make light of the problems facing the church today. The problems facing the church are real and serious. However, these problems can be resolved if brothers and sisters in Christ would study the Word of God, recognize and submit to Christ’s authority and depart from the doctrines of men. Honest and sincere hearts belong to those who faithfully follow the Savior and refuse to compromise or deviate from the Truth.

The purpose of this article is to encourage and exhort the members of the church to be of one mind, speak the same thing, and be perfectly joined together (1 Cor. 1:10). To encourage all members to study God’s Word to be approved of God (2 Tim. 2:15). To encourage members to grow in the grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18). To encourage the spirit of humility and to put off the soul destroying attitude of pride.

If it were the case that every member of the church were on the same page (engulfed in the Truth) there would be no divisions. If all
Richard and Linda Parker wish to announce the birth of their granddaughter, Madeline Rachel, on August 6, 2000, to Terrell and Alicia Parker of Kinnesaw, GA. Madeline was born three months premature weighing 2 pounds 13 ounces and 13 inches long. Please keep Madeline in your prayers.

Bill and Pam Busch have placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Their address is: 3621 Evelyn's Lane; Pensacola, FL 32526. Their telephone number is 456-9931. Please update your directory.

A strange man indeed!  
Author Unknown

As for me and my family

A preacher came calling on a man about his soul and was concerned for his salvation. The preacher pleaded with the man to come to Christ, but the man would not budge.

The next Lord’s day when the invitation song was sung, the man responded. Walking down the aisle and clutching the preacher’s hand, the man said, “Preacher, I want to get right with God.” He confessed his faith in Christ and was baptized for the remission of sins. After the services the man told the preacher what had made him come to realize the great importance of accepting Christ as Savior.

He said, “Preacher, after you left my home the other evening, my little boy climbed on my lap. He said that he had heard what you said to me. He reached out his chubby little arms, hugged me real tightly, put his mouth up to my ear and whispered, ‘Daddy, we don’t want to be a Christian, do we?’ Preacher I went upstairs weeping; now realizing the terrible consequences of the example I was setting for my family. That is one reason I obeyed the gospel—to get myself right with God so I can help my family to know Him!” (Psa. 8:2; Mat. 21:16).

Author Unknown
SICK AND SHUT-IN
Please remember in your prayers: Leon Waters, Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Lou (in Sacred Heart Hospital, room 229) and Buster Gafford, Harold and Lucille Staples, Jean Flesher, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gereau (Ray Foshee’s friend), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Ann McNally (Marge Williams’ aunt), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Madeline Parker (Richard and Linda Parker’s granddaughter),

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Billy Bland and his family in the death of his son, Jared Bland, on August 4, 2000. Please keep this family in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
August 16, 2000
Reading: Harold Maxey
Invitation: Scot Brazell
August 23, 2000
Reading: Horce Myrick
Invitation: Bill Cline

MARK THESE DATES
August 13, 2000–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
August 13, 2000–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
August 20, 2000–Visitation Group 3
assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Vegetables
WHEN TRAGEDY STRIKES

Levi Sides

From the time that Adam and Eve sinned in Eden man has experienced tragedy. It may take many forms, two of the most prevalent being sickness and death. Tragedy affects different people in different ways—some become very emotional, while others remain quiet and calm. Some get over it quickly; others never get over it. No matter whether he is emotional of calm, the Christian is better equipped than anyone else to handle tragedy. There are several reasons why this is true.

The Christian has a host of fellow Christians who come to his aid in time of need. Now I am not referring to the so-called Christian who rarely ever attends any of the services and never participates in the work of the church, but rather to the one who is an active worker in a local congregation. It has been my experience that when the true Christian suffers a tragedy he is surrounded by his brothers and sisters in Christ who provide support, sympathy, and whatever else is needed. This is but an application of the command to bear one another’s burdens (Gal. 6:2).

The Christian realizes that his eternal reward will more than compensate for any suffering in this life. He will have the attitude expressed by Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18: “Wherefore we faint not...For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.” When we set our affections on things above and seek to lay up treasures in heaven, we are able to say as Paul said, “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content” (Phil. 4:11).

The Christian has the precious promises found
in God’s Word. “And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28). “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live” (John 11:25). “Casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you” (1 Pet. 5:7).

The Christian has an all loving and all powerful mediator, Christ, who is ever living to make intercession for us (1 Tim. 2:5). Our mediator understands our troubles and wants to help us (Heb. 4:5). Fellow Christian, in time of tragedy, show your faith by having a peace which passeth understanding, a peace which can only come by being a child of God and a joint heir with Christ.

IN MEMORY OF
WILLIAM LEON WATERS, JR.

Our warmest sympathy is extended to Fran Waters and her family in the death of her husband, Leon, on August 7, 2000 from Multiple Sclerosis. He was 59 years old. Leon was born August 17, 1940 in DeFuniak Springs, Florida. He grew up and went to schools in Pensacola, Florida. Leon married Fran in 1961. In 1994 they were contacted during a door-knocking campaign and invited to a gospel meeting. This led to Bible studies and subsequently to their baptism into Christ in February 1995.

Please keep Fran and her family in your prayers and offer any assistance possible.

FRAIL CHILDREN OF DUST

Burt Jones

In the twilight of the twentieth century this tired and traumatized world is satiated with tension and torment. It is a troubled world because of its troubled people. A general feeling of unrest is prevalent. “Nerves” have become the major topic of conversation and the chief concern even of those within the body of Christ. There is a stark naked element of fear running like a highly charged cable or a slithering snake through the souls of men, even though our Lord offers us rest in our fear and trouble (2 Thes. 7:7; Mat. 11:28). Human beings with priceless souls are being wooed by vice, crime and worldliness, led to the slaughter by the factions of the pro-murderers, or the gays and lesbians. Countless other lobbying groups, through a conduit of corrupt congressmen and senators, make us feel as though we represent no more than cogs in a machine that may be replaced at any time at the discretion of the machine itself. The individual is being pressured, coerced, blackmailed, confused, distorted, disturbed, robbed and yet soothed to the point that he has lost his will—and is uninterested in finding the way out or back (Mat. 13:19-22).

As gospel preachers and as Christians we are faced with going out to save a world that does not want to be saved. Brethren, there is no peace without God. There is no cause for man without God’s intent, purpose and design.

Man may saturate himself with the pleasures of sin for a season (Heb. 11:25). He may be called by presidents to dispense advice from his store of earthly wisdom, but he will not find in any one of these things the fulfillment of his soul’s great yearning. He misses the most obvious of invitations. “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Mat. 7:7-8).

We are frail, and, as the fine old hymn states, we are as feeble as frail. We are inadequate and
inferior whenever we attempt to use our stamina, our moral resources. Indeed, were we to be the most righteous of the righteous, “we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away” (Isa. 64:6).

I was in a gospel meeting where three sets of fragile but feisty grandparents were baptized. Two of them were over seventy years of age. At a time when too many of our elderly are saying, “It’s too late to teach an old dog new tricks,” these good souls had seen that we were not teaching dogs and we were not engaged in tricks. They were baptized. As each couple arose after having been buried with our Redeemer, I had the unadulterated joy of gazing into the faces of three sets of seventy-year-old infants. Never shall I forget that moment!

“Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail, In Thee do we trust, nor find Thee to fail; Thy mercies, how tender! How firm to the end! Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer and Friend!”

IS GOD FIRST IN YOUR LIFE?
Al Macias

Today we are living in a world that has become very competitive and materialistic. We as a society have become so involved in trying to have a nice house that we forget about the home. We sometimes become so caught up with the temporal that we forget about the eternal. We become so concerned with the physical that we forget about the spiritual. The Bible relates example after example of how easy it is to forget God when we get so involved in “this, that, and the other.” In Haggai chapter one, we find such an example of how the people of God had forgotten Him because of other things they had put first in their lives.

The people of God had been taken into Babylonian captivity during the years of the prophets Daniel and Ezekiel (around the years 606, 597, and 585 B.C.), because they had become so rebellious toward God. At the end of the 70-year captivity in Babylon, God stirred the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, to sign a decree permitting the people of God to go back to Jerusalem and work on the temple which laid in waste (Ezra 1:1). The temple in Jerusalem had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar back in the year 585 B.C., in one of the attacks against the city of Jerusalem. When Cyrus signed his decree, only a remnant decided to go back and work on the temple, and they actually began to work as soon as they got back to Jerusalem. But, almost from the beginning, they encountered opposition from others. Thus, they stopped working on the temple for awhile.

When Darius became king of Persia, the Jews were allowed to continue working on the temple, but they had become disinterested, because they were too involved in working on their own houses. When God’s people talked about resuming their work on the temple, they said, “The time is not come that the Lord’s house be built.” God was not pleased with their attitude, and communicated to His people through the prophet Haggai: “Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?...Consider your ways” (Hag. 1:4-5). The Lord wanted His people to examine their lives and take notice that things were not going so well for them with their crops, with their food, and with their wages. They were not being blessed by God, and why? They were losing out on God’s blessings because they had become so wrapped up in themselves and had forgotten God and His temple. How involved are we with ourselves? Let us never become so self-centered that we forget God altogether.

8900 Manchaca Road; Austin, TX 78748
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Lou and Buster Gafford, Harold and Lucille Staples (in Baptist Hospital, room 252), Jean Flesher, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Madeline Parker (Richard and Linda Parker’s granddaughter), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), and Ann McNalley (Marge Williams’ aunt).

BAPTIZED
Daniel Gallaher was baptized into Christ on August 13, 2000. His address is 2301 Silverside Loop; Pensacola, FL 32526. His telephone number is 944-8655. Please keep Daniel in your prayers and help him grow as a Christian.

READING/INVITATION
August 23, 2000
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Bill Cline
August 30, 2000
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Bill Crowe

MARK THESE DATES
August 20, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
August 20, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
August 27, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Vegetables
THE CRY ROOM
Lynn Parker

In the back of most every church building it awaits the noisy youngster. It is the nursery, sometimes known as the “cry room.” Commonly used for the care of infants and toddlers, it sometimes is the site of training and discipline where an unruly child (old enough to behave better) goes to receive some “woodshed encouragement.” Now it is not a mandate of Scripture that every congregation build and make available a cry room, but it sure can be expedient.

You cannot help but wonder if there ought to be a cry room available for older kids, too. There are those immature church members who may be in need of a nursery. The apostle made this observation concerning brethren at Corinth: “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not with meat; for ye were not yet able to bear it: nay, not even now are ye able; for ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal, and do ye not walk after the manner of men?” (1 Cor. 3:1-3).

It is normal for a new convert to be immature in the faith. It is evidence of stagnation and thus inexcusable for Christians to remain spiritual babies for years. Yet, in most every congregation there are at least a handful that never grow up. They squall, bawl, fight, sulk, pout, frown, gripe, and nit-pick until folks begin to realize they must be handled with velvet gloves. These malcontents demand an inordinate amount of time and attention—just as you would expect when such childishness becomes evident. But here is offered a few suggestions to the babies and the baby-
To the immature we say, **GROW UP!** Put away your petty gripes. Wipe your feelings off of your sleeves. Put away the cry rag. Come out of the nursery. Think of others and cease being self-centered. “Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying” (Rom. 15:2). The church is bigger than you and your childish desires. There are weighty and pressing matters that really need the attention of elders, preachers, and faithful members. Self-pity is a waste of precious time and energy. Sure, you can move to another congregation but eventually the problem—your attitude—will surface there, too. Unless you repent of your immature and petty behavior, you will never find a congregation to satisfy you. More importantly, a person with the disposition we describe here cannot enter heaven! One man unknowingly told on himself when after being at one congregation for no more than five years stated, “This is the longest I’ve ever stayed at one congregation.” He soon thereafter got mad and left.

You can tell loads about a person by watching how they respond to correction. Some receive it meekly and give serious examination to well-intentioned criticism. The wise man wrote: “Reprove not a scoffer, lest he hate thee: “Reprove a wise man, and he will love thee” (Pro. 9:8), “He is in the way of life that heeddeth correction; But he that forsaketh reproof errreth)” (Pro. 10:17), “Whoso loveth correction loveth knowledge; But he that hateth reproof is brutish” (Pro. 12:1), “The ear that hearkeneth to the reproof of life Shal al abide among the wise. He that refuseth correction despiseth his own soul; But he that hearkeneth to reproof getteth understanding” (Pro. 15:31-32), “Better is open rebuf Than love that is hidden” (Pro. 27:5).

The “cry room crowd” does not take correction well. As a matter of fact, it makes them livid, defensive, and ready to quit. According to them, the shepherds of the flock are held in high esteem as long as they correct the other sheep—you know, the ones who need it. The preacher is above average until his sermons hit this crowd—then watch out! But, neither man’s anger or his pride fit into God’s plan. James wrote, “Ye know this, my beloved brethren. But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls” (Jam. 1:19-21).

To the carnal, immature members we humbly, lovingly say: learn to accept correction and criticism as well as you can give it. If you want brethren to respect and appreciate you, show that you can be faithful and cooperative even when you do not get your way.

Now to brethren who for years have had to walk on “egg shells” around some of these hard-hearted easily-offended, ready-to-explode types, your patience and long-suffering is commendable. Paul wrote, “Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (Rom. 15:1). You hearty souls have done that very thing for way too long. You have borne with the immature and exhorted and encouraged them. You have been long-suffering with their temper tantrums and pouting periods. You have silently endured their outrageous accusations. Good brother and sister, quit jumping every time they holler “frog”! Some will never grow up until they see that the world does not revolve around them. Do not let a few voices of discontent impede the progress of good work for God. There are no indispensable folks. Even if they threaten to leave the congregation, we cannot help but ask, “What harm does it do to the body to lose such divisive, trouble-making and caustic members?”

We love every family that makes up every
New Arrival

Jean Cline is proud to announce the birth of her grandson, John Aaron, born on August 17, 2000, to Gary and Mary Barch of Olive Branch, MS. John weighed 7 pounds 11 ounces. Our congratulations is extended to all.

The Sandwich Generation

A sandwich is quick, easy to make, with little or no cleanup. It’s convenient and fast. It’s for the hurry-up crowd, the 30-minute lunch bunch. It’s the way we are...in a hurry. The sandwich culture wants everything immediately, if not sooner. I saw two men leave a restaurant because they had to wait two minutes on a sandwich!

This attitude comes into the church as well. We want our services, quickly made, at the last minute. We don’t care about making preparations beforehand. We want the preacher’s part to be just right, not too long, not too dry. We want him to be juicy and humorous, full of depth, and, oh, so understandable. For sure, he better finish before the other churches do so the good members can be first in line for a more important meal at the local restaurant.

Extra words at the Lord’s table? No! “Just the facts, man,” (to borrow and modify a phrase). Wordy prayers? Well, you know, “For a prayer to be heavenly, it doesn’t have to be eternal,” we always say. Our services come neatly boxed, concisely made, just like a sandwich. What’s more, we “sandwich” in the church’s activities when it’s convenient to fit our schedule. A weekend away from the home church, for some, is a weekend away from church attendance. It’s just not convenient! If it doesn’t fit in, then we just forget about it. Relatives, meal preparation (ironically), TV schedules, and rest cycles, replace “inconvenient” worship services.

The service I hear described in the Bible is much more than a quick hurry-up sort of affair. It’s more than just a sandwich, easily made and easily consumed. “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Mat. 7:13-14). “And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mark 8:34). “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1).

Convenient? Ease? Not the Christian life I read about in the Bible. Many of the “sandwich generation” will be sorely mistaken and eternally distressed that their religion of convenience has given them a false hope of heaven. There will not be a fast food entrance there...there will be no curbside check-in. Time will no longer be of essence, for time will have been suspended. Take time for the Lord today, and you won’t be disappointed. Do a hurry-up job, have a convenient-for-me attitude, abbreviate the essentials, and you will have an inferior product, unacceptable to the Lord.

Author Unknown
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Harold and Lucille Staples, Lou and Buster Gafford, Jean Flesher, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Madeline Parker (Richard and Linda Parker’s granddaughter), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), and Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father).

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Marge Williams in the death of her aunt, Ann McNalley, who passed away on August 18, 2000. Please keep Marge and her family in your prayers.

RESTORED
Larry McDaniels was restored on August 21, 2000. Please keep Larry in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

READING/INVITATION
August 30, 2000
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Bill Crowe
September 6, 2000
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

MARK THESE DATES
Aug 30, 200—Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 P.M.
Sep 10, 2000—Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Vegetables
THE POWER OF ONE

Flavil Nichols

During the war between the states, a young woman learned the truth and obeyed the gospel. Her sweetheart, J. H. Halbrook, was a confederate soldier. He was captured by the union army and kept a prisoner in Michigan until the war was over. He was given a ticket to Nashville, Tennessee, and $2.50. From there, he returned to Centerville and found what was left of his home and family. He found his girlfriend and they were married. His wife studied the Bible with him, and he soon became a Christian. He thought the truth was so good and so simple that he began to teach and baptize many of his friends and neighbors. He began to preach, but he recognized his need for more training, so he came to the original Mars Hill Bible School, taught by T. B. Larimore.

Upon completing his studies there, instead of going back to Tennessee, they moved farther south, coming into Walker, Marion, Fayette, and Larnum counties in Alabama. One of his many converts was Charley Alexander Wheeler. His wife taught him to read from the Bible. Along with his wife, C. A. Wheeler obeyed the gospel and soon began preaching to others. He started more than 100 congregations and baptized more than 6,000 people.

But wait, the story is not ended! One of those 6,000 was my father, the late Gus Nichols! Twelve thousand were baptized under his preaching. Among those baptized by Gus Nichols, no one knows, nor can know, how many began to preach “the glorious gospel of Christ” (2 Cor. 4:3-4); but I personally know several. I, Flavil Nichols, am ONE who he baptized and whom he encouraged to preach the truth. And under my preaching, about three thousand have been bap-
tized. A few among them preach the gospel, also!

Only eternity can reveal the total results of the conversion of that one girl nearly one hundred and fifty years ago. The results are not yet all in! But this shows that TWENTY-ONE THOUSAND people have become Christians through this single thread in the fabric of her influence.

“Go, and do thou likewise” (Luke 10:37). YOU are important, too! Dear reader, if you go to heaven, others probably will be saved by you! “For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?” (1 Cor. 7:16). “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 5:16). Each ONE is very important.

100 13th Street NE; Jasper, AL 35504

THE CHURCH MUST BE EVANGELISTIC

Joseph D. Meador

Some years ago I heard an older gospel preacher say that after he “retired” he would like to “do evangelism.” Remarkable! How sad that many “cannot see the forest for the trees.” Have we become so professionalized that we no longer take the command to “go into the world” personally? Indeed, I am afraid that this symptom of non-evangelism among all Christians (not just elders and preachers) is a problem in many places.

As one searches the riches of God’s Word, the ideals of godliness and holiness along with the attitudes of servant-hood and obedience shine brightly as spiritual qualities for which all men should aspire. Christianity as a vibrant and active lifestyle really depends upon a well studied growth for its existence within the individual (2 Tim. 2:15). Those who “hunger and thirst after righteousness” and who feed upon the doctrine of Christ grow steadfast as the cedar of Lebanon and will flourish as the palm-tree (Psa. 92:12).

Evangelism Proper

Regarding the doctrine of evangelism, one finds after a careful evaluation that whether or not we possess these lofty ideals and attitudes may determine, in the long run, if we are genuinely committed to evangelism as an integral part of living the Christian life. Those who are growing in the faith have no problem in recognizing the importance of teaching others about the salvation afforded them in Christ. Neither do such maturing Christians wait on an organized effort before they start teaching the lost. It just comes naturally. In fact, doing personal evangelism is the immediate by-product of true conversion to Christ as one realizes that he or she, like Paul, is a debtor to

Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds  
September 10  
After the morning service in the general purpose building.  
Bring family members, friends, neighbors, and others for  
Christian fellowship and home-cooked food.  
Members of the congregation will provide a covered-dish meal.
NEW BIBLE CLASSES BEGINNING

Bible classes for the fall quarter will begin Sunday, September 3. Make plans now to attend these classes.

**Sunday Schedule**

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<tr>
<th>Adults I</th>
<th>Romans I</th>
<th>Michael Hatcher</th>
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<td>Adults II</td>
<td>Romans II</td>
<td>Louis Herrington</td>
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<td>Adults III</td>
<td>Romans I</td>
<td>Paul Brantley</td>
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<td>New Converts</td>
<td>Studies In Christian Doctrine And Practical Christian Living</td>
<td>Bill Gallaher</td>
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**Wednesday Schedule**

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<th>Adults I</th>
<th>Christian Evidences Video (auditorium)</th>
<th>Michael Hatcher</th>
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<tr>
<td>Adults II</td>
<td>Christian Evidences Video (auditorium)</td>
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<td>Adults III</td>
<td>Christian Evidences Video (auditorium)</td>
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<td>New Converts</td>
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<td>High School</td>
<td>Christian Evidences Video (auditorium)</td>
<td>Michael Hatcher</td>
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those who are lost because of the salvation which the Lord has provided (Rom. 1:14). In essence, if we are truly thankful for our own salvation then we will be very serious about telling others!

**Evangelism Practiced**

The pattern book which provided both motivation and methodology for evangelism is the New Testament. God’s Word portrays for our twentieth century minds those first century men and women who were committed to personal evangelism and in whose lives evangelism was exemplified.

Paul (Rom. 1:16), a converted persecutor of the church, was not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as he now realized that it alone provided to both Jews and Gentiles the true source of reconciliation and eternal salvation.

Peter (Acts 2:14-42), the apostle who had denied his relationship to Christ some three times, now by virtue of steady spiritual growth is privileged to boldly preach the first complete gospel sermon. For the first time men and women were told why they should obey the gospel and how they were to do it.

Lydia (Acts 16:24, 40), a woman from Thyatira who was one of Paul’s converts and who worked in Philippi selling purple dye, formed the nucleus of the congregation at Philippi, along with her friends. In face, Paul and his companions made Lydia’s house their headquarters before and after their stay in the Philippian jail.

Philip (Acts 8:5-6; 21:8), after being forced to leave Jerusalem because of severe persecution, traveled some 36 miles down to the city of Samaria where he preached Christ. Although great prejudice existed in the minds of many toward the Samaritans (and vice versa), Philip, constrained by they love of God, went anyway and met with a great reception.

In view of these examples of dedication to evangelism, each of us should realize that we, too, are debtors to our untaught friends and neighbors. It was unto this end that Jesus came to “seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10) which today is the mission of every Christian worker (Mark 16:15-16).
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Harold and Lucille Staples, Lou Gafford, Jean Flesher, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Natalie Carter (Peggy Crowe’s mother), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Madeline Parker (Richard and Linda Parker’s granddaughter), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), and Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father).

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Lou Gafford in the death of her husband, Walter (Buster) Gafford, on August 27, 2000. Please keep Lou and her family in your prayers and offer any assistance possible.

READING/INVITATION
September 6, 2000
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

September 13, 2000
Reading: Joshua Wilkes
Invitation: Ray Dodd

MARK THESE DATES
September 3, 2000–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.

September 10, 2000–Visitation Group 3
assignment cards handed out.

September 10, 2000–Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Vegetables
DOCTRINE DODGERS

Monte L. Evans

In the Sixties and early Seventies “Draft Dodger(s)” was commonly spoken and heard. A Draft Dodger was an individual who when drafted to serve this country in a military capacity refused to do so. These individuals fled the United States of America to Canada (at least a large majority of draft dodgers did) to avoid serving in the armed services. By dodging the draft they showed their disregard for authority, violated the law, and were subject to be prosecuted for their actions.

In the Nineties “Draft Dodger” is virtually erased from the vocabulary of the masses. Yet, another type of Dodging is taking place not only in the United States but throughout the world. This type of dodging is “Doctrine Dodging.” Simply said, many are dodging the doctrine (teaching) of Christ. The harsh reality of the Doctrine Dodger is that he has no regard for the authority of Christ, he is a law breaker and is subject to prosecution (before the judgment seat of Christ) for his actions. To dodge the doctrine of Christ places one’s soul in eternal jeopardy. In Deuteronomy 18:18, Moses speaks the words of God to Israel promising that a Prophet coming from their own brethren would speak His Word (God’s Word) as He (Christ) is commanded. In the following verse Moses continues to say, “And it shall come to pass, that whatsoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.” According to the apostle Peter the prophet spoken of by Moses is Jesus the Christ (Acts 3:22-26). Peter makes it clear in verse 23 that those who are not willing to hear that prophet (His doctrine) shall...
be destroyed. John 12:48 teaches all mankind that the words of Jesus (His doctrine) will be our judge when He comes to gather the faithful saints. Who would want to dodge His doctrine since it will be our judge?

In Matthew 17:5, God the Father tells all who will pay attention that we are to hear His Son in whom He was well pleased. The faithful Bible student easily understands that God commands us to hear (give heed) His Son’s doctrine. To be a “Doctrine Dodger” is precarious and is in essence to commit spiritual suicide.

We must be sure that we give heed to the doctrine of Christ. Failure to do so speaks volumes of one’s person and love for God. Those who dodged the draft decades ago received pardon for their crime. Those today who dodge the doctrine of Christ will in no way receive pardon for their crime. When one dodges Christ’s doctrine they dodge His teaching regarding faith, repentance, confession, and baptism for the remission of sins; thus, forfeiting God’s pardon afforded to man. Will you choose to be a “Doctrine Dodger”?

3601 N. Highway 146; Baytown, TX 77520

THREE SOLUTIONS TO TRIALS

George Pledger

In Paul’s account of his asking God to remove the thorn from his flesh (2 Cor. 12:7-10), we find three possible ways God could have answered. These are applicable to us today.

1. God could have removed the thorn altogether. Paul asked for this when he besought the Lord three times that the thorn “might depart” from him. This request was refused. We, too, will find that when we ask for a problem to be removed altogether, the request is seldom, if ever, answered.

2. God could have let the thorn remain but could have given Paul the strength to bear it. This is what He did. The answer was, “my grace is sufficient for thee.” We can take consolation in this fact, that however big the problem, or however long it lasts, the Lord will always give us the strength to bear it and the stamina to endure it.

3. God could have given Paul the strength to bear the burden and then turn it into a blessing. This, too, is what happened for the strength given made Paul stronger. Paul wrote, “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Cor. 12:9-10).

All of us have some trials to bear. When we ask for assistance, we do not know in what manner it will come; but we do know, it always will be what is best for us.

JESUS DIED FOR THE CHURCH!

Barry Grider

I still hear the words of the old gospel preacher ringing in my ears, “I would rather be the man who drove the spear into Jesus’ side, than to bring harm to the spiritual body of Christ—the church.” Such a statement made an indelible impression on my memory, though I was only a boy. Indeed, the church of Christ is precious: she was purchased with His blood. As the hymnist wrote,

“From heav’n He came and sought her,
To be His holy Bride: With His own blood
He bought her and for her life He died.”

It is truly sad that our world rejects the blood-
bought body of Christ. To do so is to denigrate what Jesus did at Calvary. The Lord promised in Matthew 16:18 to build His one and only church, “And upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” His church had a purchase price; it was His very own blood. Paul, speaking to the Ephesian elders, said, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). Again, the beloved apostle wrote, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph. 5:25). Jesus suffered in the garden of Gethsemane for the church. He endured cruel reproaches during His wicked trial, again for the church. He agonized on the cross, pouring out His blood, that he might bring the church into existence. How could anyone argue that the church has nothing to do with man’s salvation? When man considers his condition outside of Christ (Eph. 2:12) and the necessity of being cleansed in Christ’s blood (Eph. 1:7; 2:13), he will want to be in the blood-bought. The only way one can receive the benefits of Christ’s blood is to be in the blood-bought. Following Pentecost we read, “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47). Why did the Lord do this? To be cleansed by the blood requires being in the blood-bought church. Salvation, therefore, is to be found in the church and only in the church, which has been authorized, built, and purchased by Christ.

Considering the high cost of the Lord’s church, what kind of persons ought we to be? The writer of Hebrews records, “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath countend the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Heb. 10:28-29).

How often do we show disrespect for Jesus’ blood? One way we do this is by being cynical or indifferent to the blood-bought body of Christ. Some members cannot respect the Lord’s blood enough to assemble with the church on the Lord’s day and commemorate His death (Mat. 26:28-29; Acts 20:7). Others disrespect His blood by living unholy lives, which mars the cause of Christ and brings shame to His church.

Friends, if we are not ashamed that Jesus died for our sins, likewise, let us not be ashamed of the church for which He died, either. Let us be members of the blood-bought, that we might be saved; and let us never do harm to that divine institution for which Jesus gave His life. Remember, if we do so, we are worse that a soldier who pierced our Lord’s side 2,000 years ago.

Copied

**Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds**
**September 10**

After the morning service in the general purpose building,
Bring family members, friends, neighbors, and others for Christian fellowship and home-cooked food.
Members of the congregation will provide a covered-dish meal.
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall (in Sacred Heart Hospital, room 526), Elaine Maxey, Ray Williams, Harold and Lucille Staples, Lou Gafford, Jean Flesher, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Natalie Carter (Peggy Crowe’s mother), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Madeline Parker (Richard and Linda Parker’s granddaughter), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), and Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father).

READING/INVITATION
September 13, 2000
Reading: Joshua Wilkes
Invitation: Ray Dodd
September 20, 2000
Reading: Michael Wilkes
Invitation: Ray Dodd

MARK THESE DATES
September 10, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
September 10, 2000–Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds.
September 10, 2000–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
September 17, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
September 17, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
September 24, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Fruit Juice and Canned Fruit
A LOVE FOR THE TRUTH
Bob Spurlin

The most compelling need of our day is a love for the truth. Unfortunately there is a deficiency in this regard that is woefully lacking. As a boy my father, grandfather, brothers, and I would go to Bentley’s Barber Shop in Hartselle, AL, to get a haircut. My grandfather, J. F. Dean, was an elder in the church and was recognized as a walking Bible. Occasionally, at the barber shop a question would be raised about some Bible related subject. My grandfather would reply, “the Bible says so and so,” and then he would quote the pertinent Scripture. As a child my memory was clear regarding how silent that place of business became when he finished his answer. The presentation of truth silenced the questioner and convicted the hearts of those present. Beloved, there was a day when men and women would shudder at the truth and/or tremble at the spoken Word (Heb. 4:12; Acts 24:25).

How do we show our love for the truth? Initially, we should love hearing the truth or gospel proclaimed (Eph. 4:15; Acts 2:41). This writer has noticed over the last ten to fifteen years a lack of appreciation for the truth and the majesty of God’s written Word. One brother told a gospel preacher that he should watch what he said because there were sectarian people in the audience. One even remarked that he should not speak on religious error due to certain people being present. Wonder how Peter or Paul would preach today? Would they simply slap people on the back, shake their hands, and then declare some philosophical jargon? Most Bible students know better. If we truly love the truth then joy will soar in our hearts as the spoken Word is
A love of the truth will cause us to crave and hunger for it like a fine meal (Mat. 5:6). Solomon said, “Buy the truth, and sell it not” (Pro. 23:23). A love for the truth will cause us to submit to it (Jam. 4:7-8). Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

A love for the truth will also cause one to live it to the uttermost. There can be no greater challenge for our love of the truth than living it daily. Paul said, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21). Jesus was the personification of truth and truly exemplified how we should conduct our lives. Luke wrote his second treatise to Theophilus and said, “All ... a love for the truth is not only the purpose of our being, but everlasting life will be the result of a faithful life.

122 Brooks Lane; Somerville, AL 35670

“GIVE ME ONE SOUL TODAY”

Pat McIntosh

I pulled out my file on personal work recently and thumbed through the mountain of material I have on the subject so as to stir my thinking along this line. I noticed as I flipped through, that not only have I filed away numerous articles on personal work and evangelism, but that through the years I have preached some two dozen sermons on the subject (and some of those more than once). The bulletins that come through the mail and cross my desk quite frequently touch on the great need to reach the lost Workshops, gospel meetings, cottage classes, new books, tracts, etc., are all geared toward saving souls. And so it seems to me that our realization of the need for evangelism is very acute. We know people are lost without Christ. We know that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. We know that if men are to be won to Christ it will take our efforts and united talents. There seems to be the deep longing within every congregation I have worked with to “do something.” People are just not satisfied with “keeping house.”

It also seems to me that our problem is not methodology. The open Bible studies, film strips, video tapes, correspondence courses, etc., have been proven to be very effective tools for teaching the lost. Each individual must adapt whatever method might best suit his teaching abilities. Obviously, I have one particular tool which I consider most effective, but I am not shackled to that one method of teaching. Whatever tool you might use, just make sure that it meets the need in the most effective way.

Now the question: Why are we not baptizing more souls into Christ? Those who have done research tell us that the last couple of decades has seen a decline in effective personal evangelism on the local area. According to statistics, it takes 100 members of the Lord’s church to reach one soul for Christ in one year. This does not include our own children. Thus, on the average, a congregation of 200 can only expect to baptize two people in one year’s time. I do not know how that strikes you, but it makes me gag. We have the tools, the awareness of the lostness of humanity, and the desire to see the body grow. Where, then, lies the deficiency?

To excuse the lack of growth on the disinterest of those around us is not an adequate answer. I think the problem lies in our conviction. The early church, though driven from their homes, their cities, and even their families, still “went every where preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). Perhaps our greatest problem is the “things” that surround us. It might be that we have developed a “come-and-get-it” mentality, and think that if
we must preach the truth, hold to the pattern of sound doctrine, and keep our own house in order that folks will flock to the building for teaching. Or it could be that we are comfortable in a “non-confrontational” setting. “Don’t make waves!” Maybe what we need is another great persecution to scatter us abroad! One thing I know for sure, the words of that popular song ought to be on our lips and in our hearts:

Lead me to some soul today,
oh teach me Lord just what to say!
Friends of mine are lost in sin,
and cannot find their way.
Few there are who seem to care;
few there are who pray.
Melt my heart and fill my life.
Give me one soul today!

PO Box 447; Millport, AL 35576

WHEN COMING TO WORSHIP

When we come together to worship God, there are some things that we should bring along, and there are some things that we should leave at home.

We should bring along: (John 4:24)
A cheerful disposition. Worship will be joyful. A pleasant smile. Others will be encouraged.
An open mind, ready to learn. The preacher’s efforts will be more successful.

An honest heart. We can worship with a clear conscience.
A humble and contrite spirit. Worship will be more acceptable unto God.
A rested body. (Tired bodies often cause one to drop off to sleep. One does not worship while asleep.)

We should leave at home: (1 Cor. 11:24-29)
All home and business problems and worries. The plans for the week. Thoughts and plans about the vacation. All envy, malice, ill will, and insincerity.

Author Unknown

DOUBTERS

The famous engineer and inventor, Robert Fulton, returned to America from Paris in 1805 to test his invention of the steamship. In 1807, he was ready to take the steamship Claremont on a trial run up the Hudson River between New York City and Albany.

The story is told that, in the excited crowd which watched the proceedings, there was a negative, pessimistic, doubtful old man. While preparations were being made to start the test run, the old man kept repeating, “They won’t ever get her started.” The steamship, however, was started, and began its trip up the river to the cheers of the crowd.

The doubter was then heard to say, “They won’t ever get her stopped.”

Does he remind you of anyone? There are two kinds of doubters: the active, investigative doubters who are willing to study the evidences before reaching a conclusion; and the lazy, prejudicial doubters who are unwilling to consider any possible evidences. Be a good doubter. Consider the evidence why you should believe the Bible and be a member of the church you read about therein.

Author Unknown
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Harold and Lucille Staples, Lou Gafford, Jean Flesher, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Madeline Parker (Richard and Linda Parker’s granddaughter), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), and Bill Waters (Fran Waters’ father-in-law).

BAPTIZED
Richard Ayliffe was baptized into Christ on September 10, 2000. His address is 5749 Hermosa Circle; Pensacola, FL 32526. His telephone number is 453-0076. Please keep Richard in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

READING/INVITATION
September 20, 2000
Reading: Michael Wilkes
Invitation: Ray Dodd
September 27, 2000
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Louis Herrington

MARK THESE DATES
September 17, 2000—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
September 17, 2000—Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
September 24, 2000—Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Fruit Juice and Canned Fruit
ETERNITY TO THINK

Bobby Liddell

He had planned on dying, not at 36. Like the rest of us, he had planned on living and those plans centered around the things which, to him, were more important and more pressing than others. He had not planned on leaving two little children and a wife alone to rear them. Yet, he did. His funeral was yesterday, and he did leave those little children and her. He left everything else in this world.

We did not know him nearly as well as we would have liked. The church had helped obtain medicine he needed, and we had taken the opportunity to invite him to learn about Jesus, the Great Physician. Telephone conversations ensued. Letters and tracts were sent with hope. Numerous visits made, seemingly had no effect.

Time went by too quickly and he was not saved. You see, he was always too busy. Too busy to come to worship. Too busy to bring his family. Too busy to study the Bible. Too busy to save his soul. Too busy to serve the Lord. It seemed he was always working, or he had just come from work and was tired, or he was just about to go to work. He was busy so, in his mind, he justified his actions and reasoned away his and their souls’ needs. There was just no time then—and there is not time now, but now there is, for him, eternity. Eternity. Endless ages to think about time, 36 years of time to think about two little children for whom he never had the time to “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph.
6:4); and eternity to think about his soul, his most prized possession, which he sold for earthly wages and earthly pleasures. “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mat. 16:26).

His funeral was yesterday. He died without Christ and without hope (Eph. 2:12). For him, eternity is sealed. There is nothing I, the church, or anyone else on earth can do for him now. The burden of that thought is why, at 3:00 A.M., I am writing this article. Perhaps, someone will read it and realize the worth of their soul, the brevity of life and the eternity before them. For those still living, there is yet time and opportunity to obey God, but one day, it will be too late. “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). Friend, do not let death find you “too busy.” Render obedience to the Lord today. Believe in Him (John 8:24). Repent of your sins (Acts 17:30). Confess Him as Christ (Mat. 10:32-33). Be baptized (Mark 16:16). Live faithfully (Rev. 2:10). Heaven will surely be worth it all.

3283 Lynchburg; Memphis, TN 38134

IS IT A SIN TO MISS WORSHIP?

Rod Rutherford

Is it really necessary to attend every service of the church? We are not talking about those who are physically unable to be present because of sickness or the infirmities of age. Certainly God understands their situation and does not expect them to do what is impossible.

But what about reasonably healthy, active members of the church? What if I am on vacation? Or traveling? Or visiting friends or relatives who are not members? What if I just do not feel like going sometimes? Is it okay to miss?

If I am a Christian, a member of the church, I do not belong to myself. I belong to Jesus Christ. I was purchased by His blood (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Christ is my Lord and Master (Acts 2:36; Mat. 7:24). As my Lord, it is His right to command and my obligation to obey (Luke 6:46). I cannot pick and choose which commandments to obey, but I must strive to the best of my ability to do all His will (Mat. 7:21-23; Jam. 2:10).

My Lord has told me to “seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness” (Mat. 6:33). Am I seeking first the kingdom if I let my own pleasure, or convenience, or just plain laziness come between me and His command to worship?

The command to attend the worship services of the church is stated plainly in Hebrews 10:25: “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.” If I willfully forsake the worship assembly of God’s people, I am guilty of deliberate sin. Sin, if unrepented of, leads to spiritual death (Jam. 1:15; Rom. 6:23).

Faithful attendance at all the services of the church, except when prohibited because of illness or extreme circumstances beyond our control, is essential for all of God’s children. The fellowship of brothers and sisters in Christ, the knowledge gained from study of God’s Word, and the strength received from all aspects of worship are as essential to the spiritual health of a Christian as nourishing food, fresh air, and clean water are to the physical health of our bodies.

Those who fall away from the faith seldom do it immediately and deliberately. It is usually done gradually, one step at a time. The way it most often begins is by a gradual forsaking of the assembly. Each time one misses, it becomes easier to miss the next time. Eventually, one ends up back in the world with no regrets. In such a
condition, he is lost eternally (Rom. 6:23; 2 Pet. 2:20-22).

Do you attend every service of the church that you are physically able to attend? If you do not, then you need to repent and seek the forgiveness of God, whose law you have transgressed (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9). You need to confess your sin publically before the church and ask the saints to pray for you (Jam. 5:16).

It is a sin to miss worship, if it is done willfully!

PO Box 5048; Duluth, GA 30096

Remember the “Good Ole Days”? Come Saturday night we got out our “Sunday clothes,” shined our shoes, and prepared our Bible class lesson. Sunday was the “Big Event” of the week. Sunday was reverenced. You cannot be carnal on Saturday night and be spiritual on Sunday morning. Airplane pilots cannot socialize Saturday night if they fly on Sunday. Baseball pitchers cannot socialize Saturday night if they pitch on Sunday. A preacher cannot socialize on Saturday night if he preaches on Sunday.

A Christian ought to be the most rested man in town when he wakes up on Sunday morning. How many football coaches allow their players to stay up all hours on the night before the big game? They know the value of rest if players are to function the next day.

We need to study 1 Corinthians 14, but not simply to debate the charismatic. We are participants in worship. We bring psalms and hymns. We are to participate, not spectate. Tragically, we make the song leader, the preacher, and even God the participants. “Do something for me, God.” (“A goose pimple?”) We have a “receiving mentality” in worship. Wrong. We come to give our praise and worship unto God and the by-product is receiving. The congregation is not the audience—it is the giver. It all starts on Saturday night.

Author Unknown

IN MEMORY OF
LUCRETIA “LOU”
GAFFORD

Our warmest sympathy is extended to the family of Lou Gafford upon her death on September 12, 2000 at the age of 73. Lou was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and had resided in Pensacola, Florida since 1960. She was preceded in death by her husband Buster Gafford and a daughter.

Please keep the Gafford family in your prayers and offer any assistance possible.

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SUNDAY IS MADE OR RUINED ON SATURDAY NIGHT

The Jews were smarter than we give them credit. Their Sabbath began at 6:00 pm on Friday night. What is wrong with us on Sunday? It is Saturday! We so abuse Saturday that we drag in on Sunday. Sunday actually begins Saturday night.

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The Jews were smarter than we give them credit. Their Sabbath began at 6:00 pm on Friday night. What is wrong with us on Sunday? It is Saturday! We so abuse Saturday that we drag in on Sunday. Sunday actually begins Saturday night.

BRIDAL SHOWER

A bridal shower for Jamie Loy will be held Monday, October 2, at 7:00 P.M., in the general purpose building. Contact Jane Herrington for details.
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Harold and Lucille Staples, Jean Flesher, Neva Bryant, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Peter Varsalona (Alice Williams’ father), and Thelma Loy (Jim Loy’s mother).

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Richard and Linda Parker in the death of their granddaughter, Madeline Parker, on September 14, 2000, at the age of 1 month. Madeline passed away due to complications of a pre-mature birth. Please keep the Parker family in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
September 27, 2000
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Louis Herrington
October 4, 2000
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Tim Lamb

MARK THESE DATES
September 24, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
October 1, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.

DIRECTORY CHANGE
Please make the following change to your directory: Michael Hatcher’s cell phone number is 261-7419.
KEEP IT AS IN
THE DAYS OF OLD
Tom Moore

Throughout Amos the prophet of God had painted a very dark and grim picture concerning Israel’s destiny. Israel had become as evil as the heathen nations around about them. Several hundred years before God warned His people of the consequences of trying to be like the nations around them: “Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles” (1 Sam. 8:19-20).

Thus, Israel had become like the nations around about them, just like they wanted. They had changed the worship of God, they had changed God’s organization for them, and no longer desired to be true to the one genuine God.

In the last part of Amos, this burden bearing prophet set forth a glorious ray of hope for the people of God. The prophet looking toward a brighter day, proclaims, “In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the L ORD that doeth this” (Amos 9:11-12).

Amos sees a broken down tabernacle restored to its former glorious state. Amos saw this tabernacle raised up “as in the days of old”; he was looking to a time that the people of God would again be united in truth. Amos, by inspiration, was privileged to look into the future and behold the church of the living God (Acts 15:13-18). The church was to be glorious and true as was
the tabernacle of God “in the days of old.”

Today there are many who are trying to break down the walls of truth in God’s glorious church. Many are striving to be like the nations (denominations) around about them. There are those today who boastfully declared themselves to be “change agents.” These “change agents” are wanting: (1) a “new hermeneutic,” (2) a change in God’s plan of salvation, (3) a change in the way we worship God, (4) a change in the way the church is organized, (5) a change from biblical unity to unity in diversity. They are doing just like the Israel of old—rejecting God’s desires for their own.

About 2,500 years ago, Jeremiah pleaded with God’s people, saying, “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken” (Jer. 6:16-17).

Today, many are saying, “We are change agents, and we will not walk therein.” These change agents are breaking down the walls of truth in the Lord’s church, and thus, are bringing upon themselves “swift destruction” (2 Pet. 2:1).

We must keep the Lord’s church “as in the days of old,” adhering stickily to the “old paths.” We as God’s people must “speak thou the things which become sound doctrine” (Tit. 2:1). We must “earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 3). We must “war a good warfare” (1 Tim. 1:18) and “lay hold on eternal life” (1 Tim. 6:12). We must “speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11), do all by the authority of Christ (Col. 3:17), and hold true and firm to the faithful Word of God (Tit. 1:9).

Solomon long ago pleaded, “Buy the truth, and sell it not” (Pro. 23:23). Please do not sell out to the change agents, keep the church of our Lord as it was in the days of old! Let that old time first century gospel ring true and mighty! Remember, our Lord is “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb. 13:8). 8900 Manchaca Road; Austin, TX 78748

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO OFFER

Marvin L. Weir

In the business world, people want to know about fringe benefits, sick days, vacations, salary, opportunity for promotion, working conditions—and rightly so. Thus, before committing to work for an organization, inquiring minds ask, “What do you have to offer me?” Can you imagine a business answering by saying, “We are biblically based. We strive to have quality Bible classes and to present thought-provoking sermons that challenge people to reflect on their soul’s eternal welfare. We are benevolent minded and desire to help those who have legitimate needs. Our mission is to proclaim the risen Savior to a lost and dying world. We regard the Word of God as being authoritative and precious—our only worthwhile guide as we journey through this life. We enjoy the fellowship with all fellow members of like precious faith. What we have to offer is worth far more than silver or gold. You will be happy to be associated with us.”

I imagine that most would quickly point out—and rightly so—that the above description better describes a church than a business! One might even say, “You cannot expect a business to be a church. People must distinguish between the two institutions, and understand their goals, purposes, and concerns are not the same.”

There is however, another side to the story. On several occasions in recent years I have had those who profess to be members of the Lord’s
church to visit the congregation and ask, “What do you have to offer?” Parents want to know what you can offer them, their teenagers, and their toddlers. They would like for me to say, “We offer a most exciting entertainment and recreational package. There are church softball and bowling teams for the adults. We have a professional youth minister who is well paid to see that the youth are always on the go—ski trips, river floats, and camp-outs. We also have many other forms of entertainment in our state-of-the-art gymnasium—ah, ugh, I mean our family life center. There is mother’s day out three times each week, and our cafeteria provides a meal each Wednesday evening. Our Bible class curriculum is second to none—we offer classes on how to succeed in business, how to cope with stress, and how to manage one’s finances. Our most popular classes are entitled ‘Cooking For Christ’ and ‘Exercising To The Glory Of God.’”

Why is it folks can so clearly see the fallacy in the above description of the business, but cannot see the fallacy in the above description of the church? Many simply do not want to see! They love the lifestyle they are living, and they cater to having all their “felt needs” met! It is as it was in Isaiah’s day when the people said, “to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits” (Isa. 30:10). And, of course, the cowardly liberals and spineless hirelings are quick to provide that which will draw a crowd even if they must forego offering that which leads to eternal life.

5810 Liberty Grove Road; Rowlett, TX 75088
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Harold (in Baptist Hospital, room 320) and Lucille Staples, Jean Flesher, Tim Lamb, Allen Brazell, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), and Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father).

READING/INVITATION
October 4, 2000
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Tim Lamb
October 11, 2000
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Tony Liddell

MARK THESE DATES
October 1, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
October 8, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
October 8, 2000–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
October 15, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
October 15, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
October 22, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Fruit Juice and Canned Fruit
PERSONAL EVANGELISM IS FORGOTTEN

Bob Spurlin

Some years ago this writer had in his possession a gospel tract entitled, “The Forgotten Commandment.” The tract did not have reference to the subject under consideration, however, many commands of God are forgotten. Among such commands is the requirement of personal evangelism. During the mid and late sixties personal evangelism was constantly being stressed by preachers and elders alike. The fruit of this enterprise resulted in numerous conversions to Christ. It was little wonder that churches of Christ became the fastest growing religious group in America.

What are the advantages of personal evangelism? Why should Christians be involved in personal evangelism? Notice the following reasons for Christians engaging in this great work.

1. Personal evangelism is commanded by the Lord Himself.

Jesus met with His disciples for the last time on that secluded mountain of Galilee, and said, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Mat. 28:18-20). This command was given initially to the disciples of Christ, but then Jesus said, “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” The early Christians took this command to heart, pounding on the doors of their fellow man and consequently Paul could say, “the gospel, which ye
have heard," and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven" (Col. 1:23). Visualize if you can, the world being evangelized in less than three decades. Obviously we understand that not everyone obeyed the gospel, but did have the opportunity of hearing it without fear or favor.

We are on the brink of the twenty-first century with mass media, satellites, printing presses, radio, television, the Internet, and much more. Yet, the church of the Lord has become derelict in its evangelistic thrust. Personal evangelism is one person talking to another person about his need for Christ and bringing him to a decision. You do not have to be a rocket scientist to discover why the Lord’s church is not growing. The church is not a they or a them, it is a we or us. Therefore, we must get busy and be compliant to this command of God.

2. Personal evangelism will make the world a better place.

My friend, this writer does not have to inform you about the wretched condition of our world with the infestation of crime, and shootings as well as the perversity that plagues our nation. There has never been a time in human history when personal evangelism needs to be practiced more than now.

The gospel of Christ is the only cure for the plague of sin (Rom. 1:16). When people live by the teachings of Christ, they will respect their neighbor, his property, and practice the golden rule. The teachings of Jesus require people to live differently than what they did previously.

This writer remembers with fondness a period of time when we could leave our doors unlocked, whether we were home or gone. Of course, today we need dead bolt locks and a variety of sophisticated security systems in order to be safe. The gospel of Christ has the power to change
lives and make them productive citizens in society. Saul of Tarsus, fierce persecutor of Christians, became a world renown missionary, because he obeyed Christ. Only the power of the gospel could make this change possible. Paul discussed the sinfulness of the Corinthians and enumerated their sin, prior to the gospel being preached in that pagan city. They were “fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,” hence Corinth was not the ideal city where we would like to raise our families (1 Cor. 6:9-10). Paul gives another example of the gospel’s power, “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11).

The practice of personal evangelism will increase respect for life, property, and the value of telling the truth will be enhanced.

3. Personal evangelism will cause the church to increase in number.

Three thousand souls were obedient to the gospel on Pentecost and like a snowball going down hill the church multiplied exceedingly (Acts 6:7). The idea of sheep stealing, or tantalizing church members to leave their home congregation, and go else where has become more and more common in recent years. We should not be interested in swelling our number by simply snatching other Christians from other places. The Lord’s church is not growing in this manner, but rather it is switching from church of church.

If the church is going to grow, Christians must go out into the highways and byways and compel the people to come in (Luke 14:23). Mass evangelism has certainly had its place, but personal evangelism has always been effective, originating with Jesus’ teaching the Samaritan woman in John chapter four, to Christians teaching their neighbor across the street.

When people are taught the gospel of Christ, they become Christians, and the Lord will add the saved to the church (Acts 2:47). It just makes sense to practice personal evangelism, if for no other reason than to see an increase in the number of disciples (Acts 2:41, 47; 6:7).

122 Brooks Lane; Somerville, AL 35670

NEW ARRIVAL
Louis and Jane Herrington are proud to announce the birth of their grandson, Galen Jared Lundy, born on September 27, 2000, to Damon and Vaydra Lundy of Senatobia, Mississippi. Galen weighed 7 pounds 11 ounces and was 19 1/4 inches long. Our congratulations is extended to all.

NEW WEB SITE ADDRESS
Please make note of the Bellview Church of Christ’s new web site address.
http://www.bellviewcoc.com
Email: bellview@bellviewcoc.com
Preacher:
michaelhatcher@bellviewcoc.com

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Please make note of the Bellview Church of Christ’s new web site address.
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Email: bellview@bellviewcoc.com
Preacher:
michaelhatcher@bellviewcoc.com

PLACED MEMBERSHIP
Dot Lambert and Madeline Graves have placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Their addresses and telephone numbers are: Dot’s: 1500 North 50th Avenue; Pensacola, FL 32506; phone, 453-3545. Madeline’s: 1727 Creighton Road; Pensacola, FL 32504; phone, 505-9483. Please update your directories.
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Harold Staples, Jean Flesher, Tim Lamb, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Thelma Loy (Jim Loy’s mother), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), and Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend).

RESTORED
Dot Lambert was restored into Christ on September 24, 2000, and Madeline Graves was restored into Christ on October 1, 2000. Please keep Dot and Madeline in your prayers and offer them encouragement.

READING/INVITATION
October 11, 2000
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Tony Liddell
October 18, 2000
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

MARK THESE DATES
October 8, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
October 8, 2000–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
October 15, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
October 15, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
October 22, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Vegetable and Chicken Soups
EXERCISES FOR A STRONG FAITH
Eddie Whitten

The Lord had related the account of the rich man and Lazarus, in Luke 16:19-31. As chapter 17 opens, Jesus speaks to His disciples about faith. He said that it was impossible to prevent offenses from coming, but “woe unto him, through whom they come” (Luke 17:1). He gives the great injunction to forgive those through whom offenses come if they ask forgiveness. This is very hard for men to do. The apostles evidently recognized this weakness of the flesh and “said unto the Lord, Increase our faith” (Luke 17:5).

It is evident that men cannot overcome the power of Satan by himself. Mere mortal men must have something stronger than human strength to resist his carnal reactions to life.

Spiritual exercise is necessary for spiritual growth. “But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:14). Every part of the human anatomy must have exercise to function properly and so must the spiritual body.

How, then can one forgive another who has sinned against him and who has asked forgiveness? He may need to do as the apostles: Say, “Lord, increase our faith.” How can this be done?

Exercises for a strong faith involve—

1. Humility. Pride will be the downfall of many people. John named pride as one of the three sources of sin (1 John 2:15). He said those who are controlled by pride are “not of the Father, but of the world.” Jesus rebuked the...
proud Pharisees: “And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (Mat. 23:12). It takes a big person (humble person) to put aside hurt feelings and resentment to accept into full fellowship one who has sinned against him, who now asks forgiveness. Faith is strengthened when a person can swallow his pride and embrace the penitent brother and sister with a heart of love and sincerity. The more one employs this exercise for a strong faith, the greater it grows.

2. Patience. James writes, “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (Jam. 1:2-4). Peter listed patience as one of the virtues of a Christian (2 Pet. 1:6). Paul advised Timothy to flee these (evil) things and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness (1 Tim. 6:11). The writer of Hebrews admonished Christians to “run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:1). Patience is a virtue of Christian ethics. One who exercises patience in his everyday activities is able to discern that which is important and of spiritual value. He quickly learns the true values of life do not include rash and compulsive judgments likely to result in regret.

3. Service. Faith is strengthened when put into practice. It is a strange phenomenon that helping someone else makes one feel better about one’s self. An effective antidote for self-pity is to visit someone who needs attention. A person in need is encouraged by the attention given, but the giver’s faith is greatly strengthened when he gives God the glory for the encouragement. Service is one of the visible manifestations of the Christian life. People see the good done; the giver of the good deed and the motivation for the action, which is God. Christianity involves giving one’s time, talent, energy, as well as money. Giving is service in the Master’s kingdom. One who feels he can belong to the church of our Lord and fail to serve is laboring under a false premise. The more we serve, the stronger our faith becomes.

4. Loyalty. Standing true to our convictions in times of trouble, trial, stress, or persecution strengthens our faith. It is impossible for one to have a clear conscience knowing he has betrayed his Master. Judas Iscariot hanged himself knowing he had betrayed Jesus. We call it living with one’s self. It is a hard thing to bear the guilt of betrayal. Paul wrote, “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong” (1 Cor. 16:13). Men are rewarded for loyalty; never for betrayal.

Conclusion. Those who have expressed their desire to become a Christian have made a statement to all men that they have committed their lives as a believer and follower of Jesus. To accomplish their commitment demands great faith. Those not having such faith soon falter and fall back into the world. Having a great faith requires humility, patience, service, and loyalty. With these he can withstand the “fiery darts of the wicked” (Read Eph. 6:10-18).

WHO OR WHAT IS RIGHT?
Jeff Blanton

When children are seen playing, many times before too long one or the other of the children wants to do something differently or change games or take charge. Then comes the problem. Who is right? Is it right for one to change rules or games just because it is what that individual wants or because he is not getting his way? The way they decide to find out who or what is right is to call on mother or daddy. Mom and dad have
As we get older the same thing, who or what is right, comes into play. In the world, many that have problems decide that they are not being treated right or that someone owes them something for what has happened to them. Often, the way one finds out who or what is right is by turning to a court of law. In the spiritual and moral aspect of life many, like children, decide who or what is right by what “I” want or like. When people do this, the problem is that they turn to the wrong place to find out the correct answer. The correct place to turn for guidance is the Bible for it has all the right answers. “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Pet. 1:3). However, often in the world today people depend on self and not the Scriptures. “O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23).

If people today truly want to find out the answer to who or what is right, all should turn to the Bible. Christ said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Mat. 11:28-30). For us to truly find out who or what is correct we must not depend on our parents, the court of law, or even ourselves, but instead turn back to the Bible. Are you genuinely willing to follow God’s Word? It is the only true way to find out who or what is right. “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17).
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Harold Staples (in Baptist Hospital, room 307), Jean Flesher, Tim Lamb, Ray and Marge Williams, Hairston Brantley (in Sacred Heart Hospital, room 430), Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Maria Bonparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), and Thelma Loy (Jim Loy’s mother).

READING/INVITATION
October 18, 2000
   Reading: Allen Brazell
   Invitation: Fred Stancliff
October 25, 2000
   Reading: Bill Busch
   Invitation: Dusty Wilkes

MARK THESE DATES
October 15, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
October 15, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
October 22, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Vegetable and Chicken Soups

PSALM 117:1-2
“O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD.”
HOW TO BE PERFECTLY MISERABLE

Carl Garner

There are some decisions in life that are made below our conscious level. We do not sit down, ponder the options and then chart a particular course, but gradually and slowly these choices are made. We have all known people with manifold problems, and good reasons to be irritable and depressed, yet they were pleasant, positive, and determined to make the best of whatever comes. They had made one of those choices—perhaps not consciously, but just as certainly—they were going to be happy! On the other hand, we may know others with fewer problems, less reason to complain, yet for them nothing is ever quite good enough. They love to talk about their troubles, and they constantly fret or grumble about something or someone. They, too, have made a decision—they are going to be miserable! And nothing anyone can do is going to deprive them of their enjoyment of that misery. As a service to those who have made the latter decision, the decision to be miserable, we offer the following ten guidelines for being miserable and enjoying it:

1. Think and talk about yourself as much as possible. In every conversation, use “I,” “me,” and “my” as often as possible. Center all your thoughts on your own interest, and whatever you do, do not become interested in or concerned about others. Talk about your troubles to everyone you see. It will not be long before no one will talk (or listen) to you, and then you can really be miserable (Rom. 15:1-2).

2. Measure your happiness by the amount...
of money or possessions you own. If the first suggestion does not sound good to you, then this one will work. Compare what you have (or do not have) with everyone you know. Determine to have more or better than your neighbors, and resolve not to be satisfied until you are successful. Of course, by then your neighbors will have something new, and you can start over (Heb. 13:5; Luke 12:15).

3. Be suspicious and jealous of everyone. Do not trust anyone, especially anyone who might be in competition with you. When another person receives an honor, explain to everyone that you could have done better if you had just tried. To be really miserable, you must envy everyone else their success and their happiness. That makes sense, does it not (Rom. 12:10-16)?

4. Be sensitive, easily offended, and impossible to be comforted. Make everyone walk on eggshells around you for fear of offending you. Make it clear to all you know that you will not take anything off anybody. Look for insults in the comments of others, even when none are intended. And then return the insults, humiliating everyone who speaks to you (1 Cor. 13:4-7).

5. Never forget a criticism or another person’s mistakes. If you want to be miserable, you must have a good memory. When someone has criticized you—or even if you think they have—do not ever forget it or let them forget it. And any time anyone makes a mistake, mark it down and periodically remind them of their blunder. As they say, misery loves company (Phi. 2:2-4; Col. 3:12-14).

6. Think the worst about everyone. If a rumor begins about someone else, tell those you see that you suspected it all along. Expect the worst from others and you will usually get it. If possible reach the worst possible conclusion from seeing the deeds of others. If an action could have been motivated by greed or envy, assume that it is—then tell everybody (Mark 2:14-28).

7. Demand agreement with your opinions. Make sure everyone knows of your opinions, and then show hurt and disappointment when others disagree. Of course, you must make sure everyone knows that your superior wisdom and insight demands acceptance of your conclusions (3 John 9-11).

8. Never forget a good deed you have done. Be proud of your occasional charitable acts, and if people do not know about them—tell them. Sulk and pout if others do not go on and on about your goodness and righteousness, while showing the appropriate gratitude (Mat. 6:1-4).

9. Shirk your duties whenever you can. Let others know that you are too occupied in important things to be responsible for mundane matters such as helping the needy, visiting the sick, or cleaning the church building. If you can not avoid the duties, then put them off till next week or next month.

10. Refuse to forgive or show mercy to anyone. Accept no reasons for failure in others. Make everyone aware of someone else’s mistakes, and refuse to accept anything but perfection from your friends (if you have any left) and associates (Eph. 4:32).

You might be able to be perfectly miserable without following these guidelines, but if you fall short, that is just one more way of achieving depression, despair, and distress. You have got to make your choice and then work at it. Have a miserable day!

PO Box 1; Dripping Springs, TX 78620

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME
ENDS on October 29
Set your clocks back one hour on Saturday evening.
CONSIDER THIS...

*Clint Brown*

God’s people of old were trying to “short change” the Lord by making their public appearance at the temple, periodically making their offerings, and deceiving themselves into believing it was true devotion (Jer. 7:1-7). They trusted in this outward show of religiosity never considering that God looks at the heart (1 Sam. 16:7). Jeremiah was told to go to the temple to rebuke his brethren for this hypocrisy. God make it clear that He was not at all impressed with their worship when their lives were so out of harmony with His will. They were trusting in their own lying words (Jer. 7:8-11) and their worship was in vain.

But consider this: Is there any difference in God’s people then and many of God’s people now? Do we believe that God is pleased with us when we make our weekly appearance and forget the Lord’s will for the rest of the week? This may be trust in “American religiosity” but it is hardly trust in God who demands whole-hearted devotion (Luke 9:23).

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked (Gal. 6:7)! God gave us the best He had and He expects us to give Him our best. Jeremiah’s message is still needed today: “amend your ways and your doings” (Jer. 7:5), and God will restore your soul and cause you to stand in the Judgment. But if you do not...??

PO Box 413
Calera, OK 74730

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**Gospel Meeting with Danny Box**

*October 29 - November 3, 2000*

**Sunday Morning:** 9:00 & 10:00 A.M.; **Sunday - Friday Evenings:** 7:30 P.M.

**Sunday Bible Class:** *What Makes A Strong Church?*

**Sunday A.M. Worship:** *If Everyone Were Just Like Me, What Kind Of Church Would This Church Be?*

**Sunday P.M. Worship:** *Some Hindrances To Church Growth*

**Monday Evening:** *What The Church Of Christ Believes*

**Tuesday Evening:** *Marketing The Church*

**Wednesday Evening:** *Encouraging Words To The Church*

**Thursday Evening:** *Some Things In Hell That Should Be In The Church*

**Friday Evening:** *If We Never Meet Again*

Come and enjoy Christian fellowship and gospel preaching. Covered-dish meal will be provided Monday - Thursday at 6:00 P.M. in the general purpose building.
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Harold Staples (in Baptist Hospital, room 307), Jean Flesher, Tim Lamb, Ray Williams, Hairston Brantley (in Sacred Heart Hospital, room 430), Willo Dean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), and Natalie Carter (Peggy Crowe’s step-mother).

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Jim Loy and his family in the death of his mother, Thelma Loy, on October 15, 2000. Please keep Jim and his family in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
October 25, 2000
Reading: Bill Busch
Invitation: Dusty Wilkes
November 1, 2000
Gospel Meeting with Danny Box

MARK THESE DATES
October 22, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
October 29, 2000–Daylight savings time ends.
November 5, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Vegetable and Chicken Soups
OUR WORLD
WITH BILL CLINE

(Many years ago my father periodically ran a column in the Beacon with the above title. In this column he discussed [and sometimes embellished] things that happened in the congregation and often gave us a chance to laugh at ourselves. Recent events warrant the return of “Our World” so we can chuckle at our leg and foot injuries.)

Autumn Johnson started the whole ordeal with a leg and foot injury when she fell off her horse and broke her ankle. She hobbled around on crutches for a few weeks and soon recovered from the accident. Unfortunately, some have not learned that it takes less time for a sixteen-year-old to recover from her injuries than it does for forty-five- and sixty-something-year-olds to recover from theirs.

Louis Herrington did a backward hand flip off a six-foot stepladder. His wife, Jane, gave him a 10 on the flip, but took a major deduction for the awkward landing. Final score: crutches for several months, and still hobbles like a peg-legged sailor to this day.

Others have opted to allow doctors to inflict serious pain: Jim Loy opted to have a doctor cut off a piece of bone in the heel of his foot. Fran Waters joined Jim Loy in helping their Podiatrist pay for his new Jaguar... her foot. And Marilyn Hall let a doctor talk her into letting him drill a hole in her hip; and gonna let him do the other.

If dropping things on your foot and breaking bones were an Olympic sport, Bellview would have won the gold. Just this morning I noted Jean Cline’s big toe on her right foot is almost back to normal. It has taken nearly a full year for the
blackened toenail to grow out and be replaced by
a shiny pink new nail. Floy Dell Lindesmith noted
that her big toe, aside from a slightly flattened
shape, looks every bit as good as its associates: the piggy who stayed home, the piggy who had roast beef, the piggy who had none, and the piggy who went “wee wee wee” all the way home. Actually, that last little piggy did not say anything. It was Floy Dell who went “Wee wee wee!” all the way home when she broke it a few months ago.

And now, not to be outdone by any of his fellow brothers and sisters at Bellview, Elward Brantley fell off the side of a mountain and broke his ankle.

Rumor has it that Elward’s younger brother, Paul, told him that to hike down a steep grade all you had to do was buy tennis shoes with the little suction cups on the soles. Furthermore, it is alleged that Paul told him to cut little slits in the canvas of new shoes so that in an emergency he could thrust some of his toes through the slits and get better traction.

The details are sketchy at this time; however, we speculate this is what happened. On their way to the Grand Canyon, Elward and Dot stopped at a ski resort in Albuquerque, New Mexico. They took the ski lift to the top of the mountain and decided to walk back down. As Elward and Dot were making their way down the unexplored backside of the mountain, they came across a huge slab of rock approximately fifty feet square and slanting down to a drop-off. The surface of the rock was smooth and covered with the morning dew. Elward started walking straight across the rock. Dot stopped.

“What did you stop for?” Elward asked, turning around about halfway across the slab.
PSALM 91:1-2

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.”

These shoes don’t slide on rock. The little suction cups on the soles, they grab right onto the...”

Elward was sliding.

“...this dew makes it a little slick, he said.

“I better...”

By now Elward was really sliding. He gave up all efforts at further conversation and devoted his full attention to scrambling back up the rock. The problem was that no matter how fast and furious Elward’s scramble was, his downward rate of slide seemed to be greater by about an inch per second. Dot had no idea how much of a drop awaited him at the brink of the slab—a hundred feet, half a mile? Dot remembered all the mountain-climbing movies she had ever seen where a climber loses his grip and plummets downward until he is just a tiny, noisy speck hurrying toward the patchwork farmlands below. From the look on his face, she knew Elward was remembering the same movies. Then she noticed that Elward had forgotten to stick his toes out through the slits in his shoes.

“Stick out your toes, Elward,” she screamed at him. “Stick out your toes!”

Elward’s toes suddenly emerged from the slits like little pink landing gear, and Dot has to admit that he did some marvelous things with his toes—in fact, just about everything it is possible to do with tennis shoes, toes, and rock. But nothing worked.

Elward could have gotten seriously injured if a nice boulder did not soften his landing and keep him from falling further down the mountain.

We regret Dot did not have the family video running while the whole ordeal unfolded. If Elward could have been on tape, they could have won the $100,000 grand prize on America’s Funniest Home Videos.

Whatever the fascination is this year with leg and foot injuries, we hope that it is soon over and everyone can get off their crutches at Bellview.

“EVIL GOOD, AND GOOD EVIL”

Ed Smith

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isa. 5:20). Sin by any other name is still “Sin.” That is exactly what we have done as a nation. We have ridiculed absolute truth and called it moral pluralism. We have worshiped other gods and called it multiculturalism. We have endorsed perversion and called it alternative lifestyle. We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery. We have neglected the needy and called it self-preservation. We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare. We have killed our unborn and called it choice. We have bombed the abortion clinics and called it justifiable. We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem. We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression. We have ridiculed the time-honored values or our forefathers and called it enlightenment. If we are a government “of the people and by the people” then we as a people have lost sight of the principles of righteousness that will exalt a nation. If we in the homes of America will clean up the immoral influence and let the world about us know what is right then we may again enjoy the fruits of “One Nation Under God.”

Copied
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Harold Staples (in Baptist Hospital, room 450), Jean Flesher, Ray Williams, Hairston Brantley (in Tandem Rehab, room 508), Eddie McLeod, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Natalie Carter (Peggy Crowe’s step-mother).

READING/INVITATION
November 1, 2000
Gospel Meeting with Danny Box
November 8, 2000
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Henry Born

MARK THESE DATES
November 5, 2000—Visitation Group 1
assignment cards handed out.
November 12, 2000—Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
November 19, 2000—Visitation Group 3
assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Vegetable and Chicken Soups

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS
TIME ENDS
Daylight savings time ends Sunday, October 29. Set your clocks back one hour on Saturday evening.
ANOTHER GENERATION

Barry M. Grider

In August 1955, the following was written by Senator Albert Gore, Sr., of Tennessee, in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Gospel Advocate:

May I congratulate you and your staff upon this splendid publication which contains the chronology of editors and ministers who have exerted such a lasting influence for good and for the furtherance of Christian living not only in our State but throughout the South and the Nation.

Mr. Gore’s remarks concerning morality stand in stark contrast to his son, Albert Gore, Jr., Vice President of the United States, who is presently seeking our nation’s highest office.

In last week's presidential debate with Governor George W. Bush of Texas, Mr. Gore, while not endorsing gay marriage, did appear to support some form of civic union between homosexual couples. This should not be surprising considering some of the comments of the Vice President in recent years.

Many Christians and promoters of morality were appalled when the television series “Ellen” promoted an openly lesbian character in the lead role. At the time, Mr. Gore said that the TV character forced Americans to “look at sexual orientation in a more open light.” Earlier this year while campaigning for the presidency, the Vice President relayed his vigorous support for gays and lesbians in the following quote:

But we have taken the inner meaning and power of our founding documents and the spirit of America and breathed new life into them in each new generation. And the time has come for gays and lesbians to be recognized within the circle of human dignity.
IN MEMORY OF HAROLD JOSEPH STAPLES, SR.

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:7).

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Lucille Staples and her family in the death of her husband, Harold, on October 29, 2000. Harold Staples, 77, went to be with his Lord following a courageous battle with cancer. He was an active member of the Bellview Church of Christ, having put on Christ in baptism in 1993. He was a loving and devoted husband and father.

Harold was a veteran of World War II, serving in the Marine Corps. Following the war, he continued to serve his country in the Army Reserves. Harold retired in 1984, after 42 years, from the Naval Air Rework Facility at NAS Pensacola. While retired, he enjoyed fishing and was an avid bird watcher.

Please keep Lucille and her family in your prayers and assist them in any way possible.
we do not advocate physical violence toward any homosexual. Yet, as Christians, we can never dignify such perverted behavior. Rather, with love, we reach out to them, as with all sinners, with the saving gospel of Christ (Rom. 3:23; 6:23). There is a better way. It is to be found in the Savior. “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind [homosexuals], nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:9-11). Repentance is the answer, Mr. Gore, not acceptance.

WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?

Danny Box

All across our country many people have started wearing bracelets or other items with the following letters on them, WWJD. These letters stand for What Would Jesus Do, and are there to remind the person that when faced with temptation to do evil, they should first stop and ask themselves what Jesus would do, and then follow His lead to overcome that temptation. As I took notice of these letters, WWJD, the following thoughts came to mind.

What would Jesus do if someone asked Him what they had to do to be saved? Jesus would not hesitate to tell someone what they needed to do. He would tell them they had to Hear the Word (Rom. 10:17). He then would tell them that they had to Believe that Word (John 8:24). Then He would tell them that they had to Repent of their sins (Luke 13:3). The Lord would then let the person know that they had to Confess Him as Lord before men (Rom. 10:10). And finally the Lord would tell someone that to be saved they had to be Baptized in His name for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21). He would not tell them that all they had to do was accept Him as their personal Savior and they would be saved, nor would He tell them that baptism was only an outward sign of an inward grace and not essential for salvation. Jesus would tell them the plain unadulterated truth according to God’s inspired Word, and that is what we should do!

What would Jesus do if confronted by temptations? While living on earth, our Lord was confronted by all temptations that are common to man (Heb. 4:15), yet He was without sin. How did Jesus overcome His temptations? First, He knew that He did not have to handle them by Himself (1 Pet. 5:7; Phi. 4:13). Second, He used the Holy Scriptures to help Him overcome His temptations (Mat. 4:1-11; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). Then third, He was able to overcome because He resisted the devil instead of giving in (Jam. 4:7). We, too, can overcome our temptations if we keep in mind that with all temptations given, there is also a way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13).

What would Jesus do when opposed by false teachers? Our Lord warned us about false teachers (Mat. 7:15; 24:11; Acts 20:29-30). Our Lord and the apostles confronted the false teacher, they continued to “preach the word,” they had no fellowship with the false teacher, and they marked those who taught false doctrine (Mat. 23; 2 John 9-11; Rom. 17:2; 2 The. 3:14-15). Why do we not do as the Lord did when we are confronted with those who would pervert the gospel of our Lord?

10985 Country Haven; Cottondale, AL 35453
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley, Eddie McLeod, Elward Brantley, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Natalie Carter (Peggy Crowe’s step-mother), and Jerry Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother-in-law).

READING/INVITATION
November 8, 2000
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Henry Born
November 15, 2000
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Paul Brantley

MARK THESE DATES
November 5, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
November 12, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
November 12, 2000–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
November 19, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
November 19, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
November 26, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat
SCIENTIFIC FOREKNOWLEDGE AND BIBLICAL ACCURACY

Bert Thompson

One of the most arresting evidences of the Bible’s inspiration is the unique scientific foreknowledge it contains. From anthropology to zoology, the Bible presents accurate scientific information, and provides rules, regulations, or prohibitions based on that information. Examples abound, only two of which shall be examined here.

While the Old Testament placed no restrictions on the eating of fruits and vegetables, severe limitations were given for the eating of certain meats. Among land animals, only those that had a split hoof and chewed the cud were approved as edible (Lev. 11:3). Of those water-living animals, only those with fins and scales were acceptable (Lev. 11:9); of interest is the fact that poisonous fish have no scales. Birds of prey were prohibited, as were almost all insects. But perhaps the best known among these biblical prohibitions was eating the meat of the pig; to the Jew, pork was considered unclean, and thus inedible.

There is good reason for such a prohibition. The pig is a scavenger, and as such eats almost anything. In so doing, on occasion it ingests the parasite *Trichinella spiralis*, which is the cause of trichinosis in humans. Pigs also are known carriers (as intermediate hosts) of the tapeworm, *Taenia solium*, and of the parasite *Echinococcus granulosis*, which causes tumors in the liver, lungs, and other parts of the body. Raw or undercooked pork can be very dangerous when con-
BAPTIZED

Johnathan McLeod and Ashton Fillingim were baptized into Christ on November 5, 2000. Please keep them in your prayers and offer encouragement to help them grow as young Christians.

were the Israelites “ahead of the times” in regard to their public health and personal hygiene laws? Archaeologists admit that they have yet to find civilizations as ancient as the Israelites with rules and regulations that could rival those of the Jewish people in regard to complexity and scientific accuracy. In fact, none of the people around the Israelites possessed this kind of advanced public health knowledge. Yet the Jews possessed this, and much more. How can this be explained—apart from the special revelation from God for which they have become so renowned?

Consider an additional case of scientific foreknowledge. For many centuries, man considered the seashore as little more than a shallow, sandy extension that went from one continent to another. Then, in 1873 a group of British scientists, carrying out research in the Pacific Ocean, discovered a “recess” (trench) 35,800 feet deep. A trench is a long, narrow depression in the ocean floor that looks like an enormous gash with extremely steep sides. The topography and depth of these trenches are used to distinguish them from other valleys and depressions in the oceans. Three major oceans have trenches in them, but the Pacific is most renowned for such. Extensive studies have been done on the Marianas Trench off the coast of Guam. In fact, several years ago a research team, using the bathyscaph Trieste, traveled almost seven miles down into one trench.

The Bible, however, once again contained such knowledge long before mankind discovered it. Biblical scholars acknowledge that the use of the Hebrew word tehom (“abyssal depth”—see Gen. 7:11) may well be a reference to such trenches. Job was asked by God, “Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? Or hast thou walked in the recesses of the deep?” (Job 38:16). Psalm 135:6 speaks of God as being even in “the deep.” We now know—thanks to years of intense, successful scientific investigations—that such “recesses” actually do occur in the oceans of our planet. Admittedly, our knowledge of these matters resulted from impressive technological achievements covering many generations. But where did the writer of the book of Job obtain his information? And how did the psalmist know to use a word that depicted oceanic depths?

Can these instances of scientific foreknowledge, and numerous others that the Bible contains, be counted as mere “lucky guesses”? Hardly! The simple fact of the matter is that the Bible’s awareness of, and accuracy in, scientific matters is indeed one of the most impressive evidences available to document the truthfulness of its claim of divine inspiration.

JUST ONE GENERATION AWAY

David Brown

The days of Joshua are noted for Israel’s faithfulness to the Lord. So great was his influence for good that “the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua” (Jud. 2:7). Following Joshua’s death Israel continued to serve God under the elders that outlived Joshua. However,
following the death of those elders “there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord” (Jud. 2:10). One generation served the Lord—the next did not. How did it happen?

Let us note the progression of error within fleshly Israel of old and thereby we will see that such works the same way in spiritual Israel, the church.

(1) Israel “knew not the Lord” (Jud. 2:10).

When men are ignorant of the will of God they are open to any and all forms of error (Hos. 4:6; 2 The. 2:10-12; 2 Tim. 2:15). This first step prepares the people for the second.

(2) Israel forsook God. “And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt” (Jud. 2:12).

Ignorant of God’s standard of conduct they ceased serving Him. Step two prepared them for the third one.

(3) Israel served “the gods of the people that were round about them” (Jud. 2:12). Pagan ideas took the place of God’s will, bringing about pagan practices in Israel. Hence, immorality abounded and “every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Jud. 17:6)

(4) God punished Israel. “And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about” (Jud. 2:14). The law of sowing and reaping produced its fruit.

To the church in Ephesus Paul wrote, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal. 6:7-8).

Hence, when apostasy takes place in spiritual Israel it takes the same steps as it did in ancient Israel. No hope for a faithful church is possible where there is spiritual illiteracy.

Today, the Lord’s church is not one generation away from apostasy. We are in the midst of the generation that has forsaken the Lord God of our fathers. While God’s people of yesterday returned to the Bible as their only rule of faith and practice, today many members of the church of Christ are rushing head long back into denominationalism. Our faithful ancestors restored the ancient order of things. Our generation seeks to serve “the gods of the people...round about them” (Jud. 2:12) and thereby become just another denomination. Liberalism (loosening men from what God in His Word had bound on them) is another way of saying denominationalism. To be one is to bring about the other.

PO Box 39; Spring, TX 77383

THANKS TO OUR TEACHERS

I do not think that I will ever forget my early Bible School teacher. I remember the memory verse cards that she would give to us and use as a teaching guide. Maybe some of you can remember these as well (If you do not mind admitting your age?). She always seemed interested in me and the rest of the class. I always looked forward to seeing her. And she was there at every service.

Sometimes teachers are overlooked. I do not think that this is an intentional thing, it is just that students often take them for granted. But one thing is for sure, they are mighty special people. Why do not we as parents take just a moment and tell the Bible class teachers how much we appreciate them for the good job that they are doing.

When the Bible class teacher and the home teacher (parents) are working hand-in-hand much good will be accomplished. The church of the future is being developed in those two classrooms.

I just wanted to say thank you very much!

Author Unknown
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley, Elward Brantley, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), and Natalie Carter (Peggy Crowe’s step-mother).

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Joyce Johnson and her family in the death of her brother-in-law, Jerry Johnson, on October 24, 2000. Please keep them in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
November 15, 2000
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Paul Brantley
November 22, 2000
Reading: Bill Gallaher
Invitation: Scot Brazell

MARK THESE DATES
November 12, 2000–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
November 19, 2000–Visitation Group 3
assignment cards handed out.
November 26, 2000–Visitation Group 1
assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat
WHEN ANGER BECOMES SINFUL

Barry Grider

“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city” (Pro. 16:32).

Anger is something all must seek to control. If not, such can mar friendships, destroy homes, divide churches, and can even lead to death. Christ wants to dwell in our hearts by faith (Eph. 3:17), and He wants to help us with our struggles, including anger. He, too, has been tempted in every way, similar to you and me (Heb. 9:15). So Jesus was tempted with anger. Consider Jesus when He went unto His own people and brought them the good news of human redemption, they rejected Him (John 1:11); yet He did not get angry. All the way to the cross, He never lost control of His temper. Someone says, “But Jesus did get angry.” Yes, on one occasion, His anger was stirred so much that He drove out the moneychangers from the temple (Mat. 21:13). But Jesus’ wrath was kindled because His Father’s house was made a den of thieves. Jesus got angry over traditions and customs of men, or when His Father’s truth was attacked, or when the weak and less fortunate were abused. This ought to cause each Christian to be angry as well.

The Bible student should pay close attention to this statement by the apostle Paul, “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil”(Eph. 4:26-27). As seen from the passage, anger itself is not always sinful; however, losing control of one’s temperament is always wrong. Jesus was always in control of every situation. He never got angry when He personally was attacked. Often
we are just the opposite. If someone attacks us, we get angry and mad. But if someone attacks Christ, the church, the truth, or the weak, we couldn’t care less.

The Proverbs writer says learn to control your anger and when you do, you are better than mighty men. This indicates there is work involved in controlling anger. Consider that the first step in controlling your anger involves knowing yourself. Realize that you could be wrong about something and the person who is critical of you may be right. “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.” (Pro. 12:15). Find out what makes you angry. This could be done by thinking about what brings you happiness and joy and then what destroys this. In dealing with anger, recognize that you are human and you have weaknesses like other people. Anger could be one of your weak areas. Don’t deny it, rather admit it (1 John 1:8). Once you recognize anger as a flaw in your character, you can begin working to control it.

Not only should you stop and consider yourself, but examine the one who has made you angry, in a fair manner. Try to get into his mind and see what has caused him to act or react in such a way toward you. Instead of wanting to punish the individual, think about helping him. The person may be suffering in a way you do not realize and he is taking his frustrations out on you. An old Indian expression goes, “Never judge a man till you have walked a mile in his moccasins.” Instead of looking at issues from your own perspective, look at the issues from your attacker’s angle.

Even if you are subject to a cruel and unfair attack, always respond properly. The wise man stated, “A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger” (Pro. 15:1). Try lowering your voice inflection as your attacker elevates his. And always remember to be ready to forgive.

How serious is it to lose your cool? If you live a life of anger, it will negatively affect your health. Satan will use anger to destroy your home. Because of anger, husbands and wives divorce. Through anger, parents are often alienated from their children. Anger can cost you your job and your dearest friends. Most importantly, anger interrupts your fellowship with God. He wants you to have peace in your soul. He wants you to trust Him, even when you are wronged.

So when you are tempted to lose control of your temper, remember to draw near to God. Talk to Him in prayer about what makes you angry. You will instantly obtain relief from your ill feelings. After you have talked with God, avoid those thoughts that rekindle unpleasant memories. Try and think of the good in others, including your enemies. Be open to God’s Word and let it guide you and your emotions. When you do, your heart will be filled with love and you will soon conquer anger and hostility.

Think About It...
It is infinitely better to rock the boat contending for the truth, than to wreck the boat through compromise with error.

Author Unknown

The Crowd Was Wrong!

Michael Light

In Matthew 7:13–14, Jesus referred to the ultimate destruction that awaits most of the world. Historically the same has been true. We should never let the feelings of the majority determine what we will and will not do. Truth will not be
stifled by error forever.

Adam Thompson of Cincinnati, Ohio filled the first bathtub in the United States in 1842. Doctors predicted rheumatism and inflammation of the lungs from the new device. Cities set extra heavy water rates to discourage its use, and a ban on bathtubs was published in Philadelphia that year. The crowd was wrong!

In 1896 England had a law forbidding any power driven vehicle from traveling over four miles per hour on public highways. Furthermore, it was required that any such vehicle, be preceded by a man bearing a red flag. The crowd was wrong!

Edward Jenner, who discovered vaccination, was jeered. Some men went so far as to predict the transferal of all animal diseases to the human race. Yet, Jenner’s vaccination eliminated the small pox scourge. The crowd was wrong!

Robert Fulton received only words of discouragement from his contemporaries as he worked on his steamboat. Westinghouse was called a fool for thinking a train could be stopped with air brakes. Goodyear was booed by everyone but his wife, as he worked for over ten years in vulcanizing rubber. The crowd was wrong!

And remember Noah? We could go on and on about people who had to find the strength to pursue truth, while being made fun of or discouraged in some way. The majority of the worlds population died in that flood. The crowd was wrong!

The majority never has and never will follow God’s will. They either ignore Him completely or claim to follow Him, and do so half-heartedly. Their lives are fed with temporary pleasures while the true and living God invites men to partake of a real banquet which will feed the soul for eternity. Do not follow the crowd, the crowd is wrong!

WHERE GOD AIN’T
He was just a little lad.
And on the week’s first day,
Was wandering home from Sunday School
And dawdling on the way.

He scuffed his shoes into the grass;
He found a caterpillar;
He found a fluffy milkweed pod,
And flew out all the filler.

A bird’s nest in a tree o’er head
So wisely placed and high,
Was just another wonder
That caught his eager eye.

A neighbor watched his zig-zag course,
And hailed him from the lawn;
Asked him where he’d been that day,
And what was going on.

“Oh, I’ve been to Sunday School.
(He carefully turned a sod
And found a snail beneath it);
I’ve learned a lot about God.”

“M’m’m, a very fine way,” the neighbor said,
“For a boy to spend his time;
If you’ll tell me where God is,
I’ll give you a brand new dime.”

Quick as a flash his answer came!
Nor were his accents faint—
“I’ll give you a dollar, Mister,
If you tell me where God ain’t.”

Author Unknown
SICK
Please remember in your prayers:
Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley, Elward Brantley, Jerry Lindesmith, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Natalie Carter (Peggy Crowe’s step-mother), Peter Varsalona (Alice Williams’ father), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), and Danny Elmore (Allen Brazell’s brother-in-law).

RESTORED
Bill Cline was restored into Christ on November 13, 2000. Please keep him in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
November 22, 2000
Reading: Bill Gallaher
Invitation: Scot Brazell

November 29, 2000
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Bill Cline

MARK THESE DATES
November 19, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
November 19, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
November 26, 2000–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat
IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS

Barry M. Grider

On November 23, 2000, Americans will once again celebrate a national day of thanksgiving. It is a day set aside to give thanks unto God for our great heritage and the many blessings He bestows upon us. For many, Thanksgiving is simply a day off from work. It is a time to overeat, enjoy parades and ball games, and visit friends and relatives. However, for the child of God, every day is truly Thanksgiving Day. Paul admonished, “In everything give thanks” (1 Th. 5:18). For what does the child of God give thanks?

Give thanks for God’s goodness and mercy (1 Chr. 16:34).
Give thanks for God’s holiness (Psa. 30:4).
Give thanks for God’s creation (Psa. 75:1).
Give thanks for God’s deeds (Psa. 105:1).
Give thanks for God’s righteous judgment (Psa. 119:62).
Give thanks for our food (Mat. 15:36).
Give thanks for the body and blood of Jesus (Mat. 26:26-28).
Give thanks for the victory found in Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:57).
Give thanks for the care and compassion of others (2 Cor. 8:16).
Give thanks for God’s unspeakable gift—Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 9:15).
Give thanks for our brethren (Eph. 1:16).
Give thanks for all things (Eph. 5:20).
Give thanks for the church (Col. 1:12-13).
Give thanks for all men (1 Tim. 2:1).
Give thanks for civil authorities (1 Tim. 2:2).
Give thanks for the hope of heaven (Rev. 11:16-17).
Surely we can think of countless other blessings for which we should give thanks. These are just a few of those mentioned in the Holy Scriptures. As His children, let us begin today thanking God for His many favors.
3950 Forest Hill Irene Road
Memphis, TN 38125

JESUS SAID, LEARN FROM ME
Noah A. Hackworth

In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” The phrase “learn of me” is better rendered “learn from me” (μαθητε ἀπὸ ἐμοῦ). In this passage alone we have the sum and substance of true discipleship. What does it really take to be a disciple of Jesus?

First, it requires learning. Jesus said, “learn from me.” If we would be disciples of Jesus we must sit at His feet and learn from Him. A disciple (μαθητής) is literally a learner (from μανθάω, to learn, from a root μαθή, indicating thought accomplished by endeavour). “Disciple” occurs only in the Gospels and Acts and always implies a pupil of someone in contrast to teacher, and the pupil not only accepts views but puts them into practice. Unfortunately, there are those who are “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim. 3:6-7). When we “learn from Christ” we not only learn about Christ Himself but we apply this knowledge to the extent that we live differently from other people. Learning is a continual process. We learn, we come to a knowledge of the truth, but we continue to “push back the frontiers of knowledge.” As we learn, our desire for more knowledge increases.

Second, discipleship requires us to “imbibe”...
the spirit of Christ. *Imbibe* means “to take in as if by drinking” (cf., 1 Cor. 12:13). The spirit of Christ is the spirit of service. Jesus “who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men” (Phi. 2:6-7). The disciple of Jesus must imbibe Jesus’ spirit.

Third, the disciple of Christ is eager to imitate His example, (i.e., those things that are binding). If something is an example, I suppose it is binding. Good brethren have taught us to distinguish between “an account of an action” and “an example.” An “account of an action” is not necessarily binding, but an “example” appears to be. So, as Christ’s disciples we want to imitate Him. Paul said, “Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). The world in which we live must be made to take knowledge of the fact that we have been with Jesus (Acts 4:13).

Fourth, continuance in the Word of the Lord exhibits discipleship. John 8:31 says, “If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples.” Discipleship ceases if we start and quit. We must start and continue. “No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). “If so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and stedfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard” (Col. 1:23).

When Jesus said, “learn from me,” He issued one of the greatest challenges of all time; learning is a voluntary process that pays off with tremendous dividends, but time and patience are required, and only those who have sat at the feet of Jesus, learned from Him, imbied His spirit, and are imitating His example, can navigate safely upon the sea of life.

5342 West La Vida Court; Visalia, CA 93277

**INSLIDING**

During a Gospel Meeting one of the deacons of the church came forward to ask for the prayers of the church. The congregation was electrified, disturbed, and puzzled because they knew the man was such a fine Christian. His life was completely above reproach. His confession was not one of backsliding, but insliding. He stated in substance, “A number of years ago, I was completely out of duty, refusing to attend church and conducting myself in such a way that was not complimentary to the cause of Christ. I came back, not to make confession, but to slip in. I sat on the back row for awhile, gradually moving up a few seats, singing as loudly as anybody else. This continued until I won the confidence of the brethren and they forgot about my sins and appointed me a deacon in the church. Even though the brethren have forgotten, I do not believe God has. God knows that I slipped back in. This time, I am coming forward like the prodigal son saying, “I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and I want to make correction” (Acts 8:22; Jam. 5:16).

**NEW ARRIVAL**

Jerry and Sharon Caine are proud to announce the birth of their granddaughter, Ashley Noel, born on November 15, 2000, to Kelly and Jimmy Kimmons. Ashley weighed 7 pounds 3 ounces and was 21 inches long. Our congratulations is extended to everyone.
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley, Jerry Lindesmith, Sheila Myrick, Ray Dodd, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Natalie Carter (Peggy Crowe’s step-mother), Peter Varsalona (Alice Williams’ father), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), and Danny Elmore (Allen Brazell’s brother-in-law).

READING/INVITATION
November 29, 2000
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Bill Cline
December 6, 2000
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Bill Crowe

MARK THESE DATES
November 26, 2000–Visitation Group 1
assignment cards handed out.
December 3, 2000–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
December 10, 2000–Visitation Group 3
assignment cards handed out.
December 17, 2000–Visitation Group 1
assignment cards handed out.
December 24, 2000–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
December 31, 2000–Visitation Group 3
assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat
SHOULD WE
“CONTEND FOR
THE FAITH”?

Steve Ellis

Jude 3 exhorts faithful Christians to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Courageous soldiers of the cross have ever recognized and fulfilled this sacred duty without fear or favor. When Paul encountered misconduct, even on the part of a fellow apostle and one of his most beloved collaborators, he rebuked them because “they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel” (Gal. 2:14). The fact that Peter was an apostle did not deter Paul from condemning his prejudicial behavior “to the face, because he was to be blamed” (Gal. 2:11). And the fact that Barnabas had vouched for Paul’s sincerity in obeying the gospel (Acts 9:27), recruited Paul to help with the work at Antioch (Acts 11:25-26), and accompanied him on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-2) did not influence Paul to overlook his sin (Gal. 2:13). As trustees of sacred truth, Jude taught that we should evidence this same devotion to duty.

In spite of such plain teaching on this important subject, some brethren are reluctant or unwilling to contend for the faith. Perhaps the most prevalent reason for this is that many suffer from a perverted view of love. Like misinformed parents who practice a permissive approach to child-rearing, some brethren feel that no discipline and love are more compatible than discipline exhibited in a framework of love. Those who would prefer to sweep all sin under a rose-colored rug of love usually feel that real love and plain Bible-based preaching are mutually exclusive. These non-
contenders consider spineless, impotent, watered-down speech-making to be a sweet exhibition of love in the pulpit. The greatest fan of this kind of pseudo-preaching is Satan. He knows that such will not deliver the saving gospel to those who hear it, nor true New Testament Christianity to succeeding generations. Altering God’s message for any reason is a perversion of love for God, truth, and the soul of the hearers (Gal. 1:6-10).

There are several other reasons why some do not wish to contend for the faith. Some simply do not want to be involved in controversy of any kind. They would rather see the truth subverted than to overcome their natural temperament and take a stand. Those of this persuasion have a pronounced aversion to rocking boats and prefer peaceful co-existence with error to contending for the faith. Others are hesitant to staunchly defend a divine standard of behavior because we live in an age of relativism and existentialism when most people believe one should be permitted to “do his own thing.” Still others are really working to transform the church of Christ into a liberal, “anything goes” denominational body. They expend a great deal of energy in attempting to discredit those who are contending for the faith by trying to convince people that it is “unloving” to be so serious about obeying the Lord.

Because some have indeed contended in an improper fashion and spirit, we must not cease forcefully to declare and defend “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). The church at Corinth demonstrated real love and concern for their incestuous brother, not while they were puffed up and condoned his sin, but when they disciplined him (1 Cor. 5). Paul would have shown no love for the cause of Christ had he simply ignored the blasphemous behavior of Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Tim. 19-20).

Being human, it is impossible for us to contend for the faith in a manner that will please everyone. There is little chance that proponents of error and persistent practitioners of sin will ever be overjoyed by a plain denunciation of their behavior. Moreover, it is not easy to maintain a perfectly balanced blend of antagonism toward error and love for the one in error. Nevertheless, we must not permit this realization to render us compromisers of the faith rather than contenders for the faith. Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). His commandments undeniably include contending for the faith (Jude 3), and against such things as immorality (Col. 3:5-11), denominationalism (John 17:20-21), false teachers (1 John 4:1), and every false doctrine (Psa. 119:104).

THE CHURCH PRIOR TO ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

There is a mind-set in some of the religious world today that affirms that A. Campbell founded the church of Christ. This of course is a false assumption. The church of Christ had its grand beginning in the first century (Acts 2:47; 20:28; Rom. 16:16). Some even use Campbellite to identify the body of Christ. They either use it without understanding or in a derogatory manner. The following is taken from a research paper by a Dr. Robinson, principle of Overdale College, Birmingham, England.

“In the Furness District of Lancashire, in Northwest England, there existed in 1669, during the reign of Charles II, a group of eight churches of Christ...An old minute-book has been found of year 1669, and it shows that they called themselves by the name Church of Christ, practiced baptism by immersion, 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 of Fife District of Scotland, was preaching New Testament Christianity twenty-five years before Thomas Campbell (Alexander Campbell’s father) was born.”

Since there is documentation which shows that the church of Christ was in these places before Alexander Campbell, we can know that he did not start the church. However, the Bible clearly shows that it began on the first Pentecost after Christ’s resurrection (Acts 2). There is one church (Eph. 4:4; 1:22-23) and Christ founded it. All else is false.

Author Unknown

KATHRYN KUHLMAN AND MIRACLES

Brad Price

Last Sunday I taught the adult Bible class in Michigan City, IN. After the class concluded, I found a place to sit and wait for the worship service to begin. Right after I sat down, a woman took out a pen and paper and wrote a quick note. She then motioned for me to take it from her. This note is quoted in the next paragraph.

“I had Kathryn Kuhlman pray for my shoulders in Shrine Hall in California. She pushed you down—I braced myself and didn’t fall. My shoulder is much worse today.”

Why did I receive this note? The class I taught dealt with Bible miracles and modern claims. This woman made no comments during the class, but afterwards, she wanted me to know about her medical problem. She also wanted me to know that Kathryn Kuhlman did not heal her.

It was time for the worship service to begin; so I could not speak to this sister at length. However, I sensed that she had some other things to tell me; so I decided to see her after the service concluded.

When the two of us again spoke, I learned that this Christian had been a nurse in a hospital. Miracle crusades had come to the city where she had worked as a nurse. This woman related what many of us have seen on television—people throw away their crutches, dispose of needed medications, etc.

This nurse also saw something that I and many of you have never seen. The people who threw away their crutches and needed medications returned to the hospital a few days after being “healed.” Crutches needed to be replaced. Prescriptions needed to be rewritten. The nurse not only saw medical devices and prescriptions replaced; she saw irreparable damage done to the people who had abandoned needed medical treatment.

In one case there was a young boy who wore a leg brace. With continued treatments he could have probably walked. A miracle preacher said that this boy was cured—the leg brace could be throw away. It was. Unfortunately, there was no miracle. This boy had to return to the hospital, his condition was much worse, and his chance of walking was virtually zero.

My note sender also related that doctors had run ads in local newspapers warning people to avoid the alleged healings of the Pentecostal movement.

Not only does the Bible prove that miracles are no longer available, our hospitals offer the same proof. If Pentecostalism trickery were found outside the area of religion, people would be charged with medical malpractice, fraud, deception, and in some cases, murder. My thanks to the sister who wrote a quick but informative note.

Copied
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley, Jerry Lindesmith, Sheila Myrick, Ray Dodd, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Peter Varsalona (Alice Williams’ father), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), and Danny Elmore (Allen Brazell’s brother-in-law).

READING/INVITATION
December 6, 2000
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Bill Crowe
December 13, 2000
Reading: Brantley Johnson
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

MARK THESE DATES
December 3, 2000–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
December 10, 2000–Visitation Group 3
assignment cards handed out.
December 10, 2000–Deacons’ meeting at
5:00 P.M., in room 7.
December 17, 2000–Visitation Group 1
assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat

ADDRESS CHANGE
Ray and Dot Dodd’s new address is:
8910 Westside Drive; Pensacola, FL 32514.
Their telephone number remains the same.
FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE OUR GIVING

Noah A. Hackworth

Introduction

In Luke 6:38, the Lord said, “give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.” There are several very strong expressions in this verse which deserve a second look. “Pressed down” (having been pressed down), “shaken together” (having been shaken), “running over” are all expressions indicative of the super-abundance of blessings being returned to those who “give.” William Arndt says, “The picture is of grain poured into a container, pressed down and then shaken so that every little corner is filled and the grain is poured in until it runs over.” Giving to the Lord’s Cause on the first day of the week was not necessarily in the Savior’s mind when He spoke the words of Luke 6:38. As a matter of fact, Christian generosity on the Lord’s Day does not in any sense exhaust the subject of giving. However, since Jesus used the word “give,” a word that appears hundreds of times, in one form or another, in the New Testament, we shall look briefly at the factors that influence our giving.

Sacrificial Giving

Sacrifice and sacrificial are words not confined to the New Testament. They are words deeply rooted in Hebrew history. The patriarch Abraham was, by faith, willing to give his son as a burnt offering to the Lord upon one of the mountains of Moriah (Gen. 22:1-2). When God first announced to Abraham that he would have
a son, Abraham could not believe it (Gen. 17:15-19), and when he subsequently was called upon to give that son in sacrifice, he obeyed without question (Gen. 22:1-2). Abraham’s giving involved sacrifice. The widow who cast into the treasury her two mites actually cast in much more than anyone else because “she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living” (Mark 12:44). This widow exemplifies the true spirit of New Testament Christianity which cannot be lived without sacrifice. If whatever is given to the Lord’s work, whether time, talents, or money, never involves sacrifice of any kind, of what real value is the gift? Some of the Lord’s people in some places have been known to frequent a certain dining place so the restaurant will refund to the church a certain percentage of the food bill. May I emphatically state that no one will ever learn anything about sacrificial giving from that kind of practice.

Giving Must Involve Self

As far as the support of the Lord’s work is concerned the giver must be “wrapped up” in the gift. Anyone who puts a gift into the local treasury will derive a much greater blessing if that person has first given self. The churches of Macedonia (Philippi, Berea, and Thessalonica) stand as constant reminders of the fact that giving must involve self (2 Cor. 8:5). The comments of McGarvey are worthy of note:

The district of Macedonia had suffered in the three civil wars, and had been reduced to such poverty that Tiberius Caesar, harkening to their petitions, had lightened their taxes. But in addition to this general poverty, the churches had been made poor by persecution (2 Thes. 1:4) This poverty put their Christian character to the proof, and Paul wished the Corinthians to know, that they may be benefited [sic] by the example, how nobly the Macedonians endured the proof.

Conclusion

Acceptable giving stems from sacrifice, purpose, planning, and the giving of self. These are the things we are challenged to remember. The Bible says, “Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7). Too, high on the list of factors that influence our giving, in whatever form it takes, is the fact that we must love the Cause to which we are giving more than we love what we are giving. Christ must have loved the Cause for which He died (salvation) more than He loved His own life. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

DAILY MAINTENANCE

David Sproule

Think about how much of our time is taken up by maintenance. It seems that on a weekly basis there is some kind of maintenance needed on our cars and houses. Our cars require gas, oil changes, tune-ups, and unexpected repairs. Our houses require vacuuming, dusting, painting, and again unexpected repairs. So trying to appeal to a society seeking maintenance free possessions, some car manufacturers are advertising cars that do not need a tune up until 100,000 miles.

Having so much of our time devoted to maintenance of our earthly lives, sometimes we have no time or desire to work and maintain our spiritual lives. Some are seeking maintenance free Christianity in order to make their lives simpler. But look at the Word of God and understand that being a faithful child of God requires maintenance.

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves” (2 Cor. 13:5). On a regular basis we need to do a self-evaluation (a
check-up). And just as a new car comes with a manual, so also we have a manual to look within in order to know whether we “are in the faith.” James uses the illustration of a mirror to compare with one looking into the Word of God (1:23-25). In reality, the Word of God is our mirror. Just as we look into a physical mirror to make sure that our physical appearance is acceptable, so also we should look into the “perfect law of liberty,” the spiritual mirror that the Lord has given to us, and make sure that our spiritual lives are acceptable to God.

Although we may try to avoid any maintenance requirements for our earthly possessions, may we never neglect the need to examine our spiritual lives. The Bereans in Acts 17 searched the Scriptures in order to make sure the things being taught were truly the Word of God. But notice they searched not only on the days they were taught, but they “searched the scriptures daily” (Acts 17:11). May God help us to maintain a faithful walk with Him by examining ourselves in His mirror daily.

**THE GRAY AREA**

*Ferman Carpenter*

Often we hear folks today try to justify their disregard for certain laws, policies, and regulations by saying they are operating in the “gray area.” They contend that they have found a zone bordering the guidelines they are under that not only offers more freedom and less restriction, but also frees them from any penalty.

While gray areas are common in dealings with worldly affairs, this has also become quite popular to many in dealing with God’s instructions to His people. Many believe that everything which does not appear to be black or white in Christian conduct may be called the gray area. However, in the eyes of God, the distinction is quite clear between darkness and light for “in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). If we wish to walk with God, we must avoid the shadows. The Christian life is not a stagnant life. As Christians live they are to become more mature and their spiritual senses are to be exercised to discern between good and evil (Heb. 5:14).

No one is neutral with respect to Christianity. Christ said, “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad” (Matt. 12:30). It makes no difference just how hard we try to straddle the fence; every person who is not helping Christ and His church is hindering it. We are servants, either of sin or of righteousness (Rom. 6:16-18). If you are not His friend, then you are His enemy (John 15:14; Rom. 5:10); there is no middle ground or gray area. There are only two directions a person may take when he leaves behind the innocence of childhood. There are only two roads, two opposite ways of life, which one may take. Which direction are you traveling? The broad way is far more popular, but it leads to have to “search diligently” for it. If you are obedient to the gospel, you are wise, but otherwise, you are indeed foolish and will lose the most precious thing you have (Matt. 7:24-27). While the good and the bad may live side by side in this life (Matt. 13:30), there will be a great gulf between them after death (Luke 16:26). And when Christ returns, there will be a final separation “as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats...And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Matt. 25:31-46). Remember, Christ is “the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9), and when He returns, He will take “vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thes. 1:8). Surely, in light of these verses, one would think twice before looking for the “gray areas.”
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley, Sheila Myrick, Ray Dodd, Tina Foshee, Allen Brazell, Tim Lamb, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Edward Podgurski (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s son-in-law), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), and Danny Elmore (Allen Brazell’s brother-in-law).

READING/INVITATION
December 13, 2000
Reading: Brantley Johnson
Invitation: Dale Cunningham
December 20, 2000
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Ray Dodd

MARK THESE DATES
December 10, 2000–Visitation Group 3
assignment cards handed out.
December 10, 2000–Deacons’ meeting at
5:00 P.M., in room 7.
December 17, 2000–Visitation Group 1
assignment cards handed out.
December 17, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meet-
ing at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
December 24, 2000–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
December 31, 2000–Visitation Group 3
assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Peanut Butter and Jelly
COUNTING THE VOTES

Dustin Forthun

The 2000 presidential election is sure to be remembered for the razor-thin margin of victory of the newly-elected president. This unique election powerfully reinforces the fact that every vote counts. Aside from the obvious political ramifications, there is also a spiritual application that we can make. The 2000 presidential race reminds us of another race. This is not a race for the White House; it is a race for heaven. In our race for heaven it is sometimes said that God casts one vote for us, Satan casts one vote against us, and we cast the deciding vote. This saying truthfully affirms that our race for heaven is far from over. Every vote will count, but the only vote that will make the difference is the deciding vote that each of us must cast for ourselves.

Evidence of God’s vote for us is clear. God has always had the salvation of souls in His eternal plan (Eph. 3:10-11). God sent His Son in the fullness of time for the saving of lost souls (Gal. 4:4; Luke 19:10). God, through His Son, has given us an immovable kingdom (Heb. 12:28) against which the gates of hades shall not prevail (Mat. 16:18). God’s vote for us is unambiguous and easily discernible. God has powerfully, as opposed to mistakenly, cast His vote in favor of mankind.

Evidence of Satan’s vote against us is also clear. Since the garden, Satan has plotted the downfall of man! In the wilderness, he unsuccessfully attempted to derail the mission of Christ (Mat. 4:1-11). As a roaring lion, Satan, through his wicked workers, aggressively seeks the demise and downfall of man (1 Pet. 5:8). In
casting his vote against us, Satan has made his intentions known; he seeks to thwart God’s plan and cancel the Father’s vote for us.

God has voted for us, Satan has voted against us, and we cast the deciding vote. We cast the deciding vote by choosing to live for God or choosing to live for Satan. We must weigh what we know about God and His plan against what we know about Satan and his plan, and then cast our vote. The votes will be counted on the Judgment Day, and then we will know whether or not we will have won heaven as our eternal home. Our deciding vote for God’s plan (shown by our submission to His Will) has the power to make the difference eternally.

509 Mt. Pelia Rd; Martin, TN 38237

THE LORD IS AT HAND

Vance Hutton

To the Philippians, Paul made reference to the Lord being at hand (Phi. 4:5). There is certainly a peace and great comfort in knowing that such is a reality. Think of the assurance of having help nearby. This is a promise from Him Who is faithful (Heb. 10:23). No wonder Peter described the promises of God as precious (2 Pet. 1:4). Notice with me some of these monumental occasions when the Lord is at hand and we are so very thankful for it.

1. When we turn away from sin: The Bible speaks of the prodigal son coming to himself, repenting of sin, and coming home to his father. The Lord is the Father; He is ever at hand (Luke 15:17). There is rejoicing in heaven when a sinner repents (Luke 15:7, 10). The Lord delights in mercy and is ever ready to pardon (Mic. 7:18; Isa. 55:6-7). If we confess our faults, He is faithful and just to forgive (1 John 1:9). Our Lord is at hand when we turn from sin.

2. When we face the hour of temptation: We will be tempted to sin even as was our Lord (Heb. 4:15). Think of the temptations our Lord faced in Matthew 4. The devil seeks to devour us through his wiles and fiery darts involving temptation (Eph. 6:10-11; 1 Pet. 5:8). When we are tempted, the Lord will be at hand. He promises to make a way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13). Thank God, the Lord is not far from us (Acts 17:27).

3. When we go to him in prayer: His ears are ever open to hear our prayers (1 Pet. 3:12). God heard the prayers of Hezekiah (Isa. 38:5) and Daniel (Dan. 6), and He will hear your prayers. He is a father who cares (Mat. 7:7-11). At any hour of any day, a faithful child of God can know that God of heaven is listening to his prayer and will answer the same (1 John 5:14-16; 1 John 3:22). The Lord is at hand.

4. When we are sick, lonely, or in tears: The Lord was at hand during the sickness of Epaphroditus (Phi. 2) and the loneliness of Paul in 2 Timothy 4:16-17. God saw the tears of Hezekiah (Isa. 38) and the sorrows of Hagar (Gen. 16). The Lord is at hand when you have days of sickness, loneliness, and sorrow. He has promised to never leave nor forsake (Heb. 13:5-6).

5. When we face death: David referred to the Lord being with him when he walked through the valley of the shadow of death (Psa. 23:4). This surely gave early Christians the courage needed to face death because the Lord was at hand. They were not to fear what man could do (Mat. 10:28). The Lord stood upon the occasion of Stephen’s death. God cares; He is ever at hand.

6. When we obey or disobey: The eyes of the Lord are in every place (Pro. 15:3). All things are naked and open before Him (Heb. 4:13). He truly knows our works (Rev. 2; 3); He knows our thoughts (1 Cor. 4:5). The Lord takes account of
our deeds (Rom. 2:6; 2 Cor. 5:10). The Lord is ever at hand to give credit and reward for the food but His justice will not ignore the evil.

Yes, the good Lord is at hand. Draw nigh to Him and He will draw nigh to you. One day we can ever be with Him eternally (John 17:24; 14:1-3).

Double Springs, AL

WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

Mike Hixson

The church is a marvelous institution that exists in accordance with God’s eternal will (Eph. 3:9-11). It was purchased with Divine blood and has as its head Jesus Christ (Acts 20:29; Eph. 5:22-24). There was a time in history when sincere men and women desired to go back and call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways. The slogan of the Restoration era was “Speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Bible is silent.” What a noble plea. Peter said it like this, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (1 Pet. 4:11).

Unfortunately, there are those among us today who are not content to walk in “the old paths” (Jer. 6:16). They have a desire to restructure the church and make it like a denomination, which it is not. In Memphis, there is a great deal of disparity in what is being taught and practiced in various congregations. Some are having their “traditional” and “contemporary” services. Some have employed “praise teams.” Some have hand clapping and hand raising. Others have gone in

for human testimonials. We have also seen the emergence of the community church. Where are we headed? What can be done to stem the tide? Consider these three things.

First, we need to have the conviction to stand up and speak out. Why is it that some congregations have been woefully silent about the community church effort? Why is it that some members silently sit by and watch change agents take over the congregation they attend? Is it possible they lack the conviction of heart and soul to stand up and speak out? Contrast the attitude of silence demonstrated by brethren today to that of Peter and John. When threatened, they boldly declared, “For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

Second, we must mark those causing division in the body of Christ. In Romans 16:17-18, Paul wrote, “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.” Is it pleasant to mark wayward brethren? No. However, if we are going to be true to God’s Word, it must be done. In his Letter to the saints of Galatia, Paul indicated that there were some troubling them with a perverted gospel (Gal. 1:6-9). Is this not what is taking place in the brotherhood today?

Third, we must encourage brethren to sever fellowship with congregations that refuse to adhere to the New Testament (2 John 9:11; Eph. 5:11). If a congregation refuses to give up the various innovations that have been introduced, brethren who want to go to heaven should leave (Rev. 2:10). Otherwise, they become a partaker of “evil deeds” (2 John 11).

Copied
SICK
Please remember in your prayers:
Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley, Sheila Myrick, Ray Dodd, Tina Foshee, Allen Brazell, Fred Stancliff, Willodean Gann (Ray Dodd’s sister), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), and Danny Elmore (Allen Brazell’s brother-in-law).

READING/INVITATION
December 20, 2000
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Ray Dodd
December 27, 2000
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Ray Dodd

MARK THESE DATES
December 17, 2000–Visitation Group 1
assignment cards handed out.
December 17, 2000–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
December 24, 2000–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
December 31, 2000–Visitation Group 3
assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Peanut Butter and Jelly

ADDRESS CHANGE
Madeline Graves’ new address is:
7236A Lanier Drive; Pensacola, FL 32504.
Her telephone number is 505-9483.
“...AND FELLOWSHIP WITH ALL?”

Chuck Pearson

Christian fellowship is a wonderful thing. Much good can come as a result of brothers and sisters in Christ meeting together for worship, Bible studies, potluck meals, etc. It is edifying and enjoyable. God’s Word specifically instructs us to assemble together often (Heb. 10:25), and we even see that such fellowship was an essential characteristic of the early church (Acts 2:42).

But the word fellowship in the Bible means a lot more than just getting together with folks! “Fellowship” comes from the Greek word koinonia, which roughly translated means “that which is held in common.” Another way of saying it is communion. Biblically speaking, if I am in fellowship with someone, then I have communion with them or something in common. In the case of Christian fellowship, it is Christ which is held in common by those who are in Him. So, in order to be in Christian fellowship with someone, that person and I must have Christ in common (i.e., we must have both obeyed the gospel and be following Him faithfully)! “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3). Our fellowship one with another (as members of the body of Christ) hinges on the fact that we have fellowship with God. And our fellowship with God hinges on our obedience to His Word! “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:6-7).
Remaining faithful to God means that we remain in fellowship with Him and with all those who are likewise faithful.

Unfortunately, this also means that there are some with whom we cannot have fellowship. This is because they are not in fellowship with God and His church (either having failed to obey the gospel, or having obeyed and then fallen away). The Bible describes who some of these people are:

**False Teachers**—those who teach false doctrine are **not** to be fellowshipped by faithful members of the Lord’s church! False teachers are to be marked and avoided, so that hopefully their false doctrines will not spread (Rom. 16:17). The Bible also teaches us that we are not to welcome those who do not bring the pure doctrine of Christ. In fact, we are told regarding such a person “receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 10-11).

**The Immoral**—the church cannot stand to have immorality in her midst. Failure to repent means that the immoral person must be withdrawn from. Paul told the church in Corinth that they needed to “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened” (1 Cor. 5:7). Likewise, the Corinthians were instructed to not keep company with those who committed fornication (1 Cor. 5:9), and “put away from among yourselves that wicked person” (1 Cor. 5:13).

**Unbelievers**—those who are not a part of the body of Christ are not in fellowship with Christ, so they cannot be in fellowship with His church! “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?...Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate” (2 Cor. 6:14, 17). In the same fashion, we are to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11). This category also extends to those people who are members of denominations, since they are part of man-made churches, and not members of the church of Christ.

Brethren, let us be thankful that we **are** in fellowship with the Lord, and with one another through Him. Let us also remember to draw the line where **God** draws it, and let **His** Word define the boundaries of Christian fellowship!

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**FOOTBALL CHRISTIANITY**

**Quarterback Sneak**—Those who quietly exit following the Lord’s supper, a quarter of the way through the worship service, or near the last quarter of worship.

**Draft Choice**—Selection of seat near the back door.

**Draw Play**—What too many children (and a few adults) do with attendance cards.

**Bench Warmer**—Those whose only participation is attendance on Sunday morning.

**Backfield in Motion**—Making three or four trips out of the auditorium during the worship service.

**Stay in the Pocket**—What happens to a lot of money that should go toward the work of the church.

**Two-Minute Warning**—When the preacher begins extending the invitation, giving everyone time to shuffle song books and gather up belong-
ings.

Sudden Death—When the preacher goes into overtime.

Blitz—The stampede for the doors after the dismissal prayer.

Halfback Option—When 50% of the congregation does not return on Sunday night.

Author Unknown

HATS OFF TO RATTLESNAKES

Leroy Brownlow

Once upon a time there was a family of wayward members of the church who had lost interest and fallen away. There was a father, and three sons, Jim, John, and Sam. The elders had talked with them about their lost condition. The preacher had done everything within reason that he could think of to lead them to repentance. Many of the brethren had tried to encourage them but nothing seemed to help in the least. One day when the boys were out in the pasture, a large rattlesnake bit John, and he became very ill. The physician was called and after an examination, he pronounced that John was in very critical condition. Said he, “About the only thing left now is prayer. You had better call the elders and your preacher at once.” Acting upon this advice, the old man called the preacher, and in tears told him of John’s condition and urged him to gather the elders and come to John’s bedside as soon as possible. The preacher arrived in due time, and was asked to lead the prayer for John’s recovery. This is what he prayed:

“Oh wise and righteous Father, we thank Thee that Thou in Thy wisdom sent this rattlesnake to bite John in order to bring him to his senses. He has not been inside the church house for years, and it is very doubtful that he has in all this time felt any need of prayer until now. Now we trust that this will lead him to genuine repentance. And now, our Father, wilt Thou send another to bite Sam, and another to bite Jim, and another BIG ONE to bite the old man? We have all been doing everything we knew for years to restore them but to no avail. It seems, therefore, that what all combined efforts would not do, this rattlesnake has done. We thus conclude that the only thing left that will do this family any good is rattlesnakes. So Lord, send us bigger and better rattlesnakes. In the name of Jesus, Amen.”

* * * * *

The above article may sound odd or even a little humorous, but I think that it illustrates how that many never turn to God until there is a crisis. Many people go through life putting God in second place until they need Him. As I read the article I could not help but wonder how God must feel. Oh, I know that He is not pleased with this position of “second best.” But I just thought how it must grieve Him to know that some do not acknowledge Him until they need something.

It is much like a parent whose children do not show any respect or demonstrate any love until they want something. Why is it that kind words and loving gestures come only to some when in distress and despair? Do you not imagine that God feels out of place when we put Him second? Do you not think that after all that He has done for us, when we make Him “second best” He feels betrayed? He surely has demonstrated His love for us, how do we treat Him?

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son” (John 3:16). “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mat. 6:33).

Toney L. Smith
517 Gaylord Road; Dresden, TN 38225
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley, Allen Brazell, Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), and Danny Elmore (Allen Brazell’s brother-in-law).

RESTORED
Tim Lamb was restored on December 17. Please keep Tim in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

READING/INVITATION
December 27, 2000
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Ray Foshee
January 3, 2001
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Louis Herrington

MARK THESE DATES
December 24, 2000–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
December 31, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
January 7, 2001–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
January 14, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
January 14, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
January 21, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Peanut Butter and Jelly
JOB, A LESSON FOR ALL GENERATIONS

Lynn Parker

Job’s experience is one for all ages and people, for indeed, all of every generation find in Job one with whom we can readily associate. We, like Job, are tempted by Satan. We suffer loss and sorrow in this world, just like Job did. We can, and must faithfully endure trials and tribulations, after the like example of Job. Consider some pertinent and timely lessons we glean from the account of Job.

We are led by this revealing book to see a glimpse of Satan’s true nature. Far from being a mythical creature with a red suit and pitchfork, Satan is a real person, with intentions of causing you eternal ruin and damnation. The Lord asked Satan concerning his travels and the tempter said that he had been “going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it” (Job 1:7). How persistent and diligent Satan is! Forever on the prowl for one who will succumb to temptation, Satan is repeatedly successful. Using lies (Gen. 3:3; John 8:44), deceitful workers (2 Pet. 2:1ff; 2 Cor. 11:13-15), materialism (2 Tim. 6:9-10), and a host of other devices (2 Cor. 2:11), Satan ruins lives, and captures souls (2 Tim. 2:26). The afflictions and losses that Job underwent were great in severity: he lost wealth (Job 1:16-17), family (Job 1:13-15), and his health (Job 2:7). Job was, no doubt tempted to forsake God and renounce his allegiance to the almighty. But here we have a splendid example of endurance, which inspires us to greater consecration and dedication, even in the face of life’s storms. James said, “Count it all joy, my breth-
ren, when ye fall into manifold temptations; Knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience [or stedfastness]" (Jam. 1:2-3).

Instead of crumbling, Job endured, and so we read, “Behold, we call them blessed that endured: ye have heard of the patience [or endurance] of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful” (Job 5:11).

The apostle Peter referred to manifold trials as the fire that refines, purifies, and strengthens our faith (1 Pet. 1:6-7). Satan uses life’s adversities to cause many to fall away from God. The Lord, explaining the parable of the sower, spoke of those who “in time of temptation fall away” (Luke 8:13). Numerous warnings are found throughout the sacred book that prepare us to meet Satan’s bombardment: “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). “Ye therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own steadfastness” (2 Pet. 3:17).

Knowing that we, like Job, will be the subjects of affliction, sorrow, pain, and heartache here below, we have all the more reason to place our trust and faith in Him who holds the world within His hand. Peter wrote, “Wherefore let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator” (1 Pet. 4:19). With matchless love and mercy, we hear the father say to us, “I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5). Therefore, we march on to meet life’s adversity just like Job, holding tightly to the hand of our Lord and Savior realizing that we are truly “more than conquerors through him that loved us” (Rom. 8:37). As Job was blessed for his faithfulness (Job 42:12ff), we will be most richly blessed if we endure faithfully unto death (Rev. 2:10).

Remember when you are faced with temptations sore and life’s problems seem too great to bear, you have a sympathetic, “great high priest” (Heb. 4:14) who carries your requests and care before the throne of grace (Heb. 4:16) where a benevolent heavenly father hears and responds to the cries and burdens of his children. Pray fervently, casting all your care upon him, “because he careth for you” (1 Pet. 5:7). And too, realize that this vale of tears is temporary and there awaits a better place for the father’s faithful children after this pilgrimage is over. With this thought in mind, we confidently say with our brother Paul that “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward” (Rom. 8:18). May we all take heart from the account of faithful, righteous Job!

1331 Spring Cypress Road; Spring, TX 77373

G - R - O - W

Darrell Beard

Surely, God’s people are concerned about growing as individuals and as congregations. Let us not only profess concern, but let us do something about it. One brother put it well: “When churches stop growing, they start dying.”

There are several areas in which growth can be seen. We are interested in growing in knowledge, enthusiasm, spiritual strength, effective service, etc. We should seek to grow in numbers by bringing in the lost and by bringing back the fallen.

Each letter of the word “GROW” suggests an important ingredient of growth.

The letter “G” can remind us that to grow we must go with the gospel. We should not expect to grow if we sit, wait, and hope that people will come to us. Our mission is to “Go...into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). Seeing a brother at fault should
prompt us to “go and tell him his fault” (Mat. 18:15). Our purpose in doing so is to restore the man overtaken in a fault (Gal. 6:1).

The letter “R” may stand for righteous conduct. Certainly, hypocrisy and wicked living will make growth difficult if not impossible. On the other hand, when people can see our good works, they will glorify God (Mat. 5:14-16).

The letter “O” tells us that growth in the cause of Christ requires an optimistic outlook. A growing saint or congregation is not weighed down with gloom, depression, and pessimism. They go about with cheerfulness, confidence, and hope, knowing that “all things work together for good to them that love God” (Rom. 8:28).

The letter “W” says that growing congregations are composed of members who are working together in harmony. There is no substitute for work. We must be “always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58). We must not only work, but we must work together. We must seek mutually to build a strong, growing congregation.

We must first be faithful in preaching and living by the Word of God. Whatever fruit is borne as a result of faithful service to God will bless us and honor God.

Tupelo, MS

THE VALUE OF THE SOUL

Danny Box

“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mat. 16:26).

Webster’s dictionary defines the soul as: “The immortal or spiritual part of the person, and though having no physical or material reality, is credited with the functions of thinking and willing and hence determining all behavior.” God’s Word defines the soul as the life of man; “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7). The Lord, knowing the value of our soul stated that it, the soul, was far more valuable than all of the riches in all of the earth. Look with me at some of the reasons that the soul is so valuable.

The soul is valuable because of where it came from. Again referring to Genesis 2:7 we read, “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” Then we read from God’s Word, “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it” (Ecc. 12:7). Where did the soul of man come from? It came from God.

The soul is valuable because of what it cost. Jesus Christ left His home in glory, came to this earth, lived a life as a common man, endured the temptations that are common to us, and suffered the cruel death on the cross to redeem our soul. It was “while we were yet sinners” that Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). Through His infinite love of man, God, provided a way of escape, and that was through His son, but it cost the blood of Christ to redeem the souls of man. “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many” (Heb. 9:28).

The soul is valuable because of its destiny. The soul is the only part of man that will last for eternity. When the earth and all things therein are burned up, the souls of all men will continue on. And as they continue on they will do so in one of two places: Heaven or Hell (John 5:28-29). Where will your soul be after judgment?

10985 Country Haven; Cottondale, AL 35453
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley, Dot Lambert, Ed Podurski (Bill & Peggy Crowe’s son-in-law), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), and Danny Elmore (Allen Brazell’s brother-in-law).

READING/INVITATION
January 3, 2001
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Louis Herrington
January 10, 2001
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Tim Lamb

MARK THESE DATES
December 31, 2000–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
January 7, 2001–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
January 14, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
January 14, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
January 21, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
January 21, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
January 28, 2001–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Peanut Butter and Jelly

JOB, A LESSON FOR ALL GENERATIONS
Lynn Parker

Job’s experience is one for all ages and people, for indeed, all of every generation find in Job one with whom we can readily associate. We, like Job, are tempted by Satan. We suffer loss and sorrow in this world, just like Job did. We can, and must faithfully endure trials and tribulations, after the like example of Job. Consider some pertinent and timely lessons we glean from the account of Job.

We are led by this revealing book to see a glimpse of Satan’s true nature. Far from being a mythical creature with a red suit and pitchfork, Satan is a real person, with intentions of causing you eternal ruin and damnation. The Lord asked Satan concerning his travels and the tempter said that he had been “going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it” (Job 1:7). How persistent and diligent Satan is! Forever on the prowl for one who will succumb to temptation, Satan is repeatedly successful. Using lies (Gen. 3:3; John 8:44), deceitful workers (2 Pet. 2:1ff; 2 Cor. 11:13-15), materialism (2 Tim. 6:9-10), and a host of other devices (2 Cor. 2:11), Satan ruins lives, and captures souls (2 Tim. 2:26). The afflictions and losses that Job underwent were great in severity: he lost wealth (Job 1:16-17), family (Job 1:13-15), and his health (Job 2:7). Job was, no doubt tempted to forsake God and renounce his allegiance to the Almighty. But here we have a splendid example of endurance, which inspires us to greater consecration and dedication, even in the face of life’s storms. James said, “Count it all joy, my breth-