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CHURCH ETIQUETTE

Carl G. Hecker

We are not French-speaking people. Yet, it is hardly an excuse for not understanding the meaning of this French word. It represents thoughts and behavior that, above all people, Christians should know and practice.

Webster: “Etiquette (F) the forms required by good breeding, social conventions, or prescribed by authority, to be observed in social or official life: the rules of decorum.”

Everyone lives by some rule. Even those who rebel against the restraints of society have standards of some kind they observe. When unthinking men urge us to look upon rules of conduct with disdain, they are merely saying that they want us to go by their rules rather than the rules of decency.

WOULD YOU AGREE?

There is nothing that is more important than our worship to God. The assembly of the church is when we, as His people, go into the very presence of our Heavenly Father. Can anything demand more attention or greater effort of each of us?

Not only must we do the right acts of worship but we must do them in the right way. These are suggestions for your consideration. Do you agree? (See Heb. 12:28-29; Mat. 10:28).

1. **Quietness is essential to scriptural worship.** We speak of the noise that so often accompanies the assembly. A little thoughtfulness on the part of each would cut the distraction factor.
tremendously.  

Talking, even in low tones after worship has begun, is out of character with the purpose of our activity. Worship must be directed to God! To do otherwise, does not show proper respect to the spiritually weak, nor to our fellow Christians, not to mention our Heavenly Father.

We realize this presents a problem with those who have little ones who as yet do not understand. Even here we must be concerned with teaching by example the proper attitudes toward worship.

It is not helpful to a struggling parent to have those nearby giving babies attention rather than attending to the business at hand...the paying of homage to our Creator!

**Attitudes are learned early in life.** If adults are playing, talking, and otherwise inattentive to sacred duties, we really cannot expect too much from our children who watch us.

**ARE THESE NOT SELF-EVIDENT SUGGESTIONS?**

We spend considerable time in preparation before doing any important task. Is it not equally urgent that we prepare to worship God?

2. **Preparation is essential to scriptural worship.** We speak of the physical. Much time and effort goes into the preparation of a suitable place. We try to find a quiet, comfortable environment where distractions are at a very minimum. We spend great sums of money, and rightly so, to provide a place to hear His Word preached and to express our deep gratitude to our Heavenly Father.

Does it not appear odd, that one could spend so little time in personal preparation, in order to participate in such a noble endeavor? Time and attitude at arrival could be a vital factor.

Saturday night should be the time to begin some preparation. Everyone should be aware of the important event in the morning...the Lord’s Day.

**The decision has been made.** We prepare to do our best in the morning. Our best clothes, in their best condition must be ready. Shoes shined, suits, dresses must be cleaned and pressed. Baths taken, clean socks and shirts laid out, whatever it takes to be ready in the morning, **to worship!**

When we go into the presence of the Lord, surely this is not too much to expect of each sincere Christian. A good night’s rest is required as well. Would you agree? **Think on these things,** you may have other suggestions.

**DOES ONE ALCOHOLIC DRINK CONSTITUTE SIN?**

**Wesley Simons**

I was at the church building studying when the phone rang. I answered the phone and a man asked, “Are you the preacher who answered the question on social drinking on the TV program, **Know Your Bible?**” I told him that I did not answer that question. He was upset that the preacher had taught that social drinking was a sin.

I assured him that if I had answered the question then I would have pointed out that social drinking is a sin. He wanted to know if I thought one drink would damn one’s soul. I told him: “Yes!” I also pointed out that he believed the same thing. He stated that he did not believe that one drink would damn one’s soul. He dogmatically denied believing that one drink would damn one’s soul.

I decided to prove to him that he believed one drink would damn a soul. I said, “Sir, if you believe in social drinking, then you must know your toleration point.” He stated that he did. I asked him what it was. He said four drinks (I
have forgotten the exact number, so we will use one to make the point). I asked him, “What happens if you take drink number five?” He said it would be sin and he would be damned. I said, “See, I told you that one drink would damn your soul.” You believe that it is drink number five and believe that it is drink number one. Therefore, we both believe that one drink will indeed condemn a man. We need to find out which drink it is that damns one!

I told him what I needed from him was Bible authority for taking the first four drinks. He tried to use Jesus turning water into “intoxicating” wine in John chapter two. I asked him if he was teaching his children to drink. He said, “No!” I asked him why? He said that he did not want them to do that. I asked him if he was trying to bring his children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. He answered, “Yes.” I replied, “If you are trying to bring your children up in the teachings of our Lord, then why not teach them to drink alcoholic beverages since (according to you) Jesus turned water into intoxicating wine.” If Jesus authorizes social drinking, then this is what we ought to teach our children, but he knew this was wrong and would not want his children involved in it.

I asked him if he would offer those who come to visit him a drink of whiskey? He said, “No.” I again chided him for not teaching his fellowman what he claims the Lord authorized. He seemed to be ashamed of what he believed that Jesus taught. He did not want his children drinking. He did not want his neighbors drinking, but he said, Jesus said it would be OK. Is his wisdom greater than our Lord’s? What nonsense!

There is not a man living who knows his toleration point because it varies (depending on what one has eaten, body size, etc. A rehabilitation doctor told me that there was not a man living who knew his toleration point). Not only that, but a man would have to commit sin trying to find his toleration point. He would try one day and get drunk and say that amount is too much and over and over he would have to repeat the process. When a man takes one drink, he is one drink drunk. If not, why not? The Bible is right: “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Prov. 20:1). God is trying to appeal to our minds (Mark 16:15; John 6:44-45; 8:32). Therefore, we have a God-given obligation to be sober-minded.

2691 Highway 91; Elizabethton, TN 37643

CONCERN FOR THE LOCAL CONGREGATION

C. B. Holcomb

It is easy to see that any congregation that is strong must be made up of faithful and loyal members. The church is universal, but if each member is as strong as he should be he is part of the work in a local congregation. If that local body is as strong as it should be then it must depend upon the presence and labors of each member to sustain its work.

There are some occasions when it is necessary to be away, but in every such case the work at the home congregation is weakened just that much. Frequent weekend trips weaken both the local church and the individual member. He cannot be as strong by merely visiting as he can by taking part in the work. The spiritual growth of children is also retarded by frequent absences, for the reason that they do not have the opportunity to become rooted and grounded in the church relationship that is so vital to soul culture. Consistent attendance and regular work in the home congregation is of vital importance to the church as a whole, as well as to the spiritual welfare of the individual Christian. Let us be concerned with the welfare of the local congregation that depends on us.
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley, Dot Lambert, Jerry Lindesmith, Ed Podgurski (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), Danny Elmore (Allen Brazell’s brother-in-law), and Peter Varsalona (Alice Williams’ father).

BAPTIZED
Jesse James was baptized on December 31, 2000. Please keep him in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
January 3, 2001
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Louis Herrington
January 10, 2000
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Tim Lamb

MARK THESE DATES
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.
RESPONSIBILITY

My favorite definition of responsibility is “the ability to act or respond.” It is a simple yet sensible definition. Where there is a need and I have the ability to act or respond, then I am responsible. Where there is a need and I do not have the means or ability to act or respond, I am not responsible. It is that simple. I guess that is why I like it so much. Its meaning is too clear to miss.

The difficult part is impressing upon some of my brethren just what they are responsible to and for. The following story illustrates the point very well.

A wise king ruled over a people who always expected others to do things for them. The king taught them a lesson by putting a large bolder in the narrowest part of the town between two banks. He had hidden a leather pouch in a hole under it. A farmer came by with his cart and grumbled about anyone who would leave a large stone in the road, but passed it by with difficulty.

One of the king’s soldiers came by with his head held high and stumbled over the obstacle, but he did not move it.

So it went from day to day. The stone remained where it had been placed and not one person made any attempt to move it.

Finally the king called his people together at the road where the stone was. He moved it over with some effort, took out the pouch, opened it and took out the pieces of gold along with a note which read, “This is for him who moves the stone.”

They had missed the reward because they would not take the responsibility to move the stone, supposing that others would do it.

Brethren, let us make the application of the above principle in the Lord’s church. The lost people of the world...whose responsibility are they? Who will knock at their door and try to arrange a Bible study? Who will conduct the Bible study? “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: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mat. 28:19-20).

The Bible classes, who will teach them? Who will serve as an elder, deacon, or preacher? Who will be involved in the Visitation Program? Who will go into the nursing homes? Who will purpose to give as he has prospered? Who?

Please, brethren, let us not miss the great rewards found in serving by deluding myself into believing that “it’s not my responsibility.” May God help us to move any boulder that gets in our way that we might receive the great blessing.

Author Unknown

OUR YOUNG PEOPLE AND PERSONAL FAITH
Pat McIntosh

I would like for each of us to imagine the following scenario. Our children are in school one afternoon, daydreaming and eagerly anticipating the final school bell. The bell will mark the beginning of their weekend and they have already made plans. However, as the time for the bell draws near, a commotion outside gets everyone’s attention. Students, faculty, and administration alike go outside to see what is happening and discover that the unthinkable has happened: We are under attack by foreign forces. The attack is quick and decisive. Our sons and daughters are loaded into trucks and taken to a place where they will then be transported to that which awaits them on foreign soil. They will not see their friends and family any more.

Upon their arrival, they are hurriedly taken to those places to which they had been assigned. In these new locations, they will be asked to do things which are contrary to God’s will. They may have to take performance enhancing drugs. They might have to partake of a diet which includes alcoholic beverages. There will eventually be an attempt to force them to bow down in homage to an image of a self-deified ruler. How will they react? Will they have been equipped with a solid scriptural foundation to help them? Will they have nurtured that information into a personal faith which will enable them to remain true to God’s Word? Or, sadly, will they be both unequipped and faithless in their new life?

This scenario is fictitious, but we have biblical examples in which this very thing occurred. In 606 B.C. four young boys, probably between the ages of 14 and 17 were literally ripped from the surroundings they called home. We have no record that they ever saw family or loved ones again. These four boys were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, or as we remember them, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These four boys, in different settings, faced the dilemma mentioned above. They were placed in positions in which, if they complied with that which they were ordered, they would find themselves in contradiction to God’s will.

Daniel’s dilemma is portrayed first. Being taken to the palace of King Nebuchadnezzar, he is to partake of “a daily provision of the king’s meat, and of the wine which he drank” (Dan. 1:5). Both Daniel’s character and his upbringing immediately become apparent. He knows that he cannot partake of that which is to be offered him. Realizing his precarious situation, he proposes an alternate solution. He asks that a ten-day trial be established in which he and those with him be fed a diet of vegetables and water. At the end of that period, as Daniel foretold, they were in better condition than those eating the king’s delicacies (Dan. 1:12-15).

The dilemma of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is recorded just a few chapters later. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had erected a
golden image in his own honor. He then issued a decree which demanded that, at certain times of the day, all were to bow down and worship this image (Dan. 3:4-6). Those who declined would face the horrible fate of being burned alive in the fiery furnace. The character of these three young men also becomes apparent early. They not only refuse to bow down to the image, but when confronted by Nebuchadnezzar himself, stand their ground and declare their faith regardless of what he chose to do with them (Dan. 3:13-18). We all know the story well enough to know that they were delivered from that fiery fate and lived as peaceful an existence in Babylon as was possible.

What enabled these four young men to stand the rigid tests into which they were placed at such a young age and in such hostile surroundings? I believe that they were able to cope for two reasons. First, we can infer that they were brought up in a proper manner by their parents. At such a young age they had a powerful faith. Was this by accident, or did they have parents or other influential adults who prepared them for such an occasion? God’s Word is clear and replete with instructions regarding the upbringing of our children (Pro. 22:6; Eph. 6:4; Deu. 6:6-9). This depends largely upon the faith of the parents, but also rests heavily on the willingness of our your people to heed such instruction (Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20).

A second reason for their steadfast stand for that which was right was that they had developed their own personal faith. Sometimes it is easier to work through difficult situations when there is someone who will be “our conscience.” This can be a parent, grandparent, elder, preacher, Bible class teacher, or simply a close friend. However, it is a different matter entirely when placed in situations in which we have only our own faith, or lack of it, to determine our actions and attitudes. How do we develop our own faith? Simply put, we must be those who study God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 3:15) and be willing to apply it to any and all situations in our lives (Gal. 2:20).

Parents, may we equip our children with the basis for their personal faith. Young people, may you take such instruction seriously and grow in your own faith and knowledge of His Word (2 Pet. 3:18). If all involved will do their part, the success stories so prevalent in Scripture will repeat themselves in more modern settings.

PO Box 447, Millport, AL 35576

TEN MINUTES BEFORE AND AFTER SERVICES

Allen Webster

Recently members of our church moved to another city due to job transfer. They visited two congregations near their new home. Both congregations came highly recommended. They arrived early, stayed late, and made themselves available. Yet, despite their eagerness, no one from Congregation Number One greeted them or expressed any interest. They contacted the preacher during the week and shared their concern. The preacher apologized. The next month they visited Congregation Number Two. During the first two visits, dozens of people greeted them, two Bible classes invited them out to eat, four families had them into their homes, and they received numerous invitations to become part of that congregation.

Guess which church this couple decided to attend? The friendliness of Congregation Two made a deep impression. The ten minutes before and after each service are significant times for our guests. Friendliness must be constantly practiced. Each week, several people visit our congregation for the first time. Extend your hand. Put on a smile. Let us be friendly.
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley, Dot Lambert, Jerry Lindesmith, Ray Williams, Carl Ayliffe, Ed 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).

PLACED MEMBERSHIP
Damon and Vaydra Lundy have placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Their address is: 130 East Nine Mile Road, Apt. 5-20; Pensacola, FL 32534. The telephone number is 479-4136. Please update your directory.

READING/INVITATION
January 10, 2000
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Tim Lamb
January 17, 2001
Reading: Joshua Wilkes
Invitation: Tony Liddell

MARK THESE DATES
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
Canned Fruit
Nothing can hurt the church (and even people in general!) like gossip. Webster’s dictionary defines gossip as “idle, often malicious talk,” and as a noun: “a person who spreads sensational or intimate facts.” Gossip is a useless, unedifying, and harmful activity. Gossip does not serve to build people up, or to communicate helpful information. It is destructive to relationships, and most certainly to the body of Christ. Unfortunately, gossip can be quite a problem in the Lord’s church!

It is not a new problem, however. In the first century, Paul was aware that gossip could bring trouble to the church in Ephesus. He wrote to Timothy and warned him about certain women (widows) who should not be taken into the number of faithful widows that the church looked after (see 1 Tim 5:3-10). These widows were often times younger women, who had left the faith in pursuit of physical pleasure (1 Tim. 5:11-12). Paul describes these women as such: “And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not” (1 Tim. 5:13). We can see that Paul (an inspired writer) spoke disfavorably of gossip and those who engaged in it. Such tattlers and busybodies were idle, and would have done much better to engage in the productive work of the Lord, rather than go from house to house picking up and passing on juicy tidbits of information about the brethren!

In his teaching to His disciples, Jesus had some things to say regarding how we should handle problems with our brethren. “Moreover if...
thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican” (Mat. 18:15-17). Notice that our Lord instructs us to confront our brethren individually and privately when we have a problem with something they have said or done. And notice that we are to take one or two witnesses if our brother will not hear us. Then, if he will still not listen, we must bring the matter before the church. Jesus does not tell us to blab about our brother’s faults to the entire world! A little respect and subtlety is in order. After all, would we not want our brethren to do the same with us (see Mat. 7:12)? A note of caution: Matthew 18:15-17 does not apply to confronting false teachers and those who endorse and practice error! The Scriptures plainly teach that false teachers are to be marked and avoided (Rom. 16:17). This means rebuking their heresies and exposing them so that others can be warned and not be led astray. However, in matters of personal offense and disagreement, Jesus’ teachings need to be followed.

Brethren, let us remember that gossip, tale-bearing, rumor-spreading, and the like are not becoming of God’s people who wish to lead faithful lives and set a good example for the world. Christians are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Mat. 5:13-14). Our speech is to be sound, that which cannot be condemned (Tit. 2:8). Let us strive to keep that which is private: private. Let us deal with our brethren lovingly and respectfully, avoiding malicious talk and gossip. There is plenty of bitter speech and back-biting in the world. Let us work to keep it out of the church! “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).

4027 Juno Drive; Chalmette, LA 70043

WHEN THREE IS TWO TOO MANY
Alton W. Fonville

A very important incident is recorded in the life of Peter, which is recorded in Matthew chapter 17. Peter, James, and John were taken by the Lord into a high mountain where they witnessed an unusual happening. Jesus was transfigured before them, with His shining face and bright clothing. Moses and Elijah of old days, appeared there with Jesus talking.

And, as was the custom, Peter was very impressed, and said unto Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias” (Mat. 17:4). And we see an interruption from Heaven of great meaning. God

VISITATION GROUP
GET-TOGETHER
January 29 at 6:00 P.M.,
in the general purpose building

The Visitation Groups will get-together to discuss the program. A covered dish meal will be held prior to the
broke into Peter’s words and overshadowed them with a bright cloud and said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Mat. 17:5).

Can you not just imagine Peter’s thinking? “Wow, a church for Moses to be heard through, a church for Elijah to be heard through, and a church for Jesus to be heard through.”

Luke, in the book of Acts, chapter 3 records some very important words which Moses himself first told the people long before this: “A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people” (Acts 3:22-23).

Jesus was “that prophet” which Moses spoke about, and we are to hear Him, and His words will judge us (John. 12:48).

At one time, God did speak through Moses and the prophets, but the time has come for us to hear Christ. In Hebrews 1:1-2, we are told: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.”

Today, two hundred or even three different churches is too many. Jesus promised to build His church, and in the book of Acts we see it come into being. The apostles all taught the same things and could go from one congregation to another, preaching the same things. This cannot be done today. Why? So many people, like Peter, want Moses’ church, or John’s church, or Luke’s church, each with different doctrines (Mat. 15:9).

Paul warned about preaching different doctrines. In Galatians 1:7-9 Paul said that there would be those who perverted the gospel of Christ, but those who did so, would be accursed (1 Cor. 1:10).

Yes, Jesus build only one church and He is to be heard and glorified through it (Eph. 4:4-6; Col. 1:18; Mat. 16:18; Eph. 3:21).

He is the saviour of that one church (Eph. 5:23). And salvation is promised in none other name (Acts 4:12; Rom. 16:16).

Early believers were baptized into that one church (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:26-29), having “put on Christ,” and having obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ, and were then made free from sins (Rom. 6:17-18).

Like in the days of Noah, we too, must be in the “ark of safety” to enjoy salvation. There was only one ark.

HC 33 Box 140; St. Paul, AR 72760

SEEK YE FIRST

Matthew 6:33 is one of the most needed concepts in the church today. The Lord’s body would be greatly different if every member would put God first. Deuteronomy 6:5 teaches that we are to love God with all our heart, soul, and might. Jesus taught this lesson in Matthew 22:37. God must be first and He will not accept second place.

The word first is not hard to understand. We know that it means number one in priorities. Plainly stated it means that we cannot put one single thing before our dedication to God. Never let anything get in the way of our service to God and our work in the church. Far too often things get in the way. Very often it is not our intention to let this be the case, but in the end we let our work, recreation, family, or other things take first place in our hearts.

Do we seek the kingdom first and put all else in their proper place? The church desperately needs those who are busy in the Lord’s work. The church will grow and be strong when every member puts it first.

Author Unknown
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley, 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 Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin).

BAPTIZED
April Johnson was baptized into Christ on January 14, 2001. Her address is 345 Corryfield Road; Pensacola, FL 32507. Her telephone number is 453-9507. Please keep April in your prayers and offer her encouragement.

READING/INVITATION
January 17, 2001
Reading: Joshua Wilkes
Invitation: Tony Liddell
January 24, 2000
Reading: Michael Wilkes
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

MARK THESE DATES
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.
January 31, 2001–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 P.M.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Fruit
GLOSSOLALIA
Jesse Whitlock

Only three books of the New Testament mention the gift of speaking in tongues or glossolalia, which is the Greek glossa = “tongue” and laleo = “to speak” (Acts 2, 10, 19; Mark 16:17; 1 Cor. 12-14). A careful study of these passages shows that the gift of speaking in tongues or languages was a miraculous element.

The apostles “were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues” (Acts 2:4). To be filled with the Holy Spirit, is what the Lord means when He speaks of being “baptized with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 1:5). Remember, only the Lord could administer Holy Spirit baptism (Mat. 3:11). In the conversion of Cornelius we learn “that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 10:45). Then, “they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God” (Acts 10:46). This was all miraculous. Again, “And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied” (Acts 19:6). Hence, the gift of “tongues” was indeed a miraculous endowment.

This gift was an endowment given to the church in its infancy. The Word of God had not been completed. There was a need for divine guidance and instruction until the completion of inspired revelation. The nine miraculous gifts of 1 Corinthians 12-14 were designed to meet that need. This is Paul’s own argument in 1 Corinthians 13:8ff and Ephesians 4:8-15. Paul plainly penned, “whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease” (1 Cor. 13:8). These and all other spiritual gifts would cease when “that which is perfect” (the New Testament) had come (Jam. 1:25; 1 Cor. 13:10).

You recall there were nine miraculous gifts (1 Cor. 12:4-11). If one claims to speak in ton-
gues today then all nine spiritual gifts must exist today. Remember, these gifts were given to the church until it attained “unto a perfect man” (Eph. 4:13). The purpose of the spiritual gifts was to confirm the Word of God (Heb. 2:3-4). Therefore, if any man, or group of men, claim today that the gift of speaking in tongues is still in vogue notice what they must affirm: (1) The church is still an infant. (2) The church has not attained to manhood. (3) The Word of God is not confirmed. (4) God’s completed revelation, i.e., “that which is perfect” has not come. (5) All nine gifts are still in vogue.

If there should be a man, or a group of men, who claim that they have the ability to speak in tongues (languages) which they have never studied, never learned, but have received in a miraculous measure; I stand ready to mount the polemic platform and prove that they are in error. Someone objects: “Oh, preacher, you are testing God—you are tempting God!” No Sir! I am not—I am obeying God (1 John 4:1-2). Let your fingers do the walkin’, and let the Bible do the talkin.’

P. O. Box 1148; Beeville, TX 78104

THE MOST COMPASSIONATE MAN WHO EVER LIVED

Al Macias

When we study the Scriptures, we must all admit that the Lord Jesus Christ was the most compassionate man that ever lived. Yet, when we study the life of Jesus, we find that on some occasions, at least it seems, the He was not so compassionate with certain people. One of these occasions was when He was confronted by the scribes and the Pharisees. This is found in Matthew 15:1-14 where the scribes and the Pharisees came to Jesus and asked Him why His disciples were transgressing the traditions of the elders by not washing their hands before eating. The Lord answered the question posed to Him, as He did on other occasions, by asking a question. The Lord asked these scribes and Pharisees, “Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?” The scribes and Pharisees thought they had found a technicity by which they did not have to be responsible to their parents, by saying that whatsoever they could have helped their parents with, they had set it apart for God. The problem with their theory was that it was only a tradition they had invented; it was not the Word of God. Later on in this same chapter, the Lord accused these scribes and Pharisees of being just as Isaiah had prophesied they would be—hypocrites who honored the Lord only with their lips, for their hearts were far from Him, and they did worship the Lord in vain, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men (Mat. 15:7-9).

When the Lord told this to these scribes and Pharisees, the Lord’s disciples noticed that these men had been offended by the Lord’s reply, and they brought it to His attention. Did the Lord go after the scribes and Pharisees and apologize for what He had said? No. What the Lord said to His disciples was very surprising. He told them: “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. ... being preached; yet, those who attend do not know that they are in a lost situation, and they leave these places of worship the same way they came in. There are others who are living in sin (sometimes because of ignorance and other times knowingly); yet, when they hear the Word of God being preached,
it is preached in such a way that these same people are never moved to make correction in their lives. We must all understand that in the day of judgment we will be held accountable not only for what we taught but the way we taught others the Word of God.

8900 Manchaca Road; Austin, TX 78748

HOW DO WE DETERMINE WHAT IS RIGHT AND WRONG?

Tom Moore

Sin is very dangerous (Isa. 59:1-2; Rom. 6:23); therefore, we must, with all our ability, strive diligently to avoid sin at all cost. In our effort to keep from sin, we must set forth a valiant effort to grow to spiritual maturity. It is spiritual maturity that allows us to have our "senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:12-14). This spiritual maturity does not come without effort; it comes through diligent study of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). It is important to remember that it is not the mere facts in one’s mind that lead to spiritual maturity, but the putting to use of those principles in our lives. Let us now allow the Bible, in all its wisdom to instruct us how to determine right from wrong.

1. If the Bible condemns something, it is wrong to be involved in such. For example, compare Galatians 5:19-21, Matthew 5:32, and 1 Corinthians 6:18.

2. If Jesus Christ would not do it, then we had better not be involved in it. Consider seriously 1 Peter 2:21 and 1 Corinthians 11:1.

3. Anything that will harm you spiritually or hinder your Christian performance will hinder our eternal well-being. Study Romans 8:1-7, Galatians 5:16-26, Matthew 6:33, and 2 Timothy 2:4.

4. Anything that will hurt others and causes them to go astray, in the area of opinion, is to be avoided. Give attention to Romans 14:1-15:3 and 1 Corinthians 8.

5. Anything that will hurt one physically is to be avoided. Consider 1 Corinthians 6:18-21 and Romans 12:1-2.

6. Anything that will corrupt one’s mind or thoughts should be abstained from. Give thought to Proverbs 4:23 and Philippians 4:8.

7. Anything that will hurt our influence for Christ and His church is evil. Give attention to Matthew 5:14-16 and 1 Timothy 4:12.

8. Anything that becomes more important to us than the Lord and His church has become sin to us. Seriously take to heart Matthew 6:33 and Luke 12:16-21.

9. Any action that we would want to hide from others or leads us into bad company should not be participated in. Read John 3:19, Hebrews 4:13, Proverbs 13:20, and 1 Corinthians 15:33.

10. Anything that hurts a biblical conscience is sin. Study Romans 14:21-23.

Sin is nothing to mess around with, and neither is it something to be ignored. We must therefore put the aforementioned principles to work in our lives so as not to allow sin to rule in our lives. “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (Jam. 4:7).
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley, 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 Peter Varsalona (Alice Williams’ father).

READING/INVITATION
January 24, 2000
Reading: Michael Wilkes
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
January 31, 2001
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Dusty Wilkes

MARK THESE DATES
January 28, 2001–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
January 31, 2001–Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 P.M.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Fruit

VISITATION GROUP GET-TOGETHER
January 29 at 6:00 P.M., in the general purpose building

The Visitation Groups will get-together to discuss the program. A covered dish meal will be held prior to the meeting. Make plans now to attend.
“HOLDING FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE”
Bob Patterson

In Philippians 2:15-16 we read, “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.”

There can be no doubt that we live in a time when sin abounds. Rights and freedoms of the individual are being exercised to the point where past established limitations are looked upon as being old-fashioned and outdated. There used to be a time when there was a stigma attached to divorce, drunkenness, homosexuality, the use of drugs, and immodest dress! When one listens to the news broadcast, it is not uncommon to hear of gang-related shootings, rapes, prostitution, robberies, drug rings, esopaul abuse, auto accidents caused by those who were driving under the influence of alcohol/illegal substances, and cases of abuse by those in public office for the first ten to fifteen minutes of the news every day of the week! I’m sure that I seem strange to some, but I guess I am still “old-fashioned enough” to believe that there is some merit to the statement concerning days gone by—“Those were the good old days!” I am sure that some of you can remember when you could go to bed at night without having to lock the doors or close the windows; you could leave the keys in your car! How about when the times when deals were struck and the parties involved would shake hands—after all, a man’s word was his bond! How about when a family was struck with hardship and all the neighbors converged upon that family to help them through...
those difficult times! A time when you knew all of your neighbors by name (even all the children), and the neighborhood was a safe place.

As we look around today, it does not take long to recognize that, indeed, times have changed. I suppose the real question is: “How do we, as faithful Christians, respond to such a situation?” Are we those who can truly identify with what the Scriptures state concerning Lot, who was “sore distressed—ASV” with the filthy conversation “[lascivious life—ASV] of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds)” (2 Pet. 2:7-8)? Brethren, if we are not “vexed” (disturbed, tormented, and troubled) by the things that we see and hear in our world today, then we definitely have a problem! Well, what is the answer, and what are we to do “in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation” (Phil. 2:15)? Please listen carefully. We are to “shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life” (Phil. 2:15-16)! What is the answer? The answer is for members of the Lord’s church to be what God would have them to be, and to do what God would have them to do! We must be men and women of the Book! I long for the day when God’s people are looked upon as those “that have turned the world upside down” (Acts 17:6) because we have been involved in teaching “publickly, and from house to house” (Acts 20:20), and we have not shunned from declaring “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27) by those who have determined to “Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God...not seeking...[their] own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved” (1 Cor. 10:32-33). Indeed, the gospel of the “Apostolic Age” is still the gospel of our age. Contrary to what some may say, the answer is not to “water down the gospel,” or to “blend in with the world,” but it is to preach the gospel—all the gospel—and nothing but the gospel. We cannot keep them from going where they will have their “itching ears” tickled (2 Tim. 4:3-4). However, instead of our efforts being determined by what we cannot do, let us resolve to do what we can do. As a faithful “steward” (1 Cor. 4:2), we must “shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life” (Phil. 2:15-16) knowing that our “labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

P.O. Box 690; Sapulpa, OK 74067

PRINCIPLES OF SCRIPTURAL GIVING

We are not giving what is ours. We do not give to God a portion of what belongs to us. Instead, we are giving back to Him part of what is His. Our decision is not how much to give, but how much of God’s blessings we can afford to keep (Rom. 14:8; Hag. 2:8).

Giving is to be according to our prosperity. The more we have, the more we are to give. We are to give as we have been prospered (1 Cor. 16:2).

What we have is only temporary. We do not own what we have. God’s bounty is only ours to use for a short time. Our possessions are part of our gifts from God. We will give account to Him of the way we have used them (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

Giving is a spiritual matter. Paul speaks of our giving to God as a service (2 Cor. 8:4). It is an evidence of our sincerity and is a proof of our love (2 Cor. 8:8, 24).

Our generosity will be rewarded. Although reward can never be a proper motive for giving, we have God’s promise that He will not forget us and will reward us for our liberality. Read Proverbs 11:24; Matthew 25:29; Malachi 3:8-10.

Giving begins in the heart. The tabernacle was built in the wilderness with gifts that were given from hearts that were stirred to sacrifice for God
(Exo. 25:1). Our purpose must begin in our heart, and must be translated to action (2 Cor. 9:6-7).

The Lord knows our gifts. We can hide from men, even the IRS. Yet, we cannot hide from God. He knows our hearts. He sees our motives. He observes how much we give. Our giving is one way to serve Him who is the Source of all things. Let us understand that giving is serious business. It affects our relationship with God. It affects where we will spend eternity.

Author Unknown

GREEN PEAS IN A BROWN WORLD

Jerry Jenkins

I once read a story of some green field peas as they were planning to emerge from the shell. They were faced with the problem of being green peas in a brown world environment. The first looked about and decided he would climb back into his comfortable surrounding and not surface in such strange surroundings. The second chose to attempt to become exactly like his brown habitat. The third pea, and the hero of the narrative, affirmed: “What this world needs is a green pea in a brown world environment.”

The church faces similar circumstances, i.e., “How will we deal with our environment?” Some churches choose to play it safe and withdraw from any evangelistic outreach, some stay committed to the will of God, and some try to assimilate the world in their message and lifestyle.

Recently a number of Birmingham, Alabama churches threw in the towel. The Birmingham News reported that Sunday afternoon a large church in Birmingham dismissed their regular type of service in which God was worshipped and opted for a Super Bowl Party. At 5:00 p.m. the 41-inch screen was strategically located for those who wanted to watch. There were activities and games for the children, adults browsed a book display arranged by a local religious book store offering 20% discounts. There were groups to discuss flower arranging, to exchange recipes, etc.

Another church advertised, “Fellowship, Worship, and Super Bowl.” A third church had a big screen for those who wanted to watch in a large group with smaller sets for those who chose the smaller more intimate setting. This church had Disney movies for the children and at half-time the preacher delivered a short message from God. When will those who claim allegiance to God stop bowing their knee to Baal?

As this writer sits before the computer screen this Monday morning he is distressed. Agonizing that church leaders will apparently do anything for a crowd. Hurting to see how far those affirm they have been crucified with Christ will allow themselves to be patronized.

This comment might engender guilt, resentment, or some other negative factor, but it must be said. Jesus died for you and He demands that His work be first in the life of every follower (Mat. 6:33). It is not right to replace worship by throwing a Super Bowl Party, neither is it right to deliberately choose to “Seek the Super Bowl first” and allow fellow Christians to serve Him all alone.

Where were your priorities Sunday? Who was the God of your life? Was it number 7 or was it the God who created life and all that there is?

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NEW ARRIVAL

Jean Cline is pleased to announce the birth of her grandson, Luke Patrick, born on January 23, 2001, to Cathy and Larry Lightfoot of Houston, TX. Luke weighed in at 7 pounds 11 ounces and was 18 inches long. Our congratulations is extended to all.
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley, 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 Peter Varsalona (Alice Williams’ father).

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Dick Cunningham and his family in the death of his sister, Rose, on January 23, 2001. Please keep Dick and his family in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
January 31, 2001
Reading: Ray Williams
Invitation: Dusty Wilkes
February 7, 2000
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Henry Born

MARK THESE DATES
February 4, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
February 11, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
February 11, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
February 18, 2001–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
February 18, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Fruit
WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE REALLY NEED

David Sproule

Have you listened to the media? How about the politicians? Everyone seems to have an answer—“This is what young people need....” Various “studies” have been made—“We need to increase spending on education. Young people need better sex education. They need to be taught about gun safety.” On and on.

Ask yourself the question: “What do young people really need?” Do they really need more education about sex, guns, and drugs? Or perhaps, are there greater needs? Since God created man, could He possibly have some ideas of what young people really need?

1. Young people really need a mom and a dad! Of course, we know that they need a mom and a dad to come into this world. So why do so many think that they do not need a mom and a dad to sustain life in this world? Was it just an accident that the first children had a mom and a dad? Notice from the very beginning of time that before one was married he was “joined” to a mom and a dad (Gen. 2:24). In Ephesians 6:2 Paul said, “Honour thy father and mother.” God’s design for the family was for children to have a mom and a dad. But obviously it is more than just having a mom and a dad.

2. Young people really need a mom and a dad who are involved in their lives and concerned about what is happening with them! How unfortunate that some parents are so concerned about their own lives and career advancement that they do not even know what is happening in the lives of their own children! Think about the four “settings” mentioned in Deuteronomy 6:7; “when thou sittest in thine house, and
when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." How many parents can say that they are actively involved in their children’s lives at all four of these times? Parents, take advantage of the gift that God has placed in your hand and get involved in their life!

3. **Young people really need a mom and a dad who teach the Bible to them and pray with them!** Notice Deuteronomy 6 again. “These words, which I command thee this day...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” (Deu. 6:6-7). “Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). Parents have been given the primary responsibility for the spiritual training and development of their children. Parents who do not teach their children and pray with them should not be surprised when their children “depart from it” (Pro. 22:6).

4. **Young people really need a mom and a dad who discipline them!** What? Is that not against the law now? Not quite! It is especially not against the law of God. Notice the admonitions given to parents in Proverbs: “He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly” (13:24—NKJV); “Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying” (19:18); “Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die” (23:13). Discipline comes in many shapes and sizes. It is not wrong to discipline your child. But it is wrong to not discipline your child. For if a parent does not discipline a child, then the parent fails to teach the child that actions have consequences, and the child fails to truly learn that punishment comes as a result of wrongdoing. Ultimately, the purpose of disciplining a child is to “deliver his soul from hell” (Pro. 23:14). Discipline is not mean!

5. **Young people really need a mom and a dad who will emphasize the supreme importance of the church and demonstrate its importance by bringing their child to every worship, every Bible study, and even every church activity!** Parents, if you want your child to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, then you must make an obvious effort to do so in your own life. Children will learn more by your example than they will by your instruction. If your example has them sitting in the pew every time the doors are open, then they will learn the supreme importance of the Lord and His church.

6. **Young people really need the church to teach them the Bible!** Yes, parents have the primary responsibility, but the church also is given a responsibility to teach the gospel to “every creature” (Mark 16:15). Too often our Bible classes are “topic-oriented” rather than “text-oriented.” May we always teach the Bible to our children (including some topical studies) and never teach topical studies (including some Bible). The church fails its young people if it is more concerned about fun activities and fun Bible classes than it is the spiritual development of its youth. Bible class teachers, open the Bible and teach it!

7. **Young people really need each member of the church (their brothers and sisters) to encourage them and treat them kindly!** Too often the young people of the church are looked down upon as if they were “sub-Christian,” and they are often referred to as “the church of tomorrow.” Yet, the Bible never makes a distinction between a Christian that is forty years old and a Christian that is thirteen years old. It simply says “ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). If there are any members who need extra support (cf., Gal. 6:2), good done to them (Gal. 6:10), kind and encouraging words spoken to them (cf., Eph. 4:32), it is certainly our young people, who struggle daily “against the wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6:11). Do not wait for them to be
the church of tomorrow, but recognize that they are the church of today: your brother and sister in Christ.

Do not be discouraged by the media or the politicians. Their “goals” and “answers” are short-sighted and short-lived. God created man and He knows what our young people really need. Moms and dads, brothers and sisters in Christ, step up and make a difference in the lives of our youth!

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“EARS TO HEAR”

W. Kent Graham

Have you considered your responsibility to be a faithful hearer during the worship assembly? Many who sit in the pews each Sunday are completely unaware that they have an obligation to be an attentive hearer when the Word is proclaimed. Jesus said, “Who hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Mat. 13:9). Although we must be hearers, we are not the audience. God is the audience, and we are all active participants in the worship assembly; that is the true nature of true worship. Yet God has a reason for making it so.

Jesus admonished us to be attentive hearers; but, He also exhorted in Mark 4:24, “Take heed what ye hear,” and in Luke 8:18, “Take heed therefore how ye hear.” Clearly, Christ wants us to regard what we hear, and how we hear it. We all have a responsibility to ensure that what we hear is the “gospel truth.” Paul said, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 The. 5:21). Furthermore, we are told, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Friends, this is always true, whether we are listening to a preacher in the pulpit, or on the radio, or in an article such as this one. We have a duty to really listen so we can take what we hear and check it according to our only measure of truth, the Holy Bible!

How we hear is also important. The brother of Jesus wrote, “receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (Jam. 1:21-22). The individual who truly desires to go to Heaven will listen to the proclaimed Word with an ear towards eternity because he knows that he must learn of the Father’s will before he can be a “doer of the word.” Jesus said, “It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me” (John 6:45). Only those who “hath ears to hear,” therefore, will “learn of the Father” and come to Christ. All others hear in vain!

To be saved we must “hunger and thirst after righteousness.” How we hear and what we hear will determine our eternity. The Bible says, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Being an attentive hearer will determine if we are “Standing on the Promises of Christ Our King,” or just taking up space and “Sitting on the Premises.” Let us forsake the doctrines of men, and be “swift to hear” what God’s Word says.

P.O. Box 1704; Fulton, TX 78358

P L A C E D  M E M B E R S H I P

Tim and Lucy Ayliffe and their family have placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Their address is: 5749 Hermosa Circle; Pensacola, FL 32526. The telephone number is 453-0076. Please update your directory.
SICK
Please remember in your prayers:
Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley, Neva Bryant (in Sacred Heart Hospital, no visitors), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Geran (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 Peter Varsalona (Alice Williams’ father).

READING/INVITATION
February 7, 2000
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Henry Born
February 14, 2001
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Paul Brantley

MARK THESE DATES
February 11, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
February 11, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
February 18, 2001–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
February 18, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
February 25, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Vegetable and Chicken Soups
AUTHORITY IS NOT A “DEAD” ISSUE

Noah A. Hackworth

One of the distinctive features of the Christian System, as Alexander Campbell called it, is the fact that Christianity is authoritative. I suppose no one will deny that Christ is the Author of New Testament Christianity. In Matthew’s biographical account of the Life of Christ, he closes the great Sermon on the Mount with “For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Mat. 7:29). Authority still means “the right to command and enforce obedience; the right to act” (John 1:11-12). God has the undeniable right “to command” which he does through love (John 14:15). Whatever is done in homage paid to God through the ascended Christ must be authorized by God Himself. According to the Holy Spirit whatsoever is done in word and deed is to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus. Van Mierld stated:

Modern theologians condemn “authoritarian religions” and will not permit any authority outside of man to be imposed on men. But they themselves end up with this kind of religion. For if all Scripture is not inspired of God, if it is in large measure made up of documents of doubtful value, brought together by unknown authors, how is the believer not versed in criticism going to make up his mind? How will he understand where the Bible is simply giving the human opinions of certain August personages? So each man has to consult the theologians to find out what texts he can have confidence in and how he is supposed to regard them. But since these critics often differ among themselves, he will have to decide on one among them. Thus the
selected one will become voice of authority. So it turns out that while the authority of God is rejected, that of man is accepted.

The problem with many is that they do not seem to understand the concept of authority. If one is walking down a hall and sees a sign over a doorway that says “Authorized Personnel Only,” what does it mean? If one is driving down the street and sees a driveway with a posted sign that says “Authorized Vehicles Only,” what does it mean? There will not be one reader of this article who does not know how he should react in these kinds of situations! Furthermore, it will be immediately admitted that one could not pass through the door or enter the driveway without specific authorization. Anyone who did would have “usurped” the right to do so.

A perverted understanding of the “silence of the Scriptures” is demonstrated in the attitude of Martin Luther (1484-1546). Luther wanted to “retain in the church all that was not expressly contradicted in the Scriptures,” but he quickly saw where this would inevitably lead him. A contemporary of Luther’s, Ulrich Zwingli, wanted to “abolish all that could not be proved by Scripture.” History says that he “reduced the church to extreme simplicity; pictures and statutes were removed from the churches... organs were banished...” Zwingli’s approach was echoed by Thomas Campbell. Subsequent to his arrival in America (ca. 1807) Campbell reportedly said, “That rule, my highly respected hearers, is this, that where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.” In a description of the attitudes that would characterize the great Restoration Movement, Robert Richardson, in memoirs of Alexander Campbell, said:

Thus the silence of the Bible was to be respected equally with its revelations, which were by Divine authority declared to be able to “make the man of God perfect and thoroughly furnished unto every good work.” Anything more, than “the whole counsel of God” would be a dangerous deficiency. Simply, reverently, confidently, they would speak of Bible things in Bible words, adding nothing thereto and omitting nothing given by inspiration.

Human opinion is sometimes valuable but it is never authoritative, and as soon as we learn this there will be fewer questions and less confusion; we are not free to do what the Bible does not authorize. We must remain in subjection to Christ who has all power in heaven and on earth (Mat. 28:18-20; Eph. 5:24). It is still appropriate to ask, “By what authority doest thou these things” (Mat. 21:23)?

5342 W La Vida Court; Visalia, CA 93277

PRACTICING PORNOGRAPHY

Thomas F. Eaves, Sr.

I have never met a Christian who defended pornographic materials. Most people will say that such is a great detriment to our society and surveys seem to substantiate this,

• One in three girls will be molested by age 18. One study of child molesters revealed that 87% of those who molested girls were users of hardcore porn.
• 77% of those who molest boys also consumed pornography.
• 86% of convicted rapists used pornography and 57% of these rapists said they were trying to imitate pornographic images when they committed their crimes.

(Figures from Breakpoint, Prison Fellowship Ministries, 1999).

Many members of the church of Christ would be horrified and grossly insulted if you were to
accuse them of approving pornography. Yet, they will go to the public beach or swimming pool and practice pornography. Brethren, there is no difference in viewing a near nude male/female form on the printed page and in viewing them in person! Some Christians will practice in person what they condemn on the printed page.

In the Old Testament the uncovering of the buttocks and thighs was considered nakedness (Exo. 20:26; 28:40-42; Isa. 47:2-3; 20:4). And we are told “whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning” (Rom. 15:4; see also 1 Cor. 10:10-11). God demands purity of spiritual Israel (Gal. 6:16) even as He demanded purity of Israel of old (Phi. 4:8; 1 Tim. 4:12, 5:22).

Paul told Timothy that women are to adorn themselves as women professing godliness. Men are also to dress in such a way as to exemplify purity (See Mat. 5:27-28). Lasciviousness is that which is lewd or lustful and is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:19; cf., Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Tim. 2:9-10).

Christians should be fighting. One usually thinks of fighting as a street brawl or a violent argument between two or more individuals. Many times individuals think of fighting as physical concerns. It may surprise you to learn that Christians are commanded to fight. Christians are not to fight with fist but the fight that we are involved is a spiritual one. Paul wrote “Fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12). The Greek word literally means “to agonize; to contest publicly.” Christians are soldiers in a public contest. Jesus said, “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). There are many reasons for Christians to fight.

**Fighting Christians**

Joel Wheeler

Christians must fight temptation. Jesus showed us how to overcome temptations from Satan (Mat. 4:1-13; Luke 4:1-11). Temptations comes at us almost every day. Instead of yielding to temptations, we must look for a way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13). We can fight temptations by knowing what is involved (Jam. 14:16) and keep our body in subjection just as Paul did.

**Christians must fight the spirit of fear.** Jesus gave the remedy for worry and fear (Mat. 6:25-35). Most people worry about various things. There are two things that a person should not worry about and that is (1) things that you can help, and (2) things that you cannot help. Paul wrote that God has not given us the spirit of fear (2 Tim. 1:7).

**Christians must fight worldliness.** To fight worldliness means that we must not conform to the mold of the world. Christians are transformed from this world’s philosophies to the way of holiness (Rom. 12:1-2). The apostle John reassures Christians that the world will one day pass away, but God’s Word will not pass away (1 John 2:17).

**Christians must fight discouragement.** Satan uses discouragement against Christians when everything else fails to draw them away. It is easy to fall prey to Satan and his devices of discouragement (2 Cor. 2:11). Discouragement is the first step to defeat. The Lord has given us the power to overcome discouragement (1 John 4:4).

Satan is our enemy and is doing all that he can to destroy Christians. One must fight to survive this great enemy (1 Pet. 5:8).

**Deceased**

P.O. Box 714; Foley, AL 36536
SICK

Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley, Neva Bryant, 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 Peter Varsalona (Alice Williams’ father).

READING/INVITATION

February 14, 2001
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Paul Brantley

February 21, 2000
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Scot Brazell

MARK THESE DATES

February 18, 2001–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
February 18, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
February 25, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED

Vegetable and Chicken Soups

1 TIMOTHY 1:8-9

“But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers.”
THE RESPONSIBILITY OF A TEACHER

Tom Moore

“My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment” (Jam. 3:1—NKJV). By these words, James is not trying to discourage Christians from becoming Christians, but is calling their attention to the great responsibility involved. There is great honor associated with teaching the Word of God, but with that honor comes an enormous obligation. James informs us that the task of a teacher is so serious that they receive harsher judgment. Are we as teachers willing to pay the price that comes with the awesome task of teaching the Word of God? Teaching the Word of God is not something that should be entered into lightly. Let us now consider some of the responsibility of a teacher.

A teacher has the responsibility of being a good example. Nothing can destroy the effects of teaching any more than the teacher who does not practice what he or she teaches. Paul told Timothy to be “an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12). What would your students think if you taught the need for faithfulness to the Lord, and yet, you miss Sunday evening worship, or they see you involved in questionable behavior? Teachers need to be good examples in conduct, in dress, in speech, in good works, yea—in all areas of life. Teachers who are not good examples are not good teachers, and do great harm to their students. A child of God who is not willing to be exemplary in their Christian walk is not qualified to be a teacher of the Word of God.

A teacher also has the responsibility of being
a good student of the Word of God. It is a dis-grace to the Lord and His Word when a Bible Class teacher goes into the class room un-pre-pared. Too many teachers are putting too little effort in the preparation of their classes. A host of teachers wait until the last minute to throw something together for their students—what a shame they do not care for their students and the Word of God. A teacher must be a student of the Word of God, and spend many hours preparing to teach his or her students. “Study to shew thy-self approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). A teacher who is not willing to put in hours of study is doing a great dis-service to their students, and will bring harsh judgment upon themselves (Jam. 3:1). A great Bible Class teacher is always a great Bible student.

Furthermore, a teacher has the responsibility of knowing and understanding their students. A teacher should understand their students to the point that they know what struggles they are going through, to know the areas in which they are weak, and the areas in which they are strong. A teacher must consider the age of their students, for you would not teach elementary students as you would Junior High students, and neither would you teach Junior High students as you would High School students. Teachers should get to know their students personally and spend time outside the class with them. Be their friend and they will be more attentive to your teaching in class.

Finally, a teacher has the responsibility of being sound in doctrine. A teacher must be very concerned about teaching only sound doctrine. A false teacher is an abomination in the sight of God (cf., Gal. 1:6-10). A teacher who teaches false doctrine will not only loose their soul, but may destroy the souls of those whom they teach. Jesus said, “Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the king-dom of heaven” (Mat. 5:19; consider also 1 Timothy 6:2-3). Thus, “speak thou the things which become sound doctrine” (Tit. 2:1), and “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

NEW BIBLE CLASSES
TO START
The spring quarter for our Bible Class Program will start in March. Make plans to attend.

SOME SUGGESTIONS
FOR A BETTER BIBLE CLASS
1. Bring your own Bible! This indicates readiness to study.
2. Attend promptly and regularly! Not only are those who do not attend weakened, they may weaken others.
3. Participate in class! We learn by sharing our understanding of God’s Word.
4. Be supportive! Do not be bashful. If you believe something is well said, let the class know it.
5. Take notes! You will encourage the teacher, set a good example and have a record for later study.
6. Study at home! You will learn more and be able to contribute more in the class.
7. Show the teacher appreciation! A good word or perhaps a note will encourage the teacher and encourage him/her to do better.
8. Disagree sweetly! Others will at least
TO WORRY OR NOT TO WORRY

James E. Gibbons

If a matter is not serious enough to pray about, then it is not serious enough to worry about—and if it is serious enough to pray about, then there is no need to worry about it.

PATIENT LOST ON ELEVATOR

Gary Grady

Did you read about it? It was in all the newspapers a few weeks ago. A patient, paralyzed from a fall, was wheeled into an elevator in a large hospital where he was left to ride up and down for 27 hours while the hospital staff looked frantically for him. Of the 4,900 people in the hospital, everybody just assumed that the man in the wheelchair was all right and that someone was taking care of him. After all, he did not tell anyone he was the missing man and was dying. Of course, no one stopped to think that perhaps he could not tell them! No one noticed him until it was too late to help!

I wonder if there is a lesson in this for us. Do we have any people in the church that are sitting in their figurative wheelchairs slowly dying spiritually because they do not know how to tell other Christians of their problems or their plight? Do we ever get so wrapped up in our own little world, so concerned about our problems that we look at other Christians and say, “Why, they look like they are doing just fine. I wonder why they never speak to anyone?” Do we ever get to the point where we come to worship, shake hands with everyone around us and say “How are you doing today?” Do we ask that question in such a way that our concern is felt by the other person? I wonder, do we ever forget the part of Christianity that deals with being our “brother’s keeper?”

How many people do we see right in the midst of us that are dying on the vine and are desperately in need of our help? Perhaps they cannot ask for the assistance they are in need of. Or perhaps they do not know how to ask. Perhaps they cannot. Perhaps they do not know that they are dying! Remember that the death brought on by inactivity and apathy comes on very slowly. So slowly, that sometimes it is not easily recognized by the person afflicted. But those who are active and involved can readily see the demise.

Surely, we need to become much more sensitive to our brethren and their needs so that we will notice before it is too late to help! It is a heart rendering thing to read of a report such as the newspaper carried concerning the lost man. But so much more to read: Man lost in church lobby.
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley, Neva Bryant, 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 Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s friend).

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Alice Williams and her family in the death of her father Peter Varsalona on February 6, 2001. Please keep Alice and her family in your prayers and help in any way you can.

READING/INVITATION
February 21, 2000
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Scot Brazell
February 28, 2001
Reading: Bill Busch
Invitation: Bill Cline

MARK THESE DATES
February 25, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
March 4, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
March 11, 2001–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
March 11, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Vegetable and Chicken Soups
MAKING WORSHIP MEANINGFUL

Barry Grider

Truly, the opportunity to worship God is a wonderful privilege. When one considers God, who is highly exalted and is seated in holiness, his heart must sing out with the psalmist: “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker” (Psa. 95:6). How grateful we should be that God allows redeemed mankind to enter into His presence and worship Him. God desires such worship, for Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24). Worship is pleasing to God when one follows the divine standard (truth) and maintains the proper attitude (spirit). All worship should be focused upon, and designed to please God the Father. Therefore, the worshiper should make proper preparation before he comes to worship, and actively participate during worship.

Preparation

Some practical matters should be considered in making preparation for worship. First, make sure you get enough rest the previous night so your mind will be alert. Eat properly before coming to worship. If you are hungry, your mind and stomach will be more focused on lunch, rather than on God. The night before, make sure you have selected the clothes you will wear to worship. This will reduce a hectic pace and will resolve tension on the Lord’s day morning.

Also, as a reflection of your heart, make sure you have dressed modestly before going to wor-
NEW BIBLE CLASSES BEGINNING

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

### Sunday Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Adults I</th>
<th>Christian Evidences</th>
<th>Louis Herrington</th>
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<td>Adults II</td>
<td>2 Corinthians</td>
<td>Paul Brantley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adults III</td>
<td>1 Corinthians</td>
<td>Michael Hatcher</td>
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<tr>
<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>1 Kings</th>
<th>Michael Hatcher</th>
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<tr>
<td>Adults II</td>
<td>2 Kings</td>
<td>Bill Crowe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adults III</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 Chronicles</td>
<td>Ray Foshee</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Converts</td>
<td>Studies In Christian Doctrine And Practical Christian Living</td>
<td>Bill Gallaher</td>
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ship (1 Tim. 2:9). Do not seek to draw attention to yourself by wearing improper clothing. Not only is immodest apparel displeasing to God, but such makes it more difficult for others to worship. Upon your arrival at the building, greet your brother and sisters with a smile and a warm greeting so that the joy of worshiping God may be realized by all.

**Participation**

Not only should one prepare for worship, but one should also actively participate. In Christian worship all are commanded and blessed to be involved. In studying the New Testament, God authorizes five items to be included in worship. We should never be ashamed of such. We are commanded to sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), pray (Acts 2:42), preach or teach (Acts 2:42), partake of the Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7), and give as we have been prospered (1 Cor. 16:1-2). So while these items constitute worship in truth, I must also worship with the right attitude. Do not sit with arms folded and mouth closed during singing, but rather open the book, sing out heartily, and concentrate on the words as you offer up praise to God. During the prayer, bow your head, close your eyes and focus upon the things which are said. As the preacher begins to preach, do not think this is the time to nap or to get relaxed. Open your Bible and follow the lesson text. Perhaps you could take notes which will give you a better opportunity to continue the study during the week, as well as incorporated the principles you have learned into your own life.

Also, it is a common practice, and a good one, to extend the Lord’s invitation at the conclusion of the sermon. This is a very sobering and thought-provoking time, as some are searching their hearts and contemplating coming to the Lord for their soul’s salvation. Do not hinder such individuals by laughing, talking, or leaving the assembly, but rather sing to encourage others to come.

One of the greatest joys and highlights of the week ought to be the Lord’s Supper, when we commune together as the body of Christ, remembering the death of our Lord. Allow your mind to go back to Calvary’s Hill and remember what Jesus did for us.

Another privilege of worship is to give to the Lord’s cause. Make sure you have purposed already in your heart what you will give, and that it is given sacrificially and cheerfully, realizing...
one can never out give God.

It is for sure when a person properly prepares and actively participates in worship, he will never come away bored or be able to say, “I didn’t get anything out of it.” In fact, he will leave feeling uplifted and more firmly committed to the Lord, knowing the peace and joy that comes to the true worshiper: the one who worships God “in spirit and in truth.”

IF GOD BE WITH US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?

Al Macias

As we study the Old Testament, time after time we find events related which we never seem to forget. Some of these accounts have become so popular that even people who know very little about the Bible know about these. One such event is found in the 1 Samuel 17. It is here that we learn that God can make all of the difference when one finds himself or herself in an impossible predicament. In this passage, we read of a giant of a man, a Philistine, whose name was Goliath, and who kept challenging the people of God to send a man who would attempt to fight him and kill him. This champion of the Philistines stood nine feet or taller and was a man of extreme military experience. Whenever he issued the challenge to the Israelites, they responded with extreme fear. The problem with all these men was that they were looking at this problem only from a human standpoint. They thought that the fight would be just between them and Goliath, rather than between God and Goliath. No matter how big Goliath was, God was a lot bigger.

After Goliath challenged the Israelites for a period of forty days, David appeared on the scene. His father Jesse had sent him to take some provisions for his three brothers, who were in Saul’s army. Jesse wanted David to go and see how his brothers were doing and to come back and let him know of their well-being. As David showed up, Goliath came out again and repeated the same challenge he had been making prior to David’s coming. When David heard what Goliath said, he asked what would be done for the one who killed Goliath. When his older brother heard David’s question, he became very angry and accused David of only wanting to come and see the battle. David made it clear that he would like to take on Goliath. David was not afraid, for he viewed things as all people of God should—that is, when we are facing a problem, we should realize that we are not alone, for God will be with us.

David did fight the giant and defeated him, but he understood that he had been victorious because God was on his side. How many of us are confronted with problems today which seem to be beyond our ability to handle, so we just pretend they do not exist? Pretending will not make our problems go away. We have to learn to confront those problems which come our way, no matter how big they might seem, and pray to God for help to solve them. Let us be like David, who knew that if one is fighting for God, he will have God fighting for him also.

8900 Manchaca Road; Austin, TX
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley, Neva Bryant, Tim Ayliffe, Allen Brazell, Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Sam Everage (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), Madeline Quinn (Diana Brazell’s mother), Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s friend), Phyllis Jenks (Dot Lambert’s granddaughter’s grandmother), and Betty Layton (Winfred Clark’s sister).

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Iris Gallaher and her family in the death of her sister, Odelle Bradley, on February 25, 2001. Please keep Iris and her family in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
February 28, 2001
Reading: Bill Busch
Invitation: Bill Cline
March 7, 2000
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Bill Crowe

MARK THESE DATES
March 4, 2001—Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
March 11, 2001—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Vegetable and Chicken Soups
ARE BIBLE CLASSES A WASTE OF TIME?

Jerry Joseph

In the minds of some people Bible classes are not important. They may even consider them just “a waste of time.” What should our attitude be toward them?

Why do we have Bible classes on Sunday and Wednesday? Do we have classes just because others have them? Do we have classes just so we can say that we are at least doing something. Until we come to learn the significance of them, we will not appreciate them as we should. If we appreciate them, then and only then will attitudes and attendance change for the better.

Bible classes are significant because they help provide a way for the elders “to feed” the flock. The apostle Paul in speaking to the Ephesian elders said, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over 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). Peter declared to the elders, “Feed the flock of God which is among you” (1 Pet. 5:2). Through our Bible classes we are helping the elders carry out their work.

Bible classes are significant because they help produce tomorrow’s elders, deacons, preachers, and teachers. We want to encourage our young people to grow up being

Word of God can be taught. We certainly want to take advantage of every opportunity to teach and study from the Bible (2 Tim. 2:15; Psa. 1:1-3).

Bible classes are significant because they help promote the work of the church. The Bible classes are one avenue through which the
servants of God. In our Bible classes, we are training potential soldiers in the Lord’s Army. The Bible classes are helping to train the young in the way they should go (Pro. 22:6).

Bible classes are significant because they help prevent unfaithfulness in the church. We all need encouragement in living the Christian life. Through our Bible classes we can encourage and edify one another (Heb. 3:13; 10:24-25) to be strong in the Lord.

Bible classes are significant because they help prepare one for eternity. Who is it that has doubts about the importance of studying the Bible? We must come to understand and know God’s Will (John 8:32; 1 Tim. 2:4). The time we spend in studying the Bible in our classes is helping us to be prepared for eternity to come.

Are Bible classes a waste of time? I think not!!!

**BIBLICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF HEAVEN**

David P. Brown

Because heaven is so far beyond our finite minds to understand, God has chosen things of this life whereby we may have some understanding of that sinless place where God’s will is flawlessly carried out and where there is no possibility of sin. Hence, various figures of speech are employed by the Holy Spirit to describe heaven. Let us, therefore, examine heaven as our God has revealed it to us.

**Heaven is a City**

The ancients were very familiar with great walled cities. They symbolized activity, life, government, and protection. Hence, one of the figures of heaven is that of a great city, the New Jerusalem. Great and high are its walls. Twelve gates are set in the great walls of the city and an angel stands at each gate. These gates are made of pearl. Written on the twelve gates of pearl are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. Open are heaven’s gates during the day and since there is no night there, the gates are never shut. The city walls are built upon twelve foundations. On these foundations are inscribed the names of the twelve apostles of Christ. Precious stones garnish the foundations. The first precious stone is jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; and the fourth, an emerald. Her street is made of pure gold. The city has a river flowing from the throne of God and the lamb; it is the pure water of life. On each side of the river of life grows the tree of life. Twelve kinds of fruit are born each month and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Its light is the very glory of God. In figurative language John declares that this celestial and eternal city of the saved is large enough to hold all who will go there (Rev. 21). Thus, in hope we sing:

*I am going to a city where the streets with gold are laid, here the tree of life is blooming, and the roses never fade. Here they bloom but for a season, soon their beauty is decayed; I am going to a city where the roses never fade.*

**Heaven Is A Country**

From the Bible we understand that the faithful patriarchs of the Old Testament looked for a country (Heb. 11:14-16). In this world Ur of the Chaldees was Abraham’s home; but it was no abiding place. Hence, as have all the servants of God, Abraham sought a country that could not be destroyed. At best, life on earth is fleeting and uncertain. We, therefore, must treat our existence here as a pilgrimage. We are sojourners in a temporary land that is rushing...
toward a fiery end. Hence, with that realization in mind we sing such songs as the following one.

Beyond this land of parting, losing and leaving, Far beyond the losses, darkening this, And far beyond the taking and the bereaving Lies the summerland of bliss.

Beyond this land of toiling, sowing and reaping, Far beyond the shadows darkening this, And far beyond the sighing, moaning and weeping, Lies the summerland of bliss.

Beyond this land of sinning, fainting and falling, Far beyond the doubtings darkening this, and far beyond the griefs and dangers befalling, Lies the summerland of bliss.

Beyond this land of waiting, seeking and sighing, Far beyond the sorrows darkening this, And far beyond the pain and sickness and dying, Lies the summerland of bliss.

Land beyond so fair and bright! Land beyond where is no night! Summerland—God is its Light, O happy summerland of bliss!

Heaven is a Place of Rest

The pilgrim is constantly moving (Heb. 11:13). He is a weary traveler who longs for a permanent place to rest (1 Pet. 2:11). By the burdens of life he is toil-worn and weighed down (Gal. 6:9). Spiritually he seeks eternal comfort, peace, and security (1 Cor. 15:58). Heaven is the only place that can permanently and flawlessly fulfill his needs.

In the Christian’s home in glory, There remains a land of rest;
There my Savior’s gone before me To fulfill my soul’s request
There is rest for the weary, There is rest for you.

Heaven is the Eternal Home of the Faithful

I cannot think of home without thinking of a residing place—a residence. In this life, when our earthly homes are as God would have them, there is no place of greater love, security, happiness, fellowship, and peace. If things are as they should be in a home, the nearest and dearest of earth reside therein. On this basis the word home strikes a soft spot in our hearts. Fond memories of days gone by are recalled and we are made happy with such reminiscing. Hence, to liken heaven to the good homes of this world strikes a harmonious cord with us.

Who are some of the persons that will make up the populace of heaven? Such great and good men and women as Abel, Enoch, Noah, “Mrs. Noah,” Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Joshua, Rahab, Gideon, Deborah, Barak, Jephthah, David, Samuel, Elijah, and all the faithful prophets (Gen. 5:24; 2 Kin. 2:11; Heb. 11). Along with the Old Testament worthies will be the faithful of which we read in the New Testament the apostles, Luke, Mark, Timothy, Titus, Barnabas, James, Dorcas, Lois, and Eunice. We will also be with the cherubim, seraphim, and all the holy angels. Above all, we shall enjoy the personal association with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Just imagine such associations in that perfect bliss that is heaven.

25403 Lancewood; Spring, TX 77373

A LITTLE MORE

We recall the kind old grocer,
When the sugar he would pour,
How he’d tip the scales to balance,
Then he’d add a little more.

And his business, how it prospered,
Folks were always in his store,
For he gave an honest measure
And he’d add a little more.

So it is with life, my brother,
We would write a better score,
When we’ve done what is expected,
If we’d add a little more.

Author Unknown
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Hairston Brantley, Elaine Maxey, Marilyn Hall, Jean Flesher, Allen Brazell, Neva Bryant, Tim Ayliffe, Tim Lamb, Maria Bonaparte and Sam Everage (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbors), 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), Madeline Quinn (Diana Brazell’s mother), Otis Johns (Dale Cunningham’s friend), Phyllis Jenks (Dot Lambert’s granddaughter’s grandmother), Betty Layton (Winfred Clark’s sister), and Teri Bland (Billy Bland’s wife).

RESTORED
Pam Busch and Dale Cunningham were restored on March 4, 2001. Please keep them in your prayers and offer them encouragement.

READING/INVITATION
March 7, 2000
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Bill Crowe
March 14, 2001
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Paul Brantley

MARK THESE DATES
March 11, 2001–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
March 11, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat
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.

HOLY SPIRIT
BAPTISM
Noah A. Hackworth
Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire (Mat. 3:5-12).

And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence (Acts 1:4-5).

In the former reference John unquestionably addresses a “mixed audience”; he has two classes of people in mind: the wheat and the chaff. Some of those in attendance were righteous, but some were not, and it is incorrect to assume that the same people who were to be baptized in the Holy
Spirit were also to be baptized in fire. To assume that the apostles of Christ were baptized in fire on the day of Pentecost is to assume too much. What happened on Pentecost was not a baptism in fire. As Boles said, “These ‘tongues’ were not ‘fire’ but only ‘like as of fire’”; too, the tongues “sat upon the apostles” but did not immerse them in the tongues like as of fire. Only the apostles of Christ were recipients of Holy Spirit baptism on the day of Pentecost. In the latter reference it is unmistakably clear that the Lord refers to the apostles, for (1) He gave commandments through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom He had chosen during the forty days He appeared to them, and (2) being assembled together with them, He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father.

What Was the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

Since the word baptism means immersion, we must conclude that baptism in the Holy Spirit was an immersion in the Holy Spirit, an overwhelming by the Holy Spirit, and entire subjugation and overmastering of the soul by the Spirit. As J. W. McGarvey said, “The immersion, therefore, consists in their being so filled with the Holy Spirit as to be attended by a miraculous physical power, and to exercise a miraculous intellectual power.” It is the conviction of this writer that baptism in the Holy Spirit was nothing short of a “clothing with power,” a power put upon the apostles of Christ (Luke 24:44-53).

When the day of Pentecost was fully come the waiting for the power from on high ended (Acts 2:1-4). There is no doubt that this is the time and the place where the apostles were baptized, immersed, and overwhelmed with the Holy Spirit. This is the time when they were “clothed with power,” an absolute necessity in order for them to carry out the instructions previously given to them by the Lord. This is what baptism in the Holy Spirit really is: it is a “clothing with power.” A few fishermen, a tax collector, and a tent maker could not stand before governors and kings and Gentiles without supernatural help (Mat. 10:19). The baptism in the Holy Spirit enabled them to do so. The Lord said, “But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you” (Mat. 10:19-20). The fact that no one today can do what the apostles did is proof that Holy Spirit baptism is not available. To anyone who thinks otherwise, let him prove his proposition by a demonstration. As goes the proposition so must go the demonstration, or to put it another way: the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

“HE ENDURED”

Winfred Clark

If you will look for this phrase in your Bible, you will find it in Hebrews 11:27. It is spoken of Moses after a long and eventful life. A life that was lived in service to God.

When you think of one enduring, you think of one facing opposition or some kind of difficulties. This was the case with this good man. It was not easy for him, nor is it for any man who seeks to do the will of the Lord. Yet, it is said of him “he endured.” That just means, “he kept on keeping on.”

Can we find some of the things he endured? Can we measure the man by what he faced? Can we see what it cost him to be faithful? I believe we can.

He Faced the Contempt of a Ruler

When Moses went to Egypt, he was to tell Pharaoh to let God’s people go. His answer was: “And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I
should obey his voice to let Israel go?” (Exo. 5:2). The man who sat on the throne of Egypt had no regard for the God that Moses served. He showed nothing but contempt for the commands of God. He was not a believer nor could he see why others would believe.

This can have its effect in the hearts and minds of people. For example: A young man or woman might find themselves in a classroom, surrounded with atheistic thinking. They will find such folks do not believe there is a God. They will deny the very existence of God. In fact, they will challenge the Bible itself. What then is that young person to do? When he hears the Bible challenged or God mocked, what is his reaction to be? The same attitude is to be present as was in the case of Moses. There was no surrender of his faith just because a man like Pharaoh did not believe what he had to say. He knew what God had said and that was enough for him. He knew there was a God that was superior to all the gods of Egypt. He knew God had sent him on the mission, along with Aaron. Knowing all of this would help him to endure.

He Endured in Spite of Complaints

One does not have to go far with Moses and the children of Israel into the wilderness before he is aware of one complaint after another. All of this was true in spite of things God did for them. They had been brought out of Egypt with a strong arm. They had seen wondrous things, but still they were given to complaints. They had all they could need, yet they would still complain. Such complaints are registered in Exodus 16:2-3.

He Endured in Spite of Criticism

Moses was no more immune to criticism than any other man. Any man that is placed in a position of responsibility like this is bound to face it. You will find that even his own kin would criticize him (Num. 12:1-2).

The question is not “will one be criticized?” That is going to occur. The real question is, “how will one react when such comes?” We know how it was handled in the case of Moses. He is said to be “very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth” (Num. 12:3). That means Moses had his feelings under control. It means he could keep his balance in a very difficult and trying situation.

When later others accused Moses to taking too much upon himself, he would show the same kind of self control. He would not allow himself to make matters worse than they already were. He would allow the Lord to take care of the matter in His own way. That is the way he would handle criticism. He endured and so can we.

DO NOT LET SOMETHING SMALL GET YOU

Gary Colley

On the slopes of Long’s Peak in Colorado lies the ruins of a giant tree. It had stood there for four hundred years. It had been struck by lightning fourteen times. The storms of the years had not broken it over. It had resisted all of nature’s blows, but now it lay in ruins.

A small beetle had entered into the tree. The beetle had brought his little friends with him. The insect was so small that a man could crush it between his thumb and forefinger—yet with the help of its companions, it felled the forest giant.

Some men can withstand the “giant” temptations. They will not succumb to the so-called “big” sins but they will yield time and time again to the little “beetle” sins. Wrong attitudes, resentments, anger, pettiness, worry, fear, hostility and an unforgiving temper. All of these are the termites of the soul!

102 Edison Street; McMinnville, TN 37110
SICK
Please remember in your prayers:
Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley, Neva Bryant, Tim Ayliffe, Tim Lamb, Allen Brazell, Ella Hammc, Maria Bonaparte and Sam Everage (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbors), 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), Madeline Quinn (Diana Brazell’s mother), Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s friend), Betty Layton (Winfred Clark’s sister), and Teri Bland (Billy Bland’s wife).

READING/INVITATION
March 14, 2001
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Paul Brantley
March 21, 2000
Reading: Bill Gallaher
Invitation: Ray Dodd

MARK THESE DATES
March 18, 2001–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.
March 18, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting
at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
March 25, 2001–Visitation Group 3
assignment cards handed out.
April 8, 2001–Dinner on the Grounds and
Singing
April 30, 2001–Visitation Group Get-
together at 6:00 P.M.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat
CAN WE MAKE THIS STATEMENT?

Bob Patterson

David said, “David. I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD” (Psa. 122:1). Obviously, with David there was no hint of any reluctance whatsoever at the prospect of being able to turn away from the secular and to direct his attention toward the spiritual! As we think about this, can we make the same statement that David did in the long ago?

Needless to say, David was referring to the place of worship under the Old Testament system. Now, in view of that, each of us today need to consider this: We live under a better and higher-type law. The Hebrews writer says, “But now hath he [Christ] obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises” (Heb. 8:6). We should notice that the Hebrews writer says that the covenant of Christ is a better covenant which is established upon better promises! Needless to say, there is a motivation, a spiritual disposition, and an attitude that should certainly be expected from those of us who are now under the New Testament of Jesus Christ in comparison to that found under the law during David’s time! Under the New Testament we find that “the house of God... is the church of the living God” (1 Tim. 3:15), and there is to be “the assembling” (Heb. 10:25) of ourselves together for worship and the study of God’s Word. Once again, the question is: Can we make the same statement, “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD”? Gladness should be characteristic of every Christian concerning every time the church
is to assemble. Here are a few things for each of
us to consider which will insure our disposition of gladness:

1. **We will be glad:** when we know that we
can turn away from those things which are
worldly and secular, and spend time in matters
that are spiritual! Here is an opportunity for each
of us to seek first “the kingdom of God, and his
righteousness” (Mat. 6:33) as we set our “affec-
tion on things above, not on things on the
earth” (Col. 3:2).

2. **We will be glad:** knowing that God ac-
cepts from us, and desires from us, worship!
Jesus said, “But the hour cometh, and now is,
when the true worshippers shall worship the
Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seek-
eth such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and
they that worship him must worship him in spirit
and in truth” (John 4:23-24).

3. **We will be glad:** knowing that this is an
opportunity for spiritual learning and growth!
Peter writes, “As newborn babes, desire the
sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow
thereby” (1 Pet. 2:2).

4. **We will be glad:** knowing that our efforts
contribute to the work and progress of the Lord’s
church. We are fully aware that each part of the
body has his/her role to fulfill (Eph. 4:16), and
when each part of the body performs properly it
“maketh increase of the body unto the edifying
of itself in love.” Thus, my efforts contribute
toward the expediting of the overall work of the
kingdom of God!

5. **We will be glad:** knowing, by our ex-
ample, that we will be exerting a proper in-
fluence for God and the things of God upon our
families, friends, co-workers, and our neighbors
who need such lights shining upon them (Mat.
5:16). We are to be “an example of the believers,
in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in
faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12). Certainly such is
needed in our world, so let us correctly and fully
value the worth of such an example!

In the long ago, under an inferior law, it was
David who expressed gladness for the oppor-
tunity to be able to enter into the assembly and
worship. Brethren, since we work, serve, and
worship under “a better covenant, which was es-
established upon better promises” (Heb. 8:6), the
New Testament of Jesus Christ, that joy and
gladness of which David speaks should be multi-
tplied many times over! Do you think, that may-
be, the reason why we have such a problem with
indifference and absenteeism is because of the
lack of the joy and gladness? As we look to our-
selves, can we truly say that we are glad re-
garding the opportunities for us to worship?

PO Box 690; Sapulpa, OK 74067

**“JUDGE NOT, THAT YE BE NOT JUDGED”**
(Matthew 7:1)

A lady in an airport bought a book to read and
a package of cookies to eat while she waited for
her plane. After she had taken her seat in the
terminal and gotten engrossed in her book, she
noticed that the man one seat away from her was
fumbling to open the package of cookies on the
seat between them. She was so shocked that a
stranger would eat her cookies that she did not
really know what to do, so she just reached over
and took one of the cookies and ate it. The man
did not say anything but soon reached over and
took another. Well, the woman was not going to
let him eat them all, so she took another, too.
When they were down to one cookie, the man
reached over, broke the cookie in half; and got up
and left. The lady could not believe the man’s
nerve, but soon the announcement came to board
the plane.
Once the woman was aboard, still angry at the man’s audacity and puzzling over the incident, she reached into her purse for a tissue. It suddenly dawned on her that she really should not judge people too harshly—for there in her purse lay her still-unopened package of cookies!

Author Unknown

SIN IS A REPROACH
Bobby O’Dell

Much is being said today about the moral decay of America. However, a brief study of history will prove that our country’s ills are nothing new. The same basic problems that are devastating our country have brought countless other civilizations to their knees. Following are a handful of problems that prove once again: “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin [is] a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34).

The concern of our nation is a reproach. America has proven time and again that her main concern is with the “here and now.” Many have been tricked into believing that you only go around once. This mind-set has led to fewer people preparing for eternity. To help those whose concern is only in the present we must, “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy” (1 Tim. 6:17).

The conformity of our nation is a reproach. Americans are being pressured to set aside biblical values, and mold their minds to a “new morality.” In light of the constant pressure upon Christians to “fit in,” may we never forget that conformity with the world is sin. “Be not conformed to this world: but 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).

The carnality of our nation is a reproach. Our land is fascinated with vain imaginings, and has forgotten the value of purity. Many will stop at nothing to receive instant gratification. The faithful must sound the cry that true ungodliness and worldly lusts, and begins to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (Tit. 2:12).

The current trend of America is troubling indeed, but hope is extended to those who will listen. It should be our prayer that the wicked of our nation see that the only way to true happiness is by: focusing on eternity, molding themselves to the will of God, and removing the evils that bring national reproach.

409 Hillsboro St; Greenfield, TN 38230

ECCLESIASTES 3:11-12

“He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life.”
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley (Sacred Heart Hospital, room 317), Neva Bryant, Ella Hammc, Natalie Carter (Peggy Crowe’s mother), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Madeline Quinn (Diana Brazell’s mother), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s friend), Betty Layton (Winfred Clark’s sister), and Teri Bland (Billy Bland’s wife).

READING/INVITATION
March 21, 2000
Reading: Bill Gallaher
Invitation: Ray Dodd
March 28, 2001
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Foshee

MARK THESE DATES
March 25, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
April 1, 2001–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
April 8, 2001–Dinner on the Grounds and Singing.
April 8, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
April 30, 2001–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 P.M.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat
CHRIST’S ATTITUDE TOWARD GREATNESS

Matthew 11:11

Joel Wheeler

Have you ever wanted to be the greatest individual to ever live? Jesus said on one occasion, “Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he” (Mat. 11:11). Man measures greatness differently than God. Man’s list of greatness can go on and on which really leads to low self-esteem. What does and does not constitutes greatness in the eyes of God?

Wealth Does Not Constitute Greatness

Jesus said “unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15). The rich young ruler asked what he must do to inherit eternal life (Luke 18:18), yet he would not do as Jesus directed. The rich farmer was condemned because he left God out of his plans (Luke 12:20). The poor widow who gave only two mites gave more than all the others who cast in much because she gave what she had (Luke 21:3). The world looks to the rich for greatness but God does not.

Pleasing People Does Not Constitute Greatness

Some people must please the crowd to be great. A prime example of this is Herod. He killed the apostle James and tried to kill Peter because he saw it pleased the Jews (Acts 12:1-3). Herod was also gaining popularity with others when he was arrayed in royal apparel and the
people called him a god. But God smote him with worms because he had not given Him the glory (Acts 12:23). Pilate was another who pleased the people because he allowed Jesus to be crucified (John 19:12-13). Jesus never did achieve greatness by pleasing the people. He called the Pharisees children of the devil (John 8:44) and hypocrites (Mat. 23). They plotted to crucify Him.

Humility and Servitude Constitutes Greatness

Jesus said “But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant” (Mat. 23:11). Jesus taught if you exalt yourself, God will bring you low. When one humbles himself, God will exalt him. Our Lord said, “Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mat. 18:4). Jesus taught His disciples humility by washing their feet.

Jesus is the greatest example of humility and servitude. Our Lord proved His humility by being led to the cross. Jesus said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23). True greatness does not come by man’s philosophies but by doing God’s will (Mat. 7:21-23).

“JOIN THE CHURCH OF YOUR CHOICE”

John W. Moore

Among many religionists, I often hear or read of these kinds of phrases: “Join the church of your choice”; or, “One church is as good as another”; or, “It doesn’t matter what church you are a member of, because we all worship the same God.” Certainly it comes as no surprise that our denominational friends have continued to uphold this type of philosophy. But, what is even more disturbing, and will continue to be disturbing, are those individuals who, while professing to be members of the Lord’s body, espouse such a damning doctrine.

What on earth is one thinking of when he or she makes such an anti-scriptural statement as “Join the church of your choice”? Have they not read that Jesus promised only to build His church (Mat. 16:18), and that one cannot join the church, but rather he or she must be added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:47). Have they not read that those being added to the church are individuals who are saved, and that those who are saved are those that have been immersed for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38; 41)? Have they not read that when one is immersed, it is to be understood that he or she is being brought into the fellowship of one body (1 Cor. 12:13), and that the one body is the church of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Rom. 16:16)? Have they not read that there is only one body (church.—Eph. 4:4), and that Christ condemns all religious division which is brought about by human doctrines, creeds, and philosophies (1 Cor. 1:10; Col. 2:8-10; John 17; Mark 7:7, 9)? Have they not read that Christians are to be organized in worship and are to be called only by that which is authorized in the sacred text (Col. 3:17; Heb. 8:5)? Have they not read? Have they not studied? Have they not considered what apostatizing words they utter when they even but silently mention that “one church is as good as another” or “join the church of your choice”? Honestly, what have we come to?

The only real choice to be made is to choose whether or not we are going to serve the Lord by doing the will of the Father (Mat. 7:21-23). To do the will of the Father is to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, by His authority (Co. 3:17). Therefore, we must conclude that emphatically
Dinner on the Grounds
and Singing
April 8, 2001
After the morning service
in the general purpose building.
Bring a covered-dish meal.
Congregational singing will be
held after the meal.

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to
Peggy Crowe and her family in the death of
her step-mother, Natalie Carter, on March 21, 2001. Please keep Peggy and her family in your prayers.

RESTORED
Carl Ayliffe was restored into Christ on

we cannot join the church of our choice, for to
utter such a statement is to utter that which God
condemns. May we never be found guilty of
compromising the fundamental doctrine of the
true church.

OF WELLS AND MEN
The old-timer was remembering the well back
on the home place. “It was a good well with two exceptions; it froze up in winter and dried up in summer.” Obviously, the old-timer was being charitable. In my book a well that is not useful in either summer or winter has missed two very important seasons.

Effectiveness means being available in time of need. And, something which is not dependable is not worth much (excuse the double negative).

In various western books you will encounter cowboys, “who’ll do to ride the trail with.” They were the ones you could count on to be there when they were needed. Come outlaws or Indians, storms or stampedes, they would be in their place doing their jobs. They were the kinds of men for which every trail boss hankered. They were respected and admired.

One boy, at the age of nine, got his first job.
It was a paper route, and the interview was brief.
“Son,” the man said, “can I depend on you to be

HOPELESS AND
HELPLESS
An atheist boasted that he could do what he
wanted to do without fear. He should have added, and without any hope. Satisfaction here and now is the only thing the atheist has to offer; and he has no monopoly on that. The man who tries to account for our existence without God is like a blind child called force, wallowing hopelessly in a dark swamp called matter. Author Unknown

8900 Manchaca Road; Austin, TX 78748
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammes, Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crow’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Madeline Quinn (Diana Brazell’s mother), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s friend), Betty Layton (Winfred Clark’s sister), and Teri Bland (Billy Bland’s wife).

READING/INVITATION
March 21, 2000
Reading: Bill Gallaher
Invitation: Ray Dodd
March 28, 2001
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Ray Foshee

MARK THESE DATES
March 25, 2001—Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
April 1, 2001—Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
April 8, 2001—Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS
TIME BEGINS
APRIL 1
Set clocks ahead one hour Saturday night before going to bed.
CHRISTIAN HOPE

Adron Doran

The hope, which a Christian possesses, is far greater in substance than mere wishful thinking. The writer of the Hebrews’ letter said, “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). The apostle Paul wrote to the Romans, who had been “called to be saints.” “For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it” (Rom. 8:24-25).

That is why Christians base their hope on the substance of faith and their faith on evidence.

The word hope comes into comparison with such words as desire, expect, anticipate, wait, and look for. My hope is weak if these aspects of my hope are weak. The apostle Paul wrote, “But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city” (Heb. 11:16).

Again, “According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death” (Phi. 1:20).

Further: “For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come” (1 The. 1:9-10).

Finally: “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, be-
loved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (2 Pet. 3:13-14).

The word hope and comparable terms are used in the Bible to contrast it with despair. The apostle Paul wrote that the Ephesians were at one time “without Christ...having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12; 1 The. 4:13). But he adds “now in Christ Jesus...are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:13). That is why the apostle was able to write to the Colossian brethren and say, “To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).

The apostle Paul continues to admonish the Galatians: “Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal. 6:9). He is saying to them, in farm language, that in preparing the soil for the sowing of the seed and spending the growing season in watering and cultivating the crop that they should not become weary and faint, because their hope will be realized in the fall at the time of gathering and harvesting the produce.

The Christian’s hope becomes “an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast” (Heb. 6:19). When Robert Owen visited Alexander Campbell at his farm in Bethany, Campbell took Owen out to the pasture to show him his prized cattle. Owen pointed out one of the calves and said to Campbell: “I am just like that animal, neither of us has any fear of death.” “Yes,” replied Campbell, “but neither of you has hope.”

Brother N. B. Hardeman would describe hell to his Bible class as “a place where hope is a stranger and mercy has never been found.”

The Christian’s hope is built upon our desire and expectation that God can and will keep His promise (Tit. 1:2). The apostle Paul wrote that love “believeth all thing [and] hopeth all things” (1 Cor. 13:7). The apostle Peter encourages us to “sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pet. 3:15). It is surely true that our hope is deepened when it is challenged, and we are able to defend our hope against all questions.

111 Woodland Ave; Lexington, KY 40507

A “SAVING” FAITH!

Not only must people be persuaded concerning the importance of their own soul, but each saved person, in order to remain in a saved condition, must be concerned about the souls of others.

This concern must be more that a saying faith! What I would call a “saying faith,” is when one prays for the lost who has no intentions of doing anything except praying for them. Paul prayed for Israel: “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be
saved” (Rom. 10:1). Do you suppose that Paul prayed that prayer at 11:00, then spent the rest of the week serving himself? I know this is a very personal question, and that some may even react in a negative way to it, but it needs to be asked and answered by each child of God. How concerned are you, dear reader, about the souls of those not of your own extended family? How much effort have you personally made during the past year to rescue souls from Satan? How do you view the work of the church regarding her duty to carry out both parts of the Great Commission? If the church is to carry out the Great Commission, do you know who that involves? Right! Us! You and me! I heard a slogan recently which I have modified slightly which says: A small minority, using the Lord’s authority, must reach the majority, with the saving gospel. I know of no sin in the church which hinders the Lord’s will from being done more than the sin of procrastination. All intend to get better and do better, tomorrow! Yet, as the old song says: “Tomorrow never comes.”

While congregations are procrastinating, souls are dying and passing into eternity, with the majority of them lost. Why are they lost? Some are lost because they heard the gospel, but refused to obey it. Others are lost who heard, obeyed, and fell away. Still others are lost because no one ever gave them the opportunity to hear the gospel.

Our common goal ought to be that when we all appear at the judgment, no soul can point a finger at us and say, “If you had been more concerned about my lost soul back there, I might have been ready for death.”

What will our excuses be for not making a greater effort in winning the lost? What excuses have we used in the past? Baptizing our own is right and good, (though we do not always do that either, but they, at least were exposed to the gospel) but what of those outside the extended family? Are we selfish with the greatest free gift on earth? We must not, cannot be selfish, with the gospel of Christ!

If someone in the church of Christ in my home area had not been concerned about those outside their families, I would not be a Christian today. Someone back there was interested enough in their neighbor to give me the opportunity to accept or reject the gospel. When they provided me with the greatest blessing on earth (to hear the pure gospel), it became my responsibility to obey it or refuse to obey it. All we are responsible to do is to give our friends, co-workers, and neighbors the opportunity to obey or turn down the Lord’s invitation. Beloved, we are called to call others; we are saved to save others; we are won to win others! Do we have a saying or a saving faith?

West Paducah, KY
SICK
Please remember in your prayers:
Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Bramley, Neva Bryant,
Ella Hamme, Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Sam Stough
(Jean Flesher’s father), Ronald Clark
(Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Madeline
Quinn (Diana Brazell’s mother), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin),
Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s
friend), and Teri Bland (Billy Bland’s wife).

READING/INVITATION
April 11, 2000
Reading: Brantley Johnson
Invitation: Tim Lamb
April 18, 2001
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Tony Liddell

MARK THESE DATES
April 8, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
April 8, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
April 15, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
April 15, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
April 22, 2001–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Vegetables
PAT BOONE’S 
DREADFUL DEMISE

Tom Wacaster

For those of us who are old enough to remember Pat Boone in his younger years, we can recall the example he set in spite of his association in the entertainment industry. Pat was once a faithful member of the Lord’s church, and his lifestyle showed it. He was well-known for his refusal to drink alcoholic beverages, and his denouncement and criticism of the same. But near the end of the 1950s and on into the early 1960s he began his drift away from God. Some came to Pat’s defense with their affirmation that a little doctrinal difference did not amount to a wholesale rejection of God. Quite the contrary. A refusal to abide by God’s doctrine will eventually lead to a refusal to abide by God’s moral standard as well. Pat is a case in point.

Let me side track for just a moment and introduce you to another entertainer. Unless you have been keeping up with the news in the entertainment world (something that I am not “won’t” to do, as they say), you may not be aware that this particular rap star and self proclaimed artist has produced no little controversy among liberal and conservative thinkers alike. Eminem (pronounced like the candy, M n’ M) is known for his overall violent and immoral rap music. He espouses, among other things, rape, incest, and murder. He mocks authority and rails at dignitaries. In one of his songs he even speaks of raping his own mother so that he can fulfill his sexual drive, father a child, and get a brother along the way. When criticized, he claims he is sending a message, and that he is simply expressing himself in what he and others have
claimed is “the art of music.” Astonishingly, he gained quite a following and has managed to surpass some of the top stars in sales and popularity. He has also received a number of the music industry’s most coveted awards. Everything about him: his actions, his life, his music, his lyrics, and his rebellion, reek of someone who is anti-God, anti-family, and anti-morals. One would think that we would hear a national outcry. But little is said, and even less is heard. Unfortunately, men like Eminem have those who would come to their defense. Pat Boone is one such defender. On the inside front page of the Dallas Morning News (2-19-01) it was noted that “Rapper Eminem has his share of detractors, but musician Pat Boone is offering some support.” Here are Pat’s exact words: “I don’t agree with his lyrics, their content or tone. I’m totally opposed to violence, racism and homophobia, but I vigorously feel that we must respect an individual’s right to speak his mind, especially when it comes to all forms of art.” There are a number of things wrong with Mr. Boone’s thinking.

First, you cannot “totally oppose” violence and lend support to those who espouse it. You cannot remain neutral when it comes to opposition of that which is wrong. You must actively fight it.

Second, Boone has sided with those who have bought into the lie that opposition to homosexuality is “homophobia.” There is a negative connotation that derives from the use of that word. Among the gay and lesbian community, as well as the liberal left that is opposed to any criticism of homosexuality, the word “homophobia” has come to refer to anyone who has the least degree of opposition to that immoral behavior.

Third, Boone seems to think that an individual’s right (as he calls it) has no limits when it comes to self-expression. Common sense says there is no such thing as absolute freedom. Freedom entails responsibility, in both action and language.

Fourth, our one time colleague in the faith thinks that Eminem’s music and tirade against all that is good and holy is art. Come on folks. Webster defines art as “an esthetically pleasing and meaningful arrangements of elements, as words, sounds, colors, shapes, etc; any system of rules and principles that facilitates skilled human accomplishment.” Would someone please explain to me what is “esthetically pleasing” about someone who advocates raping one’s own mother? What skill is there in trashing things that are good and promoting error? If Pat Boone thinks Eminem’s music is art then our brother has sunk further than we had ever thought possible.

As I pointed out when I began this article. Abandoning the doctrine of God is the prerequisite to abandonment of God’s moral code as well. It is only a matter of time.

TAKE TIME
Dave Rogers

Take time to be holy. How often we hear and sing these words in worship! Have you ever thought about what they mean? It is easy to say, “Well I’m here singing this song, so I’m doing what it says.” This song speaks to much more than just coming to the church building three or four times a week! Being holy means being like God; can you truthfully say you are like Him? Holiness means being pure (this is the root of the word); is your life pure? Holiness is
something which takes time, because you have to work at it; how are you doing?

Long ago the Psalmist wrote, “Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness” (Psa. 29:2), to encourage us to live closer to God. In your fast-paced world of school, homework, dates, sports, cars, first jobs, and other activities, are you making time to be holy? Most of the world is not; some of your friends will think you are strange when you do; who is more important to you, God or friends?

Being a Christian is not always a choice between God and our companions; we can influence them for good! But, unless you learn now to make the time it takes to be holy, you will not. What does it take to be holy? Some very simple things: Time for prayer (Luke 18:1-5); Regular study (besides Bible classes and Bible bowl practice!) from God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15); Care and courtesy for Christians above all others (Rom. 12:10); Avoiding sin and saying no to temptation (Jam. 4:17). These are good beginning points for living a holy life: Will you take the time?

PO Box 285; Lawton, OK 73502

JESUS CHRIST CAME TO SAVE THE LOST

Andrew M. Connally

God’s purpose in sending Jesus into the world was to save sinners: “For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). Again; “Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15). His program in accomplishing this was urgent and full, for He said, “We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. When I am in the world, I am the light of the world” (John 9:4-5). Yet. He accomplished His Father’s mission, for John declares that Jesus said, “I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do” (John 17:4).

In order to accomplish God’s purpose, He shed His blood. Matthew records, “For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins” (Mat. 26:28). In doing so, Jesus died for all men, everywhere: “But we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste of death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb. 2:9-10).

But, in the midst of such a program Jesus said He would build Himself a church: “And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; ... If the church has nothing to do with our salvation, what did He want with it when He came to seek and save the lost?

His very blood was shed to purchase the church, for elders are exhorted to “feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28). Why would He shed His blood to purchase a nonessential institution when His mission was to save the lost?

What do men really think of the church? Most of them do not really think of the church at all! Those who do usually equate it with a lodge or civic club, the thought of which is blasphemy! The way many members neglect it, reject it, reflect upon it is not a bit better! Shame on them! But the idea that salvation is out of it contradicts every statement in the Bible on the subject!

Deceased
SICK

Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley, Neva Bryant, Diana Brazell, Louis Herrington, Jim Loy, Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Madeline Quinn (Diana Brazell’s mother), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Teri Bland (Billy Bland’s wife), and Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s friend).

READING/INVITATION
April 18, 2001
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Tony Liddell
April 25, 2000
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Damon Lundy

MARK THESE DATES
April 15, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
April 15, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
April 22, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
April 22, 2001–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
April 29, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Vegetables
A VISIT TO OLD PHILADELPHIA

Dub McClish

While Lavonne and I were in Tennessee for a gospel meeting, we had an opportunity to visit the site where some significant and interesting church history occurred almost two hundred years ago. About eight miles from where I preached in the meeting (the Shady Grove community in Coffee County—I also preached in a meeting there in 1988) stands the “Old Philadelphia” church building. It is in Warren County, formed in 1807. The building that now stands at “Old Philadelphia” dates back to 1830, but there were people meeting there to worship God as early as 1805, according to a granite monument on the site. The clapboard building was repaired a few years ago and the original plank flooring, pulpit lectern, and lampshelves around the walls are still intact.

The people who settled that area came from Virginia and North Carolina. They were devout Presbyterians and Episcopalians, but had no preacher. They simply turned to the Bible and “studied themselves” out of their religious errors. They learned from the Scripture that baptism is a burial in water that is unto the remission of sins, and they began practicing it, contrary to their denominational heritage. By 1810 they had discarded their Book of Common Prayer and Confession of Faith (their creed books) and were simply worshiping as a congregation of the New Testament church. They called themselves simply “Christians,” and the congregation was known as the church of Christ.

Some observations are in order: (1) This was an indigenous revival of primitive Christianity. There is no evidence that they were aware of the
work of Barton W. Stone at Cane Ridge, KY, several hundred miles away. They could not have been influenced by Alexander Campbell who did not preach his first sermon until 1810 and did not break with the Baptist Church until 1827. (2) The Bible is a pattern for the church of Christ, and any group of people anywhere at any time can form a nondenominational, nonsectarian congregation of the Lord’s church whenever they are willing to follow the Bible alone and respect its silence as well as its explicit teachings. (3) When men do this, they are not “Campbellites” or any other kind of “-ites” (even if they were led to obey the Truth through the influence of A. Campbell or some other man)— they are simply and only Christians, as were those brethren at Old Philadelphia. Following the New Testament only will make one or one thousand Christians only. Indeed, this is the ideal we must ever set before the world.

(This article was revised from an article published in the August 4, 1988, “Edifier”)
908 Imperial Drive; Denton, TX 76201

A VIEW OF
THE HOLY SPIRIT
Franklin Camp

The subject of the Holy Spirit is one that I have been interested in from the time I started preaching. One of the first errors that I had to meet when I began preaching was the denominational claim that the Holy Spirit worked directly and apart from the Word of truth. This is one of the basic doctrines of the denominational world. The teaching that the Spirit works directly and apart from the truth strikes at the very foundation of the authority of the Scriptures. This doctrine opens the door for the claims of all false teachers from Joseph Smith to Billy Graham. If one is led directly by the Spirit apart from the truth, then he does not need the Bible, nor indeed can he be expected to follow the Bible.

The question of how the Spirit works in conversion and sanctification is one that gospel preachers have debated with denominational preachers throughout the years. The proposition that the Holy Spirit works only through the Word is one that has stood the test of the polemic platform for more than a hundred and fifty years. It is my firm conviction that his proposition is as unshakable today as it has been in the past. The inroads of Pentecostalism into the church have not come as a result of brethren discovering something new about the Holy Spirit and His work; it has come about because of the neglect to teach on the subject.


Deceased

THE PRIMARY GOAL
OF THE CHURCH
Leon Cole

The church has one primary goal—evangelize. This must be our watchword. Much concern has been voiced about the lack of growth numerically of the church. Various reasons are offered as to why such growth has either stalled or stopped. The glaring truth is that generally a spirit of evangelism no longer characterizes the church.

An interesting study can be made in reviewing the history of some Protestant churches. In their early days most of them were very evangelistic and their number grew rapidly. Then came a cry to minister to the social aspect of men. Gymnasiums and playgrounds became a necessity for every church plant. Church was
now a place to play rather than pray. Only people with high degrees could occupy their pulpits. As the embrace of the social gospel intensified there was a decrease in reaching the masses. Today, most of these churches are not only not growing but their number is decreasing and disillusionment is seen among many of their adherents.

Our brethren are falling into the same trap. I read in bulletins, published by our brethren, of the accomplishments achieved by their team in the church league. They inform us that the trophies can be viewed in the foyer. One pictured the celebration after the championship had been won. Calls are made to inform the church office if one is willing to participate in softball competition. One can only speculate as to whether as much energy and interest is exerted in seeking the lost. Is there as much rejoicing over the salvation of a soul as there is over finishing first in the league? I wonder how long the preacher would last if he were to inform the congregation that it is the role of the home, not the church, to entertain. I am very well acquainted with one preacher who, after informing the congregation that people were converted by the gospel not pizza parties and frolics, was dismissed post haste!

It is worth noting that many of the groups attracting the most people today enjoy the least social standing. And though often terribly mistaken about teachings in the Bible, at least use it as the means of reaching people. Even more troublesome is that they have a zeal much stronger for their cause than is observed among most of us.

What is the answer? It is not to build again across the tracks. It is not to bar a preacher from the pulpit if he happens to know the difference between a verb and a noun. There must be a return to the evangelistic fervor of the first century church. New Testament Christians had no wealth, social power, or political clout. Their only trophies were the stripes on their back from preaching Christ (Gal. 6:17). They met where dead bodies were buried and decaying. But they grew. And they grew by telling the grand old story of the cross with clarity and power. Let us do the same. We must not allow respectable paths to lead us to dead ends.

Copied
SICK

Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Hairston Brantley (Hospice Care), Neva Bryant, Diana Brazell, Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Madeline Quinn (Diana Brazell’s mother), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Sacred Heart Hospital, room 443), Vernon Bowman (Madeline Graves’ father), and Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s friend).

READING/INVITATION
April 25, 2000
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Damon Lundy

May 2, 2001
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

MARK THESE DATES
April 22, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
April 22, 2001–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
April 29, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
April 30, 2001–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 P.M.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Vegetables
THAT WAS MY INVITATION

Dean Fugett

It had been another one of those kind of weeks. You know, when everything seems to go wrong, the whole world seems to be against you, and you have no one who cares that you are hurting and needing a little lifting up. The boss seemed to be watching me, just waiting for me to make a mistake—and I did. Workers around me were snapping and grumbling, grabbing the best materials and opportunities. My bills all seemed to come due and extra expenses on the old car took too much of my pay check. Depression had set in and I just could not get my chin off the floor. I just did not think I could take anymore...

I was sitting there on Sunday morning wondering if life was worth living, if there was any valid reason to go on. Then I thought about religion. It seems that we always think about religion last; at least I did. I began to think about a couple of people at work who always seemed to have a smile, who were always considerate of others, who did not jump into the “dog-eat-dog” fray, who always had a kind word when they spoke. I also remembered that one had mentioned to me several times that he would like for me to attend worship and study the Bible with him. I had not had time then, but now I remembered. They had said something about the church of Christ where they attend not far from my apartment. I decided. I dressed and made my way toward the church building that I had seen from time to time a few blocks away.

Worship had already begun, so I slipped onto a back pew, just to be in an atmosphere of spirituality to see if I could find something—anything—to pull this life back together. The words of the songs seemed written just for me. “Be with me Lord, I cannot live without you.” “Bring...
We extend our deepest sympathy to Joyce Brantley and family in the death of Hairston Brantley on April 17, 2001, after a long and faithful life of service to the Lord. He was born February 2, 1911 in Evergreen, Alabama.

His Christian devotion was life long, working with several local congregations of the church of Christ. He was a major factor in helping establish the Bellview Church of Christ in 1952. His first love was God; his second was his family.

Brother Brantley served as the first preacher of the Bellview congregation. He along with brother Bill Gallaher were appointed to serve as its first elders in 1965. Brother Brantley continued to faithfully serve this congregation until he retired from the eldership in August 1995 due to health reasons. He had a great love for preachers, as is evidenced by his support and promotion of the Preacher Training School that was once here and the annual lectureship. He also had a great love for people, often calling and going by to visit people who were in need.

Please keep the Brantley family in your prayers.
BEACON

Due to a personal emergency the April 23, 2001 issue of the Beacon will not be printed.

WHERE ARE YOU FOUND?

A national survey of various churches revealed the following startling statistics about church going folks.

- 10% cannot be found
- 20% never attend
- 25% never pray
- 35% never read the Word of God
- 40% never contribute to the Lord’s work
- 70% never attend Sunday evening worship
- 75% never assume responsibility in the program of the Lord’s church
- 95% never win a soul to Christ
- 100% expect to go to heaven

Author Unknown

THE TEN MOST WANTED INDIVIDUAL

1. The person who has a ready smile and a pat on the back for others.
2. The person who can see his or her own faults before he sees the faults of others.
3. The person who gives his or her own money, time, and talent without thought of return.
4. The person who gives himself or herself totally into a project and then gives credit for its success to his helpers.
5. The person who is willing to say, “I was wrong; I am sorry,”
6. The person who will look at temptation squarely and say, “No.”
7. The person who bring his or her children to church services rather than sending them.
8. The person who puts God’s business above any other business.
9. The person who tries to be the right example to every individual rather than merely talks about it.
10. The person who has a passion to help rather than a passion to be helped.

Do you and I have the qualities to be one of these individuals?

Author Unknown

ered?? One family exited out the back door as they began the next verse. “Long my heart has sighed for thee; Long has evil reigned within; Now thy message comes to me.” Now the young people were dropping scrap pieces of paper on which they had been scribbling onto the floor. One young lady just stood chewing her gum. I began to look around the auditorium. Some were concentrating on the words of the song. “Here I give my all to thee.” Two little boys pushed each other to the floor; their parents laughed. A father picked up his child and walked out into the lobby for a drink of water. What are they thinking? Certainly not about the invitation—my invitation! Did they care about my soul, my needs, my pain? They seemed so far away.

I pulled my thoughts back to my invitation, “Humbly at thy cross I bow, seeking thy salvation now.” The last note was dying away. Many were returning their books to the racks. I wanted to cry “Wait!!!” But it was over. Over! The moment was gone; the mood broken. This had been my invitation but now it was past. I gathered up my needs, pain, and loneliness and exited the auditorium, back into the abyss of my empty life. As I walked out among those who had surrounded me in the auditorium, my mind kept repeating, “That was my invitation...but...” I never went back there!!!

2335 Antioch Road; Cave City, AR 72521

WHERE ARE YOU FOUND?
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Neva Bryant, Diana Brazell, Ella Hammac, Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Madeline Quinn (Diana Brazell’s mother), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Vernon Bowman (Madeline Graves’ father), and Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s friend).

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Debra and Denise Mowery in the death of their father Delbert Mowery on April 21, 2001. Please keep them in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
May 9, 2000
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Dusty Wilkes
May 16, 2001
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Henry Born

MARK THESE DATES
May 6, 2001–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
May 13, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
May 20, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Peanut Butter and Jelly
THE BIBLE AND PI

Mel Futrell

Some time back someone handed me a clipping from an Alabama newspaper. Specifically, it was a letter to the editor titled: “The Bible is not a Book of Science.” It was, in fact, a response to a previous letter to the editor. The content of this letter, from a biology professor in Mobile, is typical of what one hears and reads these days from most science circles. It is laden with error, misrepresentation, and bias. Below I have reprinted just that section of the letter that touches on our title.

Dan Daniels’ letter on June 5 serves to remind us how unfortunate it is that specific religious beliefs have to be defended by promulgating, at best, misinformation, and at worse outright prevarication concerning the relationship between science and specific sacred texts.

The Bible is not a book of science, as the apostle Timothy notes; the statement that “science does not contradict or disprove the Bible” is erroneous. The first book of Kings (chapter 7, verse 23) states a mathematical impossibility. According to the Bible, the mathematical expression of $\pi$ would be equal to 3; in science, $\pi$ equals 3.14. The Indiana Legislature rescinded its previously biblically-based law that $\pi$ equals 3.

The above contains numerous inexcusable errors. We will give attention to three of the more obvious ones.

First, the opening line of the second paragraph that says, “The Bible is not a book of science” is misleading and irrelevant. We could also state, with clarification, has been that whenever the Bible touches on any of these areas (science, history, geography), it is 100% correct in the
statements it makes. I challenge anyone to prove otherwise.

Second, it is inferred from a comparison of 1 Thessalonians 1:1 and 2:6 that Timothy was an “apostle of Christ,” though he certainly was not an apostle in the sense the 12 or Paul. That said, let it be understood Timothy nowhere states or implies that the Bible is not a book of science. The fact of the matter is we have no record of Timothy writing any sacred text. Our confused biology professor may be thinking of Paul’s statement to Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:20 from the King James Version which says, “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.” But even here Paul is not warning anyone not to oppose science. Actually, the verse says nothing about science as we think of it today. The more literal rendering is found in the New King James Version’s “and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge.” But, of course, at one time the term science referred to systematized knowledge in general—thus the KJV’s rendering.

Third, and finally, is it the case that science contradicts and disproves the Bible? The professor offers up 1 Kings 7:23 as an example of a Bible error by way of a mathematical impossibility. Here is what the verse says, “And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other: it was round all about, and his height was five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about.” The reference is to Hiram of Tyre and the construction work he was doing for King Solomon. Now, mathematics tells us that the circumference of a circle is \( \pi \) times the diameter of the circle. From the information provided in this verse, \( \pi \) would be 3. But our critic says this is impossible because “in science \( \pi \) equals 3.14.” His conclusion is that the Bible is wrong and science is right and thus science does disprove the Bible. But, brethren, was the purpose of the author of 1 Kings to calculate \( \pi \) out several decimal points or was it to relate the construction of a circular molten sea and in so doing to offer the approximate value of \( \pi \)? Certainly the latter is the case. Even today we routinely give approximate values or measurements to things and think nothing of it. If I need accuracy to two decimal points, then 3.14 is better. But is 3.14 as the value of \( \pi \) wrong when an even more precise number is 3.14159265? Of course not!

Bible scholar Gleason Archer had this to say about the criticism of 1 Kings 7:23: If the statistical statements concerning the population of cities or nations were subjected to the same stringent standard as that leveled at 1 Kings 7:23, then we would have to say that all population statistics are in error. A certain number of people are dying each minute, and babies are being born at a standard rate every sixty seconds; therefore any exact sum that might be true at 1:00 P.M. on a give day through computer calculation would be “inaccurate” by 1:01 P.M. that same day. It is perfectly proper to speak of the circumference of any circle as being three times in diameter if we are speaking approximately.” (Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties, Zondervan Pub., 1982, pp. 198-199).

Brethren, attempts to discredit the Bible will no doubt continue and probably at an increasing rate. Knowing this to be true, let us ever be prepared to give a ready defense (1 Pet. 3:15).

450 Harleston Road; Irmo, SC 29063

BELLVIEW LECTURES

The Twenty-sixth Annual Bellview Lectures, Encouraging Statements Of The Bible, will be held June 9-13, 2001. Twenty-nine men will be speaking: Kent Bailey, Billy Bland, David Brown, Curtis Cates, B. J. Clarke, Harrell Davidson, Lee Davis, Daniel Denham, Tracy Dugger, Guss Eoff, Garland Elkins, Monte Evans, Barry Grider, Noah Hackworth, Ronnie Hayes, Bobby Liddell, Keith Mosher, Jerry
Murrell, Clifford Newell, Lynn Parker, Ira Rice, Stanley Ryan, Paul Sain, Preston Silcox, Michael Shepherd, Gary Summers, David Watson, Joel Wheeler, and Eddie Whitten. The following men will be writing lessons for the lecturership book but will not be speaking: Ted Clarke, Bob Patterson, Tim Smith, and John West.

The lecture topics include: Encouragement; “He Is Not Here: For He Is Risen”—Mat. 28:6; Pressing Toward The Mark—Phi. 3:7-14; Jesus' Reassuring Message To Peter—Mark 16:7; God Is—Psa. 19:1; God’s Superiority—1 Sam. 5:1-4; “God So Loved The World”—John 3:16; Peace Passing Understanding—Phi. 4:7; “Inherit The Kingdom”—Mat. 25:34; “Be Of Good Cheer; I Have Overcome The World”—John 16:33; “As For Me And My House”—Jos. 24:15; Nothing Separates Us From The Love Of God—Rom. 8:31-39; “I Can”—Phi. 4:13; “So Great A Cloud Of Witnesses”—Heb. 12:1; Things Not Seen Are Eternal—2 Cor. 4:16-5:1; “I Will Never Leave Thee, Nor Forsake Thee”—Heb. 13:5; “For Such A Time As This”—Est. 4:14; “Casting All Your Care Upon Him; For He Careth For You”—1 Pet. 5:7; Acknowledging God Brings His Direction—Pro. 3:6; “All Things Are Become New”—2 Cor. 5:17; The Good Shepherd—Psa. 23; “They That Sow In Tears Shall Reap In Joy”—Psa. 126:5; God’s Word Shall Not Return Void—Isa. 55:11; God Bears Our Burdens—Psa. 68:19; “God Shall Supply All Your Need”—Phi. 4:19; The Joy Of Worship—Psa. 122:1; Made In God’s Image—Gen. 1:26-27; Successful Families—Gen. 18:18-19; and The Christian’s Reward—2 Tim. 1:26-27. Book only: “He Shall Save His People From Their Sins”—Mat. 1:21; “All Spiritual Blessings”—Eph. 1:3; God Can—Eph. 3:20; and We Can Rejoice—Phi. 4:4.

If you are planning on attending the Bellview Lectures be sure to make your motel reservations now. Microtel Inn & Suites (8001 Lavelle Way) offers the following price (tax not included) $50–1 to 2 people per room. Their phone number is 850/941-8902. 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 (bellview@bellviewcoc.com). Check out our web site listed below for more information. We hope to see you in June.

(http://www.bellviewcoc.com)

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE
Larry Thomas

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Pro. 14:12). We must understand the Lord’s Way if we are to have life. Jesus said, “For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it” (Mat. 7:14). Thomas asked Jesus the question “how know we the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:5-6).

Here are some attitudes that you should adopt that will help you to understand the way:

1. Hunger for truth (Mat. 5:6).
2. Confidence that you can understand the Bible (John 8:32).
4. Humility (Jam. 4:6).
5. Patience in learning.
6. Desiring to be saved through Christ (Acts 17:10-11; Rom. 6:23).
7. Learning to live for Christ with heaven as a goal (Gal. 2:20; 2 Tim. 4:7-8).
8. Praying for wisdom (Jam. 1:5).
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Neva Bryant, Diana Brazell, Ella Hammac (West Florida Rehab, room 1024), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Madeline Quinn (Diana Brazell’s mother), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), Martha Parker (Richard Parker’s sister-in-law), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Vernon Bowman (Madeline Graves’ father), and Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s friend).

READING/INVITATION
May 16, 2001
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Henry Born
May 23, 2001
Reading: Joshua Wilkes
Invitation: Paul Brantley

MARK THESE DATES
May 13, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
May 13, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
May 20, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
May 20, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Peanut Butter and Jelly
MISTAKES IN CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Lynn Parker

Discipline is not strictly negative and punitive. It involves instruction, encouragement, and exhortation. Paul wrote, “And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all” (1 Th. 5:14). But when impenitent hearts rebuff attempts by faithful brethren to reclaim them, the Bible clearly sets forth the responsibility of God’s family toward the prodigal. “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us...And if any man obeyeth not our
find no sympathy here! Unity-in-diversity? Not here! Direct operations of the Holy Spirit? No takers at this strong, informed congregation! Do you practice church discipline as commanded in the New Testament? “Well, uh, er, no, but we don’t tolerate false doctrine here!” What a tragedy to think that those neglecting this command will spend eternity with the neglected backsliders.

Whether it be fear, ignorance, laziness, and plain ol’ rebellion that keeps us from doing all the Bible commands to bring back the lost brother, it is sure to be found wrong on that Great Day when all the books are opened. To do nothing is fatal—for the erring and for those who fail to obey the Lord in this matter.

Lip Service Only

Much like the previous mistake, some believe in church discipline but that is as far as it ever gets. They talk a good fight against sin, they preach what the Bible commands in regard to restoration of the erring, but they never get around to putting principle and precept into action. The best plans, programs, and preparation are wastes of time if we do not follow through. While we drink tea and twiddle our thumbs, eternity approaches, erring souls hang in the balance, and time is not on anyone’s side! “Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God: but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb. 3:12-13).

Wresting God’s Commands

It is always a mistake to rationalize disobedience to God’s will. Perhaps you have heard some well-meaning soul suggest: “Let’s just drop him from the church roll—he’s already withdrawn himself from the church.” Now where is that Scripture telling us that the erring can stop the discipline process by “withdrawing from the church”? No doubt it is in the same chapter telling brethren they can forget about restoring the brother who fell away some time ago. Sounds a lot like Naaman’s faulty reasoning, doesn’t it? The Bible commands that the church put away the wicked brother (1 Cor. 5:13)—not the other way around! The passing of time does not relieve us of our responsibility to convert the sinner from the error of his ways (Jam. 5:19-20). Neglecting efforts to restore the erring for five years or twenty-five does not remove our responsibility.

The Matter of Partiality

A principle well-grounded in Scripture reminds us that sin must be handled impartially. “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality” (1 Tim. 5:19-21).

A “wink and a nod” is not right, even if the disorderly brother is an elder’s son or a chief financial contributor. It is appalling to think that personalities and social standing can influence the practice of discipline but stranger things have happened. What was wrong in yesteryear is still wrong, regardless of the sinner’s identity.

Seeing that time stand still for no one, we would do well to urgently seek out and try to restore erring brothers and sisters. If they will not heed the warning, after we have done everything commanded by God, then their blood will be on their own hands (Eze. 3:19).

1331 Spring Cypress Road; Spring, TX 77373

Order your copy of the 2001 Bellview Lectures book “Encouraging Statements Of The Bible.” Contact our office.
“Encouraging Statements Of The Bible”
June 9 - 13, 2001

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7:00 PM Encouragement
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Jerry Murrell

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Lunch Break
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May 23, 2001
Reading: Joshua Wilkes
Invitation: Paul Brantley
May 30, 2001
Reading: Michael Wilkes
Invitation: Scot Brazell

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5:00 P.M., in room 7.
May 27, 2001–Farewell reception for
Tony and Vanessa Liddell will be held
after the evening service in the general
purpose building. Tony will be attend-
ing the Memphis School of Preaching
in June.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Peanut Butter and Jelly
WHY ARE WE LOSING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE?

Patrick Morrison

It cannot be denied that one of the greatest tragedies that the Lord’s church faces today is the fact that many of our young people are becoming disenchanted with the Lord’s church, and are searching for “greener pastures” elsewhere. It may be the case that this is really nothing new, but in a time when the Lord’s church is not growing as it should, and in many places the local congregations are doing all they can to hold on to the members they have, this problem becomes increasingly magnified. However, in the opinion of this writer, the church as a whole is facing an ever-growing problem of the loss of our young people. Why are we experiencing this now seemingly more than ever before? What is the cause of this problem? Is there a remedy?

I am convinced that the reason we are losing our young people at an ever-increasing rate is because we are despising our youth (1 Tim. 4:12). We can, and in many cases are, despising our youth in any number of ways. In this article we will consider two ways in which we are despising our youth, thereby contributing to an increase in the number of young people who eventually forsake the church of our Lord.

First, we despise our youth when we persuade them to believe that they cannot understand the Bible. You might be thinking, “I have never heard anyone tell our young people that they cannot understand the Bible.” But the consensus among many in our brotherhood who work with our young people is that we must entertain them
or we will lose them. If we did not reenact the Bible in some dramatic production, or if we do not use speakers who can tell a lot of good jokes while sneaking in some biblical points here and there, then, we are told, our young people will have no interest in the Bible or in things religious. Quit insulting their intelligence! This kind of nonsense is a no-win situation. When we try to entertain rather than just preach it plain, the message we send to our young people is that the Bible in and of itself is not appealing enough without clowns and fireworks, or that our young people have not reached the point where they can fully appreciate the appeal of Scripture. The Lord’s church has stressed for so long that the Bible is so simple that even a child can understand it, yet we do an about face in many instances when dealing with our youth. We lose them when we convince them that they have to be entertained. When the worship productions do not live up to their expectations, our young people search elsewhere for bigger and better productions.

Another way in which we despise our youth is in the way we allow them to make their own decisions. Please hear me out here. In an attempt to be judicious, many Christian parents allow their children to make their own decisions regarding their involvement in the work and activity of the church, yet at the same time, these same parents have made many of life’s decisions for their children. If your child were to wake up one weekday morning and state that he/she were not going to school that day, you would probably answer something like: “As long as you live under my roof, you will live by my rules. You will be going to school today. End of discussion.” The conversation would be much the same if your child had a job and he decided that he just did not feel like going on this particular day. Yet, when it comes to matters involving the Lord’s church, we suddenly allow our young people freedom of choice. If it comes down to playing in a ball game or attending the services of the church, many parents will say: “I think he/she is old enough to make his/her own decision.” Why is it that this thinking does not work when it comes to school, or work, or anything else except spiritual matters? Parents, we need to let our young people know that involvement in the church of Christ is more important than school, or work, or sports, or anything else in which they may be engaged. It is no wonder that our young people forsake the Lord’s church when parents are telling them that they have to go to school, they have to go to work, they have to practice for games, but it is their choice whether or not they attend the services and other activities of the church. Some will say: “Well, if I make that decision for them, then my children will grow up to despise the church, and they will leave it the first chance they get.” Quit telling them they have to go to school, because they might come to hate it. Quit telling them they have to work, because they might despise it and refuse to work ever again. Do you see the inconsistency? So do our young people!

SLOW DOWN

Several years ago the news media reported how a new Navy jet shot itself down flying at supersonic speed. It ran into cannon shells it had fired only seconds before. The jet was traveling too fast!

Are you traveling too fast? If you do not have time to be kind, if you do not have time to worship God in church services. If do not have time to read the Bible. If you do not have time to pray, you probably are traveling too fast to hear the sounds of God’s voice.

You had better slow down, before, like the jet, you shoot yourself down.

“Please slow me down Lord!”

Author Unknown
“Encouraging Statements Of The Bible”
June 9 - 13, 2001

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May 30, 2001
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Invitation: Scot Brazell
June 6, 2001
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Bill Busch

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June 17, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Peanut Butter and Jelly
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.
NEW BIBLE CLASSES BEGINNING

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

**Sunday Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adults I</th>
<th>Galatians</th>
<th>Michael Hatcher</th>
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<tr>
<td>Adults II</td>
<td>Christian Evidences</td>
<td>Jim Loy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults III</td>
<td>2 Corinthians</td>
<td>Paul Brantley</td>
</tr>
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<td>Studies In Christian Doctrine And Practical Christian Living</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Adults II</td>
<td>1 &amp; 2 Chronicles</td>
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</table>

BELLVIEW LECTURES

BOOKS AND DEFENDER ON CD

The 1988-2001 books and Defender issues of 1994-2000 are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Intel and Macintosh computers). The Acrobat Reader is also provided. The cost is $51.25 (includes shipping). Contact the office for further information.

8900 Manchaca Road; Austin, TX 78748

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 who 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: the word 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).
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7:45 PM The Christian Reward; 2 Tim. 4:6-8
Ronnie Hayes
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Neva Bryant, Diana Brazell, Ella Hammac, Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Madeline Quinn (Diana Brazell’s mother), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Vernon Bowman (Madeline Graves’ father), Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s friend), Gail Finch (Dot Lambert’s friend), and Jackie Ayliffe (Carl and Tim Ayliffe’s mother).

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Richard Parker and his family in the death of his sister-in-law Martha Parker, on May 22, 2001. Please keep Richard and his family in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
June 6, 2001
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Bill Busch
June 13, 2001
Bellview Lectures

MARK THESE DATES
June 3, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
June 3-8, 2001–Gospel meeting at Westside Church of Christ with Melvin Sapp from Sumter, SC, speaking. Mon-Fri at 7:30 P.M. 900 N. “J” Street.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Peanut Butter and Jelly
IMMODEST DRESS

*Joseph D. Meador*

Television offers a barrage of advertisements centering upon a scantily clad woman or man who offers for sale any item from a new car to shaving cream. Many businessmen boldly advertise their wares in newspapers with males and females often so underdressed that little is left unclothed. The entertainment sections of our media, and especially the ads of the current movies, entice and encourage one’s attendance through pictures of almost nude women. However, it seems that nearer to home is not much better. For instance, if we take a drive through our suburbs, we find men mowing their yards or washing their cars in shorts and no shirts; women washing their windows or sunbathing in short-shorts, halter tops, bikinis, and braless midriff tops. A shopping trip in our shopping centers and malls often produces a great number of males and females who have surrendered their sense of shame and modesty through lack of proper clothing. Dr. Wilbur M. Smith has correctly stated that our age wears "the shortest garments that have ever been known in any Western Civilization." Christians cannot afford to be so careless about their lack of clothing, and although there are many weak Christians who wear immodest clothing, they must be taught the truth on this matter in order to correct this spiritual defect in their lives.

The Bible plainly and clearly teaches that the clothing of a Christian must be decent, modest, and pure before God and man (1 Tim. 2:9-10; Tit. 2:5). A biblical definition of immodesty can be arrived at when Scriptures such as 1 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 3:1-4; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Romans 12:12, etc., are analyzed. Thus, immodesty is the wearing of improper clothing...
or the absence of proper clothing, which draws attention to those parts of our bodies which creates sinful action and thoughts in others.

Indeed, Christians must be careful about what they wear. Our spiritual life and the lives of those that we influence will surely be affected in a negative sense if we are guilty of the sin of immodesty. May God help each one of us to be stronger and live a purer life before others so that our influence for Christ can be felt.

“In like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works” (1 Tim. 2:9-10).

8900 Manchaca Road; Austin, TX 78748

**WORDS OF DYING INFIDELS**

*S. H. Hall*

Ingersoll (1899) while dying exclaimed, “Oh God, if there be a God; save my soul, if I have a soul.”

Voltaire (1788) while dying said, “I am abandoned by God and man! I will give you half of what I am worth if you give me six month’s life.” (Said to Dr. Frochin, who told him his life could not be extended.) “Then I shall go to hell, and you will go with me.”

It is strange that people who, all of their life, say there is no hell, seem to feel there is, when called upon to leave this world.

Gambetta (1882) while dying said, “I am lost, and there is no use to deny it.”

Is it not strange they say we are mere animals, that when we die, this is the end of us forever; and yet they seem to be afraid, and speak of being lost.

Churchill (1764) stated when the end came, “What a fool I have been.”

Hobbes (1679): “I say again, if I had the whole world to dispose of, I would give it to live one day. I am about to take a leap into the dark.”

Gibbon (1794): “All is now lost—finally irrecoverably lost. All is dark and doubtful.”

Thomas Paine (1809) stated, “O Lord, help me! O God, what have I done to suffer so much? What will become of me hereafter? Stay with me, for I cannot bear to be left alone! Send even a child to play with me.”

**“NEGLIGENCE SALVATION”**

In Hebrews 2:1-4 we find a strong warning not to “neglect salvation.” Salvation should be the goal of all men. This means doing all that is required of man so as to inherit eternal life. Verse 3 asks, “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” This question follows “For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward” (v. 2). Men neglect salvation because they neglect the Word of God (Mat. 7:21-27). This is the root of man’s problem. Men neglect salvation due to:

1. The deceitful nature of sin (Heb. 3:12; Gen. 3:1-6).
2. The idea that we have plenty of time (Jam. 4:13).
3. Some look that we have plenty of time (Acts 24:25; 26:27).
4. Some are burdened with the affairs of this world rather than with the affairs of living for God (Luke 14:16; Mat. 6:33).
5. Some feel that God will make an exception in their case (Acts 10:34).

Our souls salvation depends upon how we live (1 Cor. 15:58).  

*Author Unknown*
“Encouraging Statements Of The Bible”
June 9 - 13, 2001

Saturday, June 9
7:00 PM Encouragement (Keith Mosher)
7:45 PM “He Is Not Here: For He Is Risen”; Mat. 28:6 (Jerry Murrell)

Sunday, June 10
9:00 AM Pressing Toward The Mark; Phi. 3:7-14 (Ira Y. Rice, Jr.)
10:00 AM Jesus’ Reassuring Message To Peter; Mark 16:7 (Billy Bland)
2:00 PM God Is; Psa. 19:1 (Tracy Dugger)
3:00 PM God’s Superiority; 1 Sam. 5:1-4 (Daniel Denham)
7:00 PM God’s Word Shall Not Return Void; Isa. 55:11 (Noah Hackworth)
7:45 PM Peace Passing Understanding; Phi. 4:7 (Michael Shepherd)

Monday, June 11
9:00 AM “Inherit The Kingdom”; Mat. 25:34 (Joel Wheeler)
10:00 AM “Be Of Good Cheer; I Have Overcome The World”; John 16:33 (Kent Bailey)
11:00 AM “As For Me And My House”; Jos. 24:15 (Stanley Ryan)
1:30 PM Nothing Separates Us From The Love Of God; Rom. 8:31-39 (Dave Watson)
2:30 PM “I Can”; Phi. 4:13 (Gary Summers)
3:30 PM Open Forum (Bobby Liddell)
7:00 PM “So Great A Cloud Of Witnesses”; Heb. 12:1 (Lynn Parker)
7:45 PM Things Not Seen Are Eternal; 2 Cor. 4:16-5:1 (Bobby Liddell)

Tuesday, June 12
9:00 AM “I Will Never Leave Thee, Nor Forsake Thee”; Heb. 13:5 (Eddie Whitten)
10:00 AM “For Such A Time As This”; Est. 4:14 (Lee Davis)
11:00 AM “Casting All Your Care Upon Him; For He Careth For You”; 1 Pet. 5:7 (Michael Hatcher)
1:30 PM Acknowledging God Brings His Direction; Pro. 3:6 (Barry Grider)
2:30 PM “All Things Are Become New”; 2 Cor. 5:17 (Preston Silcox)
3:30 PM Open Forum (Harrell Davidson)
7:00 PM The Good Shepherd; Psa. 23 (Curtis Cates)
7:45 PM “They That Sow In Tears Shall Reap In Joy”; Psa. 126:5 (Curtis Cates)

Wednesday, June 13
9:00 AM “God So Loved The World”; John 3:16 (David Brown)
10:00 AM God Bears Our Burdens; Psa. 68:19 (Garland Elkins)
11:00 AM “God Shall Supply All Your Needs”; Phi. 4:19 (Monte Evans)
1:30 PM The Joy Of Worship; Psa. 122:1 (Guss Eoff)
2:30 PM Made In God’s Image; Gen. 1:26-27 (Clifford Newell)
3:30 PM Open Forum (Ronnie Hayes)
7:00 PM Successful Families; Gen. 18:19 (B. J. Clarke)
7:45 PM The Christian Reward; 2 Tim. 4:6-8 (Ronnie Hayes)
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Neva Bryant, Diana Brazell, Ella Hammac, Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Madeline Quinn (Diana Brazell’s mother), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Vernon Bowman (Madeline Graves’ father), and Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s friend).

READING/INVITATION
June 13, 2001
Bellview Lectures
June 20, 2001
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Bill Cline

MARK THESE DATES
June 17, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
June 17, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignments cards handed out.
June 24, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
June 24, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignments cards handed out.

ADDRESS CHANGE
Tony and Vanessa Liddell’s new address is: 281 Glen Park Drive; Cordova, TN 38018. Please write to them and keep them in your prayers.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Fruit
DON’T HOARD THE TRUTH!

Lynn Parker

The Day of Pentecost saw some 3,000 obey the gospel as the church of our Lord was established in Jerusalem (Acts 2:41). As faithful and bold preachers continued to proclaim Christ (Acts 4:2), the church grew “and the number of the men was about five thousand” (Acts 4:4). Even in the face of physical persecution, the apostles persisted in the divine commission (Mark 16:15). The Bible records a concise but sterling commendation of these early soldiers: “And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ” (Acts 5:12).

As fierce opposition and tribulation was brought to bear against the church (Acts 8:1), it is remarkable to note that “they therefore that were scattered abroad, went about preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). On we could go, considering numerous examples of the evangelistic fervor possessed by the Lord’s people in the first century; in these brethren we see several attributes we would do well to imitate:

1. They were determined (Acts 5:29).
2. They were obedient in carrying out the Lord’s command (Mat. 28:19-20).
3. They were zealous of good works (Tit. 2:14).
4. They were bold (Acts 4:13).
5. They were forthright and uncompromising in their message (Acts 3:19).

Our age sees faithful brethren and congregations in a small minority, and under siege, not unlike the opposition encountered by the faithful few in the first century.

Immorality and decadence seep the nation...
leaving a multitude of broken homes and damaged lives in their paths. Liberalism raged like a wildfire in the church, leaving a legacy of division, error, and damnation. What shall we do? Throw up our hands in despair and spend our time contemplating the “good old days” when we were the fastest growing religious body in these United States, and when most brethren held steadfastly to sound doctrine? Certainly not! We agree our line of defense against liberalism and false doctrine should include a good offense militantly seeking to win souls to the Lord through the spread of sound doctrine.

It is a tragic fact that some doctrinally sound congregations of the Lord’s people have put evangelism on a back burner and lost sight of their God-given marching orders. Lest you think we create a straw man with which to do battle, consider these examples and see if they do not sound familiar:

(1) One man, speaking for others in the congregation, said that personal work was pointless because the Jehovah’s Witnesses had already been in the community and prejudiced the town against religion. Consequently, neither the congregation nor the majority of its members would try to win souls. Instead, they wanted to grow solely by means of having other Christians move into the community. Needless to say, the church there is dwindling in size and spirit! It ought to shame us to know that propagators of error are more dedicated to the spread of damnable doctrines than some of us are with the truth!

(2) Some congregations build a tremendous edifice and call that evangelism. In one congregation, a brother was quoted as saying, “They all know where the building is—they can come if they want to.” Such an attitude may, unfortunately, be more widespread than any would care to imagine.

(3) Still another congregation, when asked about their evangelistic efforts, proudly pointed to the fact that they owned an entire set of filmstrips for just such work. Of course, it was not mentioned at the time, but not one person knew how to use the filmstrips; they had collected dust for years, and sadly, few cared!

Space will not permit us to continue, but many preachers will tell you that a host of members consider their evangelistic responsibilities to be fulfilled “by proxy” when the church supports a missionary and pays a preacher to “do their work for them.” And yet, we remind all that the preacher can no more do your work for you than he can stand and answer for you in judgment! Some are continually waiting for a new program to start, but the New Testament records that Jesus put it into operation centuries ago, and the most effective program will be each and every Christian making determined and militant efforts to reach his neighbor, co-worker, and relatives with the gospel message. Will they all accept it? No, but our charge is to give them the opportunity, and let God give the increase (1 Cor. 3:7).

It is not enough to “have the truth”; let us not be spiritual hermits and recluses. Instead, let us share the truth realizing that truly, “The Gospel Is For All!”

A PARABLE OF LOST OPPORTUNITY

Charles Box

Luke 14:15-24 is a parable known as the “Parable of the Great Supper.” The parable of the Great Supper is a parable of lost opportunity. Jesus had just taught His disciples to take the lowly place, to be humble and to serve the humble and lowly. One who sat with Him said, “Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God” (Luke 14:15).
In the parable of the great supper we see an opportunity extended. “Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready” (Luke 14:16-17). What an opportunity! Many have been invited. It is supper time and the Lord says to you: “Come; for all things are now ready.” Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mat. 11:28). The opportunity is extended. Through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus all things have been made ready (1 Cor. 15:1-4). What are you doing with the opportunities God extends to you?

In the parable of the great supper we see an opportunity rejected. “And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused” (Luke 14:18-20). These are not the only ones who have rejected opportunities. When you knew a family in need or hurting what did you do with that opportunity? What did you do with that opportunity to teach in Bible school? What did you do with that opportunity to visit at a funeral home or attend a funeral to support a hurting family? What did you do with that opportunity to share the gospel of Christ with others? What of your opportunities to pray, study the Bible, to attend the services of the church, or to shine as light for Jesus. Nothing is worse than rejected opportunities.

In the parable of the great supper we see an opportunity lost. “So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper” (Luke 14:21-24). Opportunities last only a brief moment. The supper is ready. Now is the time to eat. The opportunity will pass quickly. “For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper” (Luke 14:24). Once gone, those opportunities are lost forever. There is coming a great judgment day when all will give account for their opportunities. “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12).

The parable of the Great Supper gives us a look at an opportunity extended, an opportunity rejected, and an opportunity lost. What are you doing with the opportunities in your life? To become a Christian hear the gospel (Rom. 10:17), believe (John 8:24), repent (Luke 13:3), confess (Rom. 10:9-10), and be baptized (Gal. 3:26-27). As a Christian enjoy God’s forgiveness and use every opportunity to God’s glory.

THINGS WE MUST NOT COMPROMISE

The Name of Christ Acts 4:12
The Gospel of Christ Romans 1:16
The church of Christ Ephesians 3:21
The Plan of Salvation Acts 8:12
The Perfect Example of Christ 1 Peter 2:21
The Sacred Scriptures 2 Peter 1:21
The Authority of Christ Matthew 28:18
Purity of Life Titus 2:12
The Purpose of Existence Philippians 1:21
The Hope of Heaven Titus 1:2

Copied
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Neva Bryant, Diana Brazell, Ella Hammac, Joyce Brantley, Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Madeline Quinn (Diana Brazell’s mother), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Vern Bowman (Madeline Graves’ father), and Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s friend).

READING/INVITATION
June 20, 2001
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Bill Cline

June 27, 2001
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Bill Crowe

MARK THESE DATES
June 17, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
June 17, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignments cards handed out.
June 24, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
June 24, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignments cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Fruit

PSALM 5:8
“Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.”
Hand-clapping and Worship
Mel Futrell

In the course of one’s Christian life it is inevitable that issues, and the persons promoting them, will arise and must be looked at critically. Paul’s declaration in Romans 16:17 stand behind this remark: “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”

The word “mark” is from the Greek skopein and means to look at critically, to keep an eye on, to take careful notice of. I believe that the growing practice of hand-clapping in connection with singing, and for that matter hand-clapping period, in a religious context is such an issue, one that should be critically reviewed. We grant that opposition to a thing does not in and of itself represent binding legislation. But since we must have the authority of Christ for all we do in religion (Mat. 28:18; Col. 3:17) and since we are to speak only “the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11), then it follows that any practice that does not fit this criteria must be rejected. At the outset let me say that I do not believe that rhythm hand-clapping in connection with singing and hand-clapping as approval, say at a baptism, are exactly parallel. Although I am opposed to both, my line of argumentation would be somewhat different.

Brethren, the fact of the matter is that rhythmic hand-clapping represents percussion music. As such, it is an addition to the only authorized form of music for the worship of the church congregational, verbal, vocal music which is singing. Proof of the above contention is to be found in the following definition of clap and music from secular sources. Webster says of clap: “A percussive sound...made to gain attention or to express...
approval, as applause” (p. 291).

Webster also offers this definition for music: “1. An art of sound in time which expresses ideas and emotions in significant forms through the elements of rhythm, melody, harmony, and color... 6. Any sweet pleasing or harmonious sounds or sound” (Unabridged Dictionary, 1992, p. 943).

It seems clear that rhythmic hand-clapping fits these definitions for music. Finally Collier’s Encyclopedia offers this insightful statement under its music heading: “Not all music is concerned with pitch; the rhythmic drum-beating, handclapping, or footstomping of many tribal peoples clearly lacks any well-defined pitch” (Bernard Johnston, ed., Vol. 17, New York, NY: Macmillan Educational Co., 1992).

All of this sustains our point that rhythmic hand-clapping constitutes percussion music and, therefore, represents an addition to the authorized music of the church—singing. The New Testament commands us to sing—not sing and snap our fingers, not sing and stomp our feet, not sing and hum, and certainly not sing and clap!

It is also the case that hand-clapping may be non-rhythmic and engaged in purely as a means of expression approval. How should we view hand-clapping at a baptism or at the conclusion of a sermon or religious lecture? I suggest to you that even in these contexts hand-clapping should be avoided. My reasoning behind this is threefold. First, the apostle Paul was very clear that in worship setting all things are to be done “decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14:40). Worship is not for our personal entertainment or amusement. Nor is it a time for rowdy or semi-rowdy behavior. We assemble to revere, praise, and adore our God. Hand-clapping lends itself to an indecent and out of order display.

Brother Tom Holland, of Nashville, Tennessee, has correctly stated: “There is a sacredness of worship that must not be sacrificed on altars of superficial spirituality, fads of the day, emotion-rousing handclapping, and entertainment oriented quartets and choirs. The profound dignity of worship should not be sacrificed to shallow, sensational displays of drama.”

Second, if it is alright for me to display my approval by means of hand-clapping is it likewise okay for me to show by disapproval by throwing fruit or booping? It seems to me the shoe fits both feet. Third, and this is the nail that closes the coffin, we have a biblically approved means of showing our approval available: the saying of “Amen” (1 Cor. 14:16)! Can we not be satisfied with that which we have biblical authority for?

The importance of worship should not be underestimated—it must be in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Worship effects our own spirituality, our relationship with God, and our relationship with other Christians. I feel certain that if one will draw close to the Lord and continue in His Word (Jam. 4:8; John 8:31) he will see no need for special effects such as hand-clapping which have no authority in Scripture. But if you still wish to have a hand-clapping, foot-stomping good ole time, let me suggest a rodeo not the worship of the church.

EACH ONE
REACH ONE
Noah Hackworth

“Each one reach one” is an excellent slogan because it is the very heart of personal evangelism. It would be appropriate for each of us to adopt this expression as our “motto.” This expression is apropos for several reasons. First, it emphasizes soul winning. Lost souls must constantly challenge our thinking because they help us to realize that they are one of the most important reasons why we exist (John 4:35). A constant desire to bring the lost to Christ should fill our minds. Next, the “each one reach one” philosophy places the emphasis exactly where it be-
longs: squarely on the shoulders of each Christian. What did those who were scattered abroad do? They went everywhere preaching the Word (Acts 8:4).

Next, the “each one reach one” expression serves as a personal challenge and goal to each of us. It reminds us that “go ye means go me.” If we all apply our personal skills to the task of teaching others, surely we will reap a harvest of souls. Next, “each one reach one” is motivational. The fact that lost souls will suffer a fate worse than death motivates us to keep on reaching out with the gospel (2 Th. 1:7-9).

Next, “each one reach one” increases personal effectiveness. We each have more ability than we think, and we must stop telling ourselves we cannot win others to Christ. Last, “each one reach one” would just about double the size of any congregation within a year, but, most importantly, it would mean more souls saved. How much a soul is worth to us will determine the amount of work we do. “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).

DARWIN, GOD, AND ANNIE
Bert Thompson

Charles Darwin married a young woman by the name of Emma Wedgwood who was a very strong believer in both God and Christianity. However, something happened during their marriage that caused Charles to become angry with God and stop believing in Him.

The Darwins oldest daughter was a sweet little girl by the name of Annie, who was especially close to her father. In 1850, however, Annie became very sick. Doctors gave her all kinds of medicine, and members of her family looked after her on a daily basis. Friends helped too. But on April 23, 1851, she died at the tender age of only ten years old. Of course, her mother and father were terribly sad. Because Emma was a devout believer in God and the Bible, she was able to cope with Annie’s death. She held onto the hope that one day she might be able to see Annie in heaven.

But Charles Darwin had been studying evolution for a long time and already was having serious doubts about God’s existence. When Annie died, her father became very angry. He blamed God for her sickness and death. And he made up his mind not to believe in God any more.

One writer said that Annie’s death was “the end of the road” for Darwin’s hopes, and that after seeing Annie die: “He could not believe the way Emma believed—nor what she believed. Annie’s cruel death destroyed Charles’ belief in a moral, just universe and Christianity. Charles now took his stand as an unbeliever.”

Eight years after Annie died, Charles Darwin authored The Origin of Species—a book that has caused millions of other people to abandon their belief in God as well. Isn’t this sad? Darwin blamed God for something that was not even His fault. When he stopped believing in God, he lost all hope of ever getting to see Annie again in heaven. The Bible says that “without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6).

When life does not seem fair, or when bad things happen, we should remember Charles Darwin and how he gave up his faith in God. Then we should make up our minds not to be like him because we know that “all things work together for good to them that love God” (Rom. 8:28). If we love and obey Him as Christians, one day we will be with Him in heaven (read Hebrews 11:13-16 and Revelation 2:10).

5342 West La Vida Ct; Visalia, CA 93277

5342 West La Vida Ct; Visalia, CA 93277
SICK
Please remember in your prayers:
Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher,
Neva Bryant, Diana Brazell, Ella Hammac,
Joyce Brantley, Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Donald Clark
(Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Sam Stough
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(Allen Brazell’s cousin), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Vernon Bowman
(Madeline Graves’ father), and Otis Jones
(Dale Cunningham’s friend).

READING/INVITATION
June 27, 2001
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Bill Crowe

July 4, 2001
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

MARK THESE DATES
June 24, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at
5:00 P.M., in room 7.
June 24, 2001–Visititation Group 3 assign-
ments cards handed out.
July 1, 2001–Visititation Group 1 assign-
ments cards handed out.
July 8, 2001–Visititation Group 2 assign-
ments cards handed out.
July 7, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00
P.M., in room 7.
July 15, 2001–Visititation Group 3 assign-
ments cards handed out.
July 15, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at
5:00 P.M., in room 7.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Fruit
MY PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE CHURCH
Joel Wheeler

Each individual in the Lord’s church has a personal responsibility and will be held accountable. Paul stated, “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12). Others cannot do my work and I cannot do work for others. We must realize that we all do not have the same ability, yet we are responsible for the ability we do have (Mat. 25:14-30). The parts of a watch are small and may seem very insignificant. But each part must do its job and do it well or else the watch will not work correctly. The Lord has clearly illustrated my responsibility in the church.

I Am the Branch in Christ the Vine. Jesus said, “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). What would happen in a vineyard if one branch on the vine never produced any fruit? Jesus made it clear when He said, “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit” (John 15:2). I cannot get by on the fact that other branches are producing fruit.

I Am a Stone in the Building. The apostle Peter wrote, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 2:5). Christians are stones that make up the house of God which is the church (1 Tim. 3:15). Each stone performs a task by fitting into place and do work in supporting the building. If the stones do not support the building, then the building will crumble. I cannot
JERRY LINDESMITH
1923 - 2001

We extend our deepest sympathy to Floy Dell Lindesmith and family in the death of Jerry Lindesmith on June 23, 2001. Jerry was born February 9, 1923, in Sulpher, Oklahoma.

Jerry entered the Army Air Corp in 1942. After completion of cadet training he attended navigator school and flew in this capacity during World War II in Sicily, Italy, and North Africa. He completed 92 missions over the Balkans, dropping men and supplies and picking up wounded. After the war he served in the Pacific area in Search and Rescue where he was instrumental in saving the lives of several downed servicemen by directing the dropping of a life raft from the plane on which he was the navigator. He received numerous awards but one which he was most proud, was the Distinguished Flying Cross. Jerry retired from the military in 1964. In the late 60s he moved to Pensacola where he worked for American Cyanamid for 18 years until his retirement.

Jerry will be greatly missed by his loving family and friends. He was a faithful Christian who loved the Lord and His church. He seldom missed the services at Bellview Church of Christ. He was a great supporter of missionaries who were spreading the Gospel of Christ all over the world, young men preparing to preach, and brotherhood publications edited by faithful brethren.

I Am a Candle on the Candlestick and must Personally Shine. The candlestick is symbolic of the church shining forth God’s Word and righteousness in a dark and wretched world (Rev. 1:20). The Lord walks among the candlesticks and He knows who is shining and who is not (Rev. 2:1). Jesus said, “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 5:14-16). What use is a light that does not shine? What glory and praise does God receive if I am not shining forth the light of His Word?

As small as our role may seem or as insignificant it might feel, we all have an important responsibility in the church. We all must bear fruit, support the church and let our lights shine.

One question we all could ask ourselves, what would the church be like if everyone were just like me?

P.O. Box 714; Foley, AL 36536

WHERE DO WE STAND?

Toney L. Smith

I never cease to be surprised when I hear my brethren sound off against those who are defending the truth. Publications as well as the men who write articles opposing error are the ones being brought under question. It should never be the case that the truth is allowed to suffer at the hands of false teachers and the defenders of those false teachers.

The Bible is very plain when it says, “Earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 3) or, “Hold fast the form of sound words” (2 Tim. 1:13). There is no mistaking the meaning of these passages. The child of God has a solemn obligation rest upon others supporting the church and doing the work.

WHERE DO WE STAND?

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The Bible is very plain when it says, “Earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 3) or, “Hold fast the form of sound words” (2 Tim. 1:13). There is no mistaking the meaning of these passages. The child of God has a solemn obligation...
to stand for the truth and with those who have the courage to stand and contrast error with the truth. I pray that more will be strengthened to take a more solid stand for God’s Word. You can be sure of one thing, error will grow unless it is held in check. Unless it is opposed with all of our might!

How does one justify opposing those who will fight Satan? When we see and hear things concerning these men and publications, we are to wonder what is happening. Have we come to the point that we had rather have error rather than oppose it? I am convinced that this is often the case. Jude in verse 18 says that there will be those who will walk after their own ungodly lusts. To permit false doctrines to go unchecked is dangerous as well as sinful. It would do us well to read 1 Timothy 1:19-20. Hymenaeus and Alexander were making shipwreck things concerning the faith. They were delivered unto Satan to be taught not to blaspheme. Paul tells us to mark the ones that walk disorderly (2 Thes. 3:6). No where can we find that those who stand for truth are to be marked in a negative way! But this is surely what happens in so many cases.

Jesus warned, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Mat. 7:15). A “false prophet” is one who will direct one’s soul into eternal destruction. Their exterior is mild and seems to be harmless, but they are hypocritical, having cruel hearts which pretend to be gentle and peaceable.

Why will we not wake up and see just what is happening? People are being led astray. Many believe these lies that pervert the Word of God. Our children are being led by these false teachers. With fair speech they beguile the heart of the innocent (Rom. 16:18). We need to listen to the trumpets that are warning us.

It is indeed sad when men apostatize. But it is just as sad to see men who are standing for truth be criticized and ridiculed. We all need to join in the fight against Satan and his helpers.

517 Gaylord Street; Dresden, TN 38225

“SEEK THE BEST THINGS FIRST”

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had just finished a discourse concerning the problem of worldly cares. He said, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mat. 6:33). The very problem to which our Lord directed this statement is still very prevalent today.

People are so often wrapped up in stockpiling worldly goods that they forget that God is the giver of all good things (Jam. 1:17). And while people are gathering these things, they have neglected the most important possession of all—the soul. What a pity to gain all of the world and lose the soul (Mat. 16:26).

Brethren, I believe with all of my heart that we can convert lost souls to Christ and keep souls saved, but it will only be done when we (you and I) remember the most valuable thing of all is the souls of men. My desire is that you and I hold fast to the great prize set before us (Phi. 3:14) and work hand in hand at saving the lost. May God bless us all.  

NEW ARRIVAL

Horace and Sheila Myrick are happy to announce the birth of their great-granddaughter, Taryn Alexis Janes, born on June 21, 2001, to Jesse and Tiffany Janes. Taryn weighed 7 pounds and was 18 inches long. Our congratulations is extended to everyone.
SICK
Please remember in your prayers:
Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Neva Bryant, Diana Brazell, Ella Hammac, Joyce Brantley, Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Madeline Quinn (Diana Brazell’s mother), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Vernon Bowman (Madeline Graves’ father), and Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s friend).

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Madeline Graves in the death of her grandmother, Ethel Albright, on June 24, 2001. Please keep Madeline and her family in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
July 4, 2001
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

July 11, 2001
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Ray Dodd

MARK THESE DATES
July 8, 2001—Visitation Group 2 assignments cards handed out.
July 8, 2001—Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
July 15, 2001—Visitation Group 3 assignments cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Fruit
“What is his name?” I questioned as a child. “Who are you talking about?” my father asked. “The man who sits by himself on the right hand side in the center of the church building. You know, he wears blue paints and a red plaid shirt every Wednesday night and a gray suit with a white shirt every Sunday,” I explained. “Brother Jerry Lindesmith,” my father replied. “Brother Smith!” I asked for clarification. “No, his name is not brother Smith! His first name is Jerry and his last name is like two names put together Linde- and Smith.”

My questioning continued so I could find out more about the man in the gray suit. I knew what a widow was from the Bible story of the widow and her two mites, but I had never heard of a widower. I learned how hard it was on him to loose his first wife to cancer. I learned how hard it was on him to raise small children as a single father. I learned how, even if you have hard times, you use those hard times to build, not destroy, your faith in God.

The part about working at American Cynamid sounded sort of boring; however, learning that he was in the Air Force, just like my grandfather, caught my attention. Every grandson of an Air Force officer knows the story of how important is to be a soldier. However, brother Lindesmith was no Navy man; sailing on the sea in a ship. He was Air Force; full of sky and speed!

Several years passed. Then one day brother Lindesmith was spending a lot of time in Butler, Alabama. Why? There was a widow named Floy...
Dell Waller. Jerry smiled as he told dad that her late husband was a sound gospel preacher and the best that he could tell, she was a really good woman! I enjoyed the next few weeks, because for just a short while the conversations stopped centering around what travesties the preacher’s son committed and started centering on brother Lindesmith. (Do you remember the Sunday morning it was announced that Jerry was going to marry Floy Dell? Do you remember brother Fleetwood kept talking about how his good friend brother Smith was getting married. I sat and snickered in my seat. I knew brother Fleetwood was fixing to get my father’s lecture about how Jerry’s last name was like two names put together Linde- AND Smith!)

Everyone waited to see the changes that would be made. It took a few months, but it finally happened. Even though the Wednesday attire of blue pants and red plaid shirt passed inspection with the new wife, we would no longer see his gray suit and white shirt. Now, after several months of marriage, Jerry walked into services with the new, refined, married look. Yes, he still wore the same polyester gray suit, but now he sported a new pink shirt! That was brother Lindesmith and his new wardrobe! If there was any change, it was very simple.

I remember things I learned from the man in the gray suit. Things like you can take a taxicab to church! I had never seen a taxicab pull up in the church parking lot before, but one Sunday there came one and out of the back seat came the man in the gray suit and white shirt. For many Christians a change in weather conditions is a big enough excuse to miss services, but not for Jerry. When brother Lindesmith went out to start his old car and the battery was dead this minor inconvenience would not stop his attendance. He called a cab.

I learned what it was like to be nice to others. He was one of those people you enjoyed being around. He made his rounds through the auditorium every Sunday morning greeting everyone and shaking their hand. This habit made always made him one of the last ones to be seated before services. I remember several times it was lovingly said by the one making announcements, “We will begin our services as soon as brother Lindesmith gets to his seat.” Brother Lindesmith loved others.

I learned what it was like to enjoy helping people. His missions in the Air Force were designed around Search and Rescue where he was instrumental in saving the lives of others. For these actions in helping others, he received the Distinguished Flying Cross. His missions in the church was designed around Search and Rescue where he was instrumental in helping save the souls of others. He always searched for good causes and if they needed assistance, he rescued them. He was an outstanding supporter of the men who attended the Bellview Preacher Training School and later of many men who attended Memphis School of Preaching, as well as other sound brotherhood schools. For these actions in helping others, he received a reward far greater than any man can give.

I learned of a love of souls that was worldwide. At his funeral his step-son Pat said that the most important thing that his step-father taught him is that it made no difference if a person was male or female; white, black, yellow, blue, or purple you do not judge others by these things but by their actions. Brother Lindesmith could see the good in others; he loved souls no matter what race or nationality. His love for the souls of others of any race was shown in the support he gave brother Rice and the Far East World Evangelism, his support of many preachers who made countless trips to foreign mission fields, as well as many other mission efforts. We could see his love of souls world-wide by his actions.

I learned of a love of every good work. One day while preparing a lesson for the teenage class I kept noticing the Lindesmith name on the
contribution page of several brotherhood publications. One of the points in the lesson was that no matter how old you are, you can always get involved in good works. During the class I used brother Lindesmith as an example. One of the teenagers asked, "Is that the man that wears the blue paint and the red plaid shirt every Wednesday night and the gray suit every Sunday morning?" Yes it is! That is the same simple man that took no great pleasure in material things, but laid up in store for himself countless treasures.

I know that things in heaven will not be as they are on this earth, but it does not hurt to imagine a few good memories could be in that land over there. So when I imagine heaven, I know Jerry, or "J" as his friends called him, Lindesmith will be there. He left that old car that would not start down here on this earth; so you will probably see him pull up through the pearly gates in a nice, new, shiny gold cab. He will go to his mansion, change out of his bib overalls and red plaid shirt and get ready for his first services Sunday morning. "J" will be so happy there. He will be walking around shaking the hands of loved ones who have gone before, he will talk to all the preachers, editors of brotherhood publications, missionaries, and countless other souls his work influenced until they lovingly make the announcement: "the services will start as soon as the man in the gray suit finds his seat."

4820 Midas Road; Pensacola, FL 32526

WHAT CAN I DO?

J. A. McNutt

If you are really looking for an opportunity to render services in the Lord’s Vineyard you can find it. Perhaps you do not feel that your talents are very great but your help can be priceless in the church of our Lord. Do whatever your hands find to do with all your might “forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58). When you work for the Lord it always pays off in due season. Here are a few things that you can do:

- Mail a card to the sick.
- Visit those who are ill and shut in.
- Visit the new members of the church who have moved into our city.
- Invite friends to the services of the church.
- Welcome our visitors with a smile and a hearty handshake; make them feel at home.
- If you drive a car bring someone with you who might not otherwise have a way.
- Read and study your Bible daily.
- Avoid harmful criticism and gossip.
- Attend all services possible.
- Be a diligent and faithful personal worker.

GOOD REASONS TO ATTEND

Following are a number of good reasons to attend all services faithfully:
1. The best people do.
2. The best book on earth is read there.
3. The best part of our nature is fed there.
4. The worst part of our nature is cleansed there.
5. Our sorrows are explained there.
6. The most precious memories are awakened there.
7. Our faith is strengthened there.
8. Others, seeing me, will go.
9. The church is against everything bad.
10. The load of life is lightened when I go.

Author Unknown
SICK
Please remember in your prayers:
Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Fleshier, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Joyce Brantley, Tim Lamb, Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Sam Stough (Jean Fleshier’s father), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Vernon Bowman (Madeline Graves’ father), and Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s friend).

READING/INVITATION
July 11, 2001
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Ray Dodd

July 18, 2001
Reading: Bill Gallaher
Invitation: Ray Foshee

MARK THESE DATES
July 8, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignments cards handed out.
July 8, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
July 15, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignments cards handed out.
July 15, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
July 30, 2001–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.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?

Danny Box

In 1970, while a student at Freed-Hardeman College, it was my great pleasure to attend the lectureship entitled: “The Church Faces Liberalism.” I heard William Woodson answer the question “What is Liberalism?” and B. C. Goodpasture talk about “The Inspiration of the Bible.” It was also my great pleasure to hear Gus Nichols talk about “How to Establish Bible Authority” and defend the fact that “The Bible is Complete and Final.” Brother Thomas Warren eloquently presented “False Views of Truth” and Franklin Camp talked about “Fellowship,” “The Virgin Birth,” “Miracles,” and “God’s Answer to Modernism.” Brother Garland Elkins then presented a two-part lesson on “How to Defend the Faith.” But, out of all the speakers that year,

I was most impressed by the man that lectured on “Some Basic Errors of Liberalism.”

This man stated that the first error of liberalism was one of attitude. He stated that we have developed an attitude of denominationalism and want to be thought of as “one of the crowd.” We will not preach doctrinal sermons based on book, chapter, and verse because we are afraid that we will hurt someone’s feelings. He made the statement that “there can be no preaching apart from the doctrine.” He also asked the question: “Are you trying to save them or convince them that you are a nice fellow and easy to get along with?”

He stated that the second error of liberalism was their erroneous concept of God. He made the statement that man “must obey the one and true God” and went on to say that “God is a Father only to those who are members of the ‘household of faith’ by virtue of a new birth of water and the spirit.”
He stated also that the liberal had an erroneous concept of man. He stated that many feel that man needs a social Gospel and that they are advancing “the universal brotherhood of man.” But, he stated that what we need to do is to “preach the Gospel exactly as it is; it meets the needs of man. It needs no revision, addition or updating.”

This man had many other good points in this lesson, but he closed with this statement: “If we compromise with the liberal heresy, may our mouths refuse to speak and may all men turn their backs on us with contempt and disdain!” My question today to this man is “Rubel Shelly, what happened to you?”

10985 Country Haven; Cottondale, AL 35453

**BAPTISM FOR**

**“A SCRIPTURAL REASON”**

Joe Galloway

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

Such reasoning is fallacious because there is only one real reason for a sinner being baptized: to change from a lost to a saved relationship with God. True, this purpose may be stated in different ways in the New Testament, but it always equals this same reason. One is baptized “to be saved” (Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21), which suggests the purpose of changing from the lost to the saved relationship. It is “for [unto] the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38), suggesting this identical idea. It is to “wash away sins” (Acts 22:16), which means the same thing. It puts one “into Christ” or “into the one body” (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 12:13). Is this a separate purpose from the above? No! To enter into Christ is the same as to change from a lost to a saved relationship with God, for “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:1), all spiritual blessings are in Christ (Eph. 1:3), and one of these spiritual blessings in Christ is salvation (2 Tim. 2:10).

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

Someone may yet ask: “What about Christ’s baptism? Was it not simply done to obey God, without being for remission of His sins?” Christ was baptized to “fulfil all righteousness (Mat. 3:15). He was not baptized to receive salvation,
Visitation Group Get-together
July 30 at 6:00 pm
General purpose building
A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting.

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR IMPROVING THE WORSHIP SERVICE

Have you ever heard someone say, “I just don’t get much out of the worship service?” Sometimes this is more of a commentary on the person than on the service. Here are some suggestions that may help you improve the quality of your worship when you gather with the saints on the Lord’s Day.

Make Sunday Worship a Priority. It is the most important commitment of the week. It is nothing less than a meeting with God.

Don’t Bring God Left-Overs. God has always demanded the “first fruits.” He cannot be satisfied with scraps. Get plenty of sleep on Saturday night and come to worship with an alert and refreshed mind.

Prepare Your Mind. Discipline begins in the mind. So does discipleship. Train your mind to concentrate on things of the Spirit.

Be on Time. Rushing in late makes it difficult for you to settle into meditation and disturbs other worshipers. Get up a little earlier if necessary.

Bring Your Bibles. Coming to worship without your Bible is like going out to drive your car without your keys.

Open Your Mouth and Sing. Singing is not an option; it is commanded. Those who violate this command are just as guilty as if they neglected the assembly in the first place.

Sit Close to the Front. Experience has shown that some marginal church members would rather switch congregations than to change pews.

Before and After Service—Be Friendly. Worship is enhanced when done as a family. Family members should know and love each other.

Listen Carefully to the Sermon. Taking notes may help. Follow along in your Bible. Take the message seriously. It will help you. It will encourage the speaker. It will show non-Christians that you are serious.

Make Your Worship God-Centered—Not Man-Centered. Worship is primarily a giving situation. Those who say, “I don’t get much out of worship” are wrongly focused. It is in the giving of ourselves that we get. No giving—no getting!

Author Unknown

nor was He baptized because He was already saved. As to its purpose, Jesus’ baptism of necessity was different from ours because Jesus was sinless (1 Pet. 2:22). We all sin (Rom. 3:23), so we do not obey God in baptism with the same need and for the same purpose as did He.

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

218 Pinecrest Drive; Greeneville, TN 37743

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR IMPROVING THE WORSHIP SERVICE

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SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Joyce Brantley, Tim Lamb, Pauline Hatcher (Michael Hatcher’s grandmother), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Vernon Bowman (Madeline Graves’ father), and Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s friend).

READING/INVITATION
July 18, 2001
Reading: Bill Gallaher
Invitation: Ray Foshee
July 25, 2001
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Louis Herrington

MARK THESE DATES
July 15, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignments cards handed out.
July 15, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
July 30, 2001–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 P.M., in the general purpose building.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat

ISAIAH 12:2
“Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.”
THE BIBLE IS FLAWLESS IN ITS ACCURACY

Tracy Dugger

The above title is not a surprise if the Bible is God’s Word; we would expect no errors! In works strictly authored by man (regardless of how scholarly or painstaking they were), you will find unintentional mistakes. For example, when the Encyclopedae Britannica was first published, it contained so many mistakes about places in America that its competitor, the New American Cyclopedia, published a special pamphlet exposing its errors!

Regarding the birth of Jesus, critics taught that Luke (Luke 2:1-3) was mistaken about the census, people having to return to their ancestral homes, and that Quirinius was governor of Syria. However, archeological discoveries have shown that the Romans had a regular enrollment of taxpayers and also had censuses every 14 years. Furthermore, an inscription was found in Antioch showing that Quirinius was governor of Syria in 7 B.C. “As a result of this finding, it is now supposed that he was governor twice—once in 7 B.C. and the other time in 6 A.D. [the date ascribed by Josephus].” Again, when the evidence is examined, there is no inaccuracy!

In the late 1800s, Sir William Ramsey (Skeptic, British scholar, Professor of Ancient History at the University of Aberdeen, and Curator of British Museum in London) set out on an archeological expedition in Asia Minor based on his interest in the history of Asia Minor. He reluctantly turned to the New Testament book of Acts as possible data on the geography of Asia Minor, for he considered it “a highly imaginative
and carefully colored account of primitive Christianity.” Luke mentions 32 countries, 54 cities, and 9 islands in the Mediterranean Sea. When he completed his extensive first hand investigation and travels to all of Luke’s places (including Paul’s missionary journeys), he gave up his skepticism and considered Luke a historian of the first rank deserving of a place among the greatest historians of the world. How is it that Luke made no mistakes? Only the divine authorship of the Bible can account for Luke’s precision!

When we hold the Bible in our hands, we are holding the very Word of God. It is no ordinary book, but one flawlessly accurate and authoritative in our lives. Let us respect and obey it that is can be said of us, as was said of the Thessalonians, “when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Th. 2:13).

Lynn Parker

The fundamental meaning of the word deacon in the Greek language is “one who renders service to another; an attendant, servant” (Zondervan’s Analytical Greek Lexicon, p. 91). The urgency of getting done whatever service is being rendered is seen in the Greek lexicographer Thayer’s comment, “raising dust by hastening.” Thayer points out that in Colossians 1:25 the word refers to one “who does what promotes the welfare and prosperity of the church” (Thayer’s Greek English Lexicon, p. 138). We may conclude that a great dust cloud should be constantly present when it comes to activity by the deacons pertaining to the promotion of the welfare and prosperity of the church of Christ.

The General Sense of the Word “Deacon”

Jesus said, “But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant” (Mat. 23:11). Our Lord exemplified for us what He meant by service when He engaged in the menial task of washing dirty feet (John 13:13-16). Therefore, in general all Christians (those who are “of Christ”) are hastening to discharge their duties to their King (Mat. 6:33).

One who is of Christ always has a sense of urgency in accomplishing the tasks characteristic of Christian living. “Urgency” and “Christianity” are two words that are inseparable. While all service is not menial and distasteful, how many of us actually hurry to the distasteful task of the “bedpan ministry”?

THE DEACONS AMONG US

Lynn Parker

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One who is of Christ always has a sense of urgency in accomplishing the tasks characteristic of Christian living. “Urgency” and “Christianity” are two words that are inseparable. While all service is not menial and distasteful, how many of us actually hurry to the distasteful task of the “bedpan ministry”?

The Office of Deacons

In 1 Timothy 3:8-13 we read the qualifications of those who are to be appointed to the work/office of a deacon. Only a cursory examination of the qualifications set out by the inspired apostle causes us to realize that men who occupy the office of a deacon are spiritually mature Christians in knowledge and practice. They have proven themselves to be men who hasten to serve the church (Mat. 6:33). In other words before they were appointed they were already doing the work characteristic of deacons. Furthermore, while they are men who are assigned duties by the elders, due to their spiritual
maturity they constantly look for opportunities to promote the welfare and prosperity of the Lord's church.

While it is true that the church is a church of servants, there are different roles assigned to the various members. Elders are not deacons. Deacons are not elders. Evangelists are not necessarily elders or deacons. Scripturally, members are not necessarily any of the previously mentioned three. Yet, all are expected to exercise their several abilities in service to our Lord according to the teaching of the Bible. 

Elders are charged by the Lord with seeing that the things God has authorized for the church to do are done in the quickest and best way possible. Therefore, elders “oversee” and deacons execute the decisions of the elders with their service. The deacons function more in the area of “ministry” than in the arena of “superintendency.” They are men of integrity who exemplify to the whole church the teaching of the inspired writer to the Hebrews when he wrote, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you” (Heb. 13:17).

Deacons are not elders. Elders are not deacons. Some deacons might make poor elders and some elders might make poor deacons. The “diaconate” is not to be viewed as a “stepping stone” to the eldership. It has an importance all its own. As is true of elders, preachers and all members of the church, when deacons are as the Bible reveals them to be they are a vital part of the work of the church.

The Scriptures do not obligate elders to seek the deacons opinions before making their decisions. The same is true of preachers and every other member of the church. However, the elders’ decision-making process does not preclude such involvement. The elders may consult any member when such have insights that are helpful to the elders in making decisions that is their sole responsibility to make. The point made here is this: elders are not biblically obligated to run everything past the deacons before deciding something any more than they must consult every member of the church they superintend before reaching a decision on any given matter.

Moreover, they are not biblically obligated in every case to inform the deacons before they inform the church. To think that such action is obligatory places the deacons in a position foreign to the teaching of the New Testament regarding deacons and their work. Moreover, it sends a message to deacons that they are always to be consulted or informed before the elders may make their decisions public.

Let us support the New Testament pattern for the work of elders, deacons, evangelists, teachers and all members serving the Lord according to the New Testament pattern. Also, let the deacons remember what the apostle Paul wrote regarding the deacons. He penned, “For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 3:13).

Let us make the church the serving body God intended it to be. One of the prime examples to the membership of such service are the faithful deacons who are always followed by a cloud of dust they kick up as they hasten to promote the welfare and prosperity of the church of Christ in carrying out the tasks peculiar to their office.

ADDRESS CHANGE
Carl and Karen Ayliffe’s new address is: 1004 Dominguez Street; Pensacola, FL 32505. Their telephone number is 435-2591. Please update your directories.
SICK
Please remember in your prayers:
Marilyn Hall, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher,
Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Joyce Brantley, Tim Lamb, Maria Bonaparte Earl Loy (Jim Loy’s father), (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Vernon Bowman (Madeline Graves’ father), John Pippin (Dot Lambert’s nephew), and Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s friend).

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Michael Hatcher and his family in the death of his grandmother, Pauline Hatcher, on July 12, 2001. Please keep Michael and his family in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
July 25, 2001
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Louis Herrington
August 1, 2001
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Tim Lamb

MARK THESE DATES
July 30, 2001–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 P.M., in the general purpose building.
August 5, 2001–Visitation Group I assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat
UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES…

Albert Reeves

While doing some guest preaching and visiting on several occasions with the Southside congregation in Grand Rapids, MI, we were witnesses to an unusual experience. One member that came to services on a regular basis sat in a wheel chair near the front of the podium on the center aisle. His condition was such that he had to be hand fed the Lord’s Supper. The members took turns going to his home to pick him up. They would carry him in their arms, placing the folding wheel chair in the trunk of the car. Upon arrival at the church building, the procedure was simply reversed and then repeated when it came time to go home.

When I was with the M-21 church of Christ in Corruna, MI, as an interim preacher and adult class teacher, we had a similar experience. One of the members was brought to the church building for services but was unable to rise off the bed! He was brought on a folding bed, carried to the car by one of the members, with the folding bed in the trunk taken out upon arrival at the church building. During class and worship services, he would lie flat on his back. After services were over, the procedures were reversed and he was carried back home.

Many years ago, in a gospel meeting in Bowling Green, KY, I was standing with many others who had filed out when the services were over. While standing there, I saw a man come down the aisle, get this now, crawling on his hands! He had no lower body. He had on the bottom side of his torso what appeared to be leather on which he dragged himself. He had on what appeared to be welder’s gloves that reached...
all the way past his elbows. He briskly walked out of the building on his hands, dragging his torso, climbed into a specially equipped car and drove away. When I asked his identity, I was told that he was one of the elders of that congregation.

When I hear all the reasons from healthy and able-bodied people as to why they do not attend the Bible classes and worship services, I cannot but think of these three people. I now realize that many of the reasons for their non-participation in the services are not reasons at all but very poor excuses.

These reasons do not keep them from shopping, school activities, attending other events which require more time than Bible class and worship, going out to eat, work, getting one’s hair fixed, etc. In the words of an older preacher, “People do what they want to do.” If we want to attend services and activities of the Lord’s church, we will find a way. If we do not want to attend and participate, we will find an excuse.

THE BIBLE DRAMATIZED
Leon Cole

“And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not” (2 Pet. 2:3).

The speaker on the phone call I received was smooth and articulate. The presentation was impeccable. The product sounded good and appealing. He was offering a program to encourage more Bible reading. To be more accurate, we should say a program to hear the Bible read. The idea was, the preacher would preach on the importance of hearing the Word. A card would be passed out challenging the people to listen through the New Testament in forty days. Then his company would provide tapes to all who needed them for a price.

No, I am not against an organized program of reading or studying the Bible. No, I am not opposed to people selling tapes or materials. We have purchased Bibles and Bible class materials for years. Basically, the concept was and is a good one. Well, what is your problem?

It is what this company has done to the Bible. They offer tapes of reliable versions. But, then they offer some that are not so reliable. This is but the beginning of sorrows. They then offer something called The Story Dramatized NIV. They sent me a sample of one of those.

I am told in the Scriptures that “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul” (Psa. 19:7). The Hebrews writer declares, “The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword” (Heb. 4:12) “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple,” the psalmist declares in Psalm 119:130.

Evidently, there is no recognition of these and many other Scriptures concerning the all-sufficiency of God’s Word with this company. They think adding great crescendos of music or extremely soft tones at appropriate moments in the reading will supplement its power. These are but expressions of will-worship so evident today. It appeals to the disposition to make worship, even the reading of God’s Word, mere entertainment. When will some set up a concession stand in the lobby of the church building?

I grow weary of hearing that we must change or else we will not reach the unconverted. It is tedious at best to hear how changing our songs and appealing to dramatics and now to even dramatize the Bible reaches multitudes. Romanism for centuries has used that argument to justify mixing pagan worship and traditions with elements of Christianity. These changes may
produce crowds but not heart changes! The Pharisees sought converts but turned them over into children of darkness twice over. Amazing indeed it is to observe the evil corrupt manners and methods now adapted to draw a crowd!

In denouncing the sins of Judah, Isaiah said, “They please themselves in the children of strangers (Isa. 2:6). They adopted the practices of the pagans. Today, we see history repeated. God’s people, rather than walking in the old paths “wherein is the good way,” have adopted the ways of the “nations round about them.” The only reason these worldly things flourish is the love of many has waxed cold. When that happens iniquity abounds. Get back to fervently loving Jesus and we will not need theatrics and dramatized Bibles.

In so doing, Jesus was often in controversies against sin and error (Mat. 12:22-30; 22:15-46; etc.). The apostles and prophets during the early days of the church had the responsibility to stand for truth and righteousness (Acts 6:9–7:60; 11:2-18: 17:2-3; 18:4, 19; 19:8-9).

In Jude 3, Christians today are exhorted to “contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” There is a difference between contending for the faith in the right manner (Gal. 6:1; 1 Pet. 3:15), and in being contentious (Rom. 2:8; 1 Cor. 1:11; Tit. 3:9). The word debates here (2 Cor. 12:20), is associated with such words as “wraths,” “strifes,” “backbitings,” etc., and refers to wrangling and quarrelling, which are not good. However, the word debate in our language today can be used in an honorable way of contending for the faith as seen in Proverbs 25:9: “Debate thy cause with thy neighbour.”

In the early years of the Restoration Movement in the U.S., John Birch wrote a letter to Alexander Campbell asking him to debate John Walker on the “mode” and subject of baptism. Mr. Campbell declined to debate, for in many cases the debaters were seeking personal victory rather than truth victory. He opposed debates. Finally, after the third letter and much persuasion from Mr. Birch, Mr. Campbell agreed to debate John Walker. In the debate truth was easily seen by the common people when it was contrasted with error. The inconsistencies and the illogical consequences of error were clearly exposed. From that time onward Campbell and other pioneer gospel preachers used the public debate as an effective way to expose error and teach truth, and as a result the church grew mightily.

There is still a place for honorable debates today, and they can still be effective in teaching truth. Let us support them! Let us study them in the search for truth for it is the truth that makes us free (John 8:32).

912 East Teresa Ave; Sapulpa, OK 74066
SICK

Please remember in your prayers: Marilyn Hall (West FL Rehab, room 1030), Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Neva Bryant, Ella Hammac, Joyce Brantley, Earl Loy (Jim Loy’s father), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Vernon Bowman (Madeline Graves’ father), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), John Pippin (Dot Lambert’s nephew), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s neighbor), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), and Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s friend).

READING/INVITATION

August 1, 2001
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Tim Lamb
August 8, 2001
Reading: Brantley Johnson
Invitation: Damon Lundy

MARK THESE DATES

August 5, 2001–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
August 12, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
August 12, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
August 19, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
August 19, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED

Canned Meat
REPEATING THE MISTAKES IN HISTORY

Tom Moore

At the site of Dachau concentration camp near Munich, Germany, is a museum containing relics from the camp, as well as grim photos depicting the camp there during WWII. There is a sign next to the exit that reads: “Those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat its mistakes.” This is seen coming true time and time again throughout the pages of history. If only the world would learn this simple, but profound lesson, it would be a much better place in which to live.

This same lesson needs to be learned from inspired history as well! Paul declared, “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Cor. 10:11). Unless we learn from the mistakes of those before us, as recorded in the Bible, then we are condemned to make those same mistakes. This is exactly Paul’s point in 1 Corinthians 10:1 and Romans 15:4. Consider a few lessons to be learned from inspired history.

From the Inspired history of Adam and Eve we learn that separation from God occurs when we disobey God (Gen. 3). Isaiah declared, “Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Isa. 59:1-2).

The Inspired history of the wilderness wanderings teaches that we will not enter into the promise land (or heaven) if we murmur and do not trust in the Lord (Num. 14:29-30). Paul re-
DEUTERONOMY 28:1-2

“And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.”

APPAREL DOES SAY SOMETHING

Tom Wacaster

There was a most interesting editorial in the Dallas Morning News on May 2, 2001. It was entitled: “You’re right to be wary of gangsta chic,” by Leonard Pitts. I must admit that there were two words that caught my attention, mainly because I was unfamiliar with the meaning. Gangsta is slang for “gangster” (the “r” has migrated to who knows where), and chic means “style or urban fashion in clothing.” The gist of the article was avoidance of certain contact with strangers who dress in a style that classifies them with a specific element in society; in this case, youth gangs. He writes, “Kids always have outfitted themselves according to the dressing of people around them; it is the normal way to send an implicit threat.” And then he makes this most astute observation:

I often hear kids insist that dress is neutral and how dare you stereotype them based on what they wear. Fine. It is the argument you would expect them to make. But it is an abrogation of responsibility for adults to encourage them in that delusion. Better to explain to them that
what you show the world, how you allow yourself to be perceived, will have profound implications for the way people treat you. The world judges us by the way we dress. If a woman dresses like a harlot she is going to be propositioned. If a young person dresses like a gansia, he or she should not be surprised if otherwise cautious folks avoid any contact or association with them.

Now, let's apply this rather obvious truth to some other areas beside gansia chic. First, the principle is true with regard to “modest apparel.” Scanty clothing says something to those who see us. It is a come on to the opposite sex. Some of you may remember the hijacking of T.W.A. Flight 847 back in July of 1985. The Houston Chronicle carried this interesting bit of news about that event. One lady passenger was being molested by one of the hi-jackers. Fortunately, for her, he was restrained by his leader. The leader, after restraining his fellow hi-jacker explained to her that the short pants she was wearing was inappropriate and had conveyed to the terrorist that such advances might be welcomed by her. A few minutes later he brought her a blanket and told her to wrap it around her waist. In spite of the 100 degree temperature in the airplane, she kept the blanket on the rest of the ordeal. But I can hear someone say, “Well, this is a free society, and I can dress the way I want.” Evidently some think that what is lawful in the eyes of society is automatically acceptable to God. Evidence suggests that some of our sisters in Christ have bought into this lie. The Bible still says that we are to dress in “modest apparel.” Meanwhile, let a man gaze after a scantily clad woman, and she will be the first to cry “foul” should she become aware of his gazes (or worse).

But I must address another area that concerns me no little. There is an increasing trend toward sheer sloppiness in what we wear to worship. It used to be that we had our “Sunday-go-to-meeting” clothes and the first day of the week was one of those rare occasions when you could tell that a person was going to church by the way he dressed. Neatness tells us that we respect ourselves and others, but sloppiness says we just do not care. While there may be some who cannot afford a nice dress shirt and tie, or a nice dress, this is the exception rather than the rule in our affluent society. I have attended high school graduation exercises, and Baccalaureate services where young people were dressed in decent, neat, and respectful clothing, only to see them appear the following Sunday morning in rags, blue jeans, and baggy, and sloppy dress as they come to worship God. We are witnessing young ladies wearing shorts, loose blouses, and skin tight jeans as they gather to worship their God; and that with the parents consent (or at least without any voice of opposition from mom or dad). Mr. Pitts was right on target when he pointed out that it is “an abrogation of responsibility for adults to encourage them in that delusion.” Unfortunately, parents are often derelict in this area as well. When we come before God in worship we are to have a contrite spirit (Isa. 66:2). That spirit is reflected in the way we dress and conduct ourselves in our worship, as well as our every day behavior. Brother Mack Lyons hit the nail right on the head:

No! God does not have a dress-code for worship and work! Of course He does not. He assumes the humble, worshipping heart will dictate proper attire and behavior. A true spirit of awe, reverence, and worship dictates dignity and propriety in dress and demeanor. God does not command us to kneel or stand or bow our heads when we pray, but doing so manifests a humility of heart that honors and respects the sovereign God whom we praise and petition. So does proper dress.

Before you dismiss this as so much “preacher talk,” why not stop and think seriously and soberly about it.
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Neva Bryant, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Joyce Brantley, Earl Loy (Jim Loy’s father), Pat Bailey (Eddie McLeod’s mother), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Vernon Bowman (Madeline Graves’ father), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), John Pippin (Dot Lambert’s nephew), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s friend), Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s friend), and Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend).

READING/INVITATION
August 8, 2001
Reading: Brantley Johnson
Invitation: Damon Lundy
August 15, 2001
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

MARK THESE DATES
August 12, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
August 12, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
August 19, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
August 19, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
September 23-28, 2001–Gospel Meeting with Ronnie Hayes of Huntsville, Alabama. Please note the change in the speaker and the date of the meeting.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat
BITING AND DEVOURING

Carl Garner

The New Testament mandates that Christians oppose sin, false teachers, and false doctrine. Jesus did it. Paul did it. Peter did it. We must do it. When a problem arose, they addressed it and settled it. Inspired writers set down principles for solving such problems. When someone went too far, God inspired such correction as, “if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another” (Gal. 5:15). God said, in effect, “take care of the problem, but do not destroy the church in the process.” Do not forget that point.

There are some pretty far-out ideas going around even in Christ’s church today, and the mouths of these gainsayers must be stopped (Tit. 1:9-11). Some have an agenda that includes changing the church in ways they would have been fearful even to suggest a few years ago. Some consider the Lord’s church as nothing but another denomination among many. Such efforts must be opposed, and vigorously so. It is imperative that such opposition take place at this time, for it is needed.

However, as was true in the first century, some methods presently being used are, in my judgment, closer to biting and devouring than they are to biblical principles. Some of Jesus’ disciples suggested the destruction of a Samaritan city that had denied their request: “But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them” (Luke 9:55-56).

A man named Diotrephes made false charges and used malicious words in order to maintain his “preeminence” over others (3 John 9). Even if he had good intentions, he did more harm that
good. Some believe that there are those today who are “desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another” (Gal. 5:26), under the guise of opposing error. That may or may not be true, but surely we all agree that good judgment and righteous behavior demand we use ethical and biblical means, even in our opposition to false teachers and their doctrines. If it is truly our desire to maintain the purity of the church, Christ’s bride, we will respect the words of the bridegroom. Paul rebuked Peter specifically and publicly, but the result was that Peter regarded Paul as his “beloved brother” (2 Pet. 3:15).

Clearly, Paul’s motives were pure. There were no letter-writing campaigns. There was no gossip. Paul spread no rumors, nor did he misrepresent Peter’s words or his actions. Paul rebuked in the proper way and with a godly attitude. Peter, however, received the correction in the proper spirit also, and the results were what God had intended all the time. What can we do to assure that corrections are given and received as they should be?

**Examine Your Motives.** If you truly have the best interests of the church and each Christian at heart you will not hesitate to examine your motive and your method.

**Make Sure You Are Right.** It will always be a shame to divide the church over a matter of judgment or opinion. Study both sides of the matter, objectively assessing the Scriptures on the subject. Does the Bible really teach what you think it teaches? Make sure your correction is needed and deserved, then be sure your “cure” is not worse than the “disease” it is supposed to heal.

**Consider the Consequences.** Are you thinking of the possible results of your actions? If you have not thought the matter through, perhaps you are not ready to begin the effort. What are the chances of success in your endeavor? The possibility of negative results should not prevent the correction, but it could affect the method and the timing of it.

**Be careful of the “bandwagon” effect,** where one decides that if lots of people are against a view that it must be wrong. A majority still scoffs at the idea that baptism is “for the remission of sins,” though the Bible proclaims it. The crowd is not always right, and following after a multitude to sin is forbidden in 3 John 11 and Exodus 23:2.

**Remember what God has said about “he that soweth discord among brethren” (Pro. 6:19).** No, this will not preclude faithful brethren from opposing false teachers and false doctrine, but such a warning may give us pause to think carefully about the seriousness of being like the previously mentioned Diotrephes in 3 John. We dare not cause division over some matter unless it is “contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned” (Rom. 16:17).

It is easy to get so carried away with our righteous opposition to that which is false that we become self-righteous. We should “neither give place to the devil” (Eph. 4:27), but we have an equal responsibility to keep a balanced view of respected brethren, those who are trying to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). If we spend all our energy “biting and devouring” one another we will have little energy left to “resist the devil” and his aforementioned...
servants. No man, regardless of achievement, is above correction or rebuke. But, take care, brethren. Let us not “bite and devour,” but put the Lord above every goal.

PO Box 1; Dripping Springs, TX 78620

A SOUL WINNER FOR JESUS

Charles Box

The goal of every Christian should be that of being a soul winner for Jesus (2 Tim. 2:2). Christians are the “light of the world” and the “salt of the earth.” Salt does no good until it is used. Let us all use what we are and what we have to win souls for Jesus.

Jesus, A Soul Winner: Jesus set the example for us (1 Pet. 2:21). He was a soul winner. Much of Jesus’ personal ministry was spent face to face with individuals bringing them to salvation. Nicodemus (John 3) and the woman at the well (John 4) were taught by Jesus.

Early Christians Were Soul Winners: When the early Christians were scattered by persecution they went everywhere preaching the Word (Acts 8:4-5). The early church got out where the people were with the gospel (Acts 5:42). We must do the same.

To illustrate how we can limit the gospel’s influence, a preacher told this story: An almost endless line of people crowded before a small church building. Such an unusual sight aroused the curiosity of a passing preacher. After making several inquiries he discovered that no one really knew why the crowd was seeking to get into the small building. He joined the crowd and waited in line to get inside. Eventually he made his way up the steps and down the aisle to the front of the building. The most amazing spectacle imaginable captured his attention. There, chained to the pulpit, was the Lord Jesus! In astonishment the preacher asked: “Lord, what is the meaning of this? Why are you chained to this pulpit?” The Lord replied sorrowfully; “My people have done this to me. Instead of following my command to go tell the world the good news of salvation, they have chained me to this pulpit and only those who are interested enough to come in ever hear about me.”

Let us be zealous to spread God’s Word. There is joy in soul winning. “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him” (Psa. 126:5-6).

EVANGELISTIC VISITATION IS THE KEY TO CHURCH GROWTH

Here are ten reasons why

- Vitalizes the work of the church.
- Increases Bible School enrollment.
- Secures home cooperation.
- Inspires regular attendance.
- Ties the home closer to the church.
- Affords soul winning opportunities.
- Typifies the loving interest of Christ.
- Insures growth in grace.
- Opens the door of homes to Christ.
- Nurtures friendliness and goodwill.

Author Unknown
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Neva Bryant, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Joyce Brantley, Earl Loy (Jim Loy’s father), Pat Bailey (Eddie McLeod’s mother), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Vernon Bowman (Madeline Graves’ father), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), John Pippin (Dot Lambert’s nephew), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s friend), Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s friend), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), and David Howell (Joyce Brantley’s brother).

READING/INVITATION
August 15, 2001
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

August 22, 2001
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Henry Born

MARK THESE DATES
August 12, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
August 12, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
August 19, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
August 19, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
August 23, 2001–Bridal Shower for Nicole Born at 7:00 P.M., in the general purpose building. Contact Nancy Loy for further information.

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.

THE LIFEBLOOD OF CHURCH GROWTH

Dave Rogers
Practically all Christians want the church to grow; most of us would find it depressing to assemble and worship with a stagnant, careless congregation. We do not like to worship where the singing is lifeless, the giving is stingy, the preaching is dull, the prayers are perfunctory, and the Lord’s Supper has become a hasty ritual. Neither does our Lord like such worship (Pro. 15:81). It distresses us to discover Bible class teachers who are chronically unprepared to impart the eternal lessons of God’s Word. Such congregations remind us of the church at Sardis (see Rev. 3:1-2)! When we say “we want the church to grow,” however, we need to examine the motive behind that assertion. Do we just want the church to grow so we can belong to the largest religious body in town? Do we want the church to grow so we can afford a fine building, or a preacher called “Dr.” somebody? Are we just looking for a “staff” of ministers to fulfill our Christian responsibilities for us? Is our goal really just a desire to be known as one of the largest congregations in the brotherhood? **What is our motive?**

Many things cause a church to grow (swell) in numbers: Great singing, dynamic preaching, and enthusiastically presented Bible classes will all contribute to increasing the crowd on Sunday morning. Carefully avoiding controversy attracts some, while others will only attend where discord is a staple of the congregation’s life (but note Pro. 6:19b). Large numbers are not a reliable measure of church growth, however; Garth Brooks can pack hundreds of thousands of people into a park simply by announcing a free concert there!
A congregation’s growth does not depend on programs, methods, novelties, or “staff members.” The lifeblood of church growth rests in every Christian’s personal commitment to evangelism (this is the essence of Christianity, Mark 16:15-16). When all of us are trying to fulfill the great commission (Mat. 28:19), nothing can hold this congregation back! When every member invites visitors to every service, those visitors will want to know more (see Zec. 8:20-23, and note Rom. 2:28-29)! Have you done these things today?

As a congregation, we are far too satisfied with the way things are! A few members are trying to be diligent personal workers, and because we all know who they are we let them do all the work. We had better be careful about singing “Here Am I, Lord Send Me” if we are not willing to go! There is much more to being a Christian than “just” attendance! Christian living means more than simply “staying out of trouble!”

Garrison Keillor (who is no Bible scholar!) hit the mark exactly when he observed that “You can no more become a Christian by going to church than you can become an automobile by sleeping in your garage.” To live the Christian life we must each pursue the gospel pattern! Each of us must learn to bring others to Christ (2 Tim. 2:2). Ivan Stewart was exactly right when he said, “Go ye means go me!” People in our day are fed up with religion; they want real Christianity instead, and it is up to us to show them where and how to find it.

Beloved, every last one of us needs to “get off high center,” and get down to the business of building up God’s kingdom. Let us dedicate ourselves to doing everything we can and whatever we must to help the church grow. All of us should take an active role in helping this congregation grow. If we need to “re-learn” how to teach someone the gospel, let us do it! If we need to practice “teaching” each other before we attempt to teach someone “for real,” let us do it! Let us be personally involved in church growth (1 Pet. 3:15—are you ready)!

**THE WINGS OF THE WIND**

(Psalm 18:10)

*Pauline C. Hatcher*

On the wings of the wind
Some day or some night,
These wings shall fly me
To Mansions of light.

A beautiful mansion is waiting for me,
My name will be on it, and I can see;
My blindness is gone, what joy to say,
My blindness is gone, not just for today.

My blindness and deafness are gifts of the devil,
And pain to keep me on his level;
But soon these gifts I shall return,
And with seeing eyes watch them slowly burn.

My pain at times was hard to bear,
But I always knew my Father was there;
In my mind I could hear Him softly say,
Wait patiently, child for the perfect day.

No tears are there, no pain or sorrow,
No yesterday and no tomorrow;
With God we know all time is now,
And to this truth my head I bow.

I shall go to my Father with one regret,
So much of my time has been wasted—and yet,
I know this too has been forgiven,
And one glad day I shall be in Heaven.

My family is there; what joy when we meet,
When together we walk the golden street;
There is nothing in Heaven to divide or sever,
My poem is finished,
This is my last,
From now on my poems
Are those of the past.
My work here is finished,
But I must patiently wait,
For my Father to open
The Pearly Gate.
Let me sit here and rest
Until time to ascend,
Then to Heaven I shall fly
On the wings of the wind.

(This was written by my grandmother in April of 2001 when she was 97 years old.)

Deceased

Gospel Meeting with Ronnie Hayes
September 23-28, 2001

SETTING PRIORITIES
Bobby O’Dell

Christ showed the need for setting proper priorities when He said, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mat. 6:33). Since it is so easy to let ourselves put first things last and last things first, following are some guidelines from Philippians 3 to setting proper priorities.

Rejoice in the right things (v. 1). One of these right things is being in a proper relationship with the Lord—“in Christ.” Another right thing is the proper reaction that comes from this relationship—“rejoice.” In an ungodly world which so often places priorities on the wrong things let us remember to “rejoice in the Lord!”

Remember who is not on your side (v. 2). In Paul’s time, some called Judaizers were teaching it was necessary to obey the old law. Paul called such teachers “evil workers” because they drew men away from the truth. If we are ever going to put Christ first in our lives we must “beware” of the enemies of truth.

Realize what is true (v. 3). One way to put our priorities in proper order is to become well acquainted with what is true. Three of these important matters of truth are to: revere God in spirit, rejoice in Christ, and remove our confidence in the flesh.

Rely only on Christ (vv. 4-7). Here Paul shows that it is futile to trust in any of our physical greatness to provide us with salvation. If trusting in the flesh could have provided salvation for anyone it would have been Paul. He was of proper nationality—“Israel.” He came from a prominent family—“tribe of Benjamin.” He was proud religiously—“a Pharisee.” And he was prompt in his activity—“zeal.” However, as great as those things were in men’s eyes, Paul shows the proper priority by saying, “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ” (Phi. 3:7). Until we truly rely only on Christ our priorities cannot be in the proper order.

409 Hillsboro Street; Greenfield, TN 38230

Bridal Shower for Nicole Born
on August 23 at 7:00 P.M.,
in the general purpose building.
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Neva Bryant, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Joyce Brantley, Earl Loy (Jim Loy’s father), Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Vernon Bowman (Madeline Graves’ father), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), John Pippin (Dot Lambert’s nephew), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s friend), Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s friend), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), and David Howell (Joyce Brantley’s brother).

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Eddie McLeod and his family in the death of his mother Patricia Bailey on August 11, 2001. Please keep Eddie and his family in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
August 22, 2001
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Henry Born
August 29, 2001
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Paul Brantley

MARK THESE DATES
August 19, 2001—Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
August 19, 2001—Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Vegetables
The Corinthians had written Paul a letter in which they asked a number of questions (1 Cor. 7:1). These questions had to do with (1) whether one should enter into marriage, (2) whether the marriage relationship involving believers with unbelievers should be continued, especially in view of the current “present distress,” and (3) whether or not a virgin should marry. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (v. 40) Paul addressed these issues and imparted additional information relative to the so-called “Pauline privilege” contended for by such brethren as Neil Lightfoot, Burton Coffman, and the late James D. Bales. The “Pauline privilege” declares that the believer who is deserted is free to remarry, without being guilty of adultery, even though the departing unbeliever is still alive. Observe what the apostle has to say:

But to the rest say I, not the Lord: If any brother hath an unbelieving wife, and she is content to dwell with him, let him not leave her. And the woman that hath an unbelieving husband, and he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave her husband. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. Yet if the unbelieving departeth, let him depart: the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us in peace.

Three things are perfectly clear: (1) The Christian must give up the marital partner if need be instead of giving up Christ; (2) Paul’s information relates to the marriage of non-
NEW BIBLE CLASSES BEGINNING

Bible classes for the summer quarter will begin Sunday, September 2. Make plans now to attend these classes.

**Sunday Schedule**

| Adults I | Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians | Paul Brantley |
| Adults II | Galatians | Michael Hatcher |
| Adults III | Christian Evidences | Jim Loy |
| New Converts | Studies In Christian Doctrine And Practical Christian Living | Bill Cline/Bill Gallaher |

**Wednesday Schedule**

| Adults I | 1 & 2 Chronicles | Ray Foshee |
| Adults II | Ezra & Nehemiah | Michael Hatcher |
| Adults III | Esther | Damon Lundy |
| New Converts | Studies In Christian Doctrine And Practical Christian Living | Bill Cline/Bill Gallaher |
Gospel Meeting with Ronnie Hayes
September 23-28, 2001

DO YOU JUST “TILT” TOWARD CHRIST?
Al Brown

Several years ago, a man’s wife died. After some time, he married again. She also died and was buried in the same burial plot. The man left instructions that when he died, he was to be buried between them. In due course, the inevitable occurred. The marker on his grave bore this requested sentiment: “Here I lie between two good wives—Tillie and Millie. I loved them both, but let me tilt toward Tillie.”

There is a lesson in this epitaph. How many people have a similar sentiment in reference to Christ’s religion? They claim to love Christ, but show an even deeper affection for the world. If they were asked, they would probably say they leaned toward the church, as if that ought to be all that was required. Christ will not accept such allegiance. If we follow Him, we must put Him before everything else, even our family (Luke 14:26). We certainly cannot continue a love affair with the world and its ways (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 1 John 2:15-17).

God insists: “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). We cannot sit on the fence. Jesus said we are either for Him or against Him (Matt. 12:30). No one can just “tilt” in the direction of Christ and be acceptable. Will you make a far-reaching commitment to the Lord? Will you determine that in everything you will say, “Not my will, but thine, be done?”

Deceased

Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds
September 16

After the morning service in the general purpose building.
Bring family members, friends, neighbors, and others to Bible class and the worship service and invite them to stay for Christian fellowship and home-cooked food.
Members of the congregation will provide a covered-dish meal.
SICK

Please remember in your prayers: Neva Bryant, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Joyce Branley, Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Vernon Bowman (Madeline Graves’ father), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), John Pippin (Dot Lambert’s nephew), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s friend), Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s friend), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), and David Howell (Joyce Brantley’s brother).

SYMPATHY

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Jim Loy and his family in the death of his father, Earl Loy, on August 14, 2001. Please keep Jim and his family in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION

August 29, 2001
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Paul Brantley

September 5, 2001
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Scot Brazell

MARK THIS DATE
September 29, 2001—Fifth Wednesday
Singing at 7:00 P.M.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Vegetables

DIRECTORY CHANGE
Michael Hatcher’s cell phone number is 324-9476. Please update your directory.
WRONG ALLIANCES

Marvin Weir

In His infinite wisdom God has declared that “whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope” (Rom. 15:4). The Old Testament Scriptures reveal in a remarkable way the utter folly of trusting in man instead of God. One must choose to follow either God’s plan or man’s plan.

Long ago Isaiah was instructed to remind God’s people of the foolishness of forsaking God. The Holy Scriptures thus say, “Now go, write it before them on a tablet, and inscribe it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever. For it is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of Jehovah; that say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits,” (Isa. 30:8-10).

Judah was under the false impression that a foreign alliance would be just the help she needed in a battle against Assyria. Judah was so confident in her own wisdom that she rejected God’s leadership and His Word to make an alliance with the nation of Egypt. It proved to be a disastrous decision as man’s thinking proved to be far inferior to God’s thinking.

Judah was willing to forget God and His plan and trust other nations for military strength. God revealed His disdain of Judah’s decision in saying, “Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses, and trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek Jehovah!” (Isa. 31:1).

We live in a nation today that for the most
part has chosen to ignore God and His Word. Today folks are more than willing to trust in human wisdom and military strength to solve any problems that might arise. In the minds of most Jehovah God is not needed and in far too many instances he is not wanted. A nation becomes ripe for the taking when “they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek Jehovah” (Isa. 31:1).

The remedy then and the remedy today are one and the same—a profound respect for and an allegiance to the Word of God! Moses charged his people long ago, saying, “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you” (Deu. 4:2). The same charge is echoed for the Christian dispensation in Revelation 22:18-19. The wise man warned, “Add thou not unto his words, Lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Pro. 30:6).

The all-sufficiency of the Word of God has been made abundantly clear in the Holy Writ. Paul reminds Timothy that the Holy Scriptures are given so that “the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work” (2 Tim. 3:17). Peter states the same truth by saying, “seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:3).

An alliance with denominationalism is not needed to worship, serve, and honor God! Christ built His church (Mat. 16:18; Acts 2) and another is not needed. He is the head of His church which is His body (Eph. 1:22-23). There is only one body (Eph. 4:4) and to make an alliance with a man-made body is to trust in that which cannot save (cf., Eph. 5:23).

An alliance fashioned from the wisdom of man will lead to destruction! The one and only gospel (Gal. 1:6-9) has the power to save a soul from sin (Rom. 1:16). First, man-made creeds add to the Word of God, thus, we do not need them. Second, man’s creeds are powerless to save one’s soul.

NEW ARRIVAL

Dale Cunningham is pleased to announce the birth of his grandson, Matthew Caleb O’Rourke, born on August 22, 2001, to Sarah and Michael O’Rourke of Andalusia, Alabama. Matthew weighed 10 pounds 1 ounce and was 22 inches long. Our congratulations is extended to all.

Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds
September 23

After the morning service in the general purpose building.
Bring family members, friends, neighbors, and others to Bible class and the worship service and invite them to stay for Christian fellowship and home-cooked food.
Members of the congregation will provide a covered-dish meal.
An alliance with and dependence upon gimmicks and entertainment will not save one's soul! As the apostle Paul said, “For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God’s good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21). “Preach the Word” (2 Tim. 4:2).

Wrong alliances will cost you your soul. Avoid the smooth talk. Place your trust and confidence in the Word of God. Obey the gospel. Live the Christian life.

5810 Liberty Grove; Rowlett, TX 75088

THE BIBLE ATTACKED

Many men have tried to destroy the Bible. In A.D. 303, the Roman Emperor Diocletian issued an edict to destroy Christians and their Bibles. The persecution that followed was brutal. Over a burned Bible, he built a monument on which he wrote these words, “Extincto nomine Christianorum” (meaning the name Christian is extinguished). Twenty years later, Diocletian was dead the new Emperor Constantine commissioned fifty copies of the Bible to be prepared at government expense.

In 1776, Voltaire, the French philosopher, announced, “One hundred years from my day, there will not be a Bible in the earth except one that is looked upon by some antique seeker.” One hundred years later, Voltaire was dead and his own house and press were being used to print and store Bibles by the Geneva Bible Society. One hundred years from the day of Voltaire’s prediction, the first edition of his works sold for eleven cents in Paris but the British government paid the Czar of Russia half a million dollars for an ancient Bible manuscript.

It truly is interesting to read what men have tried to do with God’s Word, which shall stand forever. “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Mat. 24:35).

Author Unknown

GRATITUDE

Pauline Hatcher

If we only know in our minds the meaning of the word “gratitude,” it means nothing. It is by our works and deeds of love that we show to God and to the world that we understand the true meaning of gratitude.

If I am thankful for deeds that are done for me,
And show it by serving too,
If I visit the sick who have visited me,
If to friends I am faithful and true,
I am grateful to man.

If I leave my homeland and family and friends
To teach others the words of life,
If I serve, even though I am never served,
If I help to ease suffering and strife,
I am grateful to God.

Deceased

Gospel Meeting with Ronnie Hayes
September 23-28, 2001
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Neva Bryant, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Joyce Brantley, Sam Slough (Jean Flesher’s father), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Vernon Bowman (Madeline Graves’ father), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), John Pippin (Dot Lambert’s nephew), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s friend), Otis Jones (Dale Cunningham’s friend), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), and David Howell (Joyce Brantley’s brother).

RESTORED
Lucy Ayliffe and Tia McLeod were restored to Christ on August 19 and Pam Busch on August 27. Please keep them in your prayers and offer any encouragement you can.

READING/INVITATION
September 5, 2001
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Scot Brazell

September 12, 2001
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Bill Busch

MARK THESE DATES
September 2, 2001–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
September 9, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
September 9, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Vegetables
WHO SAID GOSPEL MEETINGS ARE NO LONGER EFFECTIVE?

Jeff Archey

Summertime is the time for Vacation Bible Schools and Gospel Meetings. It seems that the time between the end of a school year and its beginning is getting smaller and smaller, so families pack a lot into summertime. Seeing how our Bible Schools and meetings are mostly booked in the summer, we find schedules busier than ever. Is there anything wrong with being busy? Certainly not! Our lives are to be productive, providing for our own (1 Tim. 5:8). We note the danger of the sluggard (Pro. 6:6-11; 13:4; 18:9; 19:15; 20:4, 13; 21:25; 24:30-34; 26:13-16) and the sin thereof. However, the problems arise when our priorities are not what they should be (Mat. 6:24-33). In this text, do not be surprised when worry and frustration set in and dominate our lives. Overloading our schedules with the wrong priorities will result in lives that are frazzled and irritating.

Do you suppose that this is why some say that Gospel Meetings are no longer effective? Brethren and friends, it is the writer’s conclusion that Gospel Meetings are still effective. They become ineffective when brethren are ineffective!

I was invited to conduct a meeting in June of 1999 in the great state of Alabama. A Sunday through Friday (now, that is a change) meeting in the hot summertime! Would you believe great attendance every night (yes, even their own people), two baptisms and ten restorations? My brethren, this meeting was not ineffective! Being with these great brethren and seeing their dedication encouraged everyone that walked through the door that week! It has also prompted me to
write the following observations on gospel meetings.

First, if a congregation has a meeting, then have a meeting! By no means am I against the “three day meeting,” but have we cut our days down to provide for overloaded schedules? Think about it, my brethren, in the days of the two-week meetings, there was no television and people were more settled and not as transient. As lifestyles have become busier, is it any wonder that meetings have become shorter? Could it be that the decision to make meetings shorter hinged on the lack of support due to over-committed lives? So, we have a meeting just because “we have always had one” and then we are frustrated when things are not well. By no means am I criticizing three-day meetings or any type of meeting. It is only a simple plea to make any gospel meeting a priority and to give our best.

Second, all Gospel Meetings are great meetings because the gospel is preached! The gospel is the power of God (Rom. 1:16) and preaching the gospel is imperative for one to hear to believe (Rom. 10:14-15). We consider a meeting not a great meeting because someone does not respond. Brethren, we are taught to sow the seed (Luke 8:11ff) and we must allow the Lord to grow the crop (1 Cor. 3:6-7).

Third, quit saying what I call “the statement.” Have you ever heard or said it? Here it is: “Well, we would have had a good meeting if our own brethren would have been there.” You and I read bulletins and see brethren do everything but bribe brethren to come to gospel meetings. To begin with, let us eliminate that statement from our lives. See point number two and remind ourselves when the gospel is preached, it is always great! Next, brethren, if our own congregations are there, I still want more there! I want others who are lost and need to hear the soul saving message of the gospel! I want the erring to return home to a loving Father (Luke 15:11-32)! We always want as many there as possible and such goes without saying.

I am afraid, brethren, that when we use that statement, we are allowing the ones who did not deem it necessary to come overshadows the good that is always done. Therefore, eliminate it.

Fourth, plan and pray carefully and let our congregation know the excitement of a meeting and let them know we expect them at every service! We book vacations and trips, ball games and parties. Why not book our gospel meetings on our calendars and put our priorities first (Mat. 6:33)? My friends and brethren, it can be done.

Gospel Meetings are always effective. It is us, my friends who make them ineffective. Therefore, let us be people with an effect in our congregations and with the lost.

106 Terry Lynn Dr; Hendersonville, TN 37075
Bellview Church of Christ  
Gospel Meeting  
September 23-28, 2001

Sunday Morning: 9:00 & 10:00 A.M.  
Sunday - Friday Evenings: 7:30 P.M.  

with  
Ronnie Hayes  
Huntsville, Alabama

Speaking on:

Sunday Bible Class: Building On God’s Word  
Sunday A.M. Worship: Never Give Up (Part 1)  
Sunday P.M. Worship: Never Give Up (Part 2)  
Monday Evening: Lost In Sight Of Home  
Tuesday Evening: Dangers Involved In Taking Liberties With God’s Word  
Wednesday Evening: The Good Samaritan  
Thursday Evening: Hell, Shall We Preach About It?  
Friday Evening: Heaven, And Why I Want To Go  

Covered-dish meal will be provided at 6:00 P.M. by the Visitation Groups as follows:

Visitation Group 1 - Monday; Visitation Group 2 - Tuesday;  
Visitation Group 3 - Wednesday; All groups - Thursday  
Visitors are invited to every meal.
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Neva Bryant, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Joyce Brantley, Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Vernon Bowman (Madeline Graves’ father), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), John Pippin (Dot Lambert’s nephew), Debra Hilburn (Marge Williams’ cousin), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s friend), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), David Howell (Joyce Brantley’s brother), and Wanda Lewis (Linda Parker’s cousin).

RESTORED
Dot Lambert was restored on September 2. Please keep her in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
September 12, 2001
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Bill Busch
September 19, 2001
Reading: Joshua Wilkes
Invitation: Bill Cline

MARK THESE DATES
September 9, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
September 9, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
September 16, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
September 16, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Fruit Juice
THE WORD
Monte L. Evans
Hungry For The Word

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

As children of God, we must hunger for His Word. In Nehemiah 8:1, the people gathered themselves together and asked Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses. The people desired to hear the Word of God. Today, many people do not desire to hear the Word of God. They simply do not want to be told that their lifestyle is not in accordance with God’s Word. Thus, they choose to ignore God and His Word as if doing so will alleviate the problem. Some brethren today acknowledge God’s Word as the standard of judgment but, twist and pervert the Scriptures to fit their own selfish desires. Some members of the church of our Lord choose not to read nor study the Word of God on a regular basis. They feel that attending the worship on Sunday morning is all they need for spiritual matters. The Word of God contains all the necessary supplements for one to grow spiritually (1 Pet. 2:2). In order for Christians to grow in the truth and in the knowledge of God’s Word, which will strengthen their faith, the study of His Word must be adopted.
Honor The Word
In Nehemiah 8:5-6, the Scriptures reveal that the people who hungered for the Word of God also honored the Word of God. The reaction of the people, when they saw the book being opened, was to stand. The people displayed honor and respect for the Word of God by standing from morning till midday. It is a shame that to some members of the Lord’s church do not seem to honor or respect the Word of God. It is likewise shameful that the worship period held in some congregations is not revered or viewed as holy. This attitude is displayed by some members who decide that the rendering of prayers and the singing of songs is the perfect time to excuse themselves to wander about the building. This action shows little or no respect for God and the worship of Him. Not only does this activity show disrespect, but it is also disturbing to those who have come to worship the Lord in Spirit and in Truth. The worship period is to be conducted decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40). When members are constantly on the move during the worship period, a decent and orderly worship period is not being practiced. Yes, let us honor the Word of God during the worship period as well as in our daily lives.

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

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

3601 N. Highway 146; Baytown, TX 77520

Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds
September 23
After the morning service in the general purpose building. Bring family, friends, neighbors, and others to our Gospel Meeting and invite them to stay for a home-cooked meal.
Members of the congregation will provide the covered-dish meal.
Bellview Church of Christ
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Sunday Morning: 9:00 & 10:00 A.M.
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with

Ronnie Hayes
Huntsville, Alabama

Speaking on:

Sunday Bible Class: *Building On God’s Word*
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Sunday P.M. Worship: *Never Give Up* (Part 2)
Monday Evening: *Lost In Sight Of Home*
Tuesday Evening: *Dangers Involved In Taking Liberties With God’s Word*
Wednesday Evening: *The Good Samaritan*
Thursday Evening: *Hell, Shall We Preach About It?*
Friday Evening: *Heaven, And Why I Want To Go*

Covered-dish meal will be provided at 6:00 P.M. by the Visitation Groups as follows:
Visitation Group 1 - Monday; Visitation Group 2 - Tuesday;
Visitation Group 3 - Wednesday; All groups - Thursday
Visitors are invited to every meal.
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Neva Bryant, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Joyce Brantley, Sam Slough (Jean Flesher’s father), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Vern Bowland (Madeline Graves’ father), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), John Pippin (Dot Lambert’s nephew), Maria Bonaparte (Bill and Peggy Crowe’s friend), Earl Cramer (Ray Foshee’s friend), David Howell (Joyce Brantley’s brother), Wanda Lewis (Linda Parker’s cousin), and Debra Hilburn (Marge Williams’ cousin).
Noah Hackworth suffered a stroke on September 4. Please keep Noah in your prayers. Send cards and letters to Cypress Rehabilitation Center; 840 South Akers Road, Visalia, CA 93277.

RESTORED
Scot Brazell was restored on September 9, 2001. Please keep him in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
September 19, 2001
Reading: Joshua Wilkes
Invitation: Bill Cline
September 26, 2001
Gospel Meeting

MARK THESE DATES
September 16, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
September 16, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Fruit Juice
GOSPEL MEETINGS ARE STILL EFFECTIVE AND STILL COMMANDED BY GOD

Barry Grider

Some say the age of the gospel meeting is over. Well, someone needs to pinch me, I thought we were still living in the Christian dispensation. To my knowledge, Christ has not yet come to reward the faithful and judge the wicked. If that be true, the age of the gospel meeting is not over. Jesus Christ commanded, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). As long as the world stands the gospel must be preached, for it is the means whereby the lost become saved (Rom. 1:16). Whenever or wherever the gospel is preached, a gospel meeting takes place. What are the benefits of a gospel meeting?

**Refreshment**

The faithful child of God loves to worship his heavenly Father, hear His Word proclaimed, and fellowship with his brethren. A gospel meeting provides us with these opportunities. David wrote, “As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God” (Psa. 42:1—NKJV). A Christian cannot imagine forsaking such opportunities for blessings.

**Revival**

While denominations may experience revival, they do not have gospel meetings, because they are in religious error. On the contrary, a true gospel meeting will always have revival. The weary, lethargic, discouraged child of God needs to be revived. The psalmist declared, “Wilt thou...
not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?” (Psa. 85:6). A gospel meeting will help revive our souls and so with the songwriter we can proclaim: “Hallelujah, thine the glory, revive us again.”

**Resurrection**

Some congregations and many individuals need more than revival, they need resurrection. Those who need resurrection are those who are dead. In Revelation 3:1: Jesus spoke to the congregation at Sardis and exclaimed, “I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” A gospel meeting can aid in breathing renewed spiritual life into a congregation or individual who is spiritually dead.

**Restoration**

Some brethren need to be restored or brought back into fellowship with God and their brethren. Like the prodigal (Luke 15) they have wandered away from their heavenly Father. A gospel meeting is a good time to remember such an individual and pray that the gospel message will once more touch their hearts and that “chords that were broken, will vibrate once more.” During a gospel meeting, seek to restore the erring (Jam. 5:20).

**Redemption**

Since the gospel is God’s power to save (Rom. 1:16), a gospel meeting will present God’s plan for man’s redemption. Invite your friends and neighbors to come so that they might have an opportunity to hear the message of the cross and salvation that is in Jesus Christ.

A gospel meeting helps meet the most vital needs of a person. It helps to address spiritual maladies and give the proper prescription to cure them. Let us resolve to do our part to encourage the success of our gospel meeting. What a blessing it will be!

3950 Forest Hill Irene Road
Memphis, TN 38125

**PLACED MEMBERSHIP**

Rhett and Erin Bowen have placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Their address is 208 Alton Road; Pensacola, FL 32505. The telephone number is 453-8257. Please welcome them.

**ROADSIDE MEETINGS**

A little more tired at close of day,
A little less anxious to have our way;
A little less ready to scold and blame;
A little more care for a brother’s name.
And so we are nearing the journey’s end,
Where time and eternity meet and blend.
The book is closed and the prayers are said,
And we are a part of the countless dead.
Thrice happy then if some soul can say,
“I live because he has passed this way.”

*Author Unknown*
Bellview Church of Christ
Gospel Meeting
September 23-28, 2001
Sunday Morning: 9:00 & 10:00 A.M.
Sunday - Friday Evenings: 7:30 P.M.

with
Ronnie Hayes
Huntsville, Alabama

Speaking on:

Sunday Bible Class: Building On God’s Word
Sunday A.M. Worship: Never Give Up (Part 1)
Sunday P.M. Worship: Never Give Up (Part 2)
Monday Evening: Lost In Sight Of Home
Tuesday Evening: Dangers Involved In Taking Liberties With God’s Word
Wednesday Evening: The Good Samaritan
Thursday Evening: Hell, Shall We Preach About It?
Friday Evening: Heaven, And Why I Want To Go

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Visitation Group 1 - Monday; Visitation Group 2 - Tuesday;
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SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Madeline Graves in the death of her father, Vernon Bowman, on September 11, 2001. Please keep Madeline and her family in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
September 26, 2001
Gospel Meeting
October 3, 2001
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

MARK THESE DATES
October 7, 2001–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
October 14, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
October 14, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Fruit Juice
ENTHUSIASM FOR THE WORK OF GOD

Bill Jackson

That English word, enthusiasm, does not appear in any of our standard translations, but some synonyms do. Immediately, the word “zeal” comes to mind. We have been created in Christ Jesus, and called into Him by the Gospel, to be a people zealous of good works (Tit. 2:14). In that same connection, the apostle Paul made use of the expression “maintain good works” (Tit. 3:8). God determines the area of good for us, and His children then must be zealous to learn of the good, do the good, and keep on doing the good!

But we often show we do not understand real, scriptural zeal (or, enthusiasm). A showman can get in the pulpit, use virtually no Bible, but wave his arms, do handstands, and use the platform as a running track, and brethren marvel at his “enthusiasm for God!” Some of the same type behavior exhibited by one called a “youth minister,” when appealing to our young people, results in parents turning the souls of their youngsters over to the man, for he has “such zeal!” Really now, do we not confuse showmanship, or bragging, etc. with zeal and enthusiasm?

We need enthusiasm in the work of God, but where do we get it? How do we come by it? First, we do not get it from denominationalism! Norman Vincent Peale, in his enthusiasm for promoting error, will not give the child of God enthusiasm for truth! And, a preacher who is also a good gymnast will never build enthusiasm for truth! Well, where does it come from? What is its base? Back we come to the permanent theme: The Word of God, and our own personal dedication to it. More than that, real enthusiasm—one that does not have such a short life—is based on true conversion!
If I am truly converted, I can be, and will be, enthusiastic in the work of God. If I am truly converted, I love the Lord, love the Word, love the kingdom, value my own soul; and I love the souls of others—and enthusiasm is thus rooted. No one, then, will have to whip me to get my participation in the things of the kingdom. And, I will not be fooled by entertainment passing for "spiritual enthusiasm!" Here is real enthusiasm: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God” (Mat. 6:33). And here is more of it: “be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

YOU PREACH FIRST
The first sermon preached each Sunday is not by the minister, but by you:

You...preach a message a good cheer when you say “Good morning!” to those you meet when you park your car and when you are in the hallway and classroom.

You...preach a message of “Welcome!...We have room for you!” when you slide over in the pew instead of forcing others to squeeze in front of you.

You...preach a message of hope and joy when you sing enthusiastically during the song service. Move your lips, sit up straight and sing out as if God can hear you in Heaven.

You...preach a message about the power of prayer when you fervently enter into our time of prayer together and are not turning the pages of the song book, drumming your fingers on the pew, or fiddling with your children.

You...preach a message of love when you smile, say hello, and introduce yourselves to visitors. If this is the only time you see your family, then schedule other times to be with them for it is truly easy to get so bogged down in family and friends the we forget about our visitors.

You...preach a message about your faith when you give your offering. Remember to be generous, for our Lord was generous with His life.

You...preach a message about the importance of the Scriptures when you bring your Bible, open it and use it during class and worship.

You...preach a message when you leave the class outline on the pew, go home and never give another thought to the lesson nor the material in the outline that is left to be studied.

Many messages are preached before the preacher stands up to bring his message. If your message is positive and consistent, then the message given from the pulpit will be much better received.

May we see each member of our congregation continue to apply these great messages. Come Sunday morning for Bible class, with Bible in hand, a warm smile on your face, and an enthusiastic desire to study, sing, and worship God. So doing will bring about a greater desire to love and do God’s will.

Author Unknown

IS THE BIBLE NOT A BLUEPRINT?
Eusebio M. Lacuata

Leaders of the now popular or notorious event, “Jubilee” have said, “I reject pattern theology...I am not looking for a pattern.” They have written, “The Bible is a love letter as opposed to a blueprint...for me, for years Christianity was a moral code. It is now becoming a love affair. For years, there were rules and regulations, now it is a relationship.”

Coming from individuals who are regarded intelligent, such statements are strange in the presence of several Bible passages which could not have been missed by them.
The Old Testament gives these warnings to Israel to whom the law was given: “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you” (Deu. 4:2); “What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it” (Deu. 12:32). “Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Pro. 30:6).

For people of the Christian Age, the New Testament sounds similar warnings: “And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another” (1 Cor. 4:6); “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8-9); “As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness” (2 Pet. 3:16-17); “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9); and “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Rev. 22:18-19).

With all these warnings to man not to go beyond what is written; not to preach anything different from what the apostles preached; or not to add to or take anything away from what is stated in the Bible, it should be clear to all that God did not and will not tolerate any tampering with His Word contained in the Bible which must be a pattern and a blueprint for all to follow: The Law for Israel to who it was given; and the New Testament for all people of the Christian age.

Those who disregard the Bible as a pattern or a blueprint in spite of God’s numerous warnings, and who say, “For years there were rules and regulations, now it is a relationship,” are ignoring God’s Word and are now teaching their own ideas to their own damnation (Gal. 1:8-9)! Can the most powerful men qualify for a comparison with God? This is an appropriate and timely counsel for such men: “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth” (Pro. 8:13).

I agree that there is a love relationship between God and man. God loved man first by giving His only begotten Son (John 3:16). Man’s part in that relationship is for man to obey what God commands: “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3)—not to set aside God’s “rules and regulations.”

The Bible may also be regarded as mankind’s road map to heaven. If men do not follow its signs and directions, they will arrive in hell, instead, because the Lord Jesus Christ did not take away “rules and regulations” from His New Testament and He is still “the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9).
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Neva Bryant, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), John Pippin (Dot Lambert’s nephew), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), David Howell (Joyce Brantley’s brother), Wanda Lewis (Linda Parker’s cousin), and Debra Hilburn (Marge Williams’ cousin).

READING/INVITATION
October 3, 2001
Reading: Carl Ayliffe
Invitation: Dale Cunningham
October 10, 2001
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Bill Crowe

MARK THESE DATES
October 7, 2001–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
October 14, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
October 14, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
October 21, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
October 21, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
October 29, 2001–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 P.M., in the general purpose building.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Fruit Juice
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.

DIRECTED, DEDICATED, AND DETERMINED
Bob Hawkins

We are all touched by the efforts of the many dedicated firemen, policemen, and all the volunteer rescue workers in New York City at ground zero. The rubble of what is left of the Twin Towers is about six or seven stories high of what use to be two buildings each one hundred and ten stories high. How many of these brave men gave their lives in the call of duty when the alarm first sounded? And how many people were saved because of their heroic efforts? Even though the hope of someone being found alive has been growing less and less as each day passes, they have continued to work in very dangerous conditions until becoming exhausted. Conditions, such as fires still burning, dust and soot in the air they breathe, sharp and jagged objects hidden in the rubble, and the possibility of falling into a hidden crevice, are ever present. What is the motivation that has kept these rescue workers going despite now a hopeless situation of finding any one alive? Is not the answer obvious—they have a strong desire to serve their country by helping their fellow man! Can we not all agree that these workers are: (1) Directed by well organized leaders; (2) Dedicated to serving their country and fellow man, and; (3) Determined to get the job done?

Several lessons can be learned from the above three D’s in regards to our spiritual growth as Christians. To help us make a spiritual application, let us answer the following questions. What about our service to God—are we being directed by our feelings or by the Word of God? Are we dedicated to serving the Lord by using all our talents? Are we determined to remain faithful
until the Lord comes again? If these rescue workers can be so well directed, dedicated, and determined with little hope, should not we Christians who have “a lively hope” that “fadeth not away” be more dedicated and determined under God’s direction? “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pet. 1:3-4).

DIRECTED

What if each of these firemen, policemen, and volunteer rescue workers had no leadership or direction to follow, but followed their feelings? You can imagine the confusion and the difficulties they would have getting the work done. Would there not be a greater possibility of more people getting hurt or even killed? This brings to mind the inspired words of Solomon: “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Pro. 14:12). When we go by our feelings rather than God’s word in religion, we become confused and misguided (Pro. 3:5-7; Jer. 10:23). When people get away from the Word of God, it results in many different religious bodies/churches instead staying with the one true body of Christ, which is the church of Christ (1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 1:22-23). Let us all submit to the will of God and allow Him to direct our paths “And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ” (2 The. 3:5).

DEDICATED

What if half of the firemen, police, and volunteer rescue workers did not even bother to show up at their appointed time to work? Would we not all rise up and say, “How is it possible to be so uncaring, so selfish”? This certainly, would be disgraceful and inexcusable behavior. As the International reporters would show or write about this terrible situation to their countries around the world, would they not view this type of behavior as a reflection on all Americans? What happens when we deliberately forsake the assemblies of the Lord’s church or fail to do the work of the church (Heb. 10:25; Jam. 2:24-26; 4:17)? It certainly reveals to God that we are not dedicated to the Lord’s cause. Also, our bad example is being seen by our family, brethren, and friends. What message are they receiving? — that we are not dedicated to the Lord and that His body which is the church is not very important to us (Eph. 6:4; Col. 4:1; 1 Tim. 4:12). Let us be sure that we “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Mat. 22:37).

DETERMINED

What if the firemen, policemen, and volunteer rescue workers had half of mind to get the job done. How many would have quit working after getting a little tried? Daniel is a great example for us from the Old Testament of one who was determined to serve and worship God no matter what the circumstances were. “But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself” (Dan 1:8). Why was Daniel thrown into the lion’s den? Because he was praying to God with his windows open, despite the king’s orders (Dan. 6). The apostle Paul is a great example from the New Testament of one who was determined to finish his course despite being “in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Born, Jr. request the honour of your presence at the marriage of their daughter Nicole Jennifer to Mr. Todd L. Blancheri.

Saturday, the 13th of October, 2001 at two o’clock in the afternoon
First Baptist Church
500 North Palafox Street; Pensacola, Florida
Reception to follow - New World Landing

Joshua Wilkes was restored to Christ on September 24, Pam Busch and James Williams were restored to Christ on September 26, and Trina Ayliffe was restored to Christ on September 28. Please keep Joshua, Pam, James, and Trina in your prayers and offer them encouragement.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Born, Jr.
request the honour of your presence
at the marriage of their daughter
Nicole Jennifer
to
Mr. Todd L. Blancheri
Saturday, the 13th of October, 2001 at two o’clock in the afternoon
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Reception to follow - New World Landing
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READING/INVITATION
October 10, 2001
Reading: Elward Brantley
Invitation: Bill Crowe

October 17, 2001
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Ray Dodd

MARK THESE DATES
October 7-11, 2001–Gospel Meeting with Danny Box at Foley Church of Christ, Foley, AL. Sunday at 9:00, 10:00 am, 6:00 pm. Monday-Thursday at 7:00 pm.
October 14, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
October 14, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.

ADDRESS CHANGE
Madeline Graves new address is: 3205 Mariners Drive; Pensacola, FL 32526. Her telephone number is 455-4350.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Vegetable and Chicken Soups
The following words were printed above a drawing of a dachshund puppy with a roller skate strapped to its belly: “Support for the Middle.” The poster was encouraging attendance to midweek services and it caused me to think about a few benefits of such. Consider some blessings of Wednesday night services.

Wednesday night services promote serious study. Paul commanded Timothy, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). Sadly, there are a number of Christians who do not follow the noble example of the Bereans who “searched the scriptures daily” (Acts 17:11). While such laxity is inexcusable, Wednesday evening Bible classes help to encourage study that would often go undone. Of course, for those who are already diligent about their service are an added bonus to their righteous routine.

Wednesday night services provide spiritual support. The Hebrews writer underscored the importance of encouragement when he penned, “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb. 10:24-25). The burdens placed upon the hearts of Christians by the daily hassles of life and the discouraging influences of the world can be made much easier to bear when saints gather together and uplift one another by studying, singing, praying, and fellowshipping. What a wonderful relief Wednesday night is to Christians who hunger and thirst after righ-
Wednesday night services produce saintly steadfastness. By way of the worship and encouragement that take place during mid-week services, Christians are supplied with the means necessary to continue in the good fight of faith. With such provisions, they can heartily obey the marching orders of Paul: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). Those who faithfully attend mid-week services are usually the very ones who understand the importance of accumulating all available resources of steadfastness.

Wednesday evening services really do provide “support for the middle.” Of course, the benefits listed above are gained from every service of the church. Christian, do all you can to take advantage of the many blessings supplied by gathering with other children of God!

About three thousand years ago Koheleth wrote, “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sone of men is fully set in them to do evil” (Ecc. 8:11). What a sad, depressing, and discouraging commentary on the attitude of man toward sin. History records thousands of instances where justice has been defeated and even humiliated by prolonging the punishment of the evil doer. When the guilt of one has been proven beyond doubt, he should be punished straightway. The lag in retribution is the secret of many of the follies and faults within the world today.

This same sad commentary can also be read in the church of our Lord. In many congregations sins are just “swept under the rug” and, although they are never completely forgotten, they are ignored. This action is preferred over doing it the Lord’s way (2 Th. 3:6) and allows the congregation to wear the facade of peace, love, happiness, and contentment. It lulls the brethren into a false sense of peace and security.

If evil, like a raging fire, would scorch us all at once, we would take more care in doing the Lord’s will in such matters. However, when issues are hidden by time “swept under the rug” —our willingness to do the Lord’s will becomes more lax and we begin to get comfortable in sin and many more problems arise (“a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”). Sins that are not dealt with swiftly will have consequences that may be beyond our immediate vision but will cause trouble just the same. Simply “swept under the rug” they will leave “lumps” that will be stumbled over time and time again.

The apparent success of the sinner should not discourage others from doing that which is right. His false pride and arrogance, combined with other forms of wickedness in his life, are grievous to the Lord and motivates him to falsely accuse the faithful whom he regards as his enemies. This is purely a cowardice method used to deal with that which he cannot meet otherwise. David wrote of such a one: “His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them. He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity. His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity” (Psa. 10:5-7). Isaiah stated, “Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD” (Isa. 26:10). Favor shown to the wicked will be unappreciated...
Visitation Group Get-together

October 29 at 6:00 P.M.

General purpose building

A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting. Make plans to attend!

and will not improve his conduct but will only make it worse. And even though he may be surrounded by the goodness of the faithful, he will continue in his unjust life, in his unholy ways, and in his disrespect for God and His faithful children.

Brethren, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise” (2 Pet. 3:9). The wicked man will finally receive his reward as well as all who aid and abet him. Those who fear the Lord (and not the anger of the sinner) will receive favor from the Lord. Shall we obey the Lord or continue “sweeping it under the rug?”

“THE TONGUE IS A FIRE”

Chuck Pearson

Some time ago, I saw a mirror in the building where the church of Christ in Tuscola, Texas, meets. The mirror was in the foyer, was at head and shoulders level, and had a circular ring drawn right in the middle of it (where one would see the reflection of one’s head). Next to the mirror was written this statement: “This person causes me more problems than anything else in the world.” Of course, the meaning was plain. The person most responsible for our happiness, or unhappiness, is none other than ourself. When we get into trouble, it is usually our own fault! And our tongue gets us into trouble most of all!

The tongue is such a small, insignificant part of the body, but oh, how much harm it can do! The book of James tells us: “Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!” (Jam. 3:5). The Bible goes on to tell us that “the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity” (Jam. 3:6). How true this is! By our speech, we tell lies, slander our brother, accuse falsely, spread malicious rumors and gossip, and hurt people with unkind words.

But even more harmful is the hypocrisy which comes forth by our speech. James also tells us, “Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be” (Jam. 3:9-10). Such wickedness! How can we go to worship God on Sunday, praising Him, then go to work on Monday and slander our neighbor? Or even curse our brother between worship services? I once heard this line is a western movie, spoken by an Indian chief: “White man speaks with two tongues.” Let us avoid this kind of double-mindedness!

Christians are to be the salt of the earth, and the light of the world (Mat. 5:13-16). Much of this is reflected by our speech. The Bible tells us that we are to have “Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you” (Tit. 2:8). If we speak rightly, keeping our tongue in check (not in check!), we cannot be condemned by our speech. This will keep us out of quite a bit of trouble! Furthermore, we will be obeying God, and this is motive enough for watching what we say, and how we say it!

4027 Juno Drive; Chalmette, LA 70043
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Neva Bryant, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), John Pippin (Dot Lambert’s nephew), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), David Howell (Joyce Brantley’s brother), Wanda Lewis (Linda Parker’s cousin), Debra Hilburn (Marge Williams’ cousin), Jean White (Joyce Brantley’s sister), Nancy Brown (Diana Brazell’s sister), and Jada Wright (Tony Hall’s friend).

RESTORED
James Williams was restored on October 7, 2001. Please keep James in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

READING/INVITATION
October 17, 2001
Reading: Allen Brazell
Invitation: Ray Dodd
October 24, 2001
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Ray Foshee

MARK THESE DATES
October 14, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
October 14, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
October 21, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Vegetable and Chicken Soups
IRA Y. RICE, JR. 
(1917 - 2001)

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting 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. 3:13-14).

Ira Y. Rice, Jr., was born August 3, 1917 at Franklin, Texas. He passed from this life on October 10, 2001. Ira was the son of Ira Y. Rice Sr., and the former Eula Edna Davis. Baptized at the age of twelve by A. R. Holton, at Norman, Oklahoma, he began preaching while yet a boy, in 1932. He was married to Vada Ott on June 19, 1947.

After ministries at Noble and Paul’s Valley, Oklahoma; Edcouch and Mercedes, Texas; Paso Robles, San Rafael, Richmond, and San Francisco, California; and Seattle, Washington, he went, in 1955, to plant the churches of Christ in Singapore, Malaysia, and Southeast Asia, where he spent several years in mission work.

Having preached for over sixty years, Ira was the Founding and Senior Editor of Contending For The Faith and Editor of The Far East/ World Evangelism Newsletter. He was also the author of several books including: We CAN Evangelize the World, Axe On The Root—Volumes I, II, and III, and most recently his autobiography Pressing Toward The Mark, Volumes I and II. He had been working on the third volume. His 27-lesson Basic Bible Course has been translated into 16 languages and is used world-wide. Brother Rice was a teacher in singing schools and recorded four albums of gospel music with his family, he spoke and lectured at gospel meetings and lectureships, he trained preachers, and was a co-founder and President of Four Seas College of Bible and Missions in Singapore and had served
as Chairman of its Board of Directors since 1968. He had been a missionary to the Far East under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, Pensacola, Florida, since 1978. It is said that Ira had preached the Gospel in over sixty countries around the world and helped to establish the church of Christ in Latvia.

In the late 1970s, among those present at one of Bellview’s lectures were three preachers who had worked closely together in California as young men in the Lord’s cause. They were George Darling, Linwood Bishop, and Ira Y. Rice, Jr. It was a grand reunion to say the least. Now, brother Rice goes on to his reward as have brother Darling and brother Bishop.

Among missionaries very few can claim to be the equal to brother Rice. His life was a demonstration of the spreading of God’s Word to the world. Just a few weeks ago he returned from a missionary trip which spanned Russia from west to east. On October 10th, he had just begun his trip home from a gospel meeting in Texas when he lost his life.

All men pass into history but few are long remembered. Brother Rice left his mark upon the Lord’s cause while in this life. He will not be soon forgotten. Many mourn his death.

Our sincere sympathy is extended to Vada and the rest of the family.

The family requests that memorials be sent to Bellview Church of Christ, Far East/World Evangelism at 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526-1798 or Memphis School of Preaching at 3950 Forest Hill Irene Road, Memphis, TN 38125-2560.

THE PASSING OF IRA Y. RICE, JR.

Tim Nichols

I believe that brother Ira Rice was one of the most misunderstood men among us. Some who did not like his “tone” and claimed to not appreciate his efforts to draw attention to various strange sounds, doctrines, and movements that were developing among us—benefitted from his work far more that they knew (or yet know). Some who even today take pride in being among the last to accept that one is a false teacher seem to be unaware that men like Ira had to be among the first in order to give them the privilege of being the last. They often became informed by Ira Rice or by someone who had been informed by someone who had been informed by Ira Rice before they could finally see dangers and take action and warn the brethren. By being “among the last” they acknowledge that those who were among the first were correct in pointing matters out—whether or not they ever (even today) can openly admit this. I do not claim to have checked out every possible detail and every fact that Ira presented to brethren, but, in every case where I was in a position to know the facts, they were accurate. He was direct. He was clear and unambiguous. And he was offensive to those who did not like to have their teachings and practices challenged and to those who did not like to see such things challenged. Jesus was also direct and offensive to those in similar categories. I, for one, grew to love Ira Rice. Contrary to what many brethren might expect, he was extremely encouraging to young preachers. He was cer-
“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

DO YOU SERVE THE LORD?

A Servant of the Lord is one who will put the Lord’s business above any other business.

A Servant of the Lord is one who attends the services of the church on a regular basis.

A Servant of the Lord is one who is willing to be a good example for others to follow.

A Servant of the Lord is one who thinks more of attending Bible class than staying home to sleep.

A Servant of the Lord is one who gives to the church according to what he makes rather than the amount he has left over.

A Servant of the Lord is one who wants to help rather than one who wants help.

A Servant of the Lord is one who attends services because he loves to, not merely because it is his duty.

A Servant of the Lord is one who has a willing mind to do the Lord’ work.

A Servant of the Lord is one who can see his own faults and not just the other fellows.

A Servant of the Lord is one who is more concerned with winning souls than with honors men may give.

When God measures a man he puts the tape measure around the heart, not the head.

Author Unknown
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Neva Bryant, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), John Pippin (Dot Lambert’s nephew), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), David Howell (Joyce Brantley’s brother), Wanda Lewis (Linda Parker’s cousin), Debra Hilburn (Marge Williams’ cousin), Jean White (Joyce Brantley’s sister), Nancy Brown (Diana Brazell’s sister), and Jada Wright (Tony Hall’s friend).

RESTORED
Dale Cunningham was restored in Christ on October 7. Please keep Dale in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
October 24, 2001
Reading: Jerry Caine
Invitation: Ray Foshee

October 31, 2001
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Louis Herrington

MARK THESE DATES
October 21, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
October 21, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 P.M., in room 7.
October 29, 2001–Visitation Group Get-together at 6:00 P.M., in the general purpose building.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Vegetable and Chicken Soups
WORKING FOR THE LORD

Monte Evans

Working for the Lord is something that every member of the Lord’s church must be actively engaged. No doubt numerous lessons and discussions have take place in regard to this important topic. Preachers preach of its importance, men offer up petitions to God for its continuation, and members lift their voices with songs of praise in reference to it. There seems to be a vast amount of time given to talking about working for the Lord but not a vast amount of time is given in actually working for the Lord. I wonder how many times members of the Lord’s church have sung: “Work for the Night is Coming,” or “I Want to be a Worker for the Lord,” or “To the Work,” or “Here Am I Send Me,” yet, many times the work is ignored. The works of the church are threefold: Evangelism, Edification, and Benevolence which everyone (of course, keeping in mind scriptural boundaries) can participate.

In the Greek, the word work (eργον) is defined as “anything done or to be done; a deed, work, action, duty or course of action” (The Analytical Lexicon To The New Testament, William D. Mounce). The following paragraphs are intended to help all members of the church recognize their duties and responsibilities towards the Lord.

When Must We Labor?
The simplest way to answer the question “When must I labor?” would be whenever the opportunity is present. Maybe it should be asked: “When is not a good time to evangelize to the lost, render benevolence to the deserving needy, or edify (build up) a brother or sister in Christ?”

In regards to when one must evangelize, Paul
told Timothy to preach the Word in season, out
of season (when it was convenient or not con-
venient) and to be urgent in this work (2 Tim. 4:2). How many times have we heard it said, “I
sure wish the church would grow.” The church
of our Lord will not grow because we wish it to do
so; it will grow only through our work. We must
be ready and willing to give answer to every man
regarding the hope that is in us (1 Pet. 3:15). The
attitude of a congregation of the Lord’s people in
regards to teaching an individual who is desirous
of a Bible study must be “Here Am I Send Me.”
This type of attitude will cause the church to
grow and also please God.

Edifying the saints is accomplished by our
attending the Bible classes and studying God’s
Word together. Edification is accomplished by
our presence in the worship period with the pur-
pose of worshiping in spirit and in Truth (John
4:24). Edification is accomplished by giving
sincere words of kindness, sincere words of
thanks, and appreciation to those of our spiritual
family. According to the apostle Paul, edification
is to be a continuous action (1 The. 5:11).

In regards to acts of benevolence, the apostle
Paul said it best in Galatians 6:10: “As we have
therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all
men, especially unto them who are of the
household of faith.”

How Must We Labor?
We must labor with a positive attitude. We
must never use the words, “I can’t” while
working for the Lord. “I can’t evangelize,” “I
can’t be benevolent,” or “I can’t edify” ought not
be a part of a Christian’s vocabulary. To say, “I
am too old,” “I am too young,” “I am too busy,”
“I am too tired,” or “I am not ready” is to have a
defeatist attitude. This type of attitude is con-
tagious and will infect others in the congrega-
tion and is not pleasing to God. We, as God’s chosen
people, must labor tirelessly and always abound
in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58) until the
Master comes. Our rest from our labors will
come when this life is over (Mat. 11:28-30). Our
labors for the Lord must be placed on a personal
level (Rom. 14:12). No one can labor for us.
Many feel that they can labor for the Lord by
proxy. Maybe that is why it is said that “90% of
the work is done by 10% of the people in the
congregation.” We must have a burning desire to
work for the Lord. When our desire is to work
for Him, we will constantly search and seek to do
His bidding.

Why Must We Labor?
Faithful soldiers of the cross know precisely
why they must labor for the Master. God expects
us to work the same work that Christ worked
while on the earth. In John 4:34, Jesus makes it
clear of His purpose of leaving the Heavenly
realm. His purpose was simple: “to do the will of
him that sent me, and to finish his work.” This,
too, must be our why when it comes to our
laboring for the Lord. We are commanded to
maintain good works (Tit. 3:8). How could one
ever think that Heaven will be one’s eternal
home without working for the cause of Christ
while in His service? I suppose those who
believe that they do not have to work in order to
receive a crown of glory, also feel that they can
go to their place of employment and do
absolutely nothing and receive a pay check.

To labor for the Lord, manifests our love for
Him, manifests our desire to please Him, and
manifests our concern for our souls and for the
souls of others.

May we all recognize the importance of

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS
TIME ENDS
Daylight savings time ends on
October 28. Set your clocks back
one hour Saturday evening before going to
bed.
working for the Lord and may we find great joy and contentment in so doing. When we labor for the Lord we must be confident that the Lord will give the increase.

“For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (Heb. 6:10).

3601 N. Highway 146, Baytown, TX 77520

VISITATION GROUP
GET-TOGETHER
October 29 at 6:00 PM
General purpose building
A covered-dish meal will precede the meeting. Make plans to attend.

WHERE IS OUR REAL COMPASSION?

Ed Johnson

James wrote, “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (Jam. 5:19-20). This verse was written to “my brethren”—Christians. The “eriting from the truth” could be any number of sins, including no longer being faithful in attendance at the assembling of the saints.

Do we often give more than just a passing thought to the thousands in the Lord’s church who have fallen away, who were once faithful members, but for one reason or another, now rarely or never worship God in a way that they once swore they would do? It has been estimated that for each faithful member in attendance at Sunday morning worship, there is at least one “fallen away member” in the area of that congregation.

About fifteen years ago, a young child, Jessica McClure, fell into a well in Midland, Texas. Within hours, the entire state of Texas it seems was mobilized to rescue this child from this situation. The compassion shown by those both outside and within the Lord’s church was something to behold. Christians and non-Christians alike, from hundreds of miles away, showed up in Midland. They wanted to, in whatever small way they could, help the family, help the authorities, help the rescue crews. In many cases, the only help which could be done, was supporting the family by their presence. The ordeal was broadcast on national television for nearly three days until the rescue was successfully completed. The attention given, and the compassion shown, is not being criticized, it is the kind of love which is commanded of God.

Consider this though: Is the same kind of concern being shown by the congregations of the Lord’s church in that community (the same question could be asked in any other city in the country) as was shown for this small child? A lost soul is dear in the sight of God, and those members of the Lord’s church who have fallen away are just as dear in God’s eyes as the small girl in Midland, and just as dear as those faithful members who we see every first day in the worship hour.

Should we not learn a lesson from the parable of the lost coin—from the parable of the lost sheep? Should we not be concerned over those souls who have been “once enlightened” and who then have fallen away?
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Neva Bryant, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Sam Stough (Jean Flesher’s father), Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), John Pippin (Dot Lambert’s nephew), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), David Howell (Joyce Brantley’s brother), Wanda Lewis (Linda Parker’s cousin), Debra Hilburn (Marge Williams’ cousin), Jean White (Joyce Brantley’s sister), Nancy Brown (Diana Brazell’s sister), Jada Wright (Tony Hall’s friend), Tanya Silcox (Paul and Phyllis Brantley’s daughter), and Rebecca Cox (Kristin Caine’s friend).

READING/INVITATION
October 31, 2001
Reading: Jeremy Caine
Invitation: Louis Herrington
November 7, 2001
Reading: Bill Gallaher
Invitation: Damon Lundy

MARK THESE DATES
November 4, 2001–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
November 11, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
November 11, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
November 18, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
November 18, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Vegetable and Chicken Soups
WHEN I SURVEY
THE WONDROUS CROSS

Lennie Reagan

For whom would you die? Without flinching I can tell you I would die for my wife and my children. I would die for my family and for their families. I have some very dear friends for whom I would give very serious consideration to die in to protect them. And we all think we would; but, when the time came what would we really do? Hear the words of the apostle Paul: “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:6-8).

Prior to being nailed to the cross, Christ had already endured fifteen to eighteen hours of sleepless, agonizing, physically tormenting, mentally exhausting pain and persecution. A crown of thorns was platted and placed upon His head and pommeled into His scalp with a reed. He was blindfolded, slapped, spat upon; then, with ridiculing cries from His malicious mockers, Christ is taunted to prophesy the identity of those who are His torturers.

He is beaten across His outstretched back with the whip and with whatever objects were on the ends of that scourge; His back and sides were lacerated with every powerful blow from the Roman soldier. Do not be mislead to believe Christ was beaten with thirty-nine stripes, that was a Jewish custom. This is a Roman punish-
ment and our Lord was beaten without mercy to the point, no doubt, that His shoulder blades looked like white caps in a sea of blood (from the pen of brother G. K. Wallace). His bruised and battered body quivers from the excruciating pain delivered with every blow.

When we pause to consider the seriousness and the severity of the sufferings of Christ; then, how some brethren respond to that sacrifice, it is more than I can follow and fathom. Yet, week after week we are forced to behold the unmitigated selfishness and folly of a few who fail to faithfully fulfill their God-given responsibility—whether it be a forsaking of the assembly or a default of duties as defined by the Word of God.

I would ask you to remember that our Lord displays His love for us before He even comes to Calvary; but, the old rugged cross was His death. This terrible, awful price was paid for my sins in love. A love which is not deserved; but, a love which reaches all men (John 3:16; Tit. 2:11-12). A love which deserves and demands obedience (2 The. 1:7-10; Heb. 5:9).

There is no heavenly command which seeks the followers of Christ to die physically as evidence of loyalty and dedication; but, we must live for Him all the days of our lives (Mat. 10:38-39).

Isaac Watts wrote a song which suggests the proper response:

**When I Survey The Wondrous Cross**

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my Lord;
All the vain things that charm me most
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See, from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;

Did e’er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

PO Box 321; Coldwater, MS 38618

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**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 I 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).

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**A TOUCHING NOTE FROM YESTERYEAR**

*Bob Howton*

In the spellbinding biography, *J. D. Tant, Texas Preacher*, by Yater Tant, one can find himself instantly immersed in the day to day, life struggles of one of the most illustrious characters of the frontier days of our country. The hardships and heart wrenching trials of that bygone era are not spent without merit, if we can but read, and be inspired to work out our own salvation, by adhering to scriptural authority, and living dedicated and selfless moral lives, as did those dynamic characters of the past.

I wish that every young man and woman of marriageable age, in all the world, could read pages 72 and 73 of this attention grabbing work. I reprint a small portion of it below, for illustration. When J. D. Tant was twenty-five years old, he went to Austin, Texas, during a State meeting, with the express idea of finding a suitable young lady for marriage. On the first day, he singled out three possible prospects, and as was his usual way, hoped that God would help him to decide if either of them would make a suitable companion for a Gospel preacher. A controversy over sending *delegates* or *messengers* to the next meeting, saw two of the young ladies Tant had singled out, voting for *delegates* while the other voted to send *messengers*. Knowing of no biblical authority for ladies to be delegates for anything in the religious realm, Tant saw the providential hand of God in the act, and ended his quest.

I went to the girl at once, and told her who I was, and sought a private conversation with her. I told her why I had come to Austin, and that I had selected her to be my future companion, provided our natures blended and we could realize the hand of God would be with us in our work after knowing each other as we were. I told her my intention was to marry in five years, and if she could see nothing across her pathway that would prevent her from being the wife of a Christian minister, we would begin a correspondence, looking forward to an engagement and marriage at the proper time. We commenced a correspondence at that time which continued for four years, meeting only four times during those four years, and on the 26th. of March, 1890, Laura Warren of Austin, Texas, a teacher, and I, were made one by law of God and man. We were married at Georgetown, Texas. A more devoted wife and a more Godly woman could not have been found...a helper in all things and one who lived at home and helped run the farm while I was out preaching the Gospel of the Son of God (*Firm Foundation*, March 30, 1909).

Sound like something from the dark ages? Those of us who are blessed with a Godly companion feel differently. Considering the chaos and confusion abounding in marriage and divorce today, one sees virtue, moral and spiritual integrity, and Godly patience, which inheres this story, shining like a beacon to decry the sin and shame so rampant in our nation today.
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Neva Bryant, Elaine Maxey, Jean Fleshner, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), John Pippin (Dot Lambert’s nephew), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), David Howell (Joyce Brantley’s brother), Wanda Lewis (Linda Parker’s cousin), Jean White (Joyce Brantley’s sister), Nancy Brown (Diana Brazell’s sister), and Jada Wright (Tony Hall’s friend).

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Jean Fleshner in the death of her father, Sam Stough, on October 22, 2001. Please keep Jean and her family in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
November 7, 2001
Reading: Bill Gallaher
Invitation: Damon Lundy

November 14, 2001
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Fred Stancliff

MARK THESE DATES
November 4, 2001–Visitation Group 1
assignment cards handed out.

November 11, 2001–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.

November 11, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at
5:00 PM, in room 7.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Vegetable and Chicken Soups
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

THE EMPTY SEAT HAS A POWERFUL VOICE

Noah A. Hackworth

Introduction

David and Jonathan, Saul’s son, were true friends. They loved each other as much as if they were blood brothers. In fact, their souls were knit together (1 Sam. 18:1). For a number of reasons, none of which were justified, King Saul was obsessed with the relentless pursuit of the youthful David. His intense desire to kill him was not hidden (1 Sam. 19:9-10). David had several opportunities to slay Saul, but he would not touch him because he was God’s anointed (1 Sam. 24:6). David apparently did not fully understand why Saul wanted him dead. He asked, “What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin” (1 Sam. 20:1). David needed to sit at meat with King Saul during the feast of the new moon, but he was suspicious (1 Sam. 20:5-17). Jonathan said to him, “To-morrow is the new moon: and thou wilt be missed, because thy seat will be empty” (1 Sam. 20:18). David’s empty seat sent a clear message to Saul. In like manner, whether realized or not, an empty seat (pew) at service time has a powerful voice. It says different things. Here are some of them.

Someone Is Too Ill to Attend

No doubt every congregation has people who are completely dedicated to Christ and the church; they never miss a service unless they are too sick to come. If their place on the pew is vacant you can be sure that something is physically wrong. This is a well established pattern. Too, these same people never let minor afflictions keep them from the public assemblies.
This includes all activities whether spiritual or social.

**Someone Is Visiting Elsewhere**

Visiting is good. It can be refreshing to the spirit. It provides opportunities for greater fellowship. It can be a learning experience, but it can be *overdone*. Many congregations have people who belong to the tribe of “Gad” so to speak. Their seat is vacant too often. They are gone so much that they ought to fill out a visitor’s card when they return. Many of these dear souls are nomadic. They have *itchy* feet. They just cannot wait to “get on the road again.” They keep the congregation off balance and keep if from reaching attendance goals both in Bible classes and in the assembly. The empty pew, if empty too often because of visiting elsewhere, can be a real *downer* to those who are trying their best to contribute to congregational growth through faithful attendance.

**Someone Is Weak in Faith**

There are those who have (1) little faith, (2) great faith, (3) weak faith, (4) strong faith, (5) no faith (cf., Mat. 6:20; 8:10; Rom. 4:19-20; Mark 4:40; Deu. 32:20). Every congregation has those who are weak in faith. They need to be strengthened. They need fellowship with others, but these dear souls have the faith of a “gnat” and it seemingly never increases no matter what is done to help them. These are the folks who are “tossed to and fro,” by various things to the extent that you never know for sure if they will be in their seat. Weakness can be overcome and it cannot be used as a perpetual excuse.

**Someone Has Returned to the World**

Demos forsook Paul because he loved the world (2 Tim. 4:10), and unfortunately Demas has many relatives in the church today. It is heartbreaking, disappointing, and extremely frustrating to see a seat or pew vacant because the one who occupied it has returned to the beggarly elements of the world (Gal. 4:9). Satan has won another battle over one of God’s children. The thorns and thistles (the world and its cares) once again choked the Word and caused unfaithfulness (Mat. 13:22). Playing spiritual jeopardy is foolish because we cannot win.

**Someone’s Love Has Waxed Cold**

Pews and seats are often empty because the person who formerly occupied them has lost his or her love for Christianity. This dear soul is little more than a “church goer”; the opportunity to *taste* and *experience* New Testament Christianity is lost. This love, which was once warm, vibrant, and outgoing, has hardened. This absentee does not love the Lord or the church anymore. This person was a careless soldier who did not prepare himself for battle. Satan smacked him down, kicked him, and smashed him because he did not have on his armor (Eph. 6:10-18). Yes, at times the vacant pew has a powerful voice and it is not always pleasant to hear.

5342 West La Vida Court; Visalia, CA 93277

Marvin Weir

SACRED MATTERS
DEMAND PROPER RESPECT

It has amazed me for years to see folks demand proper respect for sacred matters in the Lord’s Day assembly and then treat these same sacred matters as a form of entertainment in the home. Years ago an aged gentleman led the singing at the congregation where I preached my first sermon. He would have never consented to using a piano to accompany the singing of praises to God during the assembly of the church. This same gentleman, however, invited his denominational neighbors to his home on Sunday
afternoon, and while his wife played the piano
the same religious songs that were sung in the
morning worship assembly were once again sung. He did not believe he was inconsistent or in error.

People have long pointed out the truth that
there are many things God allows us to do as a
manner of opinion, preference, and expediency
outside the realm of corporate worship. The
problem arises when an assumption is made that
sacred matters can be treated in flippant fashion.

It is true that there are divine directives that
dictate how we are to worship when we assemble
on the Lord’s Day. One who desires to please
God must do the right thing, in the right way, and
for the right reason. It is as our Savior said: “But
the hour cometh, and now is, when the true
worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and
in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship
him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him
must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John

Certain acts of worship that are sacred on the
Lord’s Day during the worship service cannot be
considered to have no spiritual significance when
engaged in outside the assembly of the saints.
Whether at home or work sacred themes and
matters must be treated with the utmost respect.
One is wrong who believes he is at liberty to treat
that which is sacred as entertainment when not
assembling with the church. It is never right to
abuse the sacred nature of that which pertains to
deity.

Some thus argue that they can sing religious
songs at home or in some similar setting with the
accompanying instruments of music because they
are not worshiping. Guy N. Woods noted that the
third commandment of the Decalogue forbade
taking of the name of the Lord in vane (Exo.
20:7). Our brother then added: “The phrase “in
vain,” translates a Hebrew term signifying that
which is done in a flippant, frivolous fashion,
without due regard for, or attention to, the sacred
nature of the same.”

When it comes to sacred matters we are not at
liberty to say “time in” and “time out.” The ave-
nue of prayer is valid in the worship assembly
and at home. Whether one prays at home or in
the assembly of the saints he must adhere to
God’s guidelines for acceptable prayer (John
15:16; 1 John 5:14-15; 1 Pet. 2:5). Prayer is
never to be relegated to a form of entertainment.
The same is true of the songs we sing that
emphasize spiritual matters. We are always to
sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12), and the
singing (as the praying) must be done in the right
way, for the right reason, and with the right at-
titude. Neither is singing to be relegated to a
form of entertainment.

We must learn to respect a “thus saith the
Lord” and all things that pertain to sacred mat-
ters. Let us never be guilty of using that which
has a sacred nature in a carefree, haphazard
manner. Sacred matters always demand proper
respect.

CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE

He became poor that we might become rich
(Jam. 2:5).

He was born that we might be born again
(John 1:14).

He became a servant that we might become
sons (Gal. 4:6-7).

He had no home that we might have a home
in heaven (Mat. 8:20).

He was bound that we might go free (John
8:32-36).

He was made sin that we might be made
righteous (2 Cor. 5:21).

He died that we might live (John 5:24-25).

Author Unknown
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Neva Bryant, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), John Pippin (Dot Lambert’s nephew), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), David Howell (Joyce Brantley’s brother), Wanda Lewis (Linda Parker’s cousin), Jean White (Joyce Brantley’s sister), Nancy Brown (Diana Brazell’s sister), Jada Wright (Tony Hall’s friend), and Robert Colucci (Marilyn Hall’s great-great-nephew).

RESTORED
Jim Williams was restored in Christ on November 4, 2001. Please keep Jim in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

READING/INVITATION
November 14, 2001
Reading: Andrew Hatcher
Invitation: Fred Stancliff
November 21, 2001
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Henry Born

MARK THESE DATES
November 11, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
November 11, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
November 18, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat
For whom should freedom of speech and liberty of action be unavailable? Some would foolishly answer: “Freedom for everyone, anytime!” Surely we do not believe that. Our liberty to do what we want must end for every man or woman who wants to use freedoms to harm fellow citizens. Level-headed Americans have always believed that. Theoretically, it is on this premise that our legal system is built.

I have freedom to shake a man’s hand, but not freedom to strike him with my hand. I have freedom to enter a man’s house when I am invited, but not when I break in uninvited. I have freedom to sell a man an apple, but not sell a man an apple laced with poison. My rights stop where another man’s begin.

This is why those who call themselves “pro-choice” hold a view which at its core is evil. Abortion involves at least two people. The mother and the unborn baby. That is the truth,
and will never change. Have you ever considered the difference between the one who holds the “Pro-life” position and one who holds the “Pro-choice” position? It is this: One places emphasis on the rights and value of the baby, the other places total emphasis on the mother.

They are also different in that in the pro-life side, the baby is safe, and with adoption, the mother is inconvenienced, but not physically harmed. On the pro-choice side, the baby dies and the mother considers herself to be more inconvenienced.

The pro-choice advocate argues that a woman has freedom to choose, and that government should protect her right to kill her unborn baby up until the baby is born except for the head. But wait! What happened to the bedrock American principle that says I cannot have freedom which places my preferences over the welfare of the innocent? That principle is trampled by each person who advocates abortion rights: be he Jew or Gentile.

And where does this selfish, evil heart which permits the killing of the unborn lead people? How many of God’s laws must be broken and ignored in a man’s heart in order to allow him to advocate abortion? And after he has broken them, what kind of man does this choice make him? I have often wondered how comfortable pro-choice people would feel living next door to a doctor which commonly performs abortions. What kind of man has a conscience which would permit that? And would you want him for your neighbor? Your children’s school principal? If he was available and you had to run some errands, would you leave your small children in his care and feel safe? He may wear a white jacket when he works, but that does not change what he truly is inside. He is a hired killer. The difference between him and a medical doctor who uses his skills to heal, is crystal clear and shockingly stark. One saves, the other kills. The mother who pays up front for an abortion is paying that man to make sure her unborn baby is dead.

Pro-abortion Americans, whoever they are, hold an evil position and need to be ashamed of themselves and repent. Our Lord gave us the foundation of all human relationships when He said, “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Mat. 7:12).

If this were cemented into all our hearts, abortion as we know it today, would immediately cease. Consider the unborn baby and ask some sobering questions. “Is it human or animal?” Obviously human. “Is it living or dead?” Obviously living, otherwise abortion would not require killing it. “Is it innocent or guilty?” Obviously innocent.

Only in reference to abortion can Americans feel enlightened and proud when they smugly advocate the deliberate killing of innocent human beings. And only in present-day America will politicians brag about it for votes. This article is not intended to offend, but to enlighten. People, and especially Christians, need to shake off contemporary liberal thinking and use their voice to protect the innocent.

**LIFE’S LITTLE LESSONS**

*Jerry W. Carmichael*

In the words of Amos, “I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet’s son” (Amos 7:14), but I have lived over forty years on Earth, at this writing, and I have been married to the same woman for well over half of my life. We have
raised two fine Christian daughters, and I have violated all the advice that my father and mother gave me at one time or another.

There is a chance that a young person does exist somewhere who is wise enough to heed the warnings of one who has already made the mistakes, and recovered from them. Facts are often heeded, advice seldom ever is! Remember, these are lessons from my life. Others may not agree with all of the details but the principles ring true throughout the ages.

1. You will not understand the importance of sexual purity until after you are married. Stay pure anyway! I promise it is worth it!

2. Make, as one of your goals in life, a promise to never taste tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs. If you are successful, you will be one of the most rare and envied people in the world!

3. Please do not buy into the American myth that true happiness and inner peace is the result of more things! The accumulation of material wealth has absolutely nothing to do with real happiness! You may not understand this now, but you will.

4. Do not choose your partner for life based solely on physical looks. Stomachs enlarge, hair-lines decrease, scalps become visible where they once were hidden, waistlines go steadily upward until trousers are worn slightly below the armpits. If the physical is all there is to your marriage, it cannot work!!

5. Care about what others think about your reputation, your influence, and your choices in life. This is a great restraining device to keep you from making mistakes early in life, for which you cannot make restitution later.

6. Never allow yourself to become selfish! The happy life is one which is lived in service to others.

7. Never be too serious to laugh at yourself. Never laugh loudly and tell inappropriate jokes at somber occasions.

8. Remember: Intelligent people can communicate without profanity and can settle their conflicts without violence! (Always!)

9. The majority is usually wrong in matters where it really counts.

10. Never fail to give an absolute minimum of 10% of all household income to the Lord. As income increases, so should your contribution.

11. People who wear an excessive amount of golden jewelry, who drive exceptionally expensive cars, and who try to display wealth at every opportunity, are usually shallow and insecure with who they really are, and they rarely like themselves much!

12. The clothes do not make the man or woman! The heart inside does!!!

13. Never bore people with tales of your own greatness!

14. Never talk badly about yourself; others will do that for you!

15. Never ridicule, or slander your mate in public!! Never talk badly about him/her to others. Talk to each other instead of about each other.

16. Never put your parents above the Lord or your mate! Care for them if you can, but never to the detriment of your faith or your marriage.

17. Obey the Gospel and always remain faithful! You will grow to appreciate your relationship with God more each day!

18. Life is like trying to sink an inner tube. You push one side down and the other pops up. The winners are those who keep on pushing. The losers are those who relax and float down the creek to the river; and down the river to the ocean never to be seen again!!!

19. "Always"
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Neva Bryant, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), John Pippin (Dot Lambert’s nephew), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Wanda Lewis (Linda Parker’s cousin), Jean White (Joyce Brantley’s sister), Nancy Brown (Diana Brazell’s sister), Jada Wright (Tony Hall’s friend), and Robert Colucci (Marilyn Hall’s great-great-nephew).

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Joyce Brantley in the death of her brother, David Howell, on November 6, 2001. Please keep Joyce in your prayers.

READING/INVITATION
November 21, 2001
Reading: Daniel Hatcher
Invitation: Henry Born
November 28, 2001
Reading: Brantley Johnson
Invitation: Paul Brantley

MARK THESE DATES
November 18, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
November 18, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
December 2, 2001–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat
REAL DEDICATION
Eddie Whitten

Dedication ceremonies are common. A new building is built and dedication ceremony is planned, then conducted. The building is recognized for its purpose and solemn promises and intents are declared. An organization is formed to provide benevolent services to the community and dedicated to that commendable goal. A new church building is dedicated to the service of God in the community. All of these are worthy undertakings and deserving of the dedication given to them.

There is another type of dedication which is also deserving of the highest honor. A person responds to the teaching of the Bible concerning the Lord and His church. He learns that unless he obeys the gospel of Christ, he will be lost eternally when he dies. He learns of the great love of Jesus as He gave Himself in sacrifice for everyone’s sins. He knows of the cruel crucifixion of Jesus and tries to imagine the agony He suffered for the forgiveness of his sins. He also learns of the church which Jesus purchased when He died on that cross. He reads where the church was established on the first Pentecost day following the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2). Then he reads that the Lord adds to the church those who are being saved (Acts 2:47). He studies the Bible and is convinced the Bible is the Word of God and is true (Rom. 10:17; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16). His faith is sure and he is determined to do what Jesus instructs with regard to his being saved.

When a person is convinced his soul is lost and that Jesus has provided salvation from sin, his faith in God, Jesus, the Bible, the church of
Dedication to God and spiritual matters never should change. The beauty of the teachings of the Bible never changes. This is a fundamental fact hard to understand by mortal minds. The purpose to which one is dedicated does not change nor will it ever. Therefore, loyalty has no reason to change. Truth, to which one was originally loyal based upon his conviction, will always be worthy of continued faith.

Teachings of the Bible embrace (1) obedience which places one in Christ, (2) worship approved of God, (3) principles of acceptable conduct, (4) endurance of dedication, (5) relationships, and, above all, (6) the characteristics of love.

The proof of one’s dedication is demonstrated in performance. A person can claim faithful dedication all he wants, but if he fails in performance, the claim is empty, and so is his faith. Insincere dedication is an indication of insincere faith which cannot be pleasing to God. One who piously declares his dedication while demonstrating an insincere faith is what Jesus called—“hypocrites” (Mat. 23).

Church attendance to every service is a demonstration of dedication. No one except the preacher and the elders seemingly are expected to be at every service. Members absent themselves from the service with the wave of the hand as it if does not matter. Perhaps the preaching is atrocious and the singing worse, but neither of those are the criteria for dedication. The matter that is important is the teaching of the Bible that we are to “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Mat. 22:37). May God help us to be committed to the Lord’s cause with such dedication.
are unknown (Rev. 21:4; et al.). Therefore, saints on their sojourn sing courageously, and continuously: “What a song of delight in that city so bright...when all of God’s singers get home.”

112 Ruckers Street; Madison, WV 25130

IT IS HARD TO CONVINCE YOUR CHILDREN

It is hard to convince your children that the work of the church is really important when you are not taking an active part in the work of the church.

It is hard to convince your children that faithfulness to the church is the most important loyalty in life when you permit them to forsake services to engage in other activities.

It is hard to convince your children that the church is the body of Christ when you are indifferent to the welfare of the members of that body.

It is hard to convince your children that they are to respect the church when you constantly complain and criticize the efforts of those who care enough to be doing something.

It is hard to convince your children that the church is the world’s most important institution when you give so little to finance the church’s work.

It is hard to convince your children that they can believe God’s Word if you do not believe Him enough to place the kingdom of God first in your life.

It is hard to convince your children that it is important to love your enemies when you hold grudges and have wrong attitudes toward those who do you wrong.

It is hard to convince your children that we must obey the laws of the land when we lie on our tax form and disregard speed limits.

It is hard to convince your children that it is important to teach others the gospel when we have never attempted to talk with our neighbors or friends about the truth.

It is hard to convince your children that we must stand against false doctrine and immorality when we remain silent when error is being propagated or practiced.

Author Unknown

RULES FOR MAKING EVERY VISITOR FEEL WELCOME

The Thirty-Second Rule. Most guests will make a judgment about us during the first thirty seconds after they enter the building. Greet others with a handshake and a friendly smile as soon as you see them.

The Front-Door Rule. Help people find their classes or a seat in the auditorium. If they have trouble, they may not return.

The Ten-Foot Rule. Greet anyone with whom you are not familiar who comes within ten feet of you. Make eye contact. Be friendly.

The Five-Minute Rule. Take the first five minutes after services to seek out guests and greet them. Encourage them to return and thank them for being here. After you have greeted our guests, you will still have opportunity to talk to your friends.

Our attitude will often determine if visitors return. Do your part to make sure they really feel welcome and appreciated. Author Unknown
SICK

Please remember in your prayers: Neva Bryant, Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), John Pippin (Dot Lambert’s nephew), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Wanda Lewis (Linda Parker’s cousin), Jean White (Joyce Brantley’s sister), Nancy Brown (Diana Brazell’s sister), Jada Wright (Tony Hall’s friend), and Robert Colucci (Marilyn Hall’s great-great-nephew).

READING/INVITATION

November 28, 2001
Reading: Brantley Johnson
Invitation: Paul Brantley

December 5, 2001
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Bill Busch

MARK THESE DATES

December 2, 2001–Visitation Group 1 assignment cards handed out.
December 9, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
December 9, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
December 16, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
December 16, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat
A CHURCH THAT MEETS MY NEEDS

Barry Grider

The above statement is the desire of many professed Christians today as they go “church shopping” in our major cities. Competition among congregations is perhaps not new, but is certainly prevalent in the Lord’s church today. Oftentimes, brethren will appeal to visitors in their audiences to come and worship at their locale because “this church will meet your needs,” which is often nothing more than an appeal to the voracious appetites of the flesh (sports facilities, child care, contemporary worship, smooth preaching, etc.). Some congregations are quite adept at sheep-stealing, as well. As a matter of fact, their growth comes not from baptizing sinners into Christ, but from wooing weak and worldly-minded members in other congregations to their terrain.

However, on the surface, asking: “Does this church meet my needs?” is not a bad question to ask. Obviously, God realizes we have spiritual needs that must be met, and for this reason He has given us His Son, His Word, and His church.

A church that meets my needs will exalt Christ as the Savior. Jesus Christ is the only hope for man today. He gave His life that we might live (1 Tim. 2:6). On one occasion, Jesus said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (John 12:32). Indeed, the Lord was lifted up on the cross and the church today has the responsibility of presenting that cross to the world. Peter wrote, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out
focus on his life (Gal. 6:14) and the heart of his preaching (1 Cor. 1:23).

A church that meets my needs will preach the Bible. Since the gospel saves (Rom. 1:16), it should be preached. Far too often, members would rather hear a watered-down, tear-jerking, human interest story, rather than the pure, unadulterated Word of God. They desire smooth preaching that eases the conscience rather than pricks the heart (2 Tim. 4:3-4). If you truly understand your needs, you will want to “receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (Jam. 1:21).

A church that meets my needs will provide an atmosphere of genuine love. The love of which I am speaking is not superficial. It is not standing up and hugging your neighbor in the middle of the service, while you should be worshiping God. Most of your neighbors will not even speak to you after the service is over. Furthermore, a loving congregation is not one that excuses or tolerates sin. God demands that the church discipline those members who deliberately and defiantly engage in sin (1 Cor. 5). Such discipline is not done because of malice or unkindness, but because of a love for the soul. In the proper church environment, Christians look out for the needs of others, fulfilling the admonition of Paul, “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:1-2). Such behavior comes only from hearts which are motivated by love (Gal. 5:6), and this love is not limited to fellow Christians. “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10). Instead of looking to be served, we should ask, “How and where can I serve others,” remembering the words of the Savior: “For even the Son of man

NEW BIBLE CLASSES BEGINNING

Bible classes for the summer quarter will begin Sunday, December 2. Make plans now to attend these classes.

**Sunday Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adults I</th>
<th>1 &amp; 2 Thessalonians, Philemon</th>
<th>Louis Herrington</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults II</td>
<td>Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians</td>
<td>Paul Brantley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adults III</td>
<td>Galatians</td>
<td>Michael Hatcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Converts</td>
<td>Studies In Christian Doctrine And Practical Christian Living</td>
<td>Bill Cline/ Bill Gallaher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Wednesday Schedule**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Adults I</th>
<th>Ezra &amp; Nehemiah</th>
<th>Michael Hatcher</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults II</td>
<td>Esther</td>
<td>Damon Lundy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults III</td>
<td>Job</td>
<td>Ray Foshee</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Converts</td>
<td>Studies In Christian Doctrine And Practical Christian Living</td>
<td>Bill Cline/ Bill Gallaher</td>
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came not to be ministered unto, but to minister” (Mark 10:45).

A church that meets my needs will fulfill the great commission. Jesus said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). To whom was this command given? Who has this responsibility? Every member of every congregation. As often stated, we are saved to save others. Jesus spoke about the need for sowers to sow the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8). The first century church did this, even in the midst of great persecution (Acts 8:1ff). It should be our desire to be part of a congregation that centers its work, prayers, and financial resources on the saving of lost souls, which includes those both at home and abroad, and keeping the saved saved.

While indeed the church is composed of social beings, we are not members of a mere social organization or club. God has granted unto us a much higher calling. After careful consideration, are you in a congregation that really meets your needs? If not, perhaps you should make a change. The salvation of your soul could be at stake.

3950 Forest Hill Irene Road
Memphis, TN 38125

DO YOU KNOW HOW OLD YOUR CHILDREN ARE?

Kent Davis

The Bible Class was shocked by the question. Their brother in Christ had said he was concerned if the fathers knew how old their children were.

One dad angrily replied, “Of course we know how old our children are!”

The concerned member replied, “I don’t mean to irritate you, but you all seem confused about how old they are.”

Another man challenged, “Tell us how we seem confused.”

“I will,” the concerned member softly answered, “but you will not like the answer. I will start with Nathan, who is not expected to sit still for thirty minutes during the sermon, because he is ‘too young’....”

“He is too young!” interrupted Nathan’s father.

“Perhaps, but you expect him to sit for hours in school,” continued the concerned member.

“Then there is Sharon, who is old enough to sing with the radio, but is not expected to sing with the congregation. And what about Michael? He will not even say, ‘Hello’ when an adult greets him after services. He learned the rules of soccer, so why can’t he learn basic etiquette? And what about Janice? Is she too young for the Bible? Her Bible class reads paraphrased ‘Bible Stories’ rather than the Bible itself, yet she is ‘old enough’ to watch PG movies.

Is Jimmy really too young to learn the books of the Bible? He was able to learn the fifty states. And how can Ellen be old enough to write a paper for her school, but too young to look up the Scripture references during the sermon? How can Cheryl...”

“All right, you can stop,” said Cheryl’s father. There was silence for a few moments, then another father said, “I have been treating my child as if he were grown up during the week and as if he were a baby on Sunday. It seems the rest of us have not done much better. God told us to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

No one answered. The silence that followed was the silence of prayer.

Copied
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), John Pippin (Dot Lambert’s nephew), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Wanda Lewis (Linda Parker’s cousin), Jean White (Joyce Brantley’s sister), Nancy Brown (Diana Brazell’s sister), Jada Wright (Tony Hall’s friend), and Robert Colucci (Marilyn Hall’s great-great-nephew).

READING/INVITATION
December 5, 2001
Reading: Bryan Loy
Invitation: Bill Busch
December 12, 2001
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Bill Cline

MARK THESE DATES
December 2, 2001–Photos for the Members’ Directory board will be taken after the morning service and after the evening service.
December 9, 2001–Visitation Group 2 assignment cards handed out.
December 9, 2001–Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Canned Meat

PHONE NUMBER CHANGE
Michael and Karen Hatcher’s telephone number is 261-7418. Please update your directories.
THE WEAKNESS OF ISLAM
Gary McDade

More than half a millennium after the establishment of the church of Christ and the Divine, prophetic pronouncement that those who preach another gospel would be accursed of God, at Medina and Mecca in the Sinai peninsula in A.D. 622 a man named Muhammad started the religion of Islam. The sober stance of the sacred Scriptures succinctly and solemnly had already been stated, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:6-9). Herein lies the greatest weakness of Islam: It stands accursed of God.

In a sampling of internal weaknesses of Islam further bases for its repudiation emerge. Consider the so-called “holy war” or “Jihad.” Muslims may claim that only the twelfth Imam, a religious leader who is a supposed descendant of Muhammad, may declare a “holy war,” but, with so many warring factions disrupting peace and raining terror in the world, to the observer it looks like any influential upstart among them may gain a loyal following of suicidal radicals. Numerous citations from the Koran could be given to show that the source from which Islam grows authorizes violence even to the point of taking life. Muhammad wrote, “And kill them wherever you find them, and drive them out from where they drove you out, and persecution is
worse than slaughter. And fight not with them at
the Sacred Mosque until they fight you [in it],
slay them. Such is the recompense of the dis-
believers” (Surah 2:191; cf., e.g., 2:190-193;

Consider their god, Allah. The late Andrew
M. Connally, who labored among the Muslims in
Africa for many years, once described how the
Koran presents Allah: “On the whole Allah is
represented as a magnificent, opulent, irresistible
world-potentate—an Arab Sheikh [sic] glorified
and magnified to cosmic proportions” (Connally,
255-256). “Allah both guides and misguides,
both punishes and forgives, according to his own
inscrutable [sic], unquestionable good pleasure
(3:124; 5:43; 6:39, 125; 13:27; 14:4; 17:9; etc.)”
(Connally, 255-256).

Consider their view of man. Although the
Islamic creed states, “Allah is one,” the Koran
says, “We created you from dust.” Then the
progression given is “then from a small life-
germin from a dot, then from a lump of flesh”
(Surah, 22:5). A footnote in the Koran says, “The
Muslims do not accept that man was created six
thousand years ago. The Imamiiyah accept the
tradition that Allah created thirty Adams before
our father Adam, and one Shi’ah Imam has gone
so far as to say that hundreds of thousands of
Adams were created before our Adam (RM). Nor
do the Muslims accept that our world is the only
world in this universe; one Imam is reported as
saying that in God’s universe there are twelve
thousand systems each bigger than our solar
system (RM)” (Muhammad, 186).

The weakness of Islam from this infinite-
simally small sampling shows it to be “a gospel
of a different kind” that is bringing trouble to the
whole world. Without question the Holy Bible
decrees Islam as standing accursed from God.
Muhammad never should have rejected the
counsel of God against himself as did the
Pharisees and lawyers of the Jews thereby
bringing upon him and his followers the

anathema of the living God (Luke 7:30).

Work Cited
Connally, Andrew M. (1981), “The Doctrines And Mili-
tancy Of Islam,” Some Modern Cults, Sects, Move-
ments, and World Religions, eds. Garland Elkins and
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fluence of the home upon the church.

The home will greatly influence the concept of God held by people in the church. The Bible often refers to God as Father (i.e., 2 Cor. 6:17-18). What do you think when you hear the term “father”? Your father? The concept of God as father is greatly enhanced by one’s positive experience of a good father in the home. Good and effective fathers form the basis for many instructive teachings about the Christian life. Good fathers are examples of the rationale for God’s discipline of His children (Heb. 12:5-10). If a father disciplines well, the child is trained to accept the discipline of the Lord. Good fathers illustrate God’s benevolence toward His children (Luke 11:11-13; 2 Cor. 12:7-10; Jam. 1:5). A good father is a model of God’s love, mercy, and forgiveness (Luke 15). Good fathers are very important to the formation of a meaningful concept of God.

Respect for authority is enjoined in the Bible. The Scriptures demand respect for Christ as head over the church (Col. 1:18-19); the utterance of God (Heb. 12:25); elders (Heb. 13:7, 17); the civil authority as ordained of God (Rom. 13:1ff; 1 Pet. 2:23ff); and husbands and parents (Eph. 5:22-23; 6:1). It is in the home that respect or lack of respect for authority is modeled and learned. Jesus learned respect for authority at home (Luke 2:51; cf., Heb. 5:8-9). If a child is not taught respect for his parents’ authority, he will not likely respect teachers, employers, and policemen. If he is not taught respect for his parents and others in authority, it is unlikely that he will cultivate respect for God, Christ, the Word, or elders of the church. The solution to the problems of crime in society and departures from God’s way in the church begin with Ephesians 6:1-3: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.”

Spiritual values are born at home and learned by a child from his parents: faith (2 Tim. 1:5); modesty (1 Tim. 2:9); sobriety (Tit. 2:4); holiness (Tit. 2:3); goodness (Tit. 2:5). Parents, will your children be faithful Christians? You are the major determining factor. Studies have shown that were both parents are faithful to the Lord, 93% of the kids remain faithful. If one of the parents is faithful, only 73% of the kids remain faithful. When the parents’ religion is limited to attending services, only 53% of the young people remain faithful. In cases in which both parents attend church only infrequently, 6% remain faithful.

Indeed, the home means much to the church. Instead of asking: “Why isn’t the church doing more to save my children?” we need to ask, “Why is my home not doing more to train them?” Three things are desperately needed. We need more fathers who are like God (Eph. 5:1). We need more parents willing to teach their children to obey them (Eph. 6:1). We need more parents devoted to God and high moral standards. If we can have these, surely the church will be stronger and more pleasing to God. Without them, it is highly unlikely that the church will be strong in the days to come.

Since the home is so crucial to the welfare of the church, great emphasis must be put upon teaching people to be the kinds of parents who will train children in the nurture and discipline of the Lord. We must teach parents how vital it is that they worship regularly. We must urge parents to be daily Bible readers and diligent students of the sacred writings. We must urge parents to be spiritual. But perhaps the most crucial thing is for parents to accept the fact that they, not the government, the school, the neighborhood, or the church, are ultimately responsible for the spiritual welfare of their children.
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Peggy Crowe, Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), John Pippin (Dot Lambert’s nephew), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Wanda Lewis (Linda Parker’s cousin), Jean White (Joyce Brantley’s sister), Nancy Brown (Diana Brazell’s sister), Jada Wright (Tony Hall’s friend), and Robert Colucci (Marilyn Hall’s great-great-nephew).

READING/INVITATION
December 12, 2001
Reading: Jim Loy
Invitation: Bill Cline
December 19, 2001
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Bill Crowe

MARK THESE DATES
December 16, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
December 16, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Peanut Butter and Jelly

SIN IS A BAD INVESTMENT
+ Adds to your troubles
- Subtracts from you energy
x Multiplies your difficulties
+ Divides your interest in your work

0 And its wage is death (Rom. 6:23)

Author Unknown
WE MUST BE “SET FOR THE DEFENSE”
Bob Patterson

In 1 Timothy 3:15 we have the church described as “the pillar and ground of the truth.” Sad to say, with some the pillar has become a pillow and they are fast asleep on the truth, and the ground has become ever shifting! Should such be characteristic of any member of the Lord’s church? If this kind of attitude and disposition does characterize any member of the Lord’s church, then there are several areas that would automatically become suspect.

The first area would be the truth itself! Obviously, to the person who has such little regard for the truth we would ask that they consider these questions:

1. What is truth (John 17:17)?
2. Can truth be known (John 8:32)?
3. Can one understand the truth (Eph. 3:3-5; Psa. 119:104)?
4. Is it enough to know the truth, or must one also obey the truth (Jam. 1:21-22)?
5. Must the truth be “rightly divided” (2 Tim. 2:15)?
6. Can one “err from the truth” (Jam. 5:19)?
7. Does truth teach us how to live proper lives that will glorify God (Tit. 2:11-14; 1 Cor. 6:19-20)?
8. Will God’s Word (the truth) be the standard of judgment for all men (John 12:48-50)?
9. Can we separate truth from salvation (Rom. 1:16; Jam. 1:21; 2 Cor. 4:3)?
10. Has not the church been charged with the responsibility of preaching and teaching the gospel (the truth) to all men (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; 2 Tim. 2:2)?
In the asking and answering of just these few questions, certainly we recognize the importance of the Word of God as it relates to all men.

The second area of concern would be the proper concern for souls. How thankful we should be concerning the fact that God “is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). The apostle Paul informs us that “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8), and that He would have “all men to be saved” (1 Tim. 2:4). Thus, as a member of the Lord’s church, one must possess a concern for the souls of men. Sometimes, I wonder just how many could state, along with the Psalmist, “I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul” (Psa. 142:4). Imagine the feeling of knowing that no one cared! Is that not what one is really conveying to a world that is lost when they have so little regard for God and the things of God? All of us should heed the instruction of 1 Timothy 4:16: “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

The third area of concern would be the false teacher. It is simply amazing that there are those who are completely unaware of the false teaching that is going on around them! Since many of them have not been diligent in their efforts, they have not grown spiritually (2 Pet. 1:5; 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18). Since they have not properly equipped themselves they are unaware of the dangers that are ever present, and sad to say, many are “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness” and are “deceived” (Eph. 4:14). In view of the charge to “earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 3), these are the ones who will generally criticize those who are preaching, teaching, and standing for the truth. Their criticisms are expressed like this: “Let’s be more positive and less negative”; “We need to be more loving”; “I don’t have any problem using any of the New Translations”; “Let’s just do our job here and nor worry about those who would change the church into a denomination”; “What’s really the big deal about Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage, instrumental music in worship?”; “After all, we don’t want to be known for being so uncooperative!”

Some seem never to have come across such passages as: Matthew 7:15-20; 15:1-14; Acts 20:29-30; Galatians 1:6-9; 3:1; Ephesians 5:11; Colossians 2:8; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 4:14; 1 John 4:1! It is not enough for one to simply “be aware of these passages,” but because one is aware of the ever present danger posed by the false teacher and his message, one should so prepare himself so that he is able to “reasoned with them out of the scriptures” (Acts 17:2) being ready always “to give an answer to every man” (1 Pet. 3:15) as we speak “the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15) knowing that we are to be “set for the defence of the gospel” (Phi. 1:17).

Let us remember that the church is “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15), and that the Lord’s people are charged with “preaching the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15), and for the Truth to be taught we must be set for the defence of the gospel!

Christianity is based on “standing on the promises,” rather than “sitting on the premises”!

LEAVES OF GOLD

REMEMBER—The value of time.
The Success of Perseverance.
The pleasure of working.
The dignity of simplicity.
The worth of character.
The power of kindness.
The influence of example.
AN ACHIEVEMENT, THOUGH NOT A MAJOR ONE

Tom Wacaster

A recent commercial showed a man pulling a bus with his teeth. A strap attached to the bumper was clinched in his mouth and used to pull a bus along a tarmac. Dad would have said this was “an achievement, though not a major one.” In fact, those words might very well describe a large number of folks with such “unusual” talents. There was one man who had a life’s ambition of setting the world record for spinning fifteen basketballs simultaneously. Or how about the one who could, and did, drive a nail into his nostrils as a human “peg board.” In the overall scope of things I do not think that spinning basketballs or driving nails into the skull would rate very high when it comes to significant achievements. What it comes down to is priorities. In Walt Disney’s “The Lion King,” the theme song has these words:

From the time we arrive on the planet,
And blinking step into the sun.
There is more to see than can ever be seen,
More to do than can ever be done.

None of us can ever hope to do everything, so we have to carefully choose what we will do. Too much of our time is taken up with bobbles and bells that may entertain for the moment but in the final analysis provide no lasting value. Hence, we are admonished by our Lord to “seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mat. 6:33). We admit that truth, but practical application sometimes is lacking. Undoubtedly we would acknowledge that a worthwhile and responsible work is to be preferred to getting into the Guinness World Book of Records. So, likewise we would admit the importance of a well ordered life over one of disorder and rebellion. Now consider this. Why is it that priorities come crashing to the earth when it comes to Christian responsibilities like prayer, study, and attendance? Why do otherwise responsible adults allow the insignificant things of life to crowd out their service to God? Is television really that much more important than an hour in Bible class with other Christians on Sunday morning? Is keeping company with guests more pressing than keeping our appointment at the Lord’s table? Is that ball game, or fishing trip more valuable, more lasting, more significant than visiting the sick, or helping the needy? Yet, when we allow those insignificant and temporal things to interfere with our Christian responsibilities we have misplaced our priorities. To be sure many of those things that get in the way of serving our God are important and significant when compared to other things that are temporal. But, when compared with eternity, much of what the world might consider a noble achievement simply does not measure up. It is only a matter of time until time will not matter.

When we stand before God, with time behind us and eternity staring us in the face, the only thing that will really matter will be whether or not we have obeyed the gospel and remained faithful to our calling. Those two factors will not only have been an achievement, they will have been major achievements.
SICK
Please remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Peggy Crowe, Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), John Pippin (Dot Lambert’s nephew), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Wanda Lewis (Linda Parker’s cousin), Jean White (Joyce Brantley’s sister), Nancy Brown (Diana Brazell’s sister), Jada Wright (Tony Hall’s friend), and Robert Colucci (Marilyn Hall’s great-great-nephew).

READING/INVITATION
December 19, 2001
Reading: Horace Myrick
Invitation: Bill Crowe

December 26, 2001
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Dale Cunningham

MARK THIS DATE
December 16, 2001–Visitation Group 3 assignment cards handed out.
December 16, 2001–Elders/Deacons’ meeting at 5:00 PM, in room 7.
December 16, 2001–Makeup date for photographs taken for the members’ directory board. Photos will be taken after the morning service.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Peanut Butter and Jelly

1 PETER 3:17
“For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.”
TWO THINGS

Josh Webster

“And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” (Deu. 6:5). “Love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul” (Jos. 22:5). “Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD” (Lev. 19:18). “Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Mat. 22:37-40).

Love the Lord with All Thy Heart. Not long ago I heard the story of a young man who loves to play golf. He entered a weekend benefit tournament. He did not realize that the tournament finals would be held on Sunday. He had a decision to make. Would he play out the tournament and miss the meeting of the church or forget about the tournament and go worship God. He won the tournament and got a really big trophy to remember it by.

Maybe golf would not be a temptation for you. Replace it with football, fishing, hunting, vacation, having company at home, or a sale at the mall. What would you do ... first in everything. Why? Because you love Him most. Allow your life to show your love. Let your outside reflect your inside.

Love Thy Neighbor as Thy Self. This is such a simple and important concept it would be hard
to believe that there are those who would not practice it. Treat others like you want to be treated. Simple, yet complex. One of the most prized and important aspects of our lives is our friends (neighbors). When we treat our neighbors like we want to be treated then we are treating them the way that Christ would have us treat them.

**COMFORT FOR TROUBLED HEARTS**

Mike Vestal

When our lives are falling apart and our hearts are writhing in pain, the thing we seek most is comfort. To much of the world the search for comfort in times of grief and pain is futile. It constitutes a never-ending exploration for that which does not exist. Our hurts are seen as something that can be lessened only by passing of time. But no amount of time can erase the scars that have been inflicted.

Children of God cannot subscribe to such a bleak outlook. The God we serve is the “God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to stand every storm in life that rages, for every battle that is fought, and for every heart that is wounded we may be assured that Jesus, the Stiller of storms, the Captain of our salvation and Physician for our souls will be there to help, encourage and console us (1 Pet. 5:7). Now, that is real comfort!

**Trust in Christ’s Promises**

Lying and half-truths are contrary to the very nature of God, so when God gives us a promise, we can know that it is sure (Heb. 6:18-19). When we are assailed by times of trouble, it is far too easy to allow our trust in the precious promises of God to waver. We may ask: “Why is all this happening to me?” Perhaps the question we should ask is not “Why?” but rather “What?” What promises has God provided for us in His Word? How can we better lay hold on them? Notice the explanation given by Peter in 2 Peter 1:3-4. He states that Jesus our Lord:

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: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

We should always remember: “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)” (Heb. 10:23). During times of struggle we must strive to remember the promises of God regarding
PSALM 134:1-3
Behold, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD, which by night stand in the house of the LORD. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD. The LORD that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.

comfort, help, consolation, peace, redemption, forgiveness, and heaven.

Trust in Christ’s Person
Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). He is the way that leads to the Father and a heavenly home. He is the embodiment of truth in a world full of cheap fiction. Jesus is the life in a world where death runs rampant.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:53-57).

No matter how bad our troubles and sorrows may become, we have comfort because we can trust in Jesus our Lord. The sense of comfort Jesus provides goes far beyond this world. The Psalmist expressed what our attitude should be when he penned, “In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul” (Psa. 94:19). Truly we can say, “This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me” (Psa. 119:50).

Conclusion
Where can we find help when we are hurting? That is the question of the ages! The Christian has the blessed assurance that God is constantly by our side to provide strength, hope, and encouragement (2 Cor. 1:3-4; Rom. 5:3-5). Our basis of comfort comes from trusting the Lord who not only knows what is best, but who will also do what is best!

I QUIT...MY FEELINGS GOT HURT

Every now and then somebody quits attending the services of the church because someone hurt their feelings. Remember, it was not God who hurt their feelings: “They” did. When you consider it all, it does not make any sense at all for someone to take it out on God when He had nothing to do with them getting their feelings hurt. Ask yourself these questions:
1. Did anyone spit on me? They did on Jesus.
2. Did anyone beat me on the back? They did Him.
3. Did anyone press a crown of thorns on my brow? They did His.
4. Did anyone hang me on a cross? They did Jesus.

They did all these things to Him and more. Yet He never quit because He came to pay the price for man’s salvation.

Anybody who lets anyone or anything cause them to forsake the Lord Jesus ought to hang his head in shame.

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb. 9:28).

Author Unknown
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Peggy Crowe, Ray Dodd, Madeline Graves, Dan Lamb (Tim Lamb’s father, under Hospice care), Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), John Pippin (Dot Lambert’s nephew), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Wanda Lewis (Linda Parker’s cousin), Jean White (Joyce Brantley’s sister), Nancy Brown (Diana Brazell’s sister), Jada Wright (Tony Hall’s friend), Diane Newell (Cliff Newell’s wife), and Robert Colucci (Marilyn Hall’s great-great-nephew).

READING/INVITATION
December 26, 2001
Reading: Shelby Nall
Invitation: Dale Cunningham
January 2, 2002
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Ray Dodd

PLACED MEMBERSHIP
Jessica Lanham has placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Her address is: 6701 Penton Street; Pensacola, FL 32506. Her telephone number is 456-8895.

RESTORED
Tim Lamb was restored in Christ on December 16. Please keep Tim in your prayers.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Peanut Butter and Jelly
SET FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE GOSPEL

Bob Patterson

When we turn to Romans 1:16, we see that Paul declared, “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.” Again, it was Paul who declared in Ephesians 6:12: “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.” And then he immediately describes the Christian’s armour (vv. 13-18), and points out “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (v. 17) is the weapon that the Christian is wielding as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2:3-4). Notice these points: (1) The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, (2) saints are engaged in a spiritual conflict, (3) to be a good soldier we utilize the proper armour and equipment.

With these thoughts in mind, let us also note that in Philippians 1:17 Paul tells us that he was “set for the defence of the gospel.” From prison, even from a jail cell, we see the Paul was able to fight in this regard! You see, the child of God never quits—no matter what! As we consider this particular verse, what are some of the things that we can learn from it?

We can learn:

• Paul understood the truth and was aware of how powerful the truth is in the battle for souls.
• Paul was aware that not every one had that same conviction.
• Because everyone did not have that same
conviction, he knew that the truth would then be attacked by some.

- Because truth would be attacked, he was aware that it was essential that someone stand in defence of truth.
- And Paul tells us that he was set to do that very thing.

What a marvelous example we have in the apostle Paul as one “set for the defence of the gospel.” Now the real question is: “Are you set for the defence of the gospel?”

HE PREACHED HIM INTO HELL

Franklin Camp

He was a member of the church. He said so when questioned about his religion. He was a member of the church but he could not be counted on to attend the services. He worked six days a week, and he had to visit sometimes, when could he go except on Sunday. He worked hard and needed some recreation, and Sunday was the only time he had for recreation.

He was a member of the church, but he just could not get to Bible study on Sunday morning. He needed the extra hour or two of sleep more than he needed to study the Bible. He attended the worship most of the time, and he felt that was enough.

He was a member of the church, but he never invited anyone. He said that he thought that was what the preacher was paid to do. If he was sick and no one visited him, it hurt his feelings. He complained of the church not visiting people.

He was a member of the church, but he never tried to teach anyone else. In fact, he did not know where to find the Great Commission. If someone asked him a question about the Bible he had to call the preacher to find the answer. The truth is he just did not like to talk with other people about the Bible.

He was a member of the church, but he died. I conducted the funeral. I said, “He was a member but he was careless in his attendance. He was a member of the church, but he did not think Bible study was important, and so he never came. He was a member of the church, but he never gave as he prospered. His funeral is being conducted in a building paid for by others. He was a member of the church, but he never visited the sick. He was a member of the church, but no one gathered here today has he taught the truth. He has now gone to judgment to meet his God, and all he can say to God is: ‘I was a member of the church.’ All that I can say about him is that he was a member of the church.”

While these are not the words that I used, it is the substance of what was said. The service was not find where the Bible said anything about mid-week Bible classes. He said he was tired on Wednesday night and needed the rest and requested people not to bother him by calling on him to invite him.

He was a member of the church, but gave very little of his money to the cause of the Lord. The church supported the preaching of the gospel, but not with his money. The church helped orphans and widows, but not with his money. After all, he owned a home, a new car, a television, and took a vacation each year and it took all of his money to live on.

He was a member of the church, but he never invited anyone. He said that he thought that was what the preacher was paid to do. If he was sick and no one visited him, it hurt his feelings. He complained of the church not visiting people.

He was a member of the church, but he never invited anyone else. In fact, he did not know where to find the Great Commission. If someone asked him a question about the Bible he had to call the preacher to find the answer. The truth is he just did not like to talk with other people about the Bible.

He was a member of the church, but he died. I conducted the funeral. I said, “He was a member but he was careless in his attendance. He was a member of the church, but he did not think Bible study was important, and so he never came. He was a member of the church, but he never gave as he prospered. His funeral is being conducted in a building paid for by others. He was a member of the church, but he never visited the sick. He was a member of the church, but no one gathered here today has he taught the truth. He has now gone to judgment to meet his God, and all he can say to God is: ‘I was a member of the church.’ All that I can say about him is that he was a member of the church.”

While these are not the words that I used, it is the substance of what was said. The service was
over, and as I stood at the door waiting for the men to take the casket and place it in the ambulance, I heard someone say, “He preached him straight into hell.” But I deny that I did so. All I did was to tell the truth about his life. All that he claimed while he lived was that he was a member of the church. Why should I insult his family and his friends and his body by saying he was more? I could not claim for a dead man what he refused to claim for himself while he lived.

This is not fiction—it happened.

Deceased

VOICE OF A SHUT-IN

Bob Spurlin

You probably do not know me, but I am a church member just like you. You see I am a “shut-in.” Every Christmas we are visited and presented with a fruit basket, in fact last year we were presented with four. As shut-ins we certainly appreciate the visits, good will, as well as the fruit baskets that are presented to us. However, beloved, there are twelve months in the year. Shut-ins have needs during the whole year and should not be neglected. We enjoy visits (usually short ones); cards, and letters as well as occasional phone calls.

Shut-ins are normally seasoned and mature. Christians who have given much during their earthly pilgrimage. Brethren as a whole have missed a rare opportunity in failing to tap into that valuable resource. They can offer much sage advice and counsel that would benefit the church. Shut-ins love the lost and care about the growth of the congregation where they are members. Keep them informed so they may feel they are a part of the on-going activities of the church.

God-fearing shut-ins are deeply concerned about the purity of the gospel and seeing that it is preached faithfully in the local congregation where they have devoted their lives. Faithful saints, who are shut-in, are deeply concerned that the church be vigilant in following the “old paths” without fail (Jer. 6:16). It is this writer’s judgment that without those who manifest such vigilance the Lord’s church would be much weaker than what it is currently.

Since shut-ins have been so valuable before, during, and after their confinement; we would all do well to remember them. Be cognizant of them in your daily prayers, communicate with them frequently with cards and visits, but most of all make them feel like they are a part of the local church and not an outsider. Why not resolve to change our attitude toward those who have given so much. It will be a blessing to them and you will receive far more than the value of the time and energy invested.

FORGET IT

Forget the slander you have heard,
Forget the hasty, unkind word;
Forget the quarrel and the cause,
Forget the whole affair, because
Forgetting is the only way.

Forget the storm of yesterday,
Forget the chap whose sour face
Forgets to smile in any place.

Forget you’re not a millionaire,
Forget the gray streaks in your hair.
Forget the coffee when it’s cold,
Forget to kick, forget to scold,
Forget the plumbers awful charge,
Forget the iceman’s bill is large;

Author Unknown
SICK
Please remember in your prayers: Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Ella Hammac, Marilyn Hall, Peggy Crowe, Ray Dodd, Madeline Graves, Linda Worley, Floy Dell Lindesmith, Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s brother-in-law), Buddy Bearden (Allen Brazell’s cousin), John Pippin (Dot Lambert’s nephew), Earl Gerean (Ray Foshee’s friend), Wanda Lewis (Linda Parker’s cousin), Jean White (Joyce Brantley’s sister), Nancy Brown (Diana Brazell’s sister), Jada Wright (Tony Hall’s friend), Diane Newell (Cliff Newell’s wife), and Robert Colucci (Marilyn Hall’s great-great-nephew).

SYMPATHY
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Tim Lamb and his family in the death of his father, Dan Lamb, on December 17, 2001. Please keep Tim and his family in your prayers.

RESTORED
Michael Wilkes was restored in Christ on December 23, 2001. Please keep him in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

READING/INVITATION
January 2, 2002
Reading: Richard Parker
Invitation: Ray Dodd
January 9, 2002
Reading: Joshua Wilkes
Invitation: Ray Foshee

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Peanut Butter and Jelly
“YE SHALL BE AS GODS”

Al Brown

When the serpent tempted Eve, he struck a responsive chord when he said, “Ye shall be as gods” (Gen. 3:5). Man has always aspired to be as deity, but such longings usually come from ulterior motives (as was true with Eve). Men want very much to declare their independence of God. Then they can indulge any fleshly desire without feeling they have to account for it. Men also revel in the fantasy that their wisdom is as good, or even superior, to God’s.

Many people may be surprised to learn that God wants His creature to be like Him. Our heavenly Father wants us to “become partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4). Paul informs us “we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3:18).

Of course, the way men would “be as God” when guided by their own wisdom is strikingly different from the way God would have us do it. We only have to observe the sorry state of society today to see how incompetent, foolish, and inferior man’s wisdom is compared to God’s. If anyone needed convincing that men are not as God, just a quick look around should do it.

The wisdom of men (the wisdom of the world) would have people practicing the “works of the flesh” (Gal. 5:19-21). This always results in indescribable misery, chaos, heartache, physical and mental suffering, as well as alienation from one another and from God. Such folly only emphasizes how finite and imperfect man’s wisdom is.

One who yearns to “be as God” according to the divine guidelines quickly learns that basic to achieving such a goal is his willingness to “put...
on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). This means he is born again (John 3:3-5; 1 Pet. 1:23; Tit. 3:4-6) by baptism into Christ’s death (Rom. 6:3-5). The old man is killed out, and he becomes a new man in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 3:1-15). He no longer thinks and acts as worldly people do. He has been transformed by the renewing of his mind (Rom. 12:2).

Now, his primary goal is to put on those qualities (traits) which characterized Christ as He walked among men (Eph. 4:13). He receives, with meekness, the Word of God in his heart (Jam. 1:21). This Word, which is given by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13; 1 The. 2:13; 1 Cor. 2:6-14), informs him of things to avoid, the way God wants him to go, and the qualities to include in his life (2 Tim. 3:16ff). The Holy Spirit teaches him to display the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22ff) in his life. A glance at the “fruit of the Spirit” Paul describes is nothing less than the traits of Christ’s character.

The more successful he is in following God’s directions (given in His Word), the more like his Lord he becomes. Some of those Christ-like qualities are love, joy, peace with God and his fellow man, contentment, purpose, zest for living, and a hope for something far better than this life can offer. He really does “become as God.” He has the same mind Christ does (Phi. 2:5), so he is humble and meek as Jesus was (Mat. 11:28-30). He is guided by God’s wisdom revealed in the Word of God.

We are all very much involved in the affairs of this life. Some seem so necessary—even worthy of taking precedence over other things that also need to be done. But are these things, which may seem so vital at the moment, on the same level of importance as the nourishment of our immortal souls? At the final judgment, which of these will seem more important—the trifling things of this world or our spiritual development into the image of the One who created us (Col. 3:10)?

Surely, if we are guided by the wisdom of God (revealed in the Scriptures), it is not difficult to see what should be of first priority in our lives. We should be adamant that nothing will be allowed to interfere with our growth into the likeness of our Master.

Deceased

A SOUL WINNER FOR JESUS

Charles Box

There is a need for those who will be “soul winners for Jesus.” “But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest” (Mat. 9:36-38). Our prayer should be that the Lord will send laborers into His harvest and that we can be one of them.

A soul winner for Jesus will tell others about God. God is the all wise, all powerful, and present everywhere Creator of the universe. The world needs to honor and respect Him. “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Gen. 1:27).

A soul winner for Jesus will tell others about man’s sin problem. There is something terribly wrong in our world. People rape, rob, steal, and kill. They curse, drink, murder, and molest. Man has a sin problem. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

A soul winner for Jesus will tell others about God’s cure for sin. God gave His Son on
the cross to redeem us. He suffered and died to save us from sin. “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (Heb. 2:9).

A soul winner for Jesus will tell others about eternity. Those who are saved by the blood of Jesus will be with God in eternity. “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 The. 4:17). The Christian’s hope it to be with God forever.

A soul winner for Jesus will tell others about God’s plan of salvation. Eternity will be spent with God only if one believes in Jesus (John 8:24); is willing to repent (Acts 2:38); confess Jesus before men (Mat. 22:16); and be baptized into Christ (Acts 22:16) just as the New Testament teaches. At the end of a faithful Christian life is an eternal reward in heaven (1 Cor. 4:17-5:1).

**“GOT TIME? –God”**

*David Sproule*

Can you name the books of the Bible? Can you list the twelve sons of Jacob? Can you recite the fifteen judges? Can you recount the name of the original twelve apostles? Have you ever tried to memorize the genealogy of Christ? Can you quote Psalm 23, Psalm 1, Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Acts 2:28, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 or any other Bible passage? This is not a test of your ability to memorize but of something even greater.

How do your answers to the above questions compare (or contrast) with your answers to the following questions?

Can you name all the NFL teams, all the NBA teams, or all the MLB teams? Can you connect any actor with Kevin Bacon in six steps or less? Can you list all of the Survivors, or all of the actors on Days of Our Lives, ER, Law & Order, Friends, or The Andy Griffith Show? Can you recite the Pledge of Allegiance? Can you quote the words of our national anthem or the typical Miranda read to an arrested person?

What is the reason that to this second set of questions we may have answered “yes” more than we did to the first set of questions? Someone may be asking: “Why should I have to memorize all of the judges, or all of the apostles, or all of the books of the Bible?” No one ever said that you have to memorize those things! Think about it again. How is it that we can list the teams, the actors, and words to pledges, songs, etc.? Have we actually sat down with the intent of memorizing these things? Not at all! We know these things for one reason: time. We are interested in these things and thus have given loads of our time to simply watching, reading, and enjoying them.

If we gave as much time to reading and enjoying the Bible as we sometimes do to secular entertainment, would not the names of the books, names of the judges, names of the apostles, and all Scripture in general become second nature, just as the names of teams and actors! You know they would! It is not that we have to memorize these things! It is that we get to read, study, and enjoy the Word of God! If we have the interest, we will find the time!

2 TIMOTHY 2:15

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”
SICK
Please remember in your prayers:
Elaine Maxey, Jean Flesher, Ella Hammac,
Marilyn Hall, Peggy Crowe, Madeline
Graves, Linda Worley, Floy Dell
Lindensmith, Donald Clark (Ray Foshee’s
brother-in-law), Buddy Bearden (Allen
Brazell’s cousin), John Pippin (Dot
Lambert’s nephew), Earl Gerean (Ray
Foshee’s friend), Wanda Lewis (Linda
Parker’s cousin), Jean White (Joyce
Brantley’s sister), Nancy Brown (Diana
Brazell’s sister), Jada Wright (Tony Hall’s
friend), and Robert Colucci (Marilyn
Hall’s great-great-nephew).

BAPTIZED
Sarah Lollar
was baptized into Christ
on December 30, 2001. Please keep Sarah
in your prayers and offer encouragement.
Her address is 7606 Harvey Street;
Pensacola, FL 32506. The telephone
number is 455-7938.

READING/INVITATION
January 9, 2002
Reading: Joshua Wilkes
Invitation: Ray Foshee
January 16, 2002
Reading: Jim Williams
Invitation: Louis Herrington

MARK THESE DATES
January 6, 2002–Visitation Group 1
assignment cards handed out.
January 13, 2002–Visitation Group 2
assignment cards handed out.

PANTRY ITEM NEEDED
Peanut Butter and Jelly

“YE SHALL BE
AS GODS”
Al Brown
When the serpent tempted Eve, he struck
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as deity, but such longings usually come from
ulterior motives (as was true with Eve). Men
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