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Prepare Thy Heart to Serve God

Bruce Stulting

Ezra is a very unique book in that we see one man's resolution to serve the Lord. In chapter 7 verse 10 we read: “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.” In this text, Ezra made four resolutions: (1) Prepare his heart; (2) seek the Law of the Lord; (3) to do it; (4) and to teach it to others.

These resolutions were not insignificant, nor easy to be accomplished. Ezra had to take time to learn what the will of the Lord was. This took great effort on his part. He then applied what he had learned to himself. This required great determination and self control. He further taught what he learned to others. This showed great love, both for God and others: Ezra's resolutions took him away from his home in Babylon, however, he trusted in the will of God and depended upon Him for help. We can see from the life of Ezra that it is often difficult to keep true resolutions, but with determination, willpower, and God's help, it is possible.

The key to Ezra's success is seen in the fact that he first "prepared his heart." The writer of Proverbs exhorts, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; For out of it are the issues of life" (4:23). Of course we must realize that the heart here spoken of is the mind. Thus, the mind must be prepared to receive God's Word. Following will be some suggestions on ways to prepare our heart to serve God.

We are told in Philippians 2:5: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." From the context it is obvious that Paul does not refer to intellectual activity alone, but also to the attitude, spirit, or disposition which was in Christ. Concerning this disposition, Paul stated in Romans 8:9: "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

The mind of Christ is humble. Jesus stated in Matthew 11:29 that He was "lowly in heart." Paul exhorted in Philippians 2:3: "in lowliness..."
of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." Paul stated in 2 Corinthians 4:5: "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." We all need to develop this trait.

The mind of Christ is obedient. Our Lord said in John 4:34: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish his work." Also, John 6:38: Jesus said: "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." Paul reminds us, "For even Christ pleased not himself" (Rom. 15:3). 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). By complete surrender and obedience to the Lord we will be saved (Heb. 5:9).

The mind of Christ is characterized by selfless love. The apostle John reminds us in 1 John 3:16: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." We are to love God and others with a selfless love (Mat. 22:37, 39). We are not to seek our own good. Our loyalty is to be to God and His ways.

The mind of Christ is characterized by prayer. According to Luke 6:12, Jesus was a man of prayer and upon one occasion He prayed all night. Concerning Jesus, Hebrews 5:7 states: "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." If He who knew no sin needed such to pray, how much more ought we who sin.

The mind of the Lord is forgiving: our Lord did not condone, ignore, or disguise sin. He came to forgive sin (Mark 2:1-11). He received sinners (Luke 15:2). He so loved sinners that "he hath made him to be sin for us" (2 Cor. 5:21) and "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6). The sacrifice of Christ makes salvation possible for all who obey Him. We are taught to forgive one another even as Christ forgives us (Mat. 6:15).

To have "the mind of Christ" in us is not impossible, but is a reachable state of life in Christ. When He comes again, how many of us will be found with the mind of Christ?" Our prayer is that we will all set our affection of things above and "prepare our hearts to serve the Lord."

### Giving As We Have Been Prospered

**Ken Chumbley**

In writing to the Corinthian brethren, Paul wrote:

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

God commands a Christian to give "as God hath prospered him." However, there are brethren that will acknowledge that they are to give and give regularly, in accordance with God's command, but yet they fail to give as they have been prospered.

Some have set an arbitrary figure, for example $50.00 a week. That figure was set years ago and although their income has increased, they still...
give the same amount even though inflation has eaten away at the value of that amount. Others will give sufficiently to be sure that the church has enough money to "pay its bills." Some receive extra income but do not include this in determining the amount that they give; they still give the same amount that they always give. How does one determine what they should give, by gross income or net income (before or after taxes), by what they have left after they have paid their own bills?

Brethren, is God pleased when we ignore His command to give as we have been prospered? Is God pleased when we give the same amount week in and week out without regard to how we have been prospered? Is God pleased when our standard of giving is to give simply to ensure that the churches bills are paid? The budget of the church is set to see how much we need to pay our necessary bills but if our giving is limited to that, what do we give for the furtherance of the Gospel and to meet legitimate benevolent needs? Is God pleased when we receive addition income but leave our contribution at the same level even though we have been additionally prospered? Is God pleased when we determine what we give after we have taken care of what we consider our necessary expenses rather than giving off the top as we have been prospered?

Surely, we can recognize that God is not pleased when we treat the matter of giving to the Lord's work in this way. Ananias and Sapphira thought that they could get away without giving as they had been (Acts 5:1-11). They found out, to their cost, that God was not pleased! We also note that as a result of God's judgment on these two both the church and all that heard were overcome with "great fear" (5:11). Christians today need to have some of this "great fear" when they fail to give to the Lord's work as they have been prospered.

Will the work of the Lord continue as it should if we do not give as we have been prospered? Will the work of the Lord grow if we fail to give as we have been prospered? Remember, the contribution that we give is not simply to be used to "pay the bills" but is to be used to preach the Gospel and to provide benevolence to those who need it.
Sick

Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher    Ella Hammac
Marge Williams        Horace Myrick
Cary Parks            Dot Lambert
Charles Williams      Bill & Peggy Crowe
Marilyn Hall          Pam Busch
Nellie Read           Ray Dodd
Nancy Travis
Mary Cunningham (Asbury Place)
Rubye Bailey (Carpenter's Creek)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer's brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Karen Diamond's nephew)
Serena Beaver (Michael & Karen Hatcher's friend)
Hallie Busch (Bill & Pam Busch' granddaughter)
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette Born's grandson)

Restored

Tony Blount and Karen Winters were restored to Christ on January 2. Please keep them in your prayers.

Wednesday Bible Reading

January 5
Dale Cunningham

Please Remember

Every Sunday
Ladies' Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

January 9
Deacons' meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.
What Shall I Say?

Wayne Coats

When Israel encountered Ai in battle, because of the sin of Achan, Israel was defeated. Joshua lamented, “O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies?” (Jos. 7:8). To capitulate before the enemies of truth is fraught with grave consequences. No less serious and deleterious to the cause of Christ is the spirit of compromise and support given to false teachers in our brotherhood.

When men pervert the Truth of God, they are false teachers and should not be encouraged or supported. Just how much error will God tolerate? The case of Ananias and Sapphira will be the answer (Acts 5:1). When Jehoshaphat “joined affinity with Ahab,” Jehoshaphat asked:

And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, “Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord” (2 Chr. 19:2).

There were some “good things found in” Jehoshaphat (19:3). Those good traits did not cover the bad. The worst perverter of divine truth in our brotherhood has a few good things in his life. The church at Pergamos tolerated those who taught error. God never approves of such compromisers. His verdict: “Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth” (Rev. 2:16). God hates false doctrine. John wrote:

If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds (2 John 10-11).

Some of my closest friends have turned aside and have become teachers of error. Can I support them with my contributions? May I lend them support and encouragement by sitting and listening to their heresy? Why can preachers change to purveyors of error, but I dare not change my pew
place? Godspeed does not seem to be understood by many.

Remember the way of Cain, the error of Balaam, and the gainsaying of Korah (Jude 11)? Those fellows were a sorry lot, but there were those who “had gone in” and “ran after” them God said, “Woe unto them.”

The faithful must make tough decisions. With all of the change and circus atmosphere that is being brought into the congregations along with the abandoning of the Bible in the pulpits, what can we do?

Suggestions by faithful sheep to hireling shepherds go for nought, and a word fitly spoken to the pulpit performer is like a fleeting sigh. Often the older members have toiled, sacrificed, prayed, and persisted for decades to sow the seed of the kingdom in their community. A faithful work develops and then a young, good-looking divine with all the credentials of a denominational pastor (except the clerical robe) is hired to palaver some mush. We who are older and imbued with a spirit of loyalty to God's Word shed tears of remorse. What in heaven's name can we do on earth?

I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God (3 John 9-11).

How can a brother or sister support a man like Diotrephes and “follow not that which is evil”? How can we bid Godspeed to a false teacher? But you say, “I've been a member of this congregation all my life.” That is another article in which we are seriously challenged to consider whether we are converted to a congregation or to Christ, whether we are bound to a building or bound as the bride to Christ. Do we observe Christ as our Passover, or do we just sit on some padded pew?

At 85 Caleb requested a mountain with its difficulties and challenges, but many today think the mountain is too high; it is so simple just to sit silently. “What shall I say when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies?” Never a word!

Masculine Pronouns for God Removed!

Jimmie Z. Gribble

The Scottish Episcopal Church, after some serious discussions:

unveiled a new service in which all masculine pronouns have been replaced with a gender-neutral variety, while the “trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost” is now “Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier” (http://www.womensrights.change.org.)

There is at least, one reason for this change. According to the same article:

to refer to God as male will always make it difficult for women to achieve full equality, even in a progressive denomination like this one.

Continuing in the next paragraph:

God has been painted with a beard for cen-
turies because when churches referred to him in male terms, they meant that he is male. This also came in handy for excluding women from church hierarchy.

Some, when announcing changes will refer to a process of “much study, prayer and discussion.” No doubt thinking that this justifies their changes. Nothing justifies changes that are not God ordained. If these discussions were centered upon the Word of God, rather than pleasing men, God’s Word would be upheld and followed.

In the sight of God, man and woman, in Christ are equal. Paul wrote, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). Christ died for all. John wrote, “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). And, again, “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2).

Though, in Christ, we are all one, we still retain our gender. And, no matter how many discussions there may be, there is still the gender difference in some of what God has for His children.

For instance, no matter how many discussions might be had, God still has placed men in the overseer position. Paul wrote:

“This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach (1 Tim. 3:1-2).

The Psalmist penned, “For ever, O LORD, Thy word is settled in heaven” (Psa. 119:89). The word settled means, to station, to appoint, to erect, to take a stand. Abraham’s servant stationed himself beside the well to find a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24:13); Jacob set up a stone pillar (35:14, 20); the people stood up when Moses went out to the tent to meet God (Exo. 33:8); God established the boundaries for Israel (The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament). God’s Word is erected in heaven; no man has the right to change what God has already erected.

“My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it” (Luke 8:21). May all of us “hear” and “do” God’s Word.

The Preacher Hasn’t Called Lately!

Well be thankful, and count your blessings. If he hasn’t called, it means that death has not struck—that no serious illnesses have laid low members of your family—that the surgeon’s knife has not threatened you—that you have no serious family problems to solve—that you are not a spiritual delinquent.

As a rule, preachers have little time for social calls. They would enjoy making them as much as you would enjoy having them, but there are simply not enough hours in a day.

Be sure of this—you preachers is willing to come at any hour of the day or night that you call him for help!

Author Unknown
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher    Ella Hammac
Marge Williams        Horace Myrick
Cary Parks            Dot Lambert
Charles Williams      Bill & Peggy Crowe
Marilyn Hall          Pam Busch
Nellie Read           Ray Dodd
Nancy Travis          Ray Dodd
Mary Cunningham (Asbury Place)
Rubye Bailey (Carpenter's Creek)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer's brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Karen Diamond's nephew)
Serena Beaver (Michael & Karen Hatcher's friend)
Hallie Busch (Bill & Pam Busch' granddaughter)
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette Born's grandson)

**Wednesday Bible Reading**

**January 12**
Ray Foshee

Please Remember

**Every Sunday**
Ladies' Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

**January 16**
Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

**January 17**
Visitation Group 3 will meet at 6:00 pm.
Eleven Inches Equals One Foot

Donald R. Fox

From 1987 until 1992 I was employed as a counselor for the State of Mississippi, Region Three Chemical Dependence Program. An interesting period of my life! Part of my duties was to conduct group-counseling sessions. I remember one such session very well. I was teaching/leading the group in the discussion of Step Four of the 12-Step Program, “Make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”

Some of the clients did not understand what moral meant. After giving a definition of the word moral, the group started to ask questions concerning a principle that pertains to right and wrong. Pursuing this line of discussion I made the point that there are fixed standards of right and wrong. A few of the men challenged me on this affirmation.

With chalk and blackboard I illustrated a 12-inch ruler. I stated, “Have we not been taught, and is it not true that one foot has twelve inches in it, according to Tables of Weights and Measures?” All answered, “Yes.” I continued, “What if you wanted to build a house. You selected a building contractor and a blueprint with all measurements and specifications on it. Both you and your contractor sign a contract to build per the specifications of the blueprint. You were scheduled to take a trip away from home for six months. Your contractor assured you that your house would be completed when you came home per your building contract.”

Continuing with the illustration I stated, “You come home and your house is built, however, it looks smaller than you expected. You start to measure the rooms, the outside, and sure enough, it does not meet the specifications. You confront the contractor and ask him, concerning the breach of contract and blueprint.” Your contractor states, “All my life I decided that one foot has eleven inches in
it, and that's the way it will be.” “What do you do?” I asked. One of the men responded, “Well, if he thought eleven inches equals one foot, he has that right.” Oh boy, aren't some people strange?

You know friends; there are many folks like that one man in this world. They see no standards, no principles, no right or wrong, no nothing. Now isn't that sad and it is more widespread than you think! Stinking thinking prevails in all walks of life, from the very powerful to the most common of people.

I will stand by fixed standards, principles that will bring about God-given peace, stability and rationality. We must all remember that God hates false standards of right and wrong. “A false balance is abomination to the Lord: But a just weight is his delight” (Pro. 11:1). “A just weight and balance are the Lord’s: All the weights of the bag are his work” (16:11).

Wicked sinners and the unjust have always sought after disorder and calamity. “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; That put darkness for light, and light for darkness; That put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isa. 5:20) “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

349 McComb Ave; Saltillo, MS 38866

The Prosperity Gospel

Charles Pogue

Were it not so sad for both themselves, and those who follow them, the message of the typical televangelist would be almost comical. Televangelists have a few common errors which seem to always form the content of what they say. Eschatological (end time) speculation, and the pray-this-prayer for salvation error, are common with virtually every program.

Many of today’s popular charlatan T.V. preachers “preach” what has been labeled, “The Prosperity Gospel.” False teachers such as Benny (the soon to be divorced) Hinn, Rod Parsley, Kenneth Copeland, and husband and wife team Marcus and Joni Lamb of the Daystar Network, are some of the more notorious proponents of this prevalent falsehood.

Sometimes called health and wealth, name it and claim it, or as someone else has more appropriately labeled it, “blab it and grab it,” the basic idea is that “If you send money to us, God will send more back to you than you can even count.” These people have a track record of taking every single verse they use out of its context, not to mention putting God in a position of encouraging people to seek that which His Word says to desire is fraught with spiritual danger.

Isaiah 53:5 is misinterpreted to mean that physical healing is a blessing of the cross, when the prophet is actually referring to spiritual (e.g. 1 Pet. 2:24), not physical, healing. If this were true, why would Christians ever be sick or die? The position actually impugns the power of the blood of Christ!

One of the favorite verses of the prosperity gospel advocates is Malachi 3:10. It reads, Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be meat in mine house, And prove me now herewith,
saith the Lord of hosts, If I will not open you the windows of heaven, And pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

To begin with, this passage is written specifically to Judah, who has been stingy with God, and offered polluted offerings to the Lord. This passage is not a universal principle to all people. In the second place, tithes are part of the old law, not the new one. If the prosperity preachers are going to claim the blessing of Malachi 3:10, they need to be offering animal sacrifices of the best of their flocks. But that would put them in the position of rejecting the sacrifice of Christ. What tangled webs men weave!

Preachers of the prosperity gospel seldom find a usage of the word seed in the Bible that they do not like. Their message is, “send me a donation, and you have planted a seed that will produce at some later date an abundant crop of cash for you.” These men are encouraging people to do what Paul warns against. “But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition” (1 Tim. 6:9). The prosperity gospel is both error and a scam, taught by those who’s greed for gain makes them identical to the description given by the apostle Peter stated in 2 Peter 2:3: “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.” On July 7, 2008, the New York Times, reported that no less than six televangelists were under scrutiny by the U.S. Senate for financial wrong doing. Leading the way was Kenneth Copeland, who was accused of humanitarian aid fraud while his ministry supplied him a mansion which the Times described as “large as a hotel,” a $20-million-dollar Cessna Citation jet, and a private airport to land it on.

The feet of these men, and women too, by the way, must be kept to the fire for two reasons: they are frauds with no qualms about cheating primarily the poor out of their money while they wallow in wealth. Additionally, when these shysters do preach anything other than their materialistic and utopian message of “make your own heaven on earth,” their messages about salvation are as erroneous as 2+2=7. Like the mainstream denominations, they teach salvation by the doctrine of faith alone. They deny the efficacy of baptism or that it is the crowning act required of one to be cleansed from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ (Mat. 26:28; Acts 22:16; Heb. 9:12; 10:22).

We live in a materialistic society crowded with faux-religious people who like other secular humanists, seek their ultimate happiness in the here and now. The prosperity gospel dispensers are there to scratch their itching ears. They reinforce the love of money with their brand of error. The majority of their followers will be disappointed in this life, because the promise of wealth is a mere confidence scheme. They will be further disappointed when they stand before God in judgment, because they have been fed a lie about how one is saved. The reality is, whether in this world, or the world to come, the prosperity gospel is not really so prosperous after all!
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  
Marge Williams  
Cary Parks  
Charles Williams  
Marilyn Hall  
Nellie Read  
Mary Cunningham (Asbury Place)  
Rubye Bailey (Carpenter's Creek)  
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer's brother)  
Gabriel Stewart (Karen Diamond's nephew)  
Serena Beaver (Michael & Karen Hatcher's friend)  
Hallie Busch (Bill & Pam Busch's granddaughter)  
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette Born's grandson)

Wednesday Bible Reading
January 19
Andrew Hatcher

Please Remember
Every Sunday
Ladies' Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

January 24
Visitation Group 4 will meet at 6:00 pm.

January 26
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
“For Sale”  
Ken Chumbley

We often see signs that proudly announce “house for sale.” Recently I have noticed that one local realtor uses signs that read “home for sale.” I hope that the sign means that a “house” is for sale and not a “home”! When one thinks about a house, one usually has reference to the physical structure, but when one thinks about a home he usually has reference to those who reside there making up the home. Indeed, a part of the definition for home, as given in Merriam-Webster’s dictionary, is, “the social unit formed by a family living together.”

Sadly, though, it seems that in more and more of our society today, the home is up for sale. What should be “a family living together” is so easily broken up, since divorce is so readily available for about any and every reason and, indeed, no reason at all. It is one thing to tear down a house, and sometimes houses need tearing down as they have reached the point where they are no longer fit for human habitation. However, to tear down a home is a totally different proposition. Sadly, too many children are growing up in a situation where the home has been broken and they are not living together in a family unit with the mother and father that bore them. The tragedy of broken homes is all around us. Ask those who teach the children in school. When children come from broken homes they are more likely to have difficulties in school as well as becoming discipline problems. Ask those who are involved in law enforcement, the majority of young people that get involved in criminal activity come from broken homes.

As Christians we should do all that we can to uphold the teaching of God’s Word concerning home and family. We should seek to set the right kind of example in our relationships that our homes may remain intact and
that our children can have the opportunity to be raised in a home that is not broken, and that they may desire to have such for themselves. We need, also, to do all that we can to help those who are the victims of broken homes so the trauma of the broken home may be overcome, that they might have happy and successful lives and be able to build good strong homes in the future.

For some time when traveling Interstate 20 to Atlanta, there was a sign that stated, “Church Building For Sale” near Conyers, GA. That surprised me! Not because a church building was up for sale, but for the fact that someone had got it right! It was the physical structure that was up for sale, not the congregation, the religious group, that had met in that building. Too many, even among our brethren, refer to the physical structure in which the church meets as being the church. The Bible clearly teaches that the church is the people and not the building in which the church meets. We read in the Scriptures of churches meeting in the homes of brethren, in school buildings (the school of Tyrannus, for instance).

However, we do find instances where it seems that the church is up for sale. Too many brethren are willing it seems, to sell out the church of the Lord. Some want to bring in innovations that are not authorized by the Bible, others who want to bind where the Lord has not bound. Then there are others in their desire to fellowship those that God has stated are not to be fellowshipped, unrepentant false teachers, and in so-doing have sold out the Lord’s church.

Brethren, the Lord’s church is not for sale. We need to be always willing to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3) at whatever cost. We need to labor so our children and our children’s children will be able to know and love and be members of the Lord’s body, the church that He purchased with His blood (Acts 20:28).

Brethren, our homes should not be up for sale and neither should the church of our Lord!

535 Belvedere Clearwater Rd
Belvedere, SC 29841

“Fellowship and Speaking on Lectureship Programs”: A Look Back
Johnny Oxendine

Back in 2007 I wrote a lectureship manuscript that included the title topic. I am including some excerpts (and additions) and hope that they are both instructive and interesting:

What are some questions one must ask before deciding to accept a lectureship invitation? First, we must determine if the invitation comes from brethren who are sound in the faith themselves: faithful brethren. This means that we have done (or are to do) our due diligence to ascertain the degree to which a congregation (or those in charge of the lectureship) teach and practice the truth. Though
not always an easy exercise, it is essential for any speaker to find out whether brethren who are inviting him (assuming he does not know them) are sound and faithful brethren. When Paul sent Timothy to Corinth, he did so with the specific mention of his faithfulness (1 Cor. 4:17). Paul mentions the requirement of faithfulness in other epistles (Col. 4; 1 Cor. 4), and it is a specifically mentioned characteristic that the Lord Himself expected of congregations (Rev. 3).

What if those issuing the invitation are not faithful, or have been in support of error? Can I participate in the lectures and “rebuke” or “reprove” these brethren? There really are two questions here. One is whether one should go to those in error to expose the error that the hosts are adhering to, and the other question is whether one can go to such a meeting, knowing the error of those holding it, and say nothing about the error that they uphold. Again we should consult the Ephesian 5:11 passage: “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them,” which is clear in every way to the questions. One will have to make a biblical decision (judgment) as to whether his going will allow the opportunity for reproof. This passage (and 2 John 9-11) makes it impossible to go to such an event only to speak on “your topic.” Some brethren might simply thank the congregation for the invitation, or express gratitude to the elders for the “outstanding” work they are doing, but that would be to violate “he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works.”

If a faithful Christian allows his good name to be associated with false teachers and false doctrine it is difficult to see how this will not ultimately create a dilution of his influence. It would certainly cloud the issues of right and wrong. How would one know that there was such distinction, and not just one big happy (Joel Osteen?) brotherhood? This has happened frequently on college campuses when brethren take those “opportunities” to speak at places that will also invite the likes of Lucado, the unity brethren, or worse. One well-known “church” school went so far as to have a renowned promoter of homosexual marriage speak on their campus. What faithful Gospel preacher would fill the same stage and not understand how the minds of those in attendance will not make any clear differentiation?

Speaking on questionable lectureships (with people from Sunset, Abilene, or Pepperdine) can now be seen as a key indicator of whether one will compromise or defend the Gospel. Men who will uphold the truth of the Gospel will seek information beforehand if they are not familiar with the congregation or groups inviting them, and elders certainly have a responsibility to know the men who are invited to speak on their congregation’s lectureships. We do owe the Lord that much, if we are to contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 3).
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Nellie Read
Marge Williams  Nancy Travis
Cary Parks  Ella Hammac
Charles Williams  Dot Lambert
Marilyn Hall  Ray Dodd
Mary Cunningham (Asbury Place)
Rubye Bailey (Carpenter's Creek)
Horace Myrick (Sacred Heart Hospital)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Karen Diamond’s nephew)
Serena Beaver (Michael & Karen Hatcher’s friend)
Steve Potter (Pam Busch’s cousin)
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette Born’s grandson)

Wednesday Bible Reading
January 26
Jim Loy

Please Remember
Every Sunday
Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

February 7
Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.

February 13
Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.
"That Ye May Know”  
David P. Brown

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God (1 John 5:13).

Confidence (John 5:14) and assurance (1 John 3:19) are products of the above verse. They are the birthright of the faithful (Heb. 12:14-16). Radiating from confidence and assurance is hope. It means:

favorable and confident expectation. It has to do with the unseen future, Rom. 8:24,25. Hope (a) the happy anticipation of good (the most frequent significance) e.g., Titus 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:21; (b) the ground upon which hope is based, Acts 16:19; Col. 1:27, “Christ in you the hope of glory;” (c) the object upon which the hope is fixed, e.g., I Tim. 1:1 (W. E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, p. 232).

We may conclude that if one cannot know his salvation, it is then impossible to have confidence, assurance, and thereby hope. Without these we are no better off than the alien sinner (Eph. 2:12).

How sad when men are so self-willed, contentious and hard-hearted that they will deny the simple and plain teaching of 1 John 5:13. Assuredly it is pride and willful ignorance gone to seed! But, as if denying these spiritual blessings were not enough, some must publicly teach contrary to 1 John 5:13. Lamentably, they must be marked for the false teachers they are (2 The. 3:14-16).

We understand better why some are always troubled, perplexed, and distraught. They are sure of nothing and trust not the promises of Christ. Such is nothing less than refusing to take Christ at His Word. It is disbelief!

Assuredly, the “eternal life” of 1 John 5:13
for the earthly pilgrim is in promise. It is yet to be and it is conditional (Rev. 2:10), but we have no more evidence what will be than we do of that which has been. It all rests on the truthfulness of Christ's Word. We know our alien sins are forgiven by the same evidence that gives us knowledge pertaining to our eternal inheritance (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21; 1 John 1:7; 2:3-5, 29; 3:19-21; 5:11-14; 2 Tim. 1:12; 1 Cor. 15:58). How then is it possible to know the one and not the other? We might as well declare that one cannot know he is lost as to teach that one cannot know he is saved! The evidence for knowing either one comes from the same divine standard—the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3-11). To all the doubters, we say with James and Peter:

Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.… Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator (Jam. 1:21; 1 Pet. 4:19).

With these sentiments in mind, we can, with confidence, sing:

I know that my Redeemer lives, and ever prays for me; I know eternal life He gives, From sin and sorrow free.
I know that unto sinful men His saving grace is nigh; I know that he will come again to take me home on high.

Any Christian(?) singing the preceding song and at the same time declaring that we cannot know we are saved, is not aware of his inconsistency, is hypocritical, or mentally unstable. In any case, the Lord's Word has little or no effect on his thinking.

A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself (Tit. 3:10-11).

25403 Lancewood Dr; Spring, TX 77373

Now Is the Time

Brad Green

Though many have heard and have uttered the adage, “there’s no time like the present,” there is no time that is more neglected than the “now.” The Bible teaches that we should be redeemers of time (Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5). Time cannot be placed on “lay-away” and does not offer “rain checks.” If time is to be used, it must be used as it happens. Each moment that passes is one of history that can never be redeemed or used again. It is this fact
that should urge us to be excited about right now. Now is the time.

**Now Is the Time for Action, Not Complacency**

And it shall come to pass at that time, That I will search Jerusalem with candles, And punish the men that are settled on their lees: That say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil (Zep. 1:12).

Those who settle “on their lees” are they who have become satisfied and comfortable with their current condition though there is work left undone. The “lees” are the dregs or refuse of freshly squeezed grape juice. If the lees are left, the juice will ruin. The dregs are to be filtered out. Many today stop working or “sit on their hands,” once they arrive at a comfortable place. They know and teach that God requires us to labor in His vineyard, but by their inaction, their heart is exposed as being far from God. There is much work in the Lord’s Kingdom for us to do. “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men” (Col. 3:23).

**Now Is the Time to Prepare for Eternity**

“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation’ (2 Cor. 6:2).

**Now Is the Time to Reach the Lost**

Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest (John 4:35).

**Now Is the Time to Strive to Recover Those Souls Who Have Fallen Away**

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 5:4-5).

God is longsuffering (1 Pet. 3:20) and has blessed us with today. We must follow God’s pattern to retrieve those who have left the faith now, while we have time, so they can return to God and be saved in the end.

**Now Is the Time to Strengthen Our Relationships with Faithful Brethren in Christ**

Fellowship is important and we should cherish the time we spend together. The more time we spend with each other, the stronger the relationships will become. It can be easy to fall into complacency in regard to fellowship. While developing strong relationships with some brethren in the congregation, other relationships are slighted or never even developed. This must not be. “So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Rom. 12:5). We must strive to ensure that all members know one another, care for one another, and know that each cares for the other.

**Now Is the Time Because Now Is All We Have Been Promised**

Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away (Jam. 4:14).

Let us redeem the time with which we have been blessed and be as productive as we can in service to the Lord.

129 Lane Rd; Lenoir City, TN 37772
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Nancy Travis
Marge Williams  Ella Hammac
Charles Williams  Dot Lambert
Marilyn Hall  Ray Dodd
Nellie Read  Horace Myrick
Mary Cunningham (Asbury Place)
Ruby Bailey (Carpenter's Creek)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer's brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Karen Diamond's nephew)
Serena Beaver (Michael & Karen Hatcher's friend)
Steve Potter (Pam Busch' cousin)
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette Born's grandson)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson's brother/sister-in-laws)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson's friend)

Wednesday Bible Reading
February 2
Ray Pierce

Please Remember
Every Sunday
Ladies' Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
February 7
Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.
February 13
Deacons' meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.
How Can It Be Possible?

Franklin Camp

For a person to be saved before baptism since Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). Peter told the Pentecostians to “Repent, and be baptized…for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). He also said, “baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God” (1 Pet. 3:21).

For there to be nothing in a name or one name as good as another when Acts 4:12 says, “there is none other name…whereby we must be saved.”

For one church to be as good as another when the Lord has a church (Mat. 16:18).

For one to be saved out of the Lord’s church since He bought it with His blood (Acts 20:28).

For there to be more than one church as the Bible says, the church is the body (Eph. 1:23) and there is but one body (1 Cor. 12:20).

For one to be saved by faith only when James teaches that we are justified by works and not by faith only (Jam. 2:24).

For sprinkling to be baptism when Paul says we are buried with Him in baptism (Rom. 6:3-4).

To observe the Lord's Supper on Thursday night when Acts 20:7 says that the church at Troas came together on the first day of the week to break bread.

For a Christian not to fall from grace when the Bible warns against the danger of falling (1 Cor. 10:12), and even speaks of some who had fallen (Gal. 5:4).

For snake handlers to quote Mark 16:18 for handling snakes and not have services to drink poison as the very next thing referred to in the same verse mentions drinking poison.

For one to be a Christian and not be interested in saving the lost.

For a Christian to be interested in saving...
the lost and never try to teach them or talk to them about the Bible.

For a Christian to be in earnest about going to Heaven and fail to come to Bible study on Sunday morning.

For one to be a faithful Christian and miss the Wednesday night Bible study to watch television.

For a person to love the Lord more than relatives when they will miss services to visit relatives or stay away from services because relatives come to visit them (Mat. 10:37).

For a Christian to make $100.00 a week and give the Lord $1.00 and it be liberal giving (2 Cor. 8:2).

For a Christian to wait until the collection is being taken and run his hand in his pocket and give whatever he may find and purpose to give as 2 Corinthians 9:7 says to do.

For a Christian to be giving as the Bible teaches and then complain because the preacher preaches on it.

For a Christian to have the spirit of Christ who attends the congregation in their community and then because the elders do not see fit to follow every suggestion to give their money in other places.

I have been looking for a long time to find the answers to these questions. If you have the answers to these questions will you please give them to me in order to put my mind at ease about these people. Most of the people mentioned above think they are going to Heaven so surely they must have the answers. I would like to see all of these go to Heaven but from where I sit I can only ask, “How can it be possible?”

Peter and Paul

Daniel Denham

It is not uncommon in periods of digression to hear some justify their beliefs and/or actions upon the premise that some prominent brother holds to and/or endorses through fellowship a particular belief and/or practice that is wrong. This form of defense was made quite frequently on behalf of Missionary Societies and the mechanical instruments of music by their exponents. It was used by Premillennialists in the 1920s and 1930s in support of their infidelic positions. They reason that if brother “A” who is prominent and well respected endorses a view or practice “B,” then brother “C” has authority to hold to or utilize “B.”

The problem with this argument is that the truth of anything does not inhere in the attitude of mortal beings. Truth is objective and therefore originates from outside the minds of mere men. Truth emanates from God, Who is True. This lesson is no more forcefully demonstrated than in Galatians 2:11-13, where Paul records how he “withstood” even a fellow apostle, Peter, “to the face, because he was to be blamed.” Peter’s hypocrisy in the case was not justifiable, on the subjective basis that he was prominent and well respected by others. He was still in opposition to Acts 10:34-35 all the same! Paul rebuked Peter “to the face” despite the latter’s esteemed position in the eyes of many.

Deceased

607 72nd St; Newport News, VA 23605
Why Some People Quit

Dub McClish

Ever since the church began, some who obeyed the Gospel, thus being added by the Lord to the church, have failed to remain faithful. I am sure that there are some reasons with which I am not familiar. However, I have heard several in the years I have been preaching the Gospel. In hopes that these might prevent someone from dropping out, I want to discuss a few of them.

Because of Guilt

When one knows he is not living as Christ teaches us to live during the week, he should feel guilty and ashamed when he comes into his Bible class or into the worship assembly. His guilt and shame leave him with two choices: He can confess and repent of his sin, or he can continue in it. One who continues in sin will not long remain faithful in attendance where his sin is going to be preached and taught against. Such a person will feel increasingly out of place and will eventually quit. Of course, “quitting the church,” thus losing one’s soul, is a high price to pay because “I do not like someone.”

Because They Dislike Someone

In the Congregation

It may be the preacher, an elder, a teacher—it is usually someone in a leadership role. We all have enough faults to be unlikable to someone else (e.g., I do not like the behavior of those who quit because they do not like someone). Guess what? You do not have to like every member of the church to be a faithful Christian. God must dislike even the best of us often, but He still loves us and seeks the best for us. Likewise, we can dislike and irritate one another at times, as long as we still love one another enough to seek the good of each other. “Quitting the church,” thus losing one’s soul, is a high price to pay because “I do not like someone.”

Because “There Are Too Many Hypocrites” In the Church

I suppose all Christians (including preachers and elders) have been hypocrites (at least, inconsistent) at times. Even the best find it impossible to live flawlessly the message we preach, and sometimes we fail. The one who charges, “There are too many hypocrites,” is himself hypocritical once in a while. I do not defend hypocrisy, but which is worse, to continue to faithfully assemble and work with other imperfect saints, knowing that one’s own life is not perfect, or to drop out and not even make an effort? Besides, the presence of one or a hundred hypocrites has nothing to do with my relationship to God unless I let it. Do you come to the assembly to judge your brethren or to worship God?

Many other reasons for quitting are observable, but they all stem from letting selfish pride get out of hand. When selfishness drops out, the quitter will drop back in.
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Ella Hammac
Marge Williams  Dot Lambert
Charles Williams  Ray Dodd
Marilyn Hall  Horace Myrick
Nellie Read  Joyce Brantley
Nancy Travis
Mary Cunningham (Asbury Place)
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Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette Born's grandson)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson's brother/sister-in-laws)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson's friend)
Desirea McLeod (Paul & Phyllis Brantley's great-granddaughter)

Wednesday Bible Reading
February 9
Fred Stancliff

Please Remember
February 13
Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.
February 14
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.
The Tragedy of Living in a Lost Condition

Bobby Duncan

In warning the lost of the tragedy of dying in a lost condition, perhaps we have left the impression that death is the only thing a lost person has to fear. Let us not overlook the tragedy of living in a lost condition. If you are lost, you may live to a ripe old age and good health and prosperity may be yours while you are doing so. In your old age you might possibly obey the Gospel, and then die a faithful Christian, and go home to heaven.

Sound good? You had better take another look at it. There are some things you have overlooked.

By living in a lost condition, you will be leading others to be lost. A lady told me once that she knew what to do to be a Christian but she did not have the heart to do it. Her children had grown up without the proper teaching and were all out in the world and lost. A little girl I know asked her mother if a person had to be baptized to go to heaven.

Then she asked: “Has Daddy been baptized?”

When told he had not, she thought for a moment and then said resolutely, “Then I’m never going to be baptized.”

In practically every congregation you find faithful Christians who would give all they own for the opportunity of going back and getting an earlier start—one that would give them back their children to train them in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord.” These people can tell you about the tragedy of living in a lost condition.

By living in a lost condition you will be lending your influence to the cause of Satan in his fight against God. If you are not on the Lord’s side you are on the Devil’s side, whether you like it or not (Mat. 12:30; 6:24). You may consider yourself a pretty good fellow, but you are right now fighting against God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the church.

You have taken your stand on the side of evil
against all that is good.

If you should live in a lost condition, you will live a life less abundant than God intended for you. In John 10:10, Jesus said: “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” This more abundant life involves a happier life here upon this earth, as well as life hereafter. One of the biggest lies the Devil ever told is that the sinner is happier than the Christian.

Some have the idea that they want to live a little, and then obey the Gospel, as if obedience to God brings an end to all happiness. Nothing could be further from the truth. A person who serves God out of deep and abiding faith in the Bible is the happiest person in the world. He is happy because he is kept cleansed of sins through the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7). Therefore he has hope beyond the grave and is not afraid to die. He is happy because God hears his prayers and answers them (Mat. 7:7-11). He is happy because he has the assurance that all things work together for his good (Rom. 8:28). Those who are lost are living in fear of death, without God to hear his prayers, and with no assurance that God will overrule to their benefit anything that happens.

By living lost you will harden your heart (Heb. 3:7-8, 12; 1 Tim. 4:2). Each time you reject heaven’s invitation your heart becomes a little more hardened against God and His will. As time goes by you will reach the point that the preaching of the Gospel has no appeal at all to you. It is a known fact that each time one says no to a proposition, it becomes easier to say no the next time. Every Gospel preacher has had the experience of seeing some who were so tenderhearted they would weep during the sermons and invitation song, but would not obey the Gospel. As time passed they would become hardened so that no thought would ever be given the matter, and no sermon or song could touch their hearts.

These are some of the tragedies of living in a lost condition. One final one is this: If you live lost, you will probably die lost. If you know what God expects of you and you decide to wait a few months or years before obeying Him, your chances of ever being a Christian are very slim. Some do finally obey the Gospel after hearing it all their lives. But these are exceptions to the rule.

If I knew I would die tonight I would certainly want to be in a saved condition. But if I knew I would live a thousand years on this earth, I would not want to live a single minute in a lost condition.

Deceased

Perpetual Virginity?

Bruce Stulting

According to Matthew 1:18-21, the birth of Jesus was the result of a supernatural union between the Holy Spirit and Mary. She was a virgin at the time that she conceived and gave birth. There are some (such as the Roman Catholics) who maintain that Mary remained a virgin throughout her life. If this were true, then Jesus would have been an only child. However, the Bible teaches that Jesus did have brothers and sisters.
We find the first evidence that Mary did not remain a virgin in the first chapter of Matthew. When Joseph found that Mary was with child, he determined to secretly divorce her. He had not had sexual relations with her and knew that the child was not his. But an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him that Mary’s pregnancy was the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 1:24-25, we read:

Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bid- den him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

From this Scripture we can determine that Joseph did not have sexual relations with Mary until after the birth of Jesus. This passage thus refutes the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary.

Furthermore, the Bible teaches that Joseph and Mary had other children who were the brothers and sisters of Jesus. When Jesus was in Nazareth the people of His home town became indignant at His claims and said in Mark 6:3: “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.” Who were these brothers and sisters of Jesus? There are only two possibilities. They were either children born to Mary and Joseph after Jesus, and therefore His younger brothers and sisters, or children of Joseph from a previous marriage.

The reason some believe that these were not children of Joseph and Mary is due to the way they are designated. Jesus is called the “Son of Mary” and is distinguished separately from the brothers and sisters. However, in Acts 1:14 we read that “Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren” were included with those gathered in the upper room. Here they are called his brothers not her sons. This evidence shows that they were blood kin and not the children of Joseph from a previous marriage the existence of which is impossible to prove. Also, there are two different words in the Greek language to distinguish between brothers and cousins. It is unlikely that the Holy Spirit would have used a word that would be ambiguous when so much was at stake.

Let a Man Examine Himself
1 Corinthians 11:28

When we examine others, we justify self—but when we examine self, we are more disposed to justify others. Let a man—

Examine his company (Psa. 1; Pro. 13:20).
Fowl of a feather flock together.
Examine his habits (1 John 2:15).
Examine his thoughts (Psa. 10:4). “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Pro. 23:7).
Examine his affections (Col. 3:2). “To be carnally minded is death” (Rom. 8:6).
Examine his motives (1 Cor. 10:31). Are they acting for self or God? (Col. 3:17).

Author Unknown
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Ella Hammac
Marge Williams  Dot Lambert
Charles Williams  Ray Dodd
Marilyn Hall  Horace Myrick
Nellie Read  Joyce Brantley
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Mary Cunningham (Asbury Place)
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Steve Potter (Pam Busch’s cousin)
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette Born’s grandson)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother/sister-in-laws)
Susan Diz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Desirea McLeod (Paul & Phyllis Brantley’s great-granddaughter)

Wednesday Bible Reading
February 16
Orville Worley

Please Remember
February 20
Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
February 21
Visitation Group 3 will meet at 6:00 pm.
Driving down the highway or street, one is apt to see the above sign. Such announces a supposed discovery. Just what it is, is not described, but left to one’s imagination. The bumper sticker does not tell where or when it was found. Well, there are some things children of God have found. They can tell you where such was found. In fact, they can tell you where you can find it.

If it Refers to Baptism, “I Found It.”

Let me tell you where. Take a Bible and turn over to the page that records Mark 16:16. There you will find it. The Lord will find it. The Lord put it right there. He put it between faith and salvation. He did not put it after salvation, but before. Now that is where you can find it. But while we are at it, turn over to Acts 2:38. You will find baptism right after repentance and before the remission of sins. Now, you will not find it after the remission of sins. It just does not fit there. That is, not in God’s divine arrangement. One has no trouble finding it, if he is looking for baptism.

If it Refers to the Church, “I Found It.”

Notice that I did not say, “them.” I cannot find churches all of a different sort that are it. Jesus talked of building it in Matthew 16:18. When I read that verse I can see it in the intention of Christ. Acts 2:47 sets forth the fact that the saved are added to it. Paul discusses such in Ephesians 5:23-27. Herein we learn that Christ is the head of it. Christ is the savior of it. Christ gave Himself for it. He has a plan by which those in it are washed. He will have it to be a glorious church, without spot, wrinkle, or any such thing. Paul must have wanted men to find it for he gave information to describe it. Now a question is in order. Can you find the church you are a member of in the Bible? How hard would it be for you to find it? Is it described? If it is of human origin and arrangement you could not find it.
If You Speak of the Plan of Salvation, "I Found It."

Notice that we refer to the plan, and not an experience. Acts 16:17 speaks of Paul and Silas as servants of God who show the way of salvation. There is then a way to be saved. Not all ways save. But Paul and Silas were preaching the Gospel. Is there a way to be saved outside the Gospel? Notice that Jesus commissioned the apostles to go preach the Gospel (Mark 16:15). The one who believed the thing preached and was baptized was to be saved. That was and is still the plan of the Lord to be saved. It has not changed since Acts 2. Everywhere you find saved people after that you find them saved in that way. Is that what men have found: Is that it? I can find this one that is revealed in the Bible. Is there another one? Yes, there are some things of which I can say "I found it" in the Bible. If you cannot find it there, it is not worth having?

Deceased

Where Should Our Minds Be When We Come to Worship the Lord? And After

Johnny Oxendine

Imagine what it must have looked like! What wrath, vengeance, and zeal He displayed. Our Lord Jesus strode into the temple. There in the Court of the Gentiles lay an open market. The market was filled with men exchanging foreign currency for Galilean shekels for Jewish pilgrims to pay the Temple tribute and other men selling animals for sacrifice. Jesus made a whip of small cords, and, in righteous indignation, drove before Him the market mob. Out of the temple He chased the men, sheep, and oxen. He poured out the money of the changers and toppled the tables. As Jesus cleansed the sacred place of worship, He cried out, "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise" (John 2:13-17)!

We have to understand that Jesus did not drive the moneychangers and merchants from the temple for doing business, but for doing

I Would See Thee
See Psalm 63:1-5

H.L. Gradowith

Truly, Thou art the God of this weary heart, I would see Thee, O Lord, and never depart! My soul thirsteth in this dry and weary land... And ever longeth at last with 'Thee to stand!' I would see Thee, my Lord, in a better way, In Thy beauty and power come Judgment Day; In the blessed reunion with Him Whose blood From Calvary came forth in a saving flood! Much better than life are Thy Mercies, O Lord! The Wondrous Salvation revealed in the Word! I will praise Thee, O Lord, as long as I live, What more could a mortal to Thy Glory give? Truly Thou art the God of this weary heart, I would see Thee, O Lord, and never depart! I will praise Thee, O Lord, as long as I live, What more could a mortal to Thy Glory give?

171 Radford Cir; Dothan, AL 36301
business in the temple. There was a proper place for business and a proper place for worshipping God. Merchandising was proper in the market, but profane in the temple! Jesus declared that the temple was His Father’s house (2:16; Luke 19:46). For this reason, He cleaned house! Today, God no longer has an earthly building known as His temple. Christ replaced the physical temple with a spiritual one, His church. Christians are “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).

It is sad to say, but there are many religious people (and maybe even some brethren) who have never learned the lesson of Jesus cleaning His Father’s house. Today, in many places, church buildings are cluttered with the tables and merchandise of the world as the politicians, businessmen, and entertainers ply their goods.

Just as there was nothing wrong with the merchants engaging in business in the day of Christ, there is nothing wrong with politics, business, entertainment, recreation, or social activities today. Yet, the church is not the proper organization to provide or support such activities, but many are adding these activities in order to make the church more relevant. The spiritual temple of the Lord is to “offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God.”

Jesus set forth the mission of His church: 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 (Matt. 28:19-20).

The mission of the church is far too important, far too urgent, far too holy to profane with the distractions of this world.

What if our Lord returned today with a scourge of cords in His hand? What wrath, what vengeance, what compelling zeal would move Him. Into the midst of the churches He would stride, turning over the wares of the social merchants, driving out the bingo nights, the volleyballs nets, the guitars, the basketball courts, and the aerobics gyms.

He might also remind us that the church should not be a place where all we think of is how to exploit our brethren for business opportunities. This is a well-documented method in the business world: make friends at the local church and then sell them your wares.

In righteous indignation Jesus would clean house and cry out: “Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise!”

PO Box 5026, San Mateo, CA 94402

Defender and Beacon Available Via E-Mail
To receive the Defender and Beacon via e-mail please send your e-mail address to bellviewcoc@gmail.com. The file you will receive will be an Adobe Acrobat PDF (a free reader is available from www.adobe.com).
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Ella Hammac
Marge Williams  Dot Lambert
Charles Williams  Ray Dodd
Marilyn Hall  Horace Myrick
Nellie Read  Joyce Brantley
Nancy Travis
Mary Cunningham (Asbury Place)
Ruby Bailey (Carpenter's Creek)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer's brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Karen Diamond's nephew)
Serena Beaver (Michael & Karen Hatcher's friend)
Steve Potter (Pam Busch's cousin)
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette Born's grandson)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson's brother/sister-in-laws)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson's friend)
Desirea McLeod (Paul & Phyllis Brantley's great-granddaughter)

Placed Membership
Robbie Cravey placed membership with the Bellview congregation on February 20. Her address is: 6982 Pine Forest Road, Apt. 130; Pensacola, FL 32526.

Please Remember
February 28
Visitation Group 4 will meet at 6:00 pm.
Flexible Christianity

Ken Chumbley

Recently, I received a bulletin that had an article under the above title. At the beginning of the article, the writer gives a quote from Daniel Sommer, a Gospel preacher at the time of the apostasy that led to the formation of the Christian Church/Disciples of Christ, recognized by the United States government a hundred years ago in the census of 1906. Sommer lived through the period when the false teachings regarding instrumental music and the missionary society were hotly debated. In 1897, he analyzed the pressures of the previous twenty years that led to the schism. He concluded that one of the contributing factors was personality differences he saw between disciples and disciples. He wrote:

I saw there was a difference between disciples and disciples. It became evident that some disciples were of the primitive or apostolic type, while others were of a modern or plastic type. Those constituting the former class I saw had stability, while those constituting the latter class had flexibility. The former disciples held that the world should bend to the church; the latter disciples held that the church should bend to the world (Matthew C. Morrison, Like a Lion, Daniel Sommer’s Seventy Years of Preaching, p. 19).

The writer of the article I received stated, “There are still those who believe that the church should bend to the world.” He illustrates this by pointing to the recent debate in the Episcopal Church in the United States regarding the appointing of homosexuals as bishops within that denomination. He points out that such appointments are “nothing less than the acceptance of homosexuality as an alternative lifestyle” and points out that the acceptance of homosexuality is nothing more than a compromise with the world,
and a “Christianity that bends with the world around it.” That such is a compromise with the world is true, however, that the Episcopal Church represents Christianity, I have a problem with, unless one uses the term Christianity in its widest application with respect to the Episcopal Church.

However, when one examines the Lord’s Church in 2006—one hundred years after the recognition by the government of the apostasy that formed the Christian Church/Disciples of Christ, it is clear that the description given by Daniel Summer between disciples (Christians) is still in existence. Sadly, we have “modern or plastic” Christians today that have this flexibility who are no longer satisfied with a “Thus saith the Lord.” Some desire fellowship with the denominations and as a result, have rejected some of the teaching of Christ to have such a fellowship. However, there is a more dangerous group than that who, although they reject fellowship with the denominations and still hold to many of the truths of the Scripture are willing to be flexible when it comes to the matter of fellowshipping unrepentant false teachers in our midst. In some instances this is occurring because they desire to receive support for their projects and programs and, to gain sufficient support, they will fellowship those who are not in fellowship with the Lord.

Brethren, we cannot be more plastic or more flexible than the Lord in His Word gives us liberty to be. We must uphold the truth of God’s Word and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather rebuke them (Eph. 5:11). Let us be known as disciples (Christians) who are of the “primitive and apostolic type” and not those who would be known as “modern and plastic” as they desire to be flexible and bend to the world or false teachers.

535 Belvedere Clearwater Rd
Belvedere, SC 29841

Withdrawing from the Withdrawn

Don W. Tarbet

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

These passages show that the church has an active responsibility in the matter of discipline, and must take a stand for truth and
Wonderful Storehouse

Frank L. Cox

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat (Heb. 5:12).

The New Testament contains a wonderful store of information and is arranged as to give information to all. It is food for the soul. It contains milk for babes and strong meat for those more advanced in the Christian life. No other book so completely fits the needs of humanity. When we obey the Gospel—the primary commands—we are babes in Christ and naturally need “the sincere milk of the word,” but we should not be babes always. We should grow up “into him”—the likeness of the Lord—and eventually become strong enough to digest stronger food. This growth cannot take place in a day or a year, but by diligent application and careful study over time. There is no reason why we should not become strong workers in the vineyard of the Lord.

God’s Plan of Salvation

Hear................................................................................................................... Romans 10:17
Believe.............................................................................................................. Mark 16:16
Repent ............................................................................................................. Luke 13: 3, 5
Confess ........................................................................................................... Romans 10:9-10
Baptism ........................................................................................................... Acts 2:38
Be Faithful ........................................................................................................ 1 Corinthians 15:58

fellowship. Our responsibility is not merely passive. Apostates from the faith seldom become such for no reason at all, but are actively engaged in the ways of the world. “Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world” (2 Tim. 4:10). Those who forsake the Lord in worship have usually already forsaken Him in living. Does this mean the church can do nothing to discipline wayward members if they have already ceased to worship with the saints? Just where do people get the idea that fellowship is limited to the worship “service”? They must think so, if they think they are to withdraw only from those who attend worship. Actually, we do not forbid anyone to attend worship when they are disciplined, but we encourage them to attend so as to be exhorted to Christian living. A withdrawal of fellowship simply means that Christians are to do nothing with those withdrawn from that would indicate any approval of their wayward conduct, and this would primarily be outside of the worship service. Any effort to reject God’s Will in discipline is an effort to follow the way of least resistance. We need to forget our fears and human reasoning and start obeying God.

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Desirea McLeod (Paul & Phyllis Brantley's great-granddaughter)

New Arrival
Our congratulations are extended to Bill and Peggy Crowe in the birth of their great-grandson, Daniel Jacob Crowe. He was born on February 24. Daniel weighed 8 pounds 10 ounces and was 21 1/2 inches long.

Wednesday Bible Reading
March 2 — Henry Born

Please Remember
March 7
Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.
The Church Must Be Kept Militant!

Foy E. Wallace

This spirit of pacificism is taking the fight out of the church. But conflict between truth and error is unending. Victory does not come by truce. God’s terms are unconditional surrender. A questionnaire and survey, to determine what kind of writing and preaching a brotherhood wants, bear on the face of them a total lack of knowledge of the spirit and genius of the Gospel, or else a gross disregard for it on the part of the promoters. To receive such a thing is an insult to a Gospel preacher and its circulation in the name of Gospel preaching and writing is a travesty on the spirit of Christ, Peter and John, Stephen and Paul.

The church grew when the fight was waged and the battles raged. When the let-up came in the fight, the let-down came in the church. It is said that the denominations do not fight any more. That is because the church has quit fighting and they have nothing to fight. If Gospel preachers will fight now as Gospel preachers fought then, the denominations will fight now as they fought then and truth will triumph now as it triumphed then. Shall we yield to the line of least resistance, or shall we challenge error in its strongholds?

Such veterans as B. C. Goodpasture and Foy E. Wallace, Jr., each who served in perilous times as editors of the Gospel Advocate, met the foe unflinchingly—we enjoy such blessings as the church affords today because of such soldiers. Basking in the sunlight of Alexander Campbell, David Lipscomb, R. L. Whiteside, C. R. Nichol, et al, buoys us and commands our generation to reach the heights of responsibility in our time even as those veterans, now gone to their reward, met the foe.

Time marches on—men must step forward in dutifulness. Error affecting the church the past Century has been on isolated issues or...
questions that could not erase the non-denominational character of the church—only pose local difficulties, at worst, split congregations mercilessly in publication of unbelief so negating our influence on the world. Error facing today’s church is of such magnitude that if it is not met and defeated the entire church will be swallowed up in sectarianism. The issue is not a single one—liberalism will erode every distinctive quality that makes us the New Testament church of Christ and will give us the appearance of being just one more of an overcrowded world of denominations! Losing that distinctiveness disqualifies us for existence. If we are not the church we have no license to be.

God’s cause must neither be diminished nor destroyed by the dilatory spirit of weak men—strength must lay hold in confident action for we are the men of this generation, day, and hour. May we press forward as men of God attending sheep rather than lambs. “Ye shall henceforth return no more that way” (Deu. 17:16).

The Love of Money

Charles Pogue

1 Timothy 6:10 in the American Standard Version points out that money is the root of “all kinds of evil.” One would be hard pressed to think of any sin that has not at one time or another been committed, because there was monetary gain in it for the sinner. Murder has been done for hire, people have lied for money. People have been slandered for money, and all kinds of sexual immorality have been committed for money: on and on the list goes.

Paul goes on to write about the love of money that while some reached for it they were led astray from the faith. When money becomes the object, even if it is merely the need for it, it can, and often does, produce compromise. Men will endorse unsound and unscriptural works over the need for money. Men will extend fellowship to those they otherwise would not, when there is money involved.

When Judas went to the chief priests with the betrayal of Jesus as his mission, he asked a question that is repulsive in its bluntness and purpose. He asked, “What are ye willing to give me?” (Mat. 26:15). Before we begin to point to Judas, though, and his bargaining for thirty pieces of silver as the value he placed on the Lord, let us look to ourselves, and make very certain that we do not place a monetary value on the Truth God has revealed to us in the Scripture. “Buy the truth, and sell it not; Yes, wisdom, and instruction, and understanding” (Pro. 23:23). One should be willing to give anything for the Truth, and unwilling to take anything for it.

Those who love and reach for money, and are thereby led away from the faith, set themselves up for all kinds of trouble. Paul says

Correction

In last week’s Beacon the article titled “Withdrawning from the Withdrawn” should have been titled “Withdrawning from the Withdrawers.” We apologize for this oversight.
36th Bellview Lectures
June 11-15, 2011

Moral Issues We Face

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Principles for Making Moral Decisions Dub McClish
Homosexuality David Brown
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If you have a question send it to mhatcher@gmail.com

Open Forum Questions

PO Box 592; Granby, MO 64844
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher   Mary Cunningham
Marge Williams      Ella Hammac
Charles Williams   Dot Lambert
Marilyn Hall       Ray Dodd
Nellie Read       Horace Myrick
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Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson's friend)
Desirea McLeod (Paul & Phyllis Brantley's great-granddaughter)
Connie Kois (Ray Dodd's sister)
Joyce Tatro (Ray & Dot Dodd's friend)

Wednesday Bible Reading
March 9 — Elward Brantley

Please Remember
March 13
Deacons' meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.

March 14
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.
More Important Things in Life than Silver or Gold

Johnny Oxendine

Though this is a constant message in the Scriptures there are few people who are interested in actually hearing and accepting this as a fact. We might say that this is one of the most resisted messages in the Scriptures, along with denying self, taking up one's cross, and following Jesus. Even though the Lord said we cannot be His disciples if our focus is otherwise, the overall impression from some is that one can have it both ways (there just has to be a way).

As we attempt to convert people to the Lord, this has to be a primary lesson that they learn. One of the largest issues in the church today is the one where some are trying to have it both ways—a little bit of the world to go along with the Lord. There are young members dressing like the people they see on magazine covers (too revealing and immodest), there are those of us who still seem to think we can say anything using any language, and there are some of us who do not find lasciviousness a problem at all—but we still all want to go to heaven.

Heaven will not be accepting of those things, and that should be a good measure to use when we think of our involvement in those areas now. If what we do, say, think, how we dress, and such like, would not be something we could do in Heaven, why carry on with it now? Would God find it offensive for me to (figuratively) walk around on the streets of gold with my pants hanging down revealing my undergarments? Absolutely! And the real question would be, why I would want to walk around like that in the first place?

What does it say about me, and my respect for God if I look like (dress like) I am in a gang (and that is what I want others to think), or I am dressing like Lady Gag (I know her name!) with little to nothing on in an attempt to look sexy. Maybe I talk like one
of the guys on the shift, or laugh at dirty jokes on a company lunch break. There are more important things in life that trying to live like (look like, talk like) worldly people.

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you (2 Cor. 6:14-17—KJV).

These words are here for a reason: This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart; who being past feeling gave themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness (Eph. 4:17-19—ASV).

This is a daunting task today because we are seeing more and more members of the church turning their attention to other things. There is more interest now in unity (doctrine aside), there is more interest in tolerance (doctrine and sin aside), there is more interest in making sure people feel good about themselves (again, sin aside), and there is more interest in hoping people will forget about sins in the past, fellowshipping false teachers, and such like. The lesson we must carry forth is the lesson we received from the Lord—the Gospel, and it only.

PO Box 5026; San Mateo, CA 94402

Seven Walks of Ephesians

Walking denotes activity; more than that, it denotes continuous activity. In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, the figurative use of walking for living or carrying on our life, is employed seven times. How very important and impressive is the lesson.

Walking in disobedience: “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (2:1-2).

Walking worthily: “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (4:1-3).

Walking in vanity: “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind” (4:17).

Walking in love: “And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given
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Walking as children of light: “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light” (5:8).

Walking in wisdom: “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (5:15-16).

Author Unknown
Sick
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Marge Williams Ella Hammac
Charles Williams Dot Lambert
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Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Desirea McLeod (Paul & Phyllis Brantley’s great-granddaughter)
Connie Kois (Ray Dodd’s sister)

Wednesday Bible Reading
March 16 — Paul Brantley

Please Remember
Every Sunday
Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

March 20
Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

March 21
Visitation Group 3 will meet at 6:00 pm.
The Indestructible Book

J. Noel Merideth

The Holy Bible cannot be destroyed; it is the indestructible book. Jehoiakim in the Old Testament cut the roll of Jeremiah’s prophecy with a penknife and sent it to the flames, but it was written again and not destroyed. Jehoiakim died in disgrace and was given the burial of an animal—the Word of God lived on. In the fourth century A.D. Diocletian, the Roman Emperor attacked the Bible and sought to have all the copies of the Bible destroyed. Twenty years later another Roman Emperor, Constantine, sought to put the New Testament in all the churches. The Word of God lived on. Voltaire claimed that the Bible would be a forgotten book within one hundred years. Within less time than that the Geneva Bible Society was using his home as a basis from which it distributed millions of Bibles. Bob Ingersol an American agnostic once held a Bible high in his hand and boasted, “In fifteen years I will have this book in the morgue.” Within fifteen years Ingersol was in the morgue and the grave; but the Bible lives on.

The centuries come and go, but the Bible stands; empires rise and fall and are forgotten, but the Bible stands; unbelief abandons it, but the Bible stands; higher critics deny its inspiration, but the Bible shines; and, modernism tries to explain it away, but it stands. “For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven” (Psa. 119:89); “the word of our God shall stand for ever” (Isa. 40:8); “heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Mat. 24:35).

This century has seen the widespread influence of liberalism and modernism. Basically, liberalism and modernism is an effort to get away from the inspiration and authority of the Bible. The liberals often present themselves as humble and pious followers of the Bible, but in dealing with them you will soon
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find out that they are arrogant and haughty and rebel at following the Bible. They complain that others are being too harsh on them, and yet they slander faithful Gospel preachers every chance they get. They pretend to believe and teach the Bible, but they do not believe its statements or morals and try to raise doubts to undermine the confidence of their students. They always say they have been misunderstood, when in reality they have been unmasked. They claim to be religious but will not sacrifice for Christ nor help those who
Where Is the Punctuation?

The following articles were written by F. W. Emmons in 1873. As you read the articles, please note that each one is exactly the same, word for word, yet note how different the meaning set forth by differences in punctuation. Much in life depends on where we put the emphasis or punctuation.

The Good Man

“He is an old and experienced man. In vice and wickedness he is never found. Opposing the work of iniquity he takes delight. In the downfall of his neighbor he never rejoices. In the prosperity of any of his fellow creatures he is ready to assist. In destroying the peace of society he takes no pleasure. In serving the Lord he is uncommonly diligent. In sowing discord among his friends and acquaintances he takes no pride. In laboring to promote the cause of Christianity he has not been negligent. In endeavoring to stigmatize all public teachers he makes no exertions. To subdue his passions he strives hard. To build up Satan’s kingdom he lends no aid. To support the gospel among the heathen he contributes largely. To the evil adversary he pays no attention. To good advice he gives great heed. To the devil he will never go. To heaven he must go where he’ll receive the just recompense of his reward.”

The Evil Man

“He is an old and experienced man in vice and wickedness. He is never found opposing the work of iniquity. He takes delight in the downfall of his neighbor. He never rejoices in the prosperity of any of his fellow creatures. He is ready to assist in destroying the peace of society. He takes no pleasure in serving the Lord. He is uncommonly diligent in sowing discord among his friends and acquaintances. He takes no pride in laboring to promote the cause of Christianity. He has not been negligent in endeavoring to stigmatize all public teachers. He makes no exertions to subdue his passions. He strives hard to build up Satan’s kingdom. He lends no aid to support the gospel among the heathen. He contributes largely to the evil adversary. He pays no attention to good advice. He gives great heed to the devil. He will never go to heaven. He must go where he’ll receive the just recompense of his reward.”

How are you punctuating life?
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Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
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Connie Kois (Ray Dodd’s sister)

Wednesday Bible Reading
March 23 — Bill Busch

Please Remember
Every Sunday
Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
March 23
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
March 28
Visitation Group 4 will meet at 6:00 pm.
Do You Recall These Words?

Charles Pogue

Ezra Taft Benson, Secretary of Agriculture under Dwight D. Eisenhower, was asked to give Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev a guided tour of some of America’s agriculture facilities. Somewhere in the different discussions between the two men, Khrushchev made the following remarks: “You Americans are so gullible. No, you won’t accept Communism outright; but we’ll keep feeding you small doses of Socialism until you will finally wake up and find that you already have Communism. We won’t have to fight you; we’ll so weaken your economy, until you fall like overripe fruit into our hands.” The Soviet Union officially fell on Christmas day of 1991 when Mikhail Gorbachev resigned as president of the USSR. However, by this time, much of what Khrushchev had said to Secretary Benson had already come true. We live in an America today that is for lack of a better term “post America.” That is, our nation has in many ways abandoned the system of government of, by, and for the people the framers of the Constitution handed down to us for the Socialism and Communism Khrushchev predicted. It is undeniable that the left in this nation (in this writer’s humble opinion far more populous than many are willing to admit), are socialist communist sympathizers. Many have surrendered the political philosophy of Washington and Madison for that of Marx and Lenin. This includes many in the highest reaches of our government. One does not have to be a card carrying member of the Communist Part U.S.A. to be a communist. He just has to be one in philosophy. If it waddles and quacks like a duck, it is a duck, or as Andy Taylor once remarked to his son Opie, “You can change the name of a rose, but you can’t do nothing about the smell.”

However, Khrushchev only had it partially right in the quote given above. It has not
been only the gradual acceptance of a socialist economy that has brought us to the brink of a fundamental transformation by those who disdain traditional America. The greatest contributor to our problems reflects one of the significant fundamentals of Communism; the rejection of God and abandonment of the objective moral values revealed in the Bible.

Liberals have high-jacked important moral issues and attempted to reduce them to subjective political subjects. The Bible tells us that homosexuality is an abomination to God.

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**36th Annual Bellview Lectures**

**June 11-15, 2011**

**Moral Issues We Face**

We invite all to attend this year's Bellview Lectures. Twenty-nine lessons will be presented and those lessons will also appear in a paperback book: *Moral Issues We Face*—Is There an Absolute Standard of Morality?

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**Open Forum Questions**

If you have a question send it to mhatcher@gmail.com
(Lev. 18:22). Many liberals now close their eyes to the murderous acts of terror committed on September 11, 2001, deny there is a war on terror, all the while engaging in their relentless war against the unborn. That war, if not by a frontal attack, at least in a back-door way, may very soon be extended to target the elderly. Whereas almost all of our founding fathers believed that Christianity, at least as they understood it, should be the religion of America, a recent book, *Muslim Mafia* describes how spies have infiltrated the executive and legislative branches of our government, along with our intelligence agencies with the goal of turning America into an Islamist country. While such clandestine activity is going on, government officials continue to praise the religion of Mohammad. This ought not so to be.

America is in real trouble. But the trouble is not with our economy; that is a secondary concern. Our trouble is that too many of our citizens have abandoned, or are in the process of abandoning, God and His inspired Word. The Psalmist stated by divine inspiration that; “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; And the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance” (Psa. 33:12). Many Americans once believed that verse referred providentially to America. Now, a growing group of Americans choose to deny that God had anything to do with our past, and certainly has no role to play in our future. They must not win this battle. Armed with the sword of the Spirit, it is only the people of God, the church of Christ, that can rescue our beloved nation from the seemingly unfolding truth of Khrushchev’s prediction. No one else can do it.

PO Box 592; Granby, MO 64844

Don’t Make Your Religion Too Hard to See

Merchants keep their store windows and their meat display cases spotlessly clean, with the slogan: “The better they see, the more they buy!” always before them. If glasses are fogged or frosted, the merchandise in the case appears unattractive, and arouses little interest in the purchaser.

How about your influence as a Christian? Do you allow conversation to be fogged with shady stories, and evil surmising, and jealous criticisms? Careful! You might make your religion too hard to see!

How about your warmth and hospitality as a Christian? Are you so interested in yourself and your own affairs that you present a cold shoulder and an icy unfriendliness to others? Are you so frosted over that no one can feel he could come to you for counsel, guidance, or appreciation? Careful! You might make your religion too hard to see!

Others are passing by your life every day, and the picture you present will cause them to pass you by, or stop to take notice. If they like your display, they will want to partake of it for themselves. If you show kindness, consideration and thoughtfulness of others, onlookers will see the benefits of such actions. If you are true to God, and His Word, others will profit by your example and follow your life of loyalty.

Author unknown
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher    Mary Cunningham
Marge Williams    Ella Hammac
Charles Williams    Dot Lambert
Marilyn Hall    Ray Dodd
Nellie Read    Horace Myrick
Nancy Travis    Rubye Bailey
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Karen Diamond’s nephew)
Serena Beaver (Michael & Karen Hatcher’s friend)
Steve Potter (Pam Busch’s cousin)
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette Born’s grandson)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother/sister-in-laws)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Desirea McLeod (Paul & Phyllis Brantley’s great-granddaughter)
Connie Kois (Ray Dodd’s sister)

Wednesday Bible Reading
March 30 — Bill Crowe

Please Remember
Every Sunday
Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

March 30
Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

April 4
Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.
Recently I was reading an article in a British magazine that was talking about “redundant churches.” The article had reference to church buildings of various denominations that were no longer in use for religious services as there was no congregation meeting there. The use of redundant is common in Great Britain. When a company needs to downsize it declares numbers of its workforce to be redundant. The workers are laid off as being surplus to requirements. Usually, there is a “severance package” that they are given to help them financially. However, as I thought about redundant churches some thoughts came to mind.

First, Jesus promised: “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mat. 16:18). Jesus promised to build one church and only one. Thus, any other church than that which Jesus built is “redundant.” It is not necessary and is surplus to requirements. Such would be true of each and every one of the thousands of man-made churches, each teaching and practicing different and contrary doctrines that are indeed not part of the faith that was once delivered to the saints (Jude 3). Just think what it would be like in each community if the only churches that existed were those that were faithful congregations of the Lord’s church. Jesus also taught: “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up” (Mat. 15:13). Thus, there will surely come a time when our Lord will declare each man-made church to be redundant and He will dispose of them at the judgment.

Also, I thought about the fact that some congregations that were once faithful congregations of the Lord’s church are also redundant. They are redundant because they have ceased to be that city set on a hill (5:14). They
### Moral Issues We Face

**June 11-15, 2011**

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are no longer sending forth the pure light of the Gospel as they have espoused damnable error and no longer “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). Over the last half century, there have been many congregations that once stood “four-square” for the truth, but today they reject the very truth the congregation espoused when it was established. They are just like denominational church-
es in so many ways and no longer proclaim
the pure Jerusalem Gospel. In recent years we
have seen congregations that were recognized
as bastions of truth that have turned from
a faithful stand and are now fellowshipping
the purveyors of error rather than exposing
their error. They would rather have fellow-
ship with false teachers than with those who
would stand fast in the truth that they once

New Arrival
Our congratulations are extended to Bill
and Peggy Crowe in the birth of their great-
granddaughter, Chaelyn Riley Boren, on
March 30. She weighed 6 pounds 8 ounces
and was 19 3/4 inches long.

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rants will be available at the registration tables.

Books
The lectureship book, *Moral Issues We Face*,
will be available for purchase. The price of the
book has not yet been determined. The book
will contain 29 chapters. This will be a soft-
cover book. Everyone will want to purchase a
copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

Books-on-CD
The Bellview lectureship books (1975-
available on CD in Adobe PDF. The price of
the CD has not yet been determined. The CD
also includes the *Defender* (1970, 1972-2010),
*Beacon* (1972, 1974-2010), and other material.

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535 Belvedere Clearwater Rd
Belvedere, SC 29841
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher   Nancy Travis
Marge Williams   Mary Cunningham
Charles Williams   Ella Hammac
Marilyn Hall   Dot Lambert
Nellie Read   Horace Myrick
Ray Dodd (Sacred Heart Hospital)
Rubye Bailey (West Florida Hospital)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
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Wednesday Bible Reading
April 6 — Dale Cunningham

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April 10
Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.

April 11
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.
NASA launched Voyager Spacecrafts 1 and 2 in 1977. They continue to make space exploration history on several counts. After sending back stunning pictures of Saturn (1980), Uranus (1986), and Neptune (1989), Voyager 1 escaped the gravitational pull of the Sun, and in 1998, this high-tech machine became the most distant man-made object in space, hurtling into deep space beyond our galaxy. This remarkable contraption has torn through space for some twenty-nine years, and it and its onboard investigative instruments are still functioning perfectly. When its cameras sent back the first “close-up” pictures of Neptune and its moons (1989) (as it headed for deep space beyond our galaxy), a number of scientific luminaries gathered to pat themselves on the back for this signal accomplishment. In this context, the late Carl Sagan, renowned scientist (and outspoken Atheist), remarked that since men have evidenced the ability to put things rightly with such a craft for space, we now need to use the same ingenuity to “put things right [sic] in our own planet.” While we heartily agree that if men used their brains as much on moral, social, and political problems as they do on scientific and technological challenges, our world might be better off, Sagan’s statement is most curious, given his atheistic perspective.

First, it shall forever remain incomprehensible to rational and realistic thinkers how brilliant scientists can reject the argument from design for the existence of God. Sagan knew (and his blaspheming buddies know) that it takes all of the inventive, planning, and designing (to say nothing of the manufacturing) capabilities of many brilliant minds to fashion even relatively simple spacecraft like the Voyagers. None of them would be so stupid as to suggest that such a machine just “happened” with no design or planning. And yet,
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these same men will look at the universe, millions of times more complex than the little Voyagers, and say it had no designer or planner—it just happened by some freak, cosmic “accident.” Verily, there is no fuller demonstration of blind, irrational prejudice than this conclusion.

**Second,** upon what grounds does an Atheist talk about right and (implied), wrong? If God does not exist and the Bible is not His Word (basic assumptions of every Atheist and Secular Humanist), **there is no objective standard of right and wrong.** All such concepts are merely subjective opinions, existing only in the fallible and fickle minds and emotions of men. Sagan had (and his surviving cohorts have) no basis (except personal subjective prejudices) upon which to say that murder, rape, and theft are wrong and that respecting the rights of the person and property of others is right. For all they know, incest, pedophilia, genocide, and cannibalism are good and it is only because of their bias-es (or because they have been the victims of such behaviors) that they call them evil. Sagan should have kept his mouth shut about “putting things right” on planet earth until he acknowledged the only possible objective and true basis upon which right and wrong can be determined—existence of the eternal, true, and living God, the Designer and Creator of all things. “For every house is builded by some one; but he that built all things is God” (Heb. 3:4). Atheistic scientists agree as one with the first clause of the passage above. Yet their worship of self and science makes them deny the equally true (and rational) conclusion of the second clause. If Sagan had been sincere in wanting to “put things right” on earth, he would have had to start by acknowledging God as Creator and Designer and by respecting His infallible Word. Carl Sagan was converted to Theism—the moment he died in 1996.

908 Imperial Dr; Denton, TX 76201
copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

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Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Mary Cunningham
Marge Williams  Ella Hammac
Charles Williams  Dot Lambert
Marilyn Hall  Horace Myrick
Nellie Read  Ray Dodd
Nancy Travis  Alecia Godwin
Rubye Bailey (The Haven)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer's brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Karen Diamond's nephew)
Serena Beaver (Michael & Karen Hatcher's friend)
George Ness (Pam Busch's brother-in-law)
Wyatt Blancheri (Henry & Paulette Born's grandson)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson's brother/sister-in-laws)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson's friend)
Connie Kois (Ray Dodd's sister)

Placed Membership
Harold Cozad and Tim Cozad placed membership with the Bellview congregation on April 10. Their address is: 521 Bobwhite Drive; Pensacola, FL 32514. Please welcome them!

Please Remember
April 17
Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
April 18
Visitation Group 3 will meet at 6:00 pm.
Will Knowledge Save?

Harrell Davidson

In Hosea 4, God condemns Israel for her refusal to obey His Word. In verse 1 we note:

Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: For the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, Because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

What a desolate condition! This was a time when there is no truth. A time where the mercy of God is not accepted nor is the knowledge of His goodness respected.

God says that the people have separated themselves by "swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery" (4:2). In verse 6 the ancient prophet penned words of destruction due to the malady of the time, hear him:

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: Seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

It is the case that the people of Hosea’s day had refused to acquire and live by knowledge of the Word of God. They never thought of the penalty for their neglect in all likelihood. They were going along to get along and practicing the same sins as the people about them while God had commanded them to be separate or different from those nations around them, but this seems to have never entered their thought process. They wanted to be like the nations about them when they desired a king. God granted them their wish, but their desire led to great suffering and turmoil.

As Hosea writes, God is rejecting His priests and His people. He even forgets their children. A calamity exists in the land that does not respect and know God. We are taught in the Scriptures that eternal life is to "know thee the only true God, and Jesus..."
Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). It is rather obvious that there is trouble in our land this day in the year of our Lord, 2011.

Unless we come to a knowledge of God, man will be lost. We remember a classic passage in Judges 2:10 that address situations like this:

And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.

The first generation out of Egyptian bondage perished in the wilderness. The second generation is the one that Judges is addressing who were faithful. The third generation was lost because they did not know the Lord. They served Balaam while forsaking the Lord.

Are we talking about an antiquated condition? No! A thousand times No! We are describing present day America. We are talking about a time when God is respected less and less. There is lying, swearing, killing, stealing, adultery, and the list goes on and on. Filth and turmoil fill our news programs while the Bible is closed on the shelf and most of all closed to our hearts. Jesus said, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39). Knowledge alone will not save. It must be applied to the heart of man. The condition of our time is such that we had better wake up, open up, and read up if we want to go up to heaven some day. All one has to do is read the front page of the newspaper and we see Hosea all over again.

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Books-on-CD

PO Box 215; Obion, TN 38240

http://www.bellviewcoc.com
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Wednesday Bible Reading
April 20 — Ray Foshee

Please Remember
April 25
Visitiation Group 4 will meet at 6:00 pm.

April 27
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

May 1
Dinner on the Grounds and Singing after the morning service.
Reaping the Effects of Darwinism

Paul Vaughn

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8). Paul wrote this warning to the Colossians, but it endures as a warning to all. There are philosophies which will cheat Christians and those being converted to Christ by human knowledge or human values. One such philosophy is Darwin’s theory of evolution. There are few philosophies which have affected the return to New Testament Christianity like Darwinism. When the Restoration Movement of the nineteenth century started, people were basically Bible believers. This country was formed on a Biblical standard of morality and Christian ethics. Society in general looked to God as the Creator of this world, the Bible as God’s inspired Word, and Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of mankind.

In the past one hundred and twenty-nine years, since Darwin published *The Origin of Species*, there has been a transformation in American thought. The standard of morality has eroded so much that one would doubt there is a standard at all. The ethical thinking of our nation has changed to the point that the weak are no longer protected and society is interested more in fleshly pleasures than in studying and learning about God. This country has become like Judah when Jeremiah said:

To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it (Jer. 6:10).

All of these changes could not be blamed on Darwinism alone, but once people are convinced they evolved from monkeys it is not long until they start acting like animals.
Other influences which have aided in the re-molding of American thought were the liberal thinking of denominational preachers and the rise of Biblical criticism. These assaults on the Bible helped to prepare many to accept Darwin's theory of evolution.

How has Darwinism affected the Restoration Movement? First, Darwin's theory has affected the thinking of the general population. It fights against the days of creation in Genesis, as well as man being made in God’s image. The Bible says, “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). The theory of evolution teaches that man evolved. This philosophy is taught as scientific fact in the public school systems, and if one dares to speak out against evolution, he is branded as uneducated or superstitious.

Yet, to accept evolution is to deny the Bible. The two cannot be united. Those who try to work evolution into God's Word do so by adding to the Bible, which is condemned (Deu. 4:2; Psa. 69:28; Rev. 22:18-19). Those who are deceived by it will receive the wrath of God. “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” (Eph. 5:6).

Darwinism has left its mark. Like all false teachings it will keep on destroying souls as long as it is not challenged by God’s people using His Word. Christians must “put on the whole armor of God,” and take their stand with the truth (Eph. 6:11). Jesus prayed, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17). Jesus looked at God’s Word as truth. Let not man try to destroy it with evolution!

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Books-on-CD
of the CD has not yet been determined. The CD also includes the *Defender* (1970, 1972-2010), *Beacon* (1972, 1974-2010), and other material.

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### Moral Issues We Face
**June 11-15, 2011**

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Restored
Carl Ayliffe was restored to Christ on April 24. Please keep Carl in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

Wednesday Bible Reading
April 27 — Andrew Hatcher
Think on These Things

Think on These Things
Orville Worley

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).

Things That Are True
Let our thoughts be upon things that are superior, things of worth, things of excellence and value.

Things That Are Just
Let us think about things that are upright, honest, and free of bias, things that are right and moral, fair, and right conduct. In all our thinking let us be guided by the Bible while making inquiry to God in prayer.

Things That Are Pure
Let our thoughts be on heaven and heavenly things and let our minds be set on things that are superior, things free from moral corruption and evil intent. May our hearts be pure, and may we recall the words we sing in Mrs. A. L. Davidson's song: “Purer in heart, O God, Help me to be.” We need to always recall and live according to the words of Jesus when He said, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Mat. 5:8).

Things That Are Lovely
Think on things that are lovely and beautiful. Let us think on the beautiful qualities and pleasing things that are seen in the lives of men, women, and children. Think on the beauty of God’s plan for us and the handiwork of His vast creation. From a song, we have the warm admonition and encouragement to sing, “Let the Beauty of Jesus Be Seen.” Yes, let the beauty of Christ be seen in you and me.

Things of Good Report
Consider and think about things that are favorable, right, and proper, things that will
endure, things that are correct and honorable, and things that have approval. Things having approval would include the good works of Christians. The Bible reveals many things that are of good report. In writing to the Colossians, Paul mentioned hearing of their faith in Christ and love for all the saints (1:4). Another example is in his epistle to the Romans, in which he wrote that their faith was spoken of throughout the world (1:8).

Virtue and Praise

In considering virtue, our thoughts most likely include things of moral excellence, right decisions and actions. Also, we would undoubtedly think about such things as justice, prudence, fortitude, temperance, and certainly faith, hope, and charity. Also, let us have good vision and see the commendable deeds of our fellow saints.

Conclusion

In conclusion, let us meditate (think deeply and continuously) on things that are noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and commendable. Moreover, we know that the peace of God surpasses all understanding and will guard our hearts and minds through Jesus Christ: “For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord

Bellview Lectureship Books Order Form

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Jesus Christ” (Phil. 4:7). Accordingly, let us set our minds on Christ and rejoice in knowing that our citizenship is in heaven: “For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (3:20).

1014 Alexandria Dr; Pensacola FL 32505

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If you have a question send it to mhatcher@gmail.com

View Lectures Live on the Internet
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read  Nancy Travis
Mary Cunningham  Ella Hammac
Dot Lambert  Horace Myrick
Aleacia Godwin  Robbie Cravey
Joyce Brantley  Rubye Bailey
Ray Dodd (Sacred Heart Hospital)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond’s nephew)
Serena Beaver (Hatcher’s friend)
George Ness (Busch’s brother-in-law)
Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother/sister-in-laws)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Ray Dodd’s sister)
Betty Podgurski (Crowe’s daughter)

Wednesday Bible Reading
May 4 — Jim Loy

Please Remember

May 9
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.

May 15
Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.

May 16
Visitation Group 3 will meet at 6:00 pm.
Words Versus Deeds

Guy N. Woods

One does not know God who does not conform to His will. We may believe intellectually that there is a God; we may affirm the truth of His existence, the facts of His attributes, the reality of His works in nature. But only those who have wholly committed their wills to His know Him in His saving power. “And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ” (John 17:3). If it be asked which commandments constitute the test here submitted, the answer is, All of them! Any commandment we are disposed to break because of our unwillingness to bend our wills to His provides the occasion which demonstrates lack of full knowledge of Him. This is the “one thing” which we “lack” and which, like the young ruler’s riches, will close the door of heaven in our faces.

The Gnostics boasted of their superior knowledge and spiritual insight and maintained their acquaintance with the Lord despite the fact that they kept not His commandments. With reference to all such the apostle solemnly declares, “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:4). The verbs in the Greek text are in the present tense. He who keeps on saying, I know Him, and yet keeps not on keeping His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. Far from actually and really knowing God, those who refuse to do His will are, in addition to being disobedient characters, liars, and without truth. The words, “He is a liar” are more emphatic than “we lie,” of John 1:6, and “we deceive ourselves,” of 1:8. His status is not simply that of one who is guilty of a single falsehood, or one who is innocently deceived; his acts of falsehood have become embedded in his character and he is, essentially, a liar. Such a one is
demonstrating the nature and character of his father, the devil, who is a liar from the beginning (8:44). It was evidently no uncommon thing for men, at the time John wrote, who had adopted the pernicious doctrine of the Gnostics to affirm that they, though willfully guilty of sinful acts, were not thereby corrupted. Some of these men maintained that they were no more polluted by sin than gold is by the mire into which it might fall.

As shocking as the foregoing theology is, it has its modern counterparts. Those false teachers, while denying any contamination from sin, did admit the fact of sin in their lives. There are those today who deny both the sin and the contamination. A prominent denominational preacher, in a tract titled, *Do a Christian’s Sins Damn His Soul?* wrote:

We take the position that a Christian’s sins do not damn his soul. The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul…. All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he
may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer; and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger…. The way a man lives has nothing what-

soever to do with the salvation of his soul. Such theology, whether ancient or modern, is precisely in principle what John condemned when he affirmed that those who say they know Him, yet do not keep His commandments, are liars.

Deceased
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read  Nancy Travis
Mary Cunningham  Ella Hammac
Dot Lambert  Horace Myrick
Robbie Cravey  Ruby Bailey
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Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family of Emmeline Sutton, who passed away on May 8. Please keep her family in your prayers.

Wednesday Bible Reading
May 11 — Ray Foshee

Please Remember
May 15
Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.

May 16
Visitation Group 3 will meet at 6:00 pm.
Are the Days of Creation a Puzzle, or True, or Can We Really Know? No & Yes

Johnny Oxendine

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day (Gen. 1:1-5).

What do we really know about the days of creation? Do we know what God made on what days? This may seem trite, but it is really a question of our digestion of the material in more than a rote way. Can we say that we understand the details of the description of the world coming into existence to a degree that there is no doubt that its completion is described fully in the Scriptures? We will touch on this area that should not be an issue at all for the Christian, but unfortunately and quite apparently because of the influence of worldly opinion inroads have been made. This area of error involves what has been called the “Day-Age Theory.”

The basic idea is that the six days of creation are not literal days, but representative of an unlimited time span that would allow the evolutionary process to take place. The essential element needed for this theory is, of course, time. Darwin’s premise depends heavily on the unlimited time component (without enough time the theory evaporates immediately). So, once again a theory has sprung up that will massage, allure, comfort, and de-
ceive the weak and liberal minds who cannot believe the Genesis account. The available palates for false doctrine are nearly endless.

By simply allowing the Bible to speak for itself we can prove beyond any doubt that the Day-Age theory is another foolish attempt to compromise and subvert the truth. If we adhere to a very fundamental and simple rule of Biblical interpretation that demands that words be interpreted and understood literally unless there is compelling evidence to suggest otherwise (to interpret figuratively for example), we will find this argument for the Day-Age theory easily dismantled.

The passages by Moses in Exodus 20:8-11 give us clear evidence of the clarity of discourse that God has inserted “for our learning” (Rom. 15:4) in the Scriptures:

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God:…for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is (Exo. 20:8-11).

Have those who hold to this theory considered that each day of Genesis 1 was equally divided into periods of light and darkness. If the day represented millions of years, then there were obviously corresponding epochs.
### Moral Issues We Face

**June 11-15, 2011**

**Saturday, June 11**
- 7:00 pm  Is There an Absolute Standard of Morality?  Bruce Stulting
- 7:45 pm  Principles of Moral Decision-Making  Dub McClish

**Sunday, June 12**
- 9:00 am  Contemporary Music  Brad Green
- 10:00 am  Immodesty  David P. Brown
- 11:00 am  Gossip  Roelf Ruffner

**Monday, June 13**
- 9:00 am  Medical Ethics  Michael Hatcher
- 10:00 am  Racism  Johnny Oxendine
- 11:00 am  Impure Speech  Ken Chumbley

**Tuesday, June 14**
- 9:00 am  Hate Crimes Laws  Lynn Parker
- 10:00 am  Stealing  Paul Vaughn
- 11:00 am  Gossip  Roelf Ruffner

**Wednesday, June 15**
- 9:00 am  Idolatry  Jimmy Gribble
- 10:00 am  Illegal and Legal Drugs  Bruce Stulting
- 11:00 am  Euthanasia  Tim Cozad

**Dinner Break**
- 1:30 pm  The Ecology  Terry Hightower
- 2:30 pm  Abortion and Birth Control  Ken Chumbley

**Open Forum**
- 3:30 pm  Open Forum:  Tim Cozad

**Dinner Break**
- 7:00 pm  Materialism  Tim Cozad
- 7:45 pm  Lasciviousness  Roelf Ruffner

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of darkness. The vegetation that was brought into existence on the third day could never have survived those alternating periods of darkness. The arguments for a Day-Age theory are easily seen to be inconsistent with the Biblical text and with basic logical conclusions as well.

PO Box 5026; San Mateo, CA 94402
Sick

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Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson's friend)
Connie Kois (Ray Dodd's sister)
Betty Podgurski (Crowe's daughter)

New Address
Rubye Bailey's new address is: Broadview Assisted Living; 2310 Abbie Lane #147; Pensacola, FL 32514. Her telephone number is 471-2600.

Wednesday Bible Reading
May 18 — Fred Stancliff

Please Remember

May 22
Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

May 23
Visitation Group 4 will meet at 6:00 pm.
This statement is on a sign for a local Roman Catholic Church. The implication being that the various religious groups proclaiming to be Christian came out from Roman Catholicism as being the original church. Some Protestant groups readily admit that they came out of Rome as a result of what is known as the Reformation Movement and that they just sought to reform Roman Catholicism. The Bible teaches that Christians should “contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). For one to determine whether that faith “once delivered” is the Roman Catholic Church one needs to examine whether that church teaches that faith.

One thing that is immediately noticeable is that Roman Catholicism claims that the Pope is the “Vicar of Christ” and thus the representative of Christ on earth. One can examine the “faith which was once delivered to the saints” from end to end and will not find mention of a “Vicar of Christ” or of a “Pope” as the “earthly head of the church.” Indeed, that faith nowhere teaches that a man, any man, is the “earthly head of the church.” Roman Catholics would have us believe that Peter was the first “Pope.” However, by their own rules Peter would not qualify as he was a married man—one who had a mother-in-law (Mat. 8:14). Also, that faith “once delivered to the saints” teaches that in the latter days some should depart from that faith (1 Tim. 4:1-3). Two of the departures mentioned are “forbidding to marry” and “commanding to abstain from meats.” For centuries Roman Catholicism banned the eating of meat on a Friday, something that is nowhere commanded in Scripture. Also, to this day the teaching of Roman Catholicism is that the priesthood is to be celibate (unmarried). Other doctrines of Roman Catholicism could be given to...
show that they do not adhere to that "faith which was once delivered to the saints" and therefore it cannot be the true church from which all other churches of men have departed. These we have mentioned are sufficient to make the point.

To determine which church is the right church, one must always make reference to the "faith which was once delivered to the saints." If a religious group teaches that which is contrary to that faith, it cannot be the church that Jesus built.

When one studies history, it is clear that there have always been those who have sought to preach and teach that one faith. Sadly, because of the power of the Roman Catholic Church, many were classified as heretics because they determined to preach and teach the truth. As a result many faced severe persecution and even death because they would not bow to apostate religion. When the records are made available, one can see traces of the kingdom stretching back centuries before the Reformation Movement of the 15th and 16th centuries. One can be encouraged by reading of the sacrifices that were made by so many during what have been referred to as the "dark ages" when Roman Catholicism held sway across the western hemisphere.

May we, as God's people today, "contend...
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<th>Day</th>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td><strong>Is There an Absolute Standard of Morality?</strong></td>
<td>Bruce Stulting</td>
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<td>7:45 pm</td>
<td><strong>Principles of Moral Decision-Making</strong></td>
<td>Dub McClish</td>
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<td><strong>Pornography</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Suicide</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Television and Movies</strong></td>
<td>David Hartbarger</td>
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<td><strong>Alcoholism</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Gambling and the Lottery</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Dancing</strong></td>
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<td>7:45 pm</td>
<td><strong>Consequences of Amorality and Immorality</strong></td>
<td>Lynn Parker</td>
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**Wednesday Bible Reading**

**May 25** — Orville Worley

Please Remember

**Every Sunday**

Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.

**June 5**

Pre-lectureship meeting after the evening service, in room 1. All members of the congregation are encouraged to attend.

**June 6**

Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.
“Mostly Faithful”?
Lynn Parker

It might be that some have a mighty strange view of faithful. Have you ever heard a brother described as “mostly faithful,” or a congregation as “fairly faithful”? How about this—“he is pretty faithful…most of the time.”

The Bible records that Moses was faithful (Num. 12:7), as was Timothy (1 Cor. 4:17), and Tychicus (Eph. 6:21). Jesus used faithful to describe the five and two-talent men who were prepared to give account to their Lord in a parable:

His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord (Mat. 25:23).

Paul, through inspiration, set forth that, “Here, moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2). Research the word faithful and you will see that it carries the idea of those who are trustworthy…who show themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official duties…one who kept his plighted faith, worthy of trust…that can be relied on (Thayer).

In light of the meaning, how can one be mostly, pretty, or fairly faithful? Either one is, or is not, faithful to God. (Of course we are not arguing for sinlessness—it must be understood that faithfulness in God’s children is demanded of God; 1 Cor. 4:2. This faithful condition is synonymous with walking in the light—1 John 1:7—as we humbly bring our hearts and deeds into harmony with the dictates of heaven.) What ambiguous spiritual condition is represented by the term mostly faithful? Could it be a term employed to represent a person, or a congregation, that does some, or even most of what God directs—but not all? Here are some examples of those
who fit in the category of being mostly, fairly, or pretty faithful:

1. The brother or sister that attends 9 out of 10 Sunday and Wednesday assemblies but forsakes one “every now and then” for TV, shopping, Boy Scouts, walk-a-thons, the Super Bowl, vacation, company at home, or because they are disgruntled with someone or something in the church, is probably the person some have in mind when they say, “He’s mostly faithful.”

2. The brother who preaches the Truth on the fundamental matters of salvation, the distinctive nature of the church, and the errors of denominations, but teaches that baptism makes an adulterous marriage into a sanctified one, is labeled by some misguided brethren as “mostly faithful.”

3. A congregation that demands soundness from its preachers and teachers refuses to budge an inch in the face of new and novel doctrines, but neglects to do what God commanded in the matter of restoring the erring and church discipline is one that many would call “mostly faithful.” The “mostly faithful” are “mostly sound” and “mostly obedient.” They pick and choose when and where they will obey God. They will all, on the Day of Judgment, give answer for their lack of obedience.

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City: __________________________ State: _______ Zip: ________________
of complete submission to Christ's Will. “Mostly faithful” sounds “pretty good” until you realize that the “mostly faithful” will be “mostly lost.” “Here, moreover, it is required in stew-

**Moral Issues We Face**

**June 11-15, 2011**

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**Overview**

1650 Gander Slough Rd
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Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson's friend)
Connie Kois (Ray Dodd's sister)
Betty Podgurski (Crowe's daughter)
Larry Randolph (Ashley Brower's grandfather)
Alta Cork (Ashley Brower's aunt)

Restored
Bill Busch was restored to Christ on May 29. Please keep him in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

Wednesday Bible Reading
June 1 — Carl Ayliffe

Please Remember
June 5
Pre-lectureship meeting after the evening service, in room 1. All members of the congregation are encouraged to attend.
The Foibles of Human Religious Tradition

Roelf Ruffner

The media reported that hundreds of people had been exposed to hepatitis A while receiving communion on Christmas Day, 2010, at Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Church in Massapequa, NY (Long Island). There were approximately 7,500 people present at that service. The county health department reported that “a person involved in the communion process has tested positive for hepatitis A” (“Parishioners”). They were making sure that all who received communion on that day were tested for that virus—a daunting task!

The communion service of the Roman Church of the “Eucharist” (their term) is a man-made religious tradition, which has evolved over many centuries. It is a far cry from the simple memorial meal Jesus initiated and commanded (Mark 14:22-25; Mat. 26:26-29; Luke 22:17-20; 1 Cor. 11:11-23, 26). They have imposed on this act of worship the false doctrine of Transubstantiation by which they believe that the elements of the Lord’s Supper literally become the body and blood of Jesus Christ by the prayers of their priest. As the priest lays the wafer on the tongue of the celebrant he says, “The body of Christ.” In turn, they dare not chew the wafer and so chew on the body of Christ. This means that every time this ceremony is performed Jesus is sacrificed afresh on the cross (Heb. 10:11-12) and the celebrants partake of some cannibalistic feast!

One of the unleavened wafers or “host” (meaning “sacrificial victim” in Latin) becomes the center of adoration by the congregation. It is often placed in a special receptacle to be displayed on the altar, where the people bow before it. This is plain ole idolatry. When our Lord initiated His memorial feast, “This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19).
Lord was using a metaphor, a figure of speech in which one thing is likened to another. He was not saying that the unleavened bread was literally His flesh. “It was a literal impossibility. Metaphorically it was true, but literally it was not true” (Dungan 196). Catholic theologians rush to John 6:48-58 in which Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you. Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you” (6:53). Again the Lord is using figurative language to denote salvation and continued fellowship with Him not the Lord’s Supper (eat and drink are continuous action verbs in this verse).

There is a real dilemma in this outbreak of hepatitis for the Roman Catholic Church. Did the “body of Christ” (their phraseology), blessed by the priest, transmit a disease to the celebrants? This only makes sense since they consider the wafer the literal flesh of Jesus. I know this question sounds far-fetched to some, but it is a reasonable conclusion of their false doctrine.

If only our Catholic friends and neighbors would return to the simplicity of New Testament worship! This is the fatal flaw in man-made religious tradition. It sounds pious and looks devoted, but it is “vain” or empty worship in God’s sight. “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the com-

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mandments of men” (Mat. 15:9).

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<tr>
<th>Moral Issues We Face</th>
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<tr>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>Is There an Absolute Standard of Morality? Bruce Stulting</td>
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<td>7:45 pm</td>
<td>Principles of Moral Decision-Making Dub McClish</td>
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<td><strong>Sunday, June 12</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 am</td>
<td>Contemporary Music Brad Green</td>
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<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Immodesty David P. Brown</td>
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<td><strong>Lunch Break</strong></td>
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<td>Stem Cell Research Jimmie Gribble</td>
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<td><strong>Dinner Break</strong></td>
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<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>Materialism Tim Cozad</td>
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<td>7:45 pm</td>
<td>Lasciviousness Roelf Ruffner</td>
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**Tuesday, June 14**
9:00 am    Hate Crimes Laws    Lynn Parker
10:00 am   Stealing            Paul Vaughn
11:00 am   Gossip              Roelf Ruffner

**Lunch Break**
1:30 pm    Murder              David Hartbarger
2:30 pm    Impure Speech      Ken Chumbley
3:30 pm    Open Forum:

**Dinner Break**
7:00 pm    Homosexuality      David P. Brown
7:45 pm    Gambling and the Lottery Jess Whitlock

**Wednesday, June 15**
9:00 am    Idolatry            Jimmie Gribble
10:00 am   Illegal and Legal Drugs Bruce Stulting
11:00 am   Euthanasia          Tim Cozad

**Lunch Break**
1:30 pm    The Ecology         Terry Hightower
2:30 pm    Abortion and Birth Control Ken Chumbley
3:30 pm    Open Forum:

**Dinner Break**
7:00 pm    Dancing             Brad Green
7:45 pm    Consequences of Amorality and Immorality Lynn Parker

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Bill Busch  Joyce Brantley
Ray Dodd (Sacred Heart Hospital)
Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)
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Betty Podgurski (Crowe’s daughter)
Larry Randolph (Ashley Brower’s grandfather)
Alta Cork (Ashley Brower’s aunt)

Wednesday Bible Reading
June 8  —  Henry Born

Please Remember
June 19
Lectureship critique after the evening service, in room 1. All members of the congregation are encouraged to attend.

June 20
Visitation Group 3 will meet at 6:00 pm.
Divine Pattern
Brad Green

Throughout every age, man has been subject to a Divine pattern. Noah was given a Divine pattern by which he was to build the ark. God commanded:

Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it…. Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he (Gen. 6:14-16, 22).

God was very specific in regards to what He required of Noah. Divine pattern was also to be adhered to during the Mosaic period. God was definitive in regards to His instructions to the children of Israel and did not tolerate anything to the contrary. The actions of Nadab and Abihu serve as evidence.

Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord (Lev. 10:1-2).

Nadab and Abihu lost their lives because they did that which God “commanded them not.” When God authorized the building of the altar of burnt incense, He instructed Aaron to, “offer no strange incense thereon” (Exo. 30:9). The pattern which Nadab and Abihu followed is quite different from the one followed by their father, Aaron, not too long
after their deaths. God told Aaron to take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail: And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not (Lev. 16:12-13).

The New Testament also teaches a pattern for man today. Paul, by inspiration, commended the Christians at Rome:

God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:17-18).

These individuals were only “made free from sin” after they obeyed the pattern given to them by God. Had they obeyed any teaching other than “that form of doctrine,” they would have still been “servants of sin.” Paul told the church at Galatia, “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” (Gal. 1:8).

The pattern for salvation and the explanation for how one is added to Christ’s church, is first recorded in Acts 2. Those Jews heard the Word of God (Acts 2:14), “they were pricked in their heart” (2:37), proving they believed what they heard, they repented of their past sins and were baptized in order to have those sins forgiven (2:38) and because of their obedience, God added them to His church (2:47). By following that same pattern, man can be saved and added today to the church for which Christ died. God also designed a pattern for the way in which He desired His people to worship Him (John 4:24) and a pattern for how He wanted His church organized (cf. Eph. 1:22-23; 1 Tim. 3:1-13).

By providing man with a pattern to observe, God has excluded all other patterns, thus furnishing us with examples that we are not to follow. The apostle John states, “Beloved, follow not that which is evil” (3 John 11). “Peter and the other apostles answered” the Jewish leaders of the first century, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). Paul beseeches brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but ye be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God (Rom. 12:1-2).

Throughout antiquity, man has desired to fit in and conform to his surroundings. All the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations (1 Sam. 8:4-5).

God’s chosen people rejected God as their King (8:7) and longed for an earthly king in order to be like all the nations round about them. God warned His people not to “follow a multitude to do evil” (Exo. 23:2). The danger that awaits those who do follow the
crowd of unrighteousness is utter destruction. The majority rejected the preaching of Noah and they all died in the flood (Gen. 7:22-23). The majority following after the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah and were overthrown with fire and brimstone (19:24-25). We should be extremely wary when men contend that we should agree with them simply because “everyone else does.” It has been said many times and in many ways, “Wrong is wrong even if everybody is doing it. Right is right even if nobody is doing it.”

God calls upon Christians to be “a peculiar people” (1 Pet. 2:9)—a people who come out from among those who are wicked and practice error (2 Cor. 6:17). The inspired Paul states:

now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us (2 The. 3:6).

The Bible clearly teaches that Christians are not to fashion themselves after the ways of the world nor after that which seems to be most popular. In regards to error and the practice of sin, Christians are to be “non-conformers.”

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Baptized / Placed Membership
Melvin Torrey was baptized into Christ on June 7. His address is: 907 Rosewood, Apt. C; Pensacola, FL 32503. His telephone number is 438-9825. Please keep him in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

Please Remember
June 19
Lectureship critique after the evening service, in room 1. All members of the congregation are encouraged to attend.
The Church—What Shall We Call It?

Frank L. Cox

Feed the church of the Lord (Acts 20:28).
All the churches of Christ salute you (Rom. 16:16).
The church of God which is at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1).
Despise ye the church of God? (1 Cor. 11:22).
I persecuted the church of God (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13).
The churches of God (1 Thes. 2:14).
How shall he take care of the church of God? (1 Tim. 3:5).
The church of the living God (1 Tim. 3:15).

In these ten passages from the pen of inspiration, we have the names by which the church of the New Testament is called. One time it is called “the church of the Lord.” Seven times it is called “the church of God.” One time a group of churches in a given locality is called “the churches of God.” And one time a group of churches in another locality is called “the churches of Christ.”

If a group of churches may be called “churches of God,” it is both spiritual and logical for one of that group to be called “a church of God.” If a number of churches may be called “churches of Christ,” it is both scriptural and logical for one of that group to be called a “church of Christ.”

If it is right to call the church “the church of the Lord,” it is proper to call it “the church of Christ” for the very good reason that Christ is Lord (Acts 2:36). And if it is right to call the church “the church of God,” it is right to call it “the church of Christ” for Christ is God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16).

The three designations—“the church of the Lord,” “the church of Christ,” and “the church of God”—are synonymous. All three are one and the same.

Opening the holy, hallowed book, the New Testament, we find the word church appearing more than one hundred times. Significant is
the fact that not once occurs in the New Testament the name “Baptist Church,” or “Congregational Church,” or “Episcopal Church,” or “Methodist Church,” or “Lutheran Church,” or “Roman Catholic Church,” etc.

Not “Baptist” for that name makes prominent a particular New Testament practice which “Baptists” themselves declare is non-essential; not “Congregational” for that name also lifts into prominence a church polity; not “Methodist” or “Presbyterian”: for they, also, exalt an ecclesiastical form of government; not “Lutheran” for that name exalts a human leader; not “Roman Catholic”: for that designation has a sectional ring. (The expression “Roman Catholic” carries with it two conflicting, irreconcilable ideas: “Roman,” reminding us of a particular race of locality; “Catholic,” meaning universal. A Sectional Universal Church.)

The name “church of God,” or “church of Christ” is Scriptural. There is no question or doubt about it. No person, regardless of religious affiliation, can successfully contradict that. All agree that the more Biblical we are in matters religious the safer we are.

The name “church of God” or “church of Christ” encourages and promotes unity among those people who claim to be God’s people. If the unity for which Jesus prayed is ever realized,

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It does not take a college degree to notice the contemptible and vile vocabulary that proceeds from the heart of a large number of people today. The profanity that continues to spew from their mouth speaks volumes about the moral decay that is slowly eroding the good out of the hearts of many in every level of society.

There are also four-letter words that should not only be in one's vocabulary, but also in our lives on a daily basis. The first is “love.” In the New Testament love is translated from the Greek words agape and agapao (among others). The use of these words indicate more than just feelings of emotion. They evoke a love that desires the welfare of all and seeks no ill will toward anyone. Jesus said, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another” (John 13:34). Truly, this four-letter word is extremely needed in all of our lives every day.

Another four-letter that is extremely needed is “pure.” It is written, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Mat. 5:8). What a wonderful day it will be when the pure in heart see God. To be pure means one is not defiled or contaminated by the wickedness that is prevalent with so many today. Yes! Pure is a word that is needed in the hearts of so many today.

There are other four-letter words that are needed in all our lives. Such as holy, kind, work, busy, and good. Sadly, there is a growing number who know little of these important words and a growing number who have ceased to live by these words.
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Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read  Nancy Travis
Mary Cunningham  Ella Hammac
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Larry Randolph (Ashley Brower’s grandfather)
Alta Cork (Ashley Brower’s aunt)

Please Remember
June 22
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
June 27
Visitation Group 4 will meet at 6:00 pm.
June 29
Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
July 10
Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.
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 (Jude 3).

In this era there is a great lack of conviction. Day by day our metal is being tested. We see it in preachers who give up and preach no more. They become discouraged at the lack of conviction that so many have that they cannot bear up under the load. All the while our lives are a testing ground. We well recall living close enough in Gibson County, Tennessee, to the Milan Arsenal. This was the manufacturing and testing grounds for bombs and ammunition that were used in wars. Sometimes, with a loud boom, the earth would shake. Another bomb was being put to the test to see if it would do what it was designed to do. It was a test before the field of battle was engaged for that particular application. Likewise, our lives are a period of testing. We live in a time where liberalism is arrogant and indifference is widespread. In fact, we do not think we have ever witnessed the indifference that exists today in the Lord's church. Surely we have not forgotten what the church stands for.

Let us suggest that the church stands for the Deity of Jesus Christ first and foremost. This vital and fundamental truth is being assailed today as is the miraculous conception and virgin birth. We accept Jesus as a Prophet—one who teaches. Moses wrote, “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken” (Deu. 18:15). The apostle Peter repeated this in Acts 3:22 when a lame man had been healed and he and John are giving an account, but Peter, through the Holy Spirit, quoted Deuteronomy 18 regarding Christ being that Prophet. We also
accept the fact of Jesus being a Priest to make atonement for our sins through His blood (Heb. 9:14). The writer then shows that Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant by saying:

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance (9:15).

As a priest He is our intercessor.

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (4:14-16).

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them (7:25).

We accept Jesus as our King—to rule over our lives. “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Mat. 28:18). This takes place during His Mediatorial reign. Then He will come, taken vengeance, subdue, and reign over all the earth, destroy death, and deliver the kingdom up to God. Many other matters could be detailed that we will simply list. We stand for the Inspiration of the Bible (2 Tim. 3:15-16). Our motto: “Where the Bible speaks we speak…” We stand for the whole Gospel without substitutes, alterations, subtractions or additions (Deu. 4:2; Gal. 1:6-9; Rev. 22:18-19). For the facts of the Gospel: death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor. 15:1-4). For the commands of the Gospel: repent, confess, and baptism. We either disbelieve or believe the facts. We either obey or disobey the commands. We stand for the promise of the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). There is more, but this is where we stand.

PO Box 215; Obion, TN 38240

Newsweek Religion Survey
Johnny Oxendine

In the April 13, 2009, Newsweek magazine, there was an article that caused an uproar in the religious world. In this article, titled, “The End of Christian America,” the 2009 American Religious Identification Survey indicates that America is more quickly turning away from God and religion of any kind than ever before in our nation’s history. Since 1990 the number of people who identify themselves as “Christian” has dropped from 86 to 76 percent. That is a whopping drop, but even more is the additional information that the number of Americans who claim no religious affiliation has nearly doubled since 1990, rising from 8 to 15 percent.

Why should this be of a concern for the New Testament Christian? We have often spoken of the urgency with which we should...
approach our responsibility to preach the Gospel to the lost. We cannot be complacent and expect people to come to us asking to be baptized—we have to engage them, or be swallowed up by the materialists.

The article describes America as being in a "post-Christian" period! Post-Christian! Exactly how might this affect us, being we are advocates of the separation of church and state? Does this endanger us and/or our culture? I would say "yes," because we have seen a spate of court rulings in favor of same-sex unions, abortion, and a watering down of divorce laws. What message is being sent when people deny parents the right to know if their underage child is getting an abortion, but requires parental consent for medicine? How irrepressibly ignorant is that, or the people who subscribe to it? Our nation is headed in a dangerous direction while some seemingly are enjoying the ride.

PO Box 5026; San Mateo, CA 94402

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**Defender and Beacon Available Via E-Mail**

To receive the Defender and Beacon via e-mail please send your e-mail address to bellviewcoc@gmail.com. The file you will receive will be a PDF (portable document file) (a free reader is available from www.adobe.com).
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams      Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read           Nancy Travis
Mary Cunningham       Ella Hammac
Dot Lambert           Horace Myrick
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Bill Busch            Ray Dodd
Wyatt Blancheri (Born's grandson)
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Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson's friend)
Connie Kois (Ray Dodd's sister)
Betty Podgurski (Crowe's daughter)
Larry Randolph (Ashley Brower's grandfather)
Alta Cork (Ashley Brower's aunt)

Placed Membership
Jim Stark has placed membership with the Bellview congregation. He does not have a permanent address yet.

Please Remember

June 29
Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

July 10
Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.
Why Work?

Danny Douglas

It was reported of a man who said: “I’m not lazy. I just don’t like to work.” Obviously, this man did not understand the importance of work. Let us consider some reasons that we need to work, and especially why we need to work for God.

The Father and the Son Are Workers

“But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (John 5:17). These are Two examples we must all follow!

Labor for the Lord Is Not In Vain

Paul declared:

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).

When the Great Depression hit, many wealthy people lost “everything” overnight. Servants of the living God do not have such insecurity, for we know that what we do for Him is treasure laid up in heaven, and it is a treasure that is safe from all harm.

Jesus declared:

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Mat. 6:19-21; cf. 1 Tim. 6:17-19).

The Time Is Coming When We Will No Longer Be Able to Work

Jesus taught this in John 9:4: “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work.”

The Lord realized that He had to be diligent and earnest in doing God’s will while He had the time and opportunity. We must also know and practice this valuable principle. Anything
worth doing is worth doing with our might, and the Lord's work is the most worthwhile of all. The wise man said:

Whosoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest (Ecc. 9:10).

One may be diligent in earthly affairs but slothful in spiritual matters. In the parable of the rich farmer, he was very diligent in his business, but he left out God. How sad!

But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God (Luke 12:20-21).

God Condemns Slothfulness
Go to the ant, thou sluggard; Consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, And thy want as an armed man (Pro. 6:6-11).

Paul teaches that Christians are to be: “Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord” (Rom. 12:11). The one-talent man was condemned as a: “wicked and slothful servant” (Mat. 25:26)!

Our Works Will Follow Us
And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them (Rev. 14:13).

The Bible says of righteous Abel, that: “he being dead yet speaketh” (Heb. 11:4).

Christ’s Faithful Workers Will Be Rewarded Eternally In Heaven
Jesus said of them:
Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14:1-3).

Forget Not to Show Hospitality
Andrew M. Connally

Hospitality is one of the greatest tools the Lord has ever devised to keep us faithful. My heart bleeds when I realize how few Christians open their homes regularly to the brethren and the lost. With some it is a constant and regular affair. With many it virtually never happens.

What could be more Christian than showing hospitality? Our homes are precious to us. Here we live and die. Here we love and learn. Here our children came into this world and our happiest hours are enjoyed. Why in the world would we neglect to share all this with others.
Many who are members of the church rarely if ever bother to have a meal prepared for others. We selfishly go our own way compartmentalizing our Christianity and shutting all others out of our home life.

Christians need strengthening by the association found in our homes. So often delinquents are restored at church and we never invite them into our homes to encourage them. They flounder, fail, and fall away once again, all without us feeling responsible in any way whatsoever.

New members come our way and we rejoice when they place membership or are baptized, and we forget them. The "family" never takes them in and like a bright, burning coal they begin to lose their heat until they too turn to ashes! For shame, brethren! For shame!

Is it any wonder we lose so many of our number when we realize the lack of hospitality as evidenced by our selfish attitude? Yes, it takes time, effort, and money to show hospitality, but the rewards are enormous and the alternatives are horrible! Will you not re-evaluate your priorities and realize our need, your need, and their need for your hospitality? Please do not let anything or anybody stop your efforts to be a part of the great "family of God" at this place.

And remember, forget not to show hospitality!

**Coincidence or Creation?**

*Foy E. Wallace, Jr.*

“The rotation of the earth on its axis, for instance, is 1,000 mph at the equator. If it were 100 mph instead, the days and nights would be ten times as long, the result of which would be the burning up of all vegetation each long day and the freezing of each surviving sprout each long night. The sun, the source of light, has surface temperatures of 12,000° Fahrenheit; the earth is far enough away for the right warmth, not too much, not too little. If the sun gave less radiation, the result would freeze us all; and if more, it would roast us all. The slant of the earth is at an angle of 23°, which gives seasons, and if not so tilted, the movement of the vapors of the sea would turn continents into ice. If the moon were set at less distance from the earth, tides would submerge all continents twice daily, and the mountains would erode away. If the crust of the earth were ten feet thicker, there would be no oxygen and all life would die. If the atmosphere were thinner to the point of precision, meteors which hurl from their orbits and dart toward the earth and which now burn and consume in the atmosphere, would shoot to the ground and set fires over the whole earth, all of which is proof that life was created, is governed by mathematical laws and is not an accident.”

*Bulwarks of the Faith*

Deceased

Bellview Lectures on the Internet

Lessons from Moral Issues We Face, can be viewed at:

Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read  Nancy Travis
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Connie Kois (Ray Dodd's sister)
Betty Podgurski (Crowe's daughter)
Larry Randolph (Ashley Brower's grandfather)
Alta Cork (Ashley Brower's aunt)

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family of Joyce Brantley who passed away on July 1. Please keep her family in your prayers.

Please Remember

**July 10**
Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.

**July 11**
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.
From Disbelievers to Disciples

Ken Chumbley

During the course of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, He not only faced hostility from the Jewish leaders of the day but also from His own family. John’s Gospel states:

After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. Now the Jews’ feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him. Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come (John 7:1-8).

This text reveals that Jesus’ own siblings did not believe in Him during the course of His earthly ministry. It seems His brothers were not in conflict with the world therefore they were of the world which hated Jesus. Whereas some might suppose that Jesus’ brothers would have been proud of Him, it is far more likely that they were ashamed of Him. And yet, though they did not believe in Him during His earthly ministry, His brothers would later be found among the disciples in the upper room (Acts 1:13-14). What might account for their transition from disbelievers to disciples?

That which brought about the change in Jesus’ brothers was, almost certainly, the same thing that turned Saul of Tarsus from a persecutor into a preacher (the apostle Paul): the resurrection! (1 Cor. 15:5-8; Acts 26:12-23).
Such radical changes, in those who had not previously been Jesus’ disciples bear strong witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Barring some delusion or mental illness, what else might explain how these adversaries became advocates.

When the aforementioned texts are read together, we discuss a profound truth. The resurrection changes people! When an honest tender hearted sinner is confronted with the reality and the implications of the resurrection, such cannot help but change. Sadly, we have a tendency to write off people too soon. We will make a judgment that they are “too far gone,” “stuck in their ways,” or are just lost causes and hopeless cases. As a result we do not proclaim to them the Gospel that has the power to change lives (Rom. 1:16). We need to remember that it is not our task to judge the soil but to sow the seed far and wide knowing that God will give the increase (Luke 8:4-15; 1 Cor. 3:6-7).

535 Belvedere Clearwater Rd
Belvedere, SC 29841

Our Divisions Over Non-Essentials and Opinions Hinder the Obedience of Some

Charles Pogue

Some articles deal with things that often stand in the way of religious people accepting the truth of the Gospel. One category of hindrances is various false doctrines that are in direct conflict with what the New Testament teaches. Another category of obstacles, though, is division among us over non-essential matters, matters of opinion or judgment, and personal scruples. All of the foregoing causes of illicit division have something in common. Each one is based on either a false interpretation of Scripture or a personally held interpretation of a difficult passage when one cannot be absolutely certain what the correct interpretation is.

To illustrate: Divisions have occurred over the use of a single or multiple cups in the Lord’s Supper, cooperation between congregations to teach the Gospel, having a fellowship meal in the church building, etc. Those who make fellowship issues out of all the foregoing do so because in one way or another, they have mishandled the Scripture. There are other more direct ways of mishandling the Scripture which can cause a person to erect an unwarranted wall to fellowship, causing a division that can make those on the outside of the church (or the unfaithful on the inside for that matter) wag their collective heads at our pettiness, strong-arm tactics, and pointless division. One of those ways is to insist that one’s personal interpretation of a passage is the interpretation that everyone else must accept.

Several illustrations come to mind. Brethren have divided over whether or not a woman can speak even to ask a question in a Bible class when men are present. The claim is made based on an interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:34. These persons ignore the fact that they assemble under discussion is one in
which the miraculous gifts of the Spirit are being exercised. For anyone to assume from this verse that a woman is not to utter a sound in any assembly would imply that she could not sing in the worship, which thing is commanded to do (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), or that a woman obeying the Gospel could not make a confession of faith to Christ, which all are required to do prior to being baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Mat. 10:32-33; Acts 8:36-37; Rom. 10:9-10).

A second passage would be Romans 5:12. Some brethren believe Paul refers to physical death in that verse. Some say he has spiritual death in mind. I believe Paul is referring to physical death which came upon Adam, because God banished him from the garden and separated him from the tree of life, and upon the rest of mankind as a consequence of Adam’s sin. I do not believe Paul is referring to spiritual death; that sounds to me like hereditary depravity. However, I could accept someone’s view that Paul is referring to spiritual death if what they mean is that sin separates man from God, and that the sacrifice of Christ was necessary to bring about reconciliation when one obeys the Gospel.

Another passage illustrating unwarranted division is from Judges 11. In agreement with others, this writer believes the simple reading of the text makes it apparent that Jephthah offered his daughter as a burnt offering. However, some brethren believe that Jephthah did not keep the vow in that way, but rather dedicated her to the Lord, which included her remaining a virgin for her entire life [this editor’s view]. While some may not agree with the latter interpretation, there are sufficient textual, moral, and linguistic arguments for it to be a legitimate view that I dare not make my interpretation a matter of fellowship and write off as liberals and modernists, those who do not agree. Brethren known to this writer, who hold the latter view, have as strong a belief in the integrity, accuracy, and literalness of the Bible as anyone. They simply have a different interpretation of the events.

Holding to the doctrine of Christ is absolutely mandatory, and must be done for one to be in fellowship with the Lord and His faithful people (2 John 9-11). Man cannot question that, period. However, a brother or brethren accepting a different interpretation on a difficult passage that does not relate to a salvation issue or issues, or contradict the same, does not mean they have less respect for the Scripture.

Where passages are so clear that there is no room for alternate explanations we must not dare to try to introduce another. At the same time, if we make differing interpretations of difficult passages that do not relate to salvation issues matters of fellowship and divide over them, we not only hinder the efforts of faithful brethren to confront real departures from the faith; by our insistence on my way or the highway, we jeopardize our own souls by hobby-riding, and can easily become a lost person’s excuse for rejecting our attempts to teach them the unalterable Gospel of Christ which cannot be compromised.

2 John 9a
“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God.”
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read  Nancy Travis
Mary Cunningham  Ella Hammac
Dot Lambert  Horace Myrick
Robbie Cravey  Rubye Bailey
Bill Busch  Ray Dodd
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Tony Busch (Busch’s son)
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Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Ray Dodd’s sister)
Betty Podgurski (Crowe’s daughter)
Larry Randolph (Ashley Brower’s grandfather)
Alta Cork (Ashley Brower’s aunt)

Please Remember

July 17
Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

July 18
Visitation Group 3 will meet at 6:00 pm.

July 25
Visitation Group 4 will meet at 6:00 pm.

July 27
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
The Scottish Episcopal Church, after some serious discussions, unveiled a new service in which all masculine pronouns have been replaced with a gender-neutral variety, while the trinity of “Father, Son, and Holy Ghost” is now “Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier” (according to www.womensrights.change.org). There is at least one reason for this change. According to the same article, “to refer to God as male will always make it difficult for women to achieve full equality even in a progressive denomination like this one.” Continuing in the next paragraph:

God has been painted with a beard for centuries because when churches referred to him in male terms, they meant that he is male. This also came in handy for excluding women from church hierarchy.

Some, when announcing changes, will refer to a process of much study, prayer, and discussion, no doubt thinking that this justifies their changes. Nothing justifies changes that are not God-ordained. If these discussions were centered upon the Word of God, rather than on pleasing men, God’s Word would be upheld and followed.

In the sight of God, man and woman are equal in Christ. Paul wrote:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28).

Christ died for all. John wrote:

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1.29).

And, again, “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2).

Though in Christ we are all one, we still retain our gender. No matter how many dis-
cussions there may be, there is still the gender difference in some of what God has for His children.

For instance, no matter how many discussions might be had, God still has placed men in the overseer position. Paul wrote:

This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach (1 Tim. 3:1-2).

The Psalmist penned, “For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven” (Psa. 119:89). Settled means, “to station, to appoint, to erect, to take a stand.” Abraham’s servant stationed himself beside the well to find a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24:13); Jacob set up a stone pillar (35:14, 20); the people stood up when Moses went out to the tent to meet God (Exo. 33:8); God established the boundaries for Israel (The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament). God’s Word is erected in heaven; no man has the right to change what God has already erected.

Beloved, Jesus said, “My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it” (Luke 8:21). May all of us hear and do God’s Word.

Isn’t It Time?

Isn’t it time for Christians to finally stand up and be counted? For too long Christians have been content to keep silent and be a part of the “silent majority,” while we allow those that are unholy and profane speak out against the principles of the Word of God. I wonder if we expect those that are unrighteous, and not living according to God’s precepts, to make a stand for Him when we will not. We are coming into perilous times, not only in this country (compare Pro. 14:34—“Righteousness exalteth a nation: But sin is a reproach to any people”), but in the church of our Lord as well. Let us look at a couple of examples.

The homosexual (gay) movement is continually making inroads into all of our lives. Homosexual marriages are now legal in many of our states. Homosexuals are becoming more and more militant in their demand for rights. They say that their way of living is just an alternate lifestyle and call those that oppose them “Christian bigots.” But just a casual reading of God’s revelation of His will for man, the Bible, will cause us to see that this is not in accordance with His will.

If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them (Lev. 20:13).

For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to
retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;... Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them (Rom. 1:26-28, 31-32).

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10)

Effeminate, here, actually means unnatural lust, or homosexuality. Another of the problems the church is faced with today is women's rights. Even though this is an extremely touchy subject in our nation today the Bible is very clear on its teaching of the role of the woman. Paul, in 1 Timothy 2:12, gives very clear teaching: “But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp [exercise] authority [dominion] over the man, but to be in silence.”

Then, in verses 13-15, he gives two reasons why this is to be so. “For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” Women's rights supporters will say, “We know what Paul was. He was a woman hater.” However, they overlook the fact that Paul is just speaking the “commandments of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37) and that “all scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16).

Even in the church today we are having problems in this area. We have women who are leading in prayers when there are men present. Inspiration says in 1 Timothy 2:8: “I will therefore that men pray everywhere.”

This idea is brought out more effectively in the Greek. The Greek word for men is not the word for mankind in general, but the male, as opposed to the female. Paul, then, goes on to tell what the woman is to do, making a comparison of the man and woman. In light of this, anytime men and women are present together, the man is to be the one leading in prayer.

There is, also, a problem of women getting up to preach publicly while there are men present. Again in 1 Timothy 2, showing this comparison of the man and woman, in verses 11-12, Paul says:

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

Also, in 1 Corinthians 14:34, God, through Paul, says:

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

So the men are to be the public proclaimers of the Gospel and not the women.

It is time that we “stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6:11).
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher     Marge Williams
Charles Williams        Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read            Nancy Travis
Mary Cunningham        Ella Hammac
Dot Lambert            Horace Myrick
Robbie Cravey          Rubye Bailey
Bill Busch             Ray Dodd
Wyatt Blancheri (Born's grandson)
Tony Busch (Busch's son)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer's brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond's nephew)
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Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson's brother/sister-in-laws)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson's friend)
Connie Kois (Ray Dodd's sister)
Larry Randolph (Ashley Brower's grandfather)
Alta Cork (Ashley Brower's aunt)
Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks' brother)
Sharon Green (Karen Ayliffe's sister)

Please Remember

July 25
Visitation Group 4 will meet at 6:00 pm.

July 27
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

August 1
Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.
2 John 9
J. Noel Merideth

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).

Through the years our brethren have understood the “doctrine of Christ” in 2 John 9 to refer to the doctrine which Christ gave and thus to mean the whole Gospel system. This would include baptism, the incarnation, the kingdom, singing—indeed, all matters of the Gospel. So anyone who would do something that is not authorized in the New Testament would be going beyond the doctrine of Christ and thus sinful. Preachers have preached that mechanical instruments of music in worship go beyond the doctrine of Christ and thus sinful. Mechanical instruments of music in worship goes beyond the doctrine of Christ and is thus sinful. In an effort to downgrade the importance of the instrument and in an effort to say that instrumental music is not related to essential matters some want to say that the doctrine of Christ has nothing to do with acts of worship. They take the phrase “doctrine of Christ” and re-define it to mean only things about Christ like the incarnation. They falsely allege that it has nothing to do with singing.

At the forum held at Freed-Hardeman College in October [1985], both Rubel Shelly and Monroe Hawley said that they now felt that the doctrine of Christ only means the incarnation and had nothing to do with the procedures for worship. Elmer Fuller writes in the Christian Standard (October 13, 1985) that his position is that the “doctrine of Christ” in 2 John 9 means “the incarnation” (4). These men are wrong in this matter.

The participles transgresseth and abideth not are descriptive of the same process. “Transgresseth” (ASV has “goeth onward”) is from proagon, nominative, singular, masculine,
present participle of *proago* which means “to proceed, go forward: in a bad sense to go further than is right or proper, to transgress the limits of true doctrine” (Thayer, 537). We have under consideration here a transgression, a sin of going beyond true doctrine. Those who claim to progress beyond the doctrine of Christ have progressed too far. False intellectuals who claim to be advanced thinkers relegate Christ's doctrine to the past as they try to lead people to a different doctrine. Any movement which takes one away from the doctrine of Christ is progress in the wrong direction and results eventually in being lost from God (Gal. 1:6-8).

Guy N. Woods correctly writes of the phrase “doctrine of Christ” in the following words:

The "teaching of Christ" here is not teaching about Christ, or teaching which is Christian in substance or nature; it is the teaching which Christ did personally and through those whom he inspired. It is the teaching of Christ, because he is, in the final analysis, its author, and from him it issued. It is thus an infallible standard, and no deviation from it is possible without apostasy (*A Commentary On The New Testament Epistles of Peter, John, And Jude*, 347).
The Greek scholar A. T. Robertson writes: Not the teaching about Christ, but that of Christ which is the standard of Christian teaching as the walk of Christ is the standard for the Christian’s walk (Word Pictures In The New Testament, 6:254).

B. F. Westcott writes: in the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine which Christ brought, and which he brought first in his own person, and then through his followers (Heb.2:3). This sense seems better than the doctrine of (concerning) the Christ, and the usage of the New Testament is uniformly in favor of it… (The Epistles of St. John, 230).

Alfred Plummer writes: The doctrine which he taught (John 18:19; Rev. 2:14, 15), rather than the doctrine which teaches about him” (Cambridge Bible For Schools And Colleges, “The Epistles of St. John,” 182).

Karl Rengstorf, in Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament, says the “doctrine of Christ” means his whole teaching, not a particular dogmatic or ethic, but his whole teaching (11:164).

A look at the phraseology in New Testament usage will show that the construction “doctrine of Christ” means the doctrine which is Christ’s and which he gave. All the student needs to do is look at similar constructions. In Revelation 2:14-15 we understand that “doctrine of Balaam” and the “doctrine of the Nicholaitans” is the doctrine which Balaam and the Nicholaitans gave. In Matthew 16:12 the “doctrine of the Pharisees” is the doctrine which they gave. In John 18:19 the high priest asked Jesus of “his doctrine” and this was the doctrine which Jesus taught. In Acts 2:42 the “apostles’ doctrine” was the doctrine which they taught.

An analysis of the book of 2 John will show that John uses the words “truth” (2 John 1-2, 4) “commandments” (2 John 6), and the “doctrine of Christ” (2 John 9-11) to refer to the Gospel. These terms refer to the same body of truth, the Gospel.

John writes: If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds (2 John 10-11).

John is not condemning hospitality to strangers as this is not merely a case of hospitality involved. It becomes a case of becoming a partaker in evil action. We are to help strangers, yes; but not aid false teachers nor lend encouragement to their efforts, and not subject ourselves to their corruption. “Partaketh” is from koinonei, third person, singular, present, indicative of koinoneo, a verb which means “to come into communion or fellowship, to become a sharer, be made a partner” (Thayer). Paul writes, “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11). Doctrine is important. We are not to fellowship or be partaker of those who do not bring the doctrine of Christ.

The “doctrine of Christ” includes the “singing” we are to do in our worship to God (5:19). It is a part of the doctrine of Christ, it is written in the New Testament, and anyone who goes beyond that transgresses the Word of God.
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher        Marge Williams
Charles Williams    Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read         Nancy Travis
Mary Cunningham     Ella Hammac
Dot Lambert         Horace Myrick
Robbie Cravey       Rubye Bailey
Bill Busch          Ray Dodd
Iris Gallaher (West Florida Hospital)
Wyatt Blancheri (Born's grandson)
Tony Busch (Busch's son)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer's brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond's nephew)
George Ness (Busch's brother-in-law)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson's brother/sister-in-laws)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson's friend)
Connie Kois (Ray Dodd's sister)
Larry Randolph (Ashley Brower's grandfather)
Alta Cork (Ashley Brower's aunt)
Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks & Debbie Dawson's brother)
Sharon Breen (Karen Ayliffe's sister)

Wednesday Bible Reading
July 27—Dale Cunningham

Please Remember

July 27
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

August 1
Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.
In Ephesians 1:4-5 we read:
According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.

There are many who use this passage to teach predestination in the sense that God has selected certain individuals to be saved while He condemned everyone else. According to the proponents of this doctrine there is nothing one can do to affect one's salvation. However, this is a false doctrine for the following reasons.

The conditional statements regarding man's salvation show this view to be a false doctrine. In John 8:24 Jesus said, "ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Jesus said in Luke 13:3: "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Also, Jesus said in Matthew 10:32: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." Jesus further stated in John 3:5: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." In this verse, Jesus was referring to man's obedience in baptism (Rom. 6:3-6). All of these statement show that man is obligated to do something to be saved. In Matthew 11:28-29 Jesus said:

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

What then does predestination mean? Our English word predestine comes from the Greek word proorizo which means "to mark out be-
The question then becomes, “What did God mark out beforehand?” The answer to this question is the scheme of redemption. The conditions of salvation listed above are part of God’s foundation of the world. This scheme of redemption is offered to all. Those who conform to these conditions are the ones who are predestined unto salvation. Those who reject God’s plan of salvation will be lost.

Huntsville, TX

Not Forsaking the Assembly

Ken Chumbley

When asked, most Christians are aware of the teaching of the Bible which states, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is” (Heb. 10:25). However, when it comes to the application of the teaching of this verse to their lives, Christians are not consistent in keeping its teaching. There is often a significant difference between Sunday morning Bible study, Sunday morning worship, Sunday night worship, and Wednesday evening Bible study. In most congregations there are quite a number more in attendance for the morning worship service than at any other time. This should not be!

Some who attend the Sunday morning services regularly are not to be seen on Sunday night or Wednesday night. Some may attend just the assembly on Sunday morning and not classes or other services. Even those who are there quite regularly will miss on some occasions. Over the past twenty-five years of preaching, I have heard a number of different reasons given by brethren for their absence. Some are too tired to attend others may have had company that caused them to miss one of the meeting times. Some say that they work hard all week and thus they need their rest on the Lord’s Day and thus they will only attend in the morning. Others have been involved with some school or other social activity that has been planned for service times and thus they miss services rather than that activity.

These excuses, for that is what they are, for being absent from the assemblies and classes that the church has are very flimsy indeed. Would a company accept such behavior from their employees? If you were tired and slept in rather go to work, would your boss think that that was acceptable? If company came and you stayed away from work, would that be acceptable? If some school or social activity occurred during working hours, would the boss not mind if you decided that activity was more important and you just did not show up for work? We know that we would not keep our jobs very long if we carried on like this. What does the Lord think of our excuses? Are we really being faithful to Him when we absent ourselves from the services of the church with such flimsy excuses? Are we really “seeking first the kingdom of God” (Mat. 6:33) when we are absent from the services without good reason. I know that there are times when it is impossible for us to attend, when we are really sick (Sometimes brethren will stay away from services because they are “sick,” but that same “sickness” would not keep them away from work!), because their job sometimes re-
quires that they be at work during the times when the church meets. These are reasons.

A number of years ago I heard about the preacher who was the coach of a little league team that had made it through to the play-offs. The game was held Friday night, at the time of the Gospel meeting. The preacher went to the Little League game and not to the meeting. As a result, the preacher was dismissed (and rightly so!). However, some of the brethren had made flimsy excuses for not attending when they could have been there. That was hypocritical! But, you say, the preacher was paid to be there! That is not true. If a preacher only attends the services of the church because he is paid to do so, he is in the wrong job! He is no more obligated to be there than any other member of the church. All have an obligation to be in attendance when the Lord’s people meet unless there is a good reason (not an excuse) for not being there.

But, someone says, “Hebrews 10:25 is only speaking about the Sunday morning assembly for the breaking of bread.” Where does it say that? The passage is talking of forsaking the assembly, any assembly that the church has. Forsaking means to be missing when you could be there. Do you forsake the assembly and make excuses when you could be there? If you have been absenting yourself from the assembly when you could be there, you sin in forsaking and need to repent.

Brethren, it is time we quit giving excuses and started putting the Lord and His kingdom first in our lives. How are we going to convince our friends and neighbors that the Lord and His church is the most important thing in our lives when we let any old excuse keep us from assembling with the saints? Our actions speak louder than our words!

Belvedere, SC

Why Some Sermons Fail

Foster L. Ramsey

All sermons are not masterpieces. Even preachers admit it. Even a sermon that is a masterpiece to some will not be so recognized by others. Even the very best sermons fail to some extent. There are many reasons for such failures.

Some sermons fail because people give no heed. Paul was an inspired preacher. He was a “master pulpiteer,” but Eutychus went to sleep (Acts 20:9)!

Some sermons fail because people ridicule that which is preached. In Athens, Paul preached the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the Athenians mocked the sermon (17:32).

Sermons fail because people consider themselves to be unworthy of eternal life. In Antioch of Pisidia, the Jews were so envious of Paul and Barnabas that they contradicted the sermons that were preached (13:45).

Sermons fail because the hearer will not endure sound doctrine. They want to hear words and lessons that “tickle” the ears. They resent reproving and rebuking, and they reject the truth of sound doctrine (2 Tim. 4:2-3).

Sermons fail because false doctrines and fables already have been accepted, and the hearer has no room for the Truth (4:4).

Deceased
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read     Nancy Travis
Mary Cunningham  Ella Hammac
Dot Lambert     Robbie Cravey
Rubye Bailey    Bill Busch
Ray Dodd        Al Flesher
Iris Gallaher (Health Center of Pensacola)
Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)
Tony Busch (Busch’s son)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond’s nephew)
George Ness (Busch’s brother-in-law)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Ray Dodd’s sister)
Larry Randolph (Ashley Brower’s grandfather)
Alta Cork (Ashley Brower’s aunt)
Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks & Debbie Dawson’s brother)

Wednesday Bible Reading
August 3—Ray Dodd

Please Remember
August 8
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.

August 14
Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm in room 7.
Which Church?  
Harrell Davidson

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28).

Many say that it makes no difference in theory that is! However, in practice it shows that it at least matters to them. Why? Perhaps it is because the first position is a matter if self-justification meaning that they have compromised their convictions if they had them to began with. People join a church for various reasons. We have heard of some that did so because of personal friendships. To some, the preacher appealed to them through the style of dress or diction. Some join a church because of social prestige or to obtain business. To many, but not enough, it is a matter of conviction.

Does it make any difference to the Lord? He went to great pains to foreshadow, picture, or pattern His church (Heb. 8:1-2; 9:8-9; 10:1). He chose to build it Himself. “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mat. 16:18). It, the church, is His because He paid for it and built it because He loved it enough to die for it (Eph. 5:25). He paid the purchase price (1 Cor. 3:9). He chose one church to be His bride (Rom. 7:4; Eph. 5:23-24; 2 Cor. 11:2-3). Christ honored one church by giving it His name. As individuals, we are called Christians (Acts 11:26; 1 Pet. 4:16). Universally, including all Christians, we are an assembly (Rom. 16:16; Heb. 12:23). It was into one church that He the put His table (Acts. 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:17; Luke 22:29-30). He adds the saved to one church (Acts 2:41, 47). Of course, it makes a difference to our Lord!

It is possible for that church to be discovered, restored and perpetuated, minus all that...
denominationalism stands for. The church is perfectly outlined in the New Testament as to its founder, the foundation, the head (Col. 1:18), the creed (Mat. 16:16), its discipline (2 Tim. 3:15), the ordinances (1 Cor. 11:2), the organization (1 Tim. 3) and its message (Gal. 1:8).

The terms of entrance are identical with the Gospel requirements for salvation (Rom 1:16; Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Then there is maintenance to be done. Membership is maintained by following the teaching of the New Testament. By life, be service (Col. 3:17) and by worship (Acts 2:42).

It is by the authority of Jesus Christ that a local congregation of Christians offers to all the privileges of becoming a Christian just as men did under the direction of inspired men (2:38). This causes one to be simply a Christian plus nothing or minus nothing. Being a member of the church you read of in the New Testament without being a party to denominationalism (1 Cor. 1:10). There is freedom in Christ not from Christ, in His Word, or law. We have liberty, not a license; we have law, without legalism; authority without autocracy (human).

When God speaks it does make a difference what men do. About Adam and Eve, Voltaire said, “What a difference could an apple make?” God did not say it was an “apple,” but it made all the difference in the world. You see, the authority and character of God is involved, as well as human destiny. It made a difference what river Naaman dipped in (2 Kin. 5) and it makes a tremendous difference by us being a part of the bride—church of Christ.

Obion, TN

Reasonable Service
W. L. Totty

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God (Rom. 12:1-2).

The people of Paul’s time were familiar with the animal sacrifices which the Jews had offered for centuries. Paul, taking advantage of their knowledge of those sacrifices, referred to our life as Christians by stating that we offer our bodies a living sacrifice. Those sacrifices which the Jews had offered were dead sacrifices; but the sacrifices of Christian people are living; they are active; they are holy and, thus, they are acceptable unto God. Paul said that the presenting of our bodies as a living sacrifice is a “reasonable service.” Thus, we are assured that nothing which the Lord requires of us is unreasonable. I am sure that what little some of us do in contrast with the great blessings which we receive from God could be considered very unreasonable.

“And be not conformed to this world.” The American Standard Version says, “And be not fashioned according to this world.” The word conformed means in accordance with the world. People’s being conformed to this world...
is the reason we have so much trouble and sin in the world today. This also accounts for the great problem of juvenile delinquency as well as adult delinquency. Even at times some people in the church become so interested in conforming their lives to the world that they neglect their children and not only lose their own souls but the souls of their children as well. They sell their children’s souls for the pleasures of this world. Fathers and mothers sometimes strive after the things of this world and neglect the weightier matters of transforming themselves by the “renewing of their minds.” The apostle says that by renewing our minds we may “prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

No doubt, many people who claim to be followers of Christ are merely nominal church members, and what little work they do could not be reasonably considered a sacrifice. The word sacrifice suggests that we do something more than just what is convenient and does not deprive us of anything that we may enjoy. It means that we give up something that would be beneficial to us for something higher and more worthwhile than merely the things pertaining to this life. No doubt, many of the things we consider a sacrifice to God in our lives would not be considered so by Him.

God required the best of the Jews when they sacrificed their animals. The prophet Malachi rebuked the people severely for offering blemished animals as a sacrifice to God, and said, “offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts” (Mal. 1:8).

The Lord has given us 168 hours a week. We may use those hours as we consider profitable, either spiritually or materially. But, if we use those hours striving to accumulate material things and neglect the service of God, we will lose our souls. The average Christian devotes but a small fraction of those hours to the service of God, insofar as the assembling of ourselves together is concerned. Some may consider that by giving one hour of the 168 they are offering their bodies as a “living sacrifice.” The average person receives pay for an average of forty hours a week; and, yet, many spend less than one hour in worship and service to God! Do we honestly think that such is a “living sacrifice” to God? What does God think of me? This is a serious matter which we should seriously consider. Let us try to look at ourselves as God sees us.

Goals

More love for the world—less love of the world.
More zealous work—less jealous thought.
More time making peace—less envy and hate.
More promoting good will—less destroying good will.
More building up—less tearing down.
More burden sharing—less taking bearing.
More praying—less straying.
More working—less shirking.
More action—less faction.

Author Unknown
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher     Marge Williams
Charles Williams       Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read            Nancy Travis
Mary Cunningham        Ella Hammac
Dot Lambert            Robbie Cravey
Ruby Bailey            Bill Busch
Ray Dodd               Al Flesher
Ray Foshee             Fred Stancliff
Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)
Tony Busch (Busch’s son)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond’s nephew)
George Ness (Busch’s brother-in-law)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Ray Dodd’s sister)
Larry Randolph (Ashley Brower’s grandfather)
Alta Cork (Ashley Brower’s aunt)
Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks & Debbie Dawson’s brother)

Wednesday Bible Reading
August 10—Ray Foshee

Please Remember
August 14
Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm in room 7.
August 15
Visitation Group 3 will meet at 6:00 pm.
The ability to speak in tongues was a miraculous gift. When the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit, they were enabled to speak with other tongues (Acts 2:4). Being filled with the Holy Spirit is what the Lord referred to as Holy Spirit baptism (1:5). We know that only the Lord Jesus could administer baptism in the Holy Spirit (Mat. 3:11). At the household of Cornelius “the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word….on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. For they heard them speak with tongues” (Acts 10:44-46). This gift of the Spirit—speaking in tongues—was clearly a miraculous working. In Acts 19:6, when Paul, an apostle, “laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.” In 1 Corinthians 12-14 we have Paul’s detailed discussion of miraculous gifts. He specifically mentions tongues as a spiritual gift. There are nine spiritual gifts listed; the ability to speak in tongues was a miraculous and spiritual endowment.

The church, in its infancy, was related to the miraculous element. Let us be reminded that the early church did not have the New Testament in completed written form. Divine guidance and instruction was needful. God’s answer to this need was provided by the miraculous spiritual gifts. These nine gifts were never intended to be a permanent part of Christianity, but were necessary in the infant church. When God’s written Word was completed, the church would become a “full grown man” and would be enabled to put away “childish things.” This is Paul’s argumentation in 1 Corinthians 13:8-12 and Ephesians 4:8-15. When God had completed His “perfect law of liberty” (Jam. 1:25), the miraculous gifts then ceased to exist. Remember that Paul penned plainly: “whether there...
be tongues, they shall cease” (1 Cor. 13:8). When God’s perfect law of liberty was complete, the miraculous elements (inclusive of speaking in tongues), would cease. God’s inspired law of liberty is that which is perfect! God’s completed divine Revelation (the New Testament of Jesus Christ) did come and miracles ceased!

Let us never forget that there are nine spiritual gifts recorded in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. Spiritual and miraculous gifts belonged to the church of my Lord in her infancy (13:8-11). Those miraculous gifts (inclusive of the ability to speak in tongues), were to last until the church attained “unto a fullgrown man” (Eph. 4:13). Miracles in the early church were designed to confirm the Word of God (Heb. 2:3-4). Miracles would cease when that which is perfect was come! The modern-day tongue talker is forced into asserting that the church of my Lord is still an infant that it still has not attained unto manhood that the Word of God has not been confirmed, and that that which is perfect (God’s inspired and inerrant Word) has not come!

Also, if one spiritual gift remains, then all nine miraculous gifts are still in vogue. Of course, that is the claim of most tongue talkers! That is why they insist the miraculous healings are still capable of being performed. In 1987, you may recall that Oral Roberts appealed to his followers, that the Lord was holding him for ransom—and they had to come up with $4.5 million dollars or the Lord was going to take him “home.” Previous to that, a Letter to the Editor was circulated in the Virginia papers. Remember, Oral Roberts claims to possess miraculous powers and abilities. The letter stated:

My mother received a letter addressed to my grandmother on July 3, 1981. My grandmother passed away March 6, 1981. The letter was from Mr. Oral Roberts. In his letter, he said the Lord had spoken to him and led him to write her the letter asking her to send him $100.00. I think that is a rotten thing, to ask a dead woman for money in the name of the Lord. I just thought you might find it interesting reading.

That is very interesting!! That is something you can sink your teeth into and chew on it for awhile...The stories about his so-called “faith healings” number into the multiplied hundreds! Oral is one of the biggest fakes and frauds of this group in my lifetime! I once challenged Mr. Roberts to a debate on his claims; his reply (from his secretary), suggested his schedule was just too busy for the Lord to be bothered by such a waste of his time and talents!

If one claims to speak in tongues, then he is actually affirming that he has received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Study your New Testament carefully, and you will see that the only ones who were able to speak in tongues were those who had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or those who had an apostle to lay his hands upon them to impart that miraculous gift! Only an apostle, through the laying on of hands, could impart a spiritual gift to another (Acts 8:14ff). However, that person could not impart such a gift to any other. All the apostles have died. Hence, any tongue talker today must insist that he/she has received Holy Spirit baptism. If the bap-
tism of the Great Commission is baptism in water (and it is), and is for all men (and it is), and if Holy Spirit baptism is still in vogue, then we have two baptisms! Now, let your fingers do the walkin’ and let the Bible do the talkin.’ Ephesians 4:5 states in clarion tones: “one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” If the baptism of the Great Commission is water baptism (and it is), and if this is the one baptism (and it is)—then obviously there is no such thing as Holy Spirit baptism available today! Since there is no baptism in the Holy Spirit in vogue today, there can be no speaking in tongues today! If one miraculous gift has been done away, then all nine are done away!!

Evant, TX

Danny Box

If I Were God

Certain characteristics are attributed only to God. God is omnipotent, having infinite and unlimited power (Gen. 1:1). God is omnipresent, present everywhere at the same time (Psa. 139:7-10). God is omniscient, having complete knowledge, awareness, and understanding (139:1-6). As human beings, we could never even come close to being completely like God, but for the sake of this essay, I want to elaborate upon the theme, If I were God.

If I were God, would I be as loving as God is? “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). God could have done anything He wanted with this wicked, sinful world, but He chose to love it, and to send His Son to save the world from their sins. If I were God, would I have been that loving?

If I were God, would I be as merciful as God is? “For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; And his truth endureth to all generations” (Psa. 100:5). God is the Father of all mercy (Heb. 4:16) and shows mercy to all mankind. Without His mercy, we would get what we deserve. If I were God, could I be merciful enough to give someone a second chance?

If I were God, would I be as forgiving as God is? “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). If I were God, could I forgive the very ones that caused the death of my son on the cross? Could I forget as well as forgive as many times as one sinned, as long as he repented of those sins? Would I be able to blot out that sin, and no longer lay it to his charge?

If I were God, would I judge with righteous judgment? Our God is a righteous judge and will “render to every man according to his deeds” (Rom. 2:6). But if I were God, would I be able to judge everyone this way? Would I be lenient on some and harsh on others, or would I take vengeance on some who had wronged me in the past, even if they had repented?

Thanks be to God that we do have a loving, merciful, forgiving God that will be our Judge on the Last Day!

Deceased
Sick

Remember in your prayers:

- Bill & Iris Gallaher
- Charles Williams
- Nellie Read
- Mary Cunningham
- Dot Lambert
- Ruby Bailey
- Ray Dodd
- Ray Foshee
- Wyatt Blancheri (Born's grandson)
- Tony Busch (Busch's son)
- Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer's brother)
- Gabriel Stewart (Diamond's nephew)
- George Ness (Busch's brother-in-law)
- Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson's brother/sister-in-law)
- Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson's friend)
- Connie Kois (Ray Dodd's sister)
- Larry Randolph (Ashley Brower's grandfather)
- Alta Cork (Ashley Brower's aunt)
- Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks & Debbie Dawson's brother)

Wednesday Bible Reading

**August 17**—Andrew Hatcher

Please Remember

**August 21**

Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

**August 22**

Visitation Group 4 will meet at 6:00 pm.
Jesus, the Jews, and the Blame Game

Tim Smith

While our nation has been all up in arms about a motion picture (specifically, as if you did not already know, *The Passion of Christ*, by Mel Gibson), some rather odd and antiquated ideas had surfaced that are perhaps worthy of our consideration. There has been an increase of complaints from “the Jewish community” about anti-Semitic sentiments. There have been *bold* statements from some of the “Televangelist” community about the guilt the Jews bear for the crucifixion. There have been complaints from the “atheist” community about much ado about nothing designed to cause trouble and etc. I seldom get *all excited* about a movie, and while admittedly I have not seen this one, I am not *all excited* about it either way. It is a movie—they make them most everyday out in Hollywood and elsewhere. This one may be a particularly good one or a particularly bad one or an exceedingly average one—I do not know. I may see it someday, but I may not.

What I find troubling is the abundant ignorance of most of the “religious scholars and Biblical authorities” I have seen commenting on the movie on many of the news (?) programs. Biblically speaking, there are some things we need to note:

1. Jesus was crucified for—as a result of, in this case—the sins of all the world.
2. Whereas the Jews of the First Century were sinners, they were no more so than anyone else.
3. The Gentiles of the First Century bore equal guilt with the Jews for the death of Jesus.
4. The Jews of the Twenty-first Century, being sinners, are responsible for the death of Jesus.
5. The Gentiles of the Twenty-first Century, being sinners, are responsible for the death of Jesus.
6. It is impossible for a Gentile today to suc-
cessfully demonstrate his innocence and the exclusive guilt of the Jew for the death of Jesus. The very arguments he would use to convict the Jew would also convict himself.

7. In the New Testament it was the Jews who conspired with the Gentiles to murder the sinless Son of God. There is no getting around that.

8. In the New Testament we are plainly told that all are guilty of sin and therefore all are guilty of the death of the Lord (cf., Rom. 3).

What do these things mean? They mean that to say that the Jews of the First Century are guilty of complicity and conspiracy to commit murder is not hate speech or anti-Semitic sentiment, it is history. It is true. Those are the facts.

What does that mean? Not much of anything, practically speaking, for the Lord was murdered for the benefit of all men—Jew or Gentile—and as a result of the sins of all men—Jew or Gentile. To those who cringe when the Jews are mentioned in connection with the crucifixion—get over it. It happened. To those who feel extra anger at the Jews for the role their forefathers played in the murder of Jesus—get over it. They are co-guilty with us. We all must come to Him for cleansing.

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At the house of Cornelius (a Gentile), Simon Peter (a Jew), said, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him” (Acts 10:34-35). By this statement, Peter especially referred to the racial distinction between Gentiles and Jews. Peter’s observation caused him to enter the home of this Gentile, which the Jews considered “unlawful” (10:28).

That God is no respecter of persons has many applications:

• **Jesus’ Death:** Calvinism’s “limited atonement” heresy teaches that Jesus died for “the elect only.” The Bible teaches that He gave Himself “a ransom for all” (1 Tim. 2:6; cf. Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2). Most men reject Him, but He still died for all.

• **Jesus’ Invitation:** He invites all men to accept the blessings available only in His death. He invites all to come to Him for rest (Mat. 11:28-30). He invites “whosoever will” (Rev. 22:17; cf. John 3:16).

• **Jesus’ Gospel:** He ordered the preaching of the Gospel to “the whole creation” (Mark. 16:15-16). The Gospel is His sole means of inviting all men to come to Him. The Gospel is God’s power to save men (Rom. 1:16). All who obey the Gospel are one, whether Jew or Greek, bond or free, male or female (Gal. 3:28). “God is no respecter.”

We all bear a share of the responsibility for His murder.

So I add my two-cents worth to the debate that has taken so much airtime on television and so many lines of print and where are we? We are in need of the cleansing of the One Who died for us. Do you have that cleansing?

**“God Is No Respeceter…”**

*Dub McClish*

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That God is no respecter of persons has many applications:

• **Jesus’ Plan of Salvation:** All must believe in Him (John 3:16). All must confess their belief in Him as the Son of God (John 8:24; Rom. 10:10). All must repent of their sins (Acts 16:30). All must be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). All must faithfully serve Him (1 Tim. 4:16). The Lord does not save some by the “sinner’s prayer,” others by faith alone, still others by some mystical “experience,” or by some other means. All men are subject to the same conditions of pardon and salvation. Paul taught the same thing “everywhere in every church” (1 Cor. 4:17). “God is no respecter of persons” in the plan of salvation.

• **Death of Men:** Of mankind, Solomon wrote: “all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again” (Ecc. 3:20). Death is an “appointment” all of us must keep (Heb. 9:27). Whether rich or poor, good or evil, powerless or powerful, regardless of race, “God is no respecter of persons” in death.

• **Judgment of Men:** All, good and evil, will be raised and judged (John 5:28-29). Jesus will be the Judge (Acts 17:31) and none will be able to avoid it (2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:12). All will be judged by the same standard (John 12:48), and the sentences will all be flawless (2 Tim. 4:8). Those sentences will determine our eternal abode (Mat. 25:31-46).

*Dothan, AL*

*We all bear a share of the responsibility for His murder.*

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*Dothan, AL*
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher       Marge Williams
Charles Williams          Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read              Nancy Travis
Mary Cunningham          Ella Hammac
Dot Lambert              Robbie Cravey
Rubye Bailey             Bill Busch
Ray Dodd                 Al Flesher
Ray Foshee
Fred Stancliff (Sacred Heart Hospital)
Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)
Tony Busch (Busch’s son)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
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Larry Randolph (Ashley Brower’s grandfather)
Alta Cork (Ashley Brower’s aunt)
Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks & Debbie Dawson’s brother)

Wednesday Bible Reading
August 24—Jim Loy

Please Remember
August 24
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
August 31
Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
When People Want to Know about Salvation, What Can We Tell Them?

Johnny Oxendine

There will always be people who will need additional information about salvation, but we want to give them the opportunity to appreciate just how wonderful salvation really is. Here we would like to offer a little Old Testament background history that might be helpful for them, and for us: Before the children of Israel crossed over the Jordan into the Promised Land, Moses spoke to them to encourage them to remain faithful to God. This series of speeches that Moses gave are recorded in Deuteronomy. Near the beginning of the book, Moses says the following: “The Lord your God hath given you this land to possess it” (Deu. 3:18). After Moses had died and the people were about to go into the land to possess it, Joshua told them: “Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, The Lord your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land” (Jos. 1:13). The land that the children of Israel were to live on had been given to them by God; it was the gift of God. Yet, they still had an obligation to go in and take what was given to them. If they had turned around and gone back to Egypt, they would not have received the gift that God had given to them.

Shortly after the children of Israel entered the land, they came upon the walled city, Jericho. In the ancient world, a walled city was a particularly formidable thing to conquer unless an army was prepared to wage a long campaign. But God said to Joshua, “See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour” (6:2). God had given Jericho to Joshua and the children of Israel. Yet, the children of Is-
rael had to take the city. They were given special instructions about marching around the city once each day for six days and then seven times on the seventh day. After that they were to blow their horns and shout and God said the walls would come down and they could go straight up into the city and conquer it. Jericho was the gift of God, but if the children of Israel had not obeyed God, then they would not have received God's gift.

In Ephesians 2:8 Paul writes, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." There are many today who say, “Salvation is God's gift to man and so there is nothing that one must do to be saved.” Of course many say that one has to “believe,” but they turn around and say that “belief” is not a work that you do (regardless of the fact that Jesus said it was—see John 6:29). These fail to take into account the fact that Israel's land was a gift of God yet Israel had to take that gift; they had to receive it. So also it is today; the salvation that God gives to man through Jesus is a free gift! That concept, however, does not do away with the fact that God expects us to obey Him to receive that gift. In fact, the Bible teaches that obedience is necessary for one to be saved. In Hebrews 5:9 God's grace teaches, "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” Indeed, salvation has already been given for those who obey.

What must we do to receive salvation? After having heard God's Word we must believe it (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6). We must then repent of our sins (Acts 17:30). We must then confess Jesus as the Son of God (Mat. 10:32-33; 1 Tim. 6:12-13). We must then obey the command of Jesus in Mark 16:16 and Matthew 28:19 to be baptized. It is at that point that we receive God's gift of salvation as Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16, Romans 6:1-11, Colossians 2:11-13, and 1 Peter 3:21 teach. Praise God that salvation is a gift! Praise God that we can receive that wonderful gift through our obedience and be saved!

San Mateo, CA

How to Kill a Congregation

Let False Teaching Go Unchecked. Tolerate error in the name of “fairness” or “broad-mindedness.” Let doctrinal problems fester until they defy solution.

Do Nothing to Stop Gossip and Backbiting. Let rumors circulate without restraint about members of the congregation, especially its leaders and their families. Believe everything you hear—that way, no one will want to lead for fear of being picked to pieces.

Place a Low Estimate on the Need for Congregational Unity. Allow the contentious to divide the church into camps that do not have anything to do with each other. Drive a wedge between members, fragmenting the strength and influence of the body. A good fuss will set the congregation back at least an entire generation.

De-Emphasize Mission Work. Reason that there is no cause to be alarmed with somebody halfway across the world when there are so many good works at home—that way, the church is isolated and loses sight of its higher purpose.
Tolerate Sin in the Church. Do nothing about worldly members whose lives bring shame to the church and indignity to the name of Christ.

Foster a cold, spiritless, uncaring atmosphere in the Worship Services. Make no effort to make visitors feel welcome.

Soft-Peddle the Subject of Giving. Offer no bold challenges requiring sacrifice for fear of offending the stingy.

Offer Young People Recreation and Entertainment but No Help with Their Spiritual Lives. Offer them no opportunities to serve others—to flex their spiritual muscles.

Tacitly suggest that the sacrificial, cross-bearing life that makes Christianity come alive is for grown-ups; let them be content with an endless succession of wiener roasts.

Put Programs Above People. Make it necessary for a good idea to go through countless channels before it can ever get off the ground. This insures that whatever enthusiasm exists in the church will be killed by forcing it through the organizational meat-grinder.

Did you read the above thoughtfully and carefully? Let none of us become guilty of trying to kill the congregation!

Author Unknown

Honesty Should Be a Way of Life

Paul Vaughn

There are many character traits that are slowly being cast aside from the essence of many people. One of these important harbingers of character is honesty. Yet, honesty should be a way of life for everyone. It is written, “Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men” (Rom. 12:17). The Scriptures teach honesty and integrity as a principle way of life.

The way of life that is characterized by integrity and honesty does not just happen. Moral character must be anchored in the mind of all children while they are very young if you expect them to be adults who are honorable. This requires time and patience as an investment in the life of every child.

We as a people, in general, have become lazy and slothful allowing the immoral to educate our children in the way of the world.

Too often the entertainment industry has full charge in the moral instruction of the most precious commodity the family has today, the children. Just take an hour today and check on some of the programs that are at the fingertips of our children daily. You will see that adultery is accepted and glorified. Yet, one is not an honest person if he cheats on his wife. There is a persistent diet that glorifies sin that is served up daily on your television, in your living room. The immoral traits of lying are accepted, cheating is a way of life, and greed has become the norm.

Friend, if you want your children to have a way of life that is honest when they become adults, they must be trained in honesty as children. It is written, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Pro. 22:6).

Cloverport, KY
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| Wednesday Bible Reading |
| August 31—Ray Pierce |

| Please Remember |
| August 31 |
| Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium. |

| September 11 |
| Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7. |
The religion of Islam claims “that Jesus Christ is not the prophet mentioned in Deuteronomy 18:18.” Instead, they claim that, “this prophecy refers to the Prophet Mohammed and not to Jesus, because Mohammed is more like Moses than Jesus” (www.islanguide.com).

In view of the absurd claim that Mohammed is more like Moses than Jesus, please note the following 21 points of likeness between Moses and Jesus Christ:

1. Both were Israelites, not Ishmaelites (Exo. 1:1-7; 2:1-10; Mat. 1:1-17).
2. Both were born at a time when national leaders were evil (Exo. 1:8-22; Acts 7:17-19; Mat. 2:1-18).
4. Both were forced to flee the countries wherein they were born and to return later (Exo. 2:11-22; Acts 7:23-29; Mat. 2:12-23).
5. Both refused to become rulers of powerful earthly kingdoms (Exo. 2:11-22; Heb. 11:24-27; Mat. 4:8-11).
6. Both forsook riches (Heb. 11:24-27; 2 Cor. 8:9; Phi. 2:5-8).
7. Both were sent by God to be deliverers (Exo. 3:7-10; Acts 7:34-35; Rom. 11:26).
8. Both possessed great knowledge and wisdom (Acts 7:22; John 2:24-25; Col. 2:3).
9. Both men were meek (Num. 12:3; Mat. 11:28-30).
10. Both delivered laws from God (Exo. 31:18; Mat. 5:7; John. 1:17; Gal. 6:2).
11. Both authenticated their missions and
messages with miracles (Exo. 4:1-9, 29-31; Acts 7:36; John 20:30; Acts 2:22).

12. Both had chosen men as their spokes-
men (Exo. 4:10-16; Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20).

13. Both mediated on behalf of the people
(John 1:17; Gal. 3:19; 1 Tim. 2:5).

14. Both supplied bread for the people (Exo.
16:15; John 6:31-33, 48).

15. Both had a baptism which provided a
transition from bondage to freedom
(Exo. 14:19-21; 1 Cor. 10:1-11; Rom.

16. Both had to be believed (Exo. 4:1-9,
29-31; Heb. 11:29; Psa. 106:10; Mark

17. Both required people to turn from fol-
lowing others to following them (Exo.
14:1-31; Psa. 106:10; Luke 13:3, 5;
24:47; Acts 3:19; 17:30).

18. Both required people by faith to be bap-
tized (Exo. 14:15-31; Heb. 11:29; 1 Cor.
10:1-11; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:37; Gal.
3:26-27).

19. Both led people to the promised rest
(Heb. 3:1-4:16; Rev. 14:13, Rev. 21-22).

20. Both were specially tended by God on
the event of their deaths (Deu. 34:5-6;

21. Both unite in song praising the mighty
works of God (Exo. 15:1-21; Rev. 15:3).

Middleburg, FL

Preventatives

David P. Brown

The title of this article is a derivation of
prevent. Webster defines prevent to mean:
to be in readiness for (as an occasion): to
meet or satisfy in advance: to get ahead
of: to arrive before: to deprive of power
or hope of acting or succeeding: to keep
from happening or existing: to hold or
keep back: hinder, stop: to interpose an
article (Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate
Dictionary).

The study of polio, mumps, measles, influ-
enza, etc. vaccinations would be classified in
the area of preventive medicine. Vaccination,
therefore, are for the purpose of depriving the
germ or virus of the power to succeed in
fecting its host.

As surely as there is preventive medicine
for the physical body, there is preventive
medicine for the spiritual being. The Great
Physician spent much of His earthly ministry
vaccinating the disciples against persecution,
false teachers, hypocrites, etc. (Mat. 5:11-12;
7:15-20; 6:16). The apostles who had been
vaccinated spent much of their time, blood,
sweat, heartache, and tears in vaccinating the
church against infectious error (Acts 20:28-
31; Phi. 3:2; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 4:3-5). We
would do well to receive these vaccinations of
love lest we find ourselves unprepared to deal
with Satan’s efforts to infect us with sin when
they appear (2 Cor. 2:11; Eph. 6:13; 1 The.
5:22).

There will always be those spiritually weak,
insipid, unwise, and short-sighted breth-
ren who believe that one should not preach
against the errors of such things as denomina-
tionalism, women exercising dominion over
men, the divided worship assembly, the error
of mechanical instruments of music in the worship of the church, turning the worship of the church into a three-ring circus to entertain the assembly, and a host of other errors infecting the church today. To this present hour unqualified men in the position of elders attempt to justify such a false view by teaching that unless the congregation is having trouble with such things there is no use to mention them much less preach against them. Such a position has no Biblical foundation and is directly opposed to the Biblical idea of being forewarned is to be forearmed. This false view itself must also be exposed and refuted.

If people of this stripe had the same attitude about physical vaccinations as they do about spiritual ones it would be a ridiculous and sorry world indeed. I am thankful that my parents did not have that attitude when it came to the polio vaccine.

Over a century ago brother Moses E. Lard gave this timely warning that will never be outdated:

The prudent man, who has the care of a family, watches well the first symptoms of disease. He does not wait till his wife is helpless, and his children prostrated. He has learned that early cures are easy cures, while late ones often fail. On this experience he resolutely acts, and the world applauds his wisdom. Why should not this same judicious policy be acted upon in the weighty matters of religion? (Moses E. Lard, “The Work of the Past—The Symptoms of the Future,” Lard’s Quarterly, Vol. II, No. 3, April 1, 1985, pp. 251-262. As quoted in The Search for the Ancient Order, Earl West, Vol. 2, 1950, Cushing-Mallory, Ann Arbor).

Then, as now many brethren refused to see the importance of the Biblical sentiments of Lard, and the church of that day suffered greatly for it. Today the Lord's church is in the tight grip of a terrible apostasy that has been going on for years and shows no sign of abating. More and more churches are turning back to the beggarly elements of human denominational religion and worldliness.

Much of this digression could have been prevented if forty years ago brethren would have received the spiritual vaccinations of those who boldly sounded out the first symptoms of the spiritual errors that greatly infect the body of Christ today. But, sadly, it was not to be. Thus, we must reform and regroup the remaining remnant of faithful saints and press on. The victory is ours, but would it not be wonderful if more of our brethren were as spiritually prudent in the care of God’s family as at least some of them are in the care of their own bodies and those of their physical families?
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read  Nancy Travis
Mary Cunningham  Ella Hammac
Dot Lambert  Robbie Cravey
Ruby Bailey  Bill Busch
Ray Dodd  Al Flesher
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Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks & Debbie Dawson's brother)

Please Remember
September 11
Deacons' meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.
September 12
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.
Why Have a Gospel Meeting?

Brad Green

With our Gospel Meeting just a few weeks away, a great opportunity lays ahead of us to:

**Redeem the Time**

There is no better way to spend our time than by studying the Bible and evangelizing in our community. “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:15-16). The majority of information spread and garnered throughout a normal week is trash. Redeem means “to buy back or to rescue from loss.” What better way to redeem or rescue time that would otherwise be lost than to share the Truth with those around us? While many are using their time to raise millions of dollars for TV time and pet projects, small congregations of faithful Christians are simply sharing God’s Word to those who are lost and being good stewards of the finances which God has blessed them to use towards teaching, edifying, and being benevolent in their local communities. A Gospel Meeting is a good way to redeem the time.

**Offer the Truth to the Lost**

We should be ever cognizant of the example given to us by Jesus, the Christ, in regards to preaching. “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). Jesus commissioned His followers to go “and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Mat. 28:19-20). Sadly, the religious world has been inundated with seminars, conferences, and special social gatherings which offer nothing more than fun and games and a bit of secular education. Many have turned to such worldly gimmicks because they, themselves, have failed to grow in the Faith and do not have the knowledge to teach others. Though their consciences are soothed by the number
of attendees, they have done more harm than good to their visitors and their children who are starving to death because they are not receiving the "sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2). The lost need the Gospel of Christ, for without it, they cannot be saved (Rom. 1:16-17). A Gospel Meeting is a good way to offer the Truth to those who are lost.

Edify One Another

Though entertainment is not an authorized work of the Church, God does want His children to be uplifted in a Scriptural manner. The inspired writer of Hebrews states that Christians can exhort one another simply by being present (10:25). Conversely, "forsaking the assembling of ourselves together" may leave individuals feeling empty. The inspired apostle Paul implores that the preaching of the Truth results in "edification, and exhortation, and comfort" (1 Cor. 14:3). When the brethren in Thessalonica were deeply sorrowed because of a misunderstanding in regards to death and the resurrection, Paul gave them the Truth of God’s Word, whereby they could “comfort one another” (1 Thes. 4:18). A Gospel Meeting is a good way to edify one another.

Resist the Devil

When Jesus was tempted by the Devil, He resisted the attacks by quoting Scripture (Mat. 4:4, 7, 10). The inspired James teaches that we can “resist the devil” by submitting our lives to God and drawing closer to God by getting our lives spiritually clean (4:7-8). Our Gospel Meeting offers both an opportunity to study the Scripture and to draw nigh to God. Many congregations have become “lukewarm” (Rev. 3:16), boasting of good works while they are actually withering away on the vine. Instead of drawing closer to Christ, through obedience, they have placed a clamp of worldliness between themselves and the life giving nutrients of the vine (John 15:1-10). A Gospel Meeting is a good way to resist the devil and keep lukewarmness from creeping into a congregation.

Let us pray for the success of our upcoming Gospel Meeting and work hard to make it so. Placing this good work of God in the forefront of our minds and doing the accompanying work necessary will make our Heavenly Father pleased. Success, in the spiritual sense, is guaranteed if we redeem the time, preach the Truth to the lost, edify one another, and resist the devil.

Lenoir City, TN

The Mechanic

Leroy Brownlow

A mechanic went to hear a visiting evangelist in a little town. The preacher preached that night on money, and presented the sermon under three points. First point: “Make all you can.” The mechanic nudged his wife and said, “That man is the best I’ve ever heard. He is no nitwit. He knows what it’s all about. He is one smart man.” Second point: “Save all you can.” This excited the mechanic and he whispered again, “This beats anything I’ve ever heard. He’s smart enough to be President. This town has never had a preacher that could hold a candle to him.” The preacher commended hard work and thrift, denounc-
ing laziness and waste. The mechanic couldn't keep quiet. He whispered, “I've believed this all my life.” Third point: “Give all you can.” “Oh my,” exclaimed the mechanic, “now he's gone crazy. He has quit preaching and gone to meddling.”

Thought: Isn't it strange that some people's conception of great preaching is a sermon that compliments [or agrees with] them and rebukes others. Remember—your preacher did not write the Bible. He is not responsible for any word in it, but he is definitely responsible for preaching every word in it. And when it is preached, people judge themselves by their reaction to it.

Deceased

**Gospel Meeting**

with

**Danny Douglas**

**October 2 – 7**

“Lessons from Aforetime”

The Cities of Refuge ........................................... Sunday 9 a.m.
What Sin Can Do.............................................. Sunday 10 a.m.
Is the Lord the Builder of Your House?.............. Sunday 1 p.m.
The Brazen Serpent and the Saving Christ.........Monday 7:30 p.m.
Broken Cisterns and the Waters of Shiloh......... Tuesday 7:30 p.m.
The Burning Bush and the Church .................Wednesday 7:30 p.m.
The Tower of Babel ........................................... Thursday 7:30 p.m.
Seek the Old Paths........................................... Friday 7:30 p.m.

A covered-dish meal will be provided on Sunday after the morning service in the general purpose building.
A covered-dish meal will also be provided Monday – Thursday at 6:00 P.M., in the zone room.
Visitation Groups 2 & 4 will provide the meal—Monday & Wednesday
Visitation Groups 1 & 3 will provide the meal—Tuesday & Thursday
Visitors are invited to every meal.

Come and enjoy a good meal and Gospel preaching.
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read  Nancy Travis
Mary Cunningham  Ella Hammac
Dot Lambert  Rubye Bailey
Bill Busch  Ray Dodd
Al Flesher  Ray Foshee
Horace Myrick  Fred Stancliff
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Wyatt Blancheri (Born's grandson)
Tony Busch (Busch's son)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer's brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond's nephew)
George Ness (Busch's brother-in-law)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson's brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson's friend)
Connie Kois (Ray Dodd's sister)
Larry Randolph (Ashley Brower's grandfather)
Alta Cork (Ashley Brower's aunt)
Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks & Debbie Dawson's brother)

Wednesday Bible Reading
September 14—Orville Worley

Please Remember
September 18
Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
September 19
Visitation Group 3 will meet at 6:00 pm.
The Church’s Primary Message

David P. Brown

To some brethren (evidently more than a few), unity among and between men is the fundamental and primary design of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To the contrary, the fundamental design of the Gospel is to bring men into unity with God. One is not ready to preach the Gospel if that one is going into all the world to unify men. We go into all the world to get men to walk with God.

Having stated what the primary purpose of the church via the preaching and defense of the Gospel of Christ is to accomplish, we hasten to add that we are not unmindful of our Lord’s prayer for the unity of believers in Christ as the Son of God and their Savior (John 17:20-21). Any Christian desires to see our Lord’s prayer of unity of all believers answered.

However, it is useless to seek unity among men simply for the sake of unity. Such an idea is foreign to the Bible. The Gospel is God’s power to save men—men who are in need of salvation because they are separated from God by their sins (Mark 16:15; Rom. 1:16; 3:23; 6:23; 10:17; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; 2 Th. 1:8; 1 John 3:4). Thus the unity that should first, foremost, and always concern every Christian is the reconciliation of men to God through the preaching and defense of the pure, unadulterated Gospel of Jesus Christ (John 12:48; Col. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:1-3). It is vain to seek unity among men apart from “walking in the light” of God’s truth (1 John 1:7; cf. John 8:31-32; 17:17; Jude 3).

Therefore, whatever causes any member of the church to deviate from the doctrine of Christ, no matter how slight the departure may seem to fallible men, such a departure ruins the ultimate, final, and logical end of the Divine Scheme of Redemption—the salvation of the souls of men.

If, therefore, the unity Christ prayed for
and Paul commanded (1 Cor. 1:10), the planks of which are listed in Ephesians 4, is to be realized, we must learn to put “first things first” or we will get the proverbial “cart before the horse” in the matter of unity and thereby corrupt the whole Divine system of unity (Mat. 6:33).

Without the doctrine of Jesus Christ believed and obeyed, no person can be saved and remain in a saved state with God. Only

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Gospel Meeting
with
Danny Douglas
October 2 – 7

“Lessons from Aforetime”

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The Tower of Babel ........................................... Thursday 7:30 p.m.
Seek the Old Paths .......................................... Friday 7:30 p.m.

Danny Douglas

A native of Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee, and graduate of Freed-Hardeman College, Danny has been preaching the Gospel of Christ on a regular basis since 1977. He has labored with churches of Christ in Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, and Virginia. He also worked in public education for approximately 10 years, on the elementary, middle, junior high, and college level. He has devoted some 16 years to preaching the Gospel over the radio and worked in several Gospel meetings and lectureships through the years. He lived and labored on the mission field of Sevastopol, Ukraine, and also, the United Kingdom, and is currently involved with evangelistic efforts in the Philippines. He was the editor of the “Standing Fast” publication and is on the faculty of the Truth Bible Institute. He is a self-supporting businessman and is the preacher of the Central Church of Christ in Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee. He and his wife Laarni Tabalon Douglas have two children: Lydia and Daniel Moses.
The Biggest

Tim Smith

What is the biggest day of your past? Is it your birth? Birth is important, for without it we would not be. Is it the day you were baptized? That is very important too. Perhaps it is the day you were married. Maybe the day you got your first job, or your first paycheck. Perhaps it was when you bought your first car or house. What is the biggest day of your past?

What is the biggest thing in your life today? Is it your spouse? Your children? Your job? Maybe it is your vacation plans. Perhaps your recreation plans? Is it studying the Bible? How about attending Bible Class? What about working your Bible Class lesson? What is the biggest thing in your life today?

What is the biggest thing in your plans for the immediate future? Is it a promotion? Could it be a trip? Where does spiritual maturity fit in? Do you plan to purchase some good literature and learn more about God from it? Do you plan to make yourself more useful in the work of the church? What is the biggest thing in your plans for the immediate future?

What is your biggest goal in long-term matters? Does it concern retirement? How about a cruise? Maybe a trip to some park or recreation area? Do you plan to garden more? Watch more television? Fish more? What is the biggest goal in your long-term plans?

Of course, the past is dead and gone and the future is uncertain. The only certainty about the future is that at some point Jesus will come in the clouds and call a halt to the world as we know it. We will then have “the biggest” event in our lives—the judgment. I need not ask what the biggest thing will be in your life then…Are you ready for it?

Dothan, AL

by a pure Gospel can men find and possess salvation from sin through the blood of Jesus Christ. And, only those who are saved from sin have authority from God to unite with one another—and then unite only on His terms. To seek a “unity” among men apart from the doctrine of Christ is foreign to and against God’s Scheme of Redemption.

Thus the Holy Spirit-inspired John instructs us:

Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partner of his evil deeds (2 John 8-11).

We, therefore, must teach, believe, practice, and contend for unity with God first, which unity comes only through compliance with Christ’s doctrine. Only by such compliance with the doctrine of Christ is the unity for which Christ prayed and which Paul commanded obtained and perpetuated.

Spring, TX
Sick

Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher     Marge Williams
Charles Williams       Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read            Nancy Travis
Mary Cunningham        Ella Hammac
Dot Lambert            Rubye Bailey
Bill Busch             Ray Dodd
Al Flesher             Ray Foshee
Horace Myrick          Fred Stancliff
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
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Larry Randolph (Ashley Brower's grandfather)
Alta Cork (Ashley Brower's aunt)
Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks & Debbie Dawson's brother)

Wednesday Bible Reading

September 21 — Carl Ayliffe

Please Remember

September 26
Visitation Group 4 will meet at 6:00 pm.

September 28
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
There they were, the sons of Jacob standing before the governor of Egypt. Unknown to them was the fact that the ruler before whom they stood was their own brother Joseph, against whom they had sinned many years earlier. One of them, Reuben, recalls the warning that he had given to them back then: “Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required” (Gen. 42:22; cf. 37:18-27).

“Do not sin against the child.” Over 50,000,000 of our precious American children have been sinned against since the legalization of abortion by the U.S. Supreme Court (January 1973). One of the things that God hates is: “hands that shed innocent blood” (Pro. 6:16-19). When Cain killed Abel, the voice of his blood cried unto God from the ground (cf. Gen. 4:10). Oh the voices of blood that God must hear today because of legalized murder in our land!

While it is deplorable that a parent would leave a child in a hot car to perish from intense heat, how sinful it is for parents to leave their children in front of the DVD or TV to watch all kinds of vile and filth, where fornication and immodesty are glamorized and the name of the Lord our God is taken in vain! Do we not believe God’s Word which teaches that out of the heart proceed: “the issues of life” (Pro. 4:23)?

One of the greatest sins committed against children in our land is spiritual neglect! Perish the thought of allowing a little child starve to death! Yet, many allow their little hearts to starve for God! Jesus said: “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Mat. 4:4). While many parents work hard to provide for their child’s mental, physical, and social development, they neglect the
The Church
Andrew Connally

The church is not made of people who believe they are better than others, but rather it is made of those who realize that they should be better than they are and must continually strive to do better always.

The church is not made of sinless people, but people who realize they are following a perfect Lord and a perfect law and therefore must do the very best they can.

The church is not made of people who never make mistakes, but those who often acknowledge their mistakes and then forsake them. Never must we seek to justify them or continually make the same mistakes over and over again.

The church is not trying to withdraw from everyone, but rather to draw everyone into its fellowship and love who are willing to walk in the light where God the Father and the Christ are found.

The church is not trying to set up arbitrary rules to hinder anyone, but rather to show the rule of Christ which helps everyone.

The church is not trying to take the joy out of your life, but rather is trying to put real joy in every life it touches.

The church is not trying to separate you from your money, but rather is trying to keep your money from separating you from God.

The church is not trying to become the master of your life, but rather trying to get you to master yourself.

most important one of all, the spiritual. “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:52).

It should be no surprise that our land is filled with despair, addictions, violent crime, fornication, suicide, and broken homes, when the Word of God has been rejected. “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hos. 4:6). Jesus said: “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

The story is told about a mother who became negligent in worshipping God. She used her child as an excuse. One day one of the elders of the church went to talk to her, and he asked her, “What if God took away your excuse?” Shortly thereafter, the mother was restored to the Lord. “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11).

The mother and grandmother of Timothy did not sin against him, but instilled in him a deep faith in God (cf. 2 Tim. 1:5). Paul said to him: “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15; cf. Rom. 10:17). Fathers also have a God-given responsibility here: “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). We need fathers like Joshua, who determined: as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Josh. 24:15).

Mt. Pleasant, TN
Gospel Meeting
with
Danny Douglas
October 2 – 7
“Lessons from Aforetime”

The Cities of Refuge ........................................... Sunday 9 a.m.
What Sin Can Do ................................................ Sunday 10 a.m.
Is the Lord the Builder of Your House? ............... Sunday 1 p.m.
The Brazen Serpent and the Saving Christ .......... Monday 7:30 p.m.
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Visitors are invited to every meal.

Come and enjoy a good meal and Gospel preaching.
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher      Marge Williams
Charles Williams        Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read             Nancy Travis
Mary Cunningham         Ella Hammac
Dot Lambert             Rubye Bailey
Bill Busch              Ray Dodd
Al Flesher              Ray Foshee
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Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Ray Dodd’s sister)
Larry Randolph (Ashley Brower’s grandfather)
Alta Cork (Ashley Brower’s aunt)
Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks & Debbie Dawson’s brother)

Wednesday Bible Reading
September 28—Henry Born

Please Remember

September 28
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm,
in the auditorium.

October 2
Attendance Drive and Dinner on the Grounds after the morning service.
The Bible claims to be the exclusive revelation of the true and living God. The Old Testament prophets enjoin, “Hear the word of the Lord,” or like expressions, hundreds of times. Paul declared that God revealed the long-hidden “mysteries” relating to human redemption (i.e., the New Testament) to the apostles by means of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:6-10, 13; cf. 2 Pet. 1:21). Jesus promised the apostles that, upon His ascension, He would send the Holy Spirit unto them to guide them “into all the truth” (John 16:13)—the doctrine of “inspiration.” To preach any other “gospel” than the one the apostles preached brings the anathema of God (Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Tim. 4:2-4; Jude 3; Rev. 22:18-19; et al.).

The Bible’s claim of inspiration is thus not merely that which one might attribute to exceptional artistic or poetic talent, but that Deity especially and specifically endowed its writers to produce its words.

If the Bible is not thus inspired, how does one account for its amazing unity of theme—the redemption of mankind from sin, introduced in its early pages (Gen. 3:1-15)? This unity exists although some forty writers wrote its sixty-six books over a span of sixteen centuries. The theme is so pervasive that we may accurately describe John 3:16 as “the Bible in miniature.” Only a Mastermind, far beyond the ability of human genius, could have produced this effect.

How does one account for the Bible’s prophecies and their fulfillment apart from God? Modern psychics and astrologers sometimes make lucky guesses in general terms about future events over a few months or a year—and gullible people are amazed. Bible prophets never consulted stars, crystals, or cards, yet they often foretold times, people, places, and events in specific terms, which no man could know unless Him Who knows all...
The bumper sticker said, “Try Jesus, if you don’t like him, the devil will always welcome you back.”

The concept of one trying Jesus has much to merit it. However, there is a problem with that phraseology. Jesus is not some food that one tries to see if he likes it. I am sure that we have all tried something new and decided that for some reason we did not like it. Jesus, however, is in a completely different category. Before one can really try Jesus, he must come to believe that Jesus is the Christ. Jesus said, “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24). Further, one must make the good confession, “And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 2:37). Thus, in order to try Jesus one must make a commitment to Him. Furthermore, lest any get the idea that belief is all that is necessary, one must repent of his sins and be baptized (immersed) into Christ for the forgiveness of his sins in order to be saved and added by the Lord to His church (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 2:38, 41; 22:16; Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21; etc.). When one has become a Christian, only then can he truly “try Jesus” by living in harmony with His will. If one is not willing to live the kind of life that Jesus commands in His words, then he is not willing to “try Jesus.” One cannot expect the blessings of the Christian life without being willing to live according to the commandments of Jesus. Our Lord said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

However, the second part of the statement on the bumper sticker surprised me. Recognizing that the source from whence the bumper sticker was obtained and judging by other stickers, etc. on the truck would indicate that it came from a source that believes the doctrine of “once saved, always saved” or “once in grace, always in grace.” If one believes that doctrine, how could they possibly say that the individual that “tries” Jesus can go back to the devil if he does not like Christ? If, according to that false theology, one has become a Christian in order to “try Jesus” then he continues in a saved state regardless of what he might do for such an individual, according to that false theology, cannot be lost.

On the other hand, if the intent of the bumper sticker is to encourage people to
“try Jesus” without coming to faith in Him, even in accordance with their false theology of faith only or faith alone, then they are encouraging people to think that they can enjoy the benefits of Christianity without any form of commitment to the Christ.

We should never encourage people to simply “try Jesus” but rather we should teach them the necessity of obedience to the Gospel and commitment to living the Christian Life.

The only way one can experience the blessing of salvation in Christ and the blessings of the Christian life is for one to be “in Christ” and we get into Him when we are baptized into Him (Gal. 3:27). If you are not a Christian, we would urge you to believe that Jesus is the Christ, repent of your sins, confess the name of Jesus before men, and then be baptized into Him for the remission of your sins.

Belvedere, SC

Gospel Meeting
with
Danny Douglas
October 2 – 7
“Lessons from Aforetime”

The Cities of Refuge ................................................... Sunday 9 a.m.
What Sin Can Do ..................................................... Sunday 10 a.m.
Is the Lord the Builder of Your House? ....................... Sunday 1 p.m.
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Sick

Remember in your prayers:

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Charles Williams           Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read                Nancy Travis
Mary Cunningham            Ella Hammac
Dot Lambert                Rubye Bailey
Bill Busch                 Al Flesher
Horace Myrick              Fred Stancliff
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)  Ray Dodd (Sacred Heart Hospital)
Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)  Tony Busch (Busch’s son)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)  Gabriel Stewart (Diamond’s nephew)
George Ness (Busch’s brother-in-law)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)  Connie Kois (Ray Dodd’s sister)
Larry Randolph (Ashley Brower’s grandfather)  Alta Cork (Ashley Brower’s aunt)
Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks & Debbie Dawson’s brother)

Wednesday Bible Reading

October 5—Gospel Meeting with Danny Douglas

Please Remember

October 9

Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.

October 10

Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.
Broken Cisterns
Jeremiah 2:9-13, 19
Danny Douglas


1. Anytime we turn from God and spiritual things to sin and the things of the world, we are doing what God’s people of old were guilty of!

For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water (Jer. 2:13).

2. Jesus Christ is the Source of salvation and eternal life, the Source of Living Water (John 4:10-14; 7:37). Examples today of man turning from God to “broken cisterns”—

• Have turned from Bible reading and prayer in school to the teaching of foolish and ungodly evolution. The broken cistern of evolution! (Gen. 1:1; Rom. 1:18-25; Psa. 14:1; 53:1).

• Have turned from a “thus saith the Lord” to “I think” or “man says”—vain and foolish man-made religion. The broken cistern of the doctrines and philosophies of man (Col. 2:8).

• Have turned from being able to take man at his word (a man’s word is his bond)—to lying, cheating, and stealing. The broken cistern of dishonesty! (Eph. 4:25).

• Have turned from sincere and devout worship to that which tickles the ears and entertains people. The broken cistern of vain human worship (2 Tim. 4:3-4; Mat. 15:9).

• Have turned from purity and decency to vulgarity and immodesty—lasciviousness. The broken cistern of immorality (Gal. 5:19-21).

• Have turned from loving thy neighbor as thyself unto self-centered and uncaring
• Have turned from resisting temptation to please God unto giving in to lust to please oneself. The broken cistern of lust (2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Cor. 6:18; Gal. 5:19-21).
• Have turned from loving the truth of God's Word to craving that which suits our fancy. The broken cistern of itching ears (2 Tim. 4:3-4).
• Have turned from sacrificial giving to giving God that which is blemished and leftovers. The broken cistern of holding back that which is due unto God (2 Cor. 9:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Mal. 1:8).
• Have turned from loving spiritual things and spiritual-mindedness to fleshly ways and greed. The broken cistern of carnal-mindedness (Rom. 8:6-7; Col. 3:1-2).
• Have turned from friendliness and kindness to hard-heartedness and a proud look. The broken cistern of foolish pride (Eph. 4:31-32; Pro. 6:16-19).
• Have turned from hospitality and sharing to hoarding up and a closed door. The broken cistern of not sharing and not being hospitable (Heb. 13:1-2; Acts 2:42-47; 1 John 3:16-18).
• Have turned from a life of prayer and talking to God to a life of trusting in self. The broken cistern of self-reliance (1 Tim. 6:17).
• Have turned from looking to the Word of God to trusting in personal feelings and desires. The broken cistern of leaning to one's own understanding (Pro. 3:3-7).
• Have turned from obedience to the Scriptures to faith alone. The broken cistern of faith only (Jas. 2:14-26).
• Have turned from respect and honor for parents and the elderly to forgetfulness and neglect. The broken cistern of disrespect (Eph. 6:1-3; Pro. 23:22).
• Have turned from reverence for God and is high and holy name to irreverence and taking God's name in vain. The broken cistern of irreverence for God (Mat. 6:9; Jer. 2:19; Ecc. 12:13-14).
• Have turned from serving and helping to the desire to be served and catered to. The broken cistern of self-servingness (2 Tim. 3:1-4).
• Have turned from a broken and contrite heart to a stubborn and obstinate heart. The broken cistern of self-will (2 Tim. 3:1-4).
• Have turned from hard work and diligence to laziness and ease. The broken cistern of slothfulness (Rom. 12:11).
• Have turned from zeal and earnestness to indifference. The broken cistern of lukewarmness (Rev. 3:15-17; Heb. 2:3; Jam. 4:17).
• Have turned from urgency and haste in doing God's will to procrastination and carelessness. The broken cistern of a false sense of security (Pro. 27:1; 2 Cor. 6:2).
• Have turned from loving God to loving
pleasures. The broken cistern of worldliness (1 John 2:15-17).

• From the soul-saving Gospel of Christ to the commandments of men that turn from the truth. The broken cistern of damnable heresies (Tit. 1:14; Mat. 15:9; 2 Pet. 2:1).

• Have turned from the sanctity of life to abortion and euthanasia. The broken cistern of murder! (Pro. 6:16-19; Gal. 5:19-21).

• Have turned from their first love of Christ to the sin of lacking love. The broken cistern of not having love (Rev. 2:4-5; 1 Cor. 13).

• Have turned from loving a good name to wayward living. The broken cistern of walking uncircumspectly (Eph. 5:15-17; Pro. 22:1).

• Have turned away from bringing up a child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord to bringing them up according to worldly standards. The broken cistern of earthly standards (Eph. 6:4).

• Have turned from a close and loving home to a divided home with strife. The broken cistern of a divided house (Mark 3:25).

• Have turned from love and purity to fornication and adultery. The broken cistern of treachery and immorality (Heb. 13:4; Mal. 2:14-16; 1 Cor. 6:18-20; Gal. 5:19-21; Mat. 19:3-9).

Mt. Pleasant, TN

The lessons from the Gospel meeting with Danny Douglas are available for viewing on our website at: www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.php

Biblical Illiteracy

According to Earl Radmacher, Zane Hodges, and Leland Ryken, all well versed in biblical translation, the following problems are the result of the way different versions have changed the text of the Bible:

1.) There has been decreasing confidence in the inspired text.

2.) A decreasing basis for the correct interpretation.

3.) A decreasing use of Scripture in the worship services.

4.) A decrease in expository preaching from the Bible.

5.) A decrease in the memorization of Scripture.

6.) A decrease in biblical literacy (188-189).

The Bible must always be at the heart of our preaching, teaching, and way of living. If the Scriptures do not guide our lives, we have no guide better than ourselves. No human document can compare in the least with the Word of God. Woodrow Wilson is reported to have said, “We have deprived ourselves of the best there is in the world if we deprive ourselves of a knowledge of the Bible.” There is no comparison: the Bible is the best guide, and the believer’s life is the best guided. Do not be deprived of the Bible’s rich blessings. Read it daily. Study it often.

Work Cited


Author Unknown
**Sick**
Remember in your prayers:
- Bill & Iris Gallaher  Marge Williams
- Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
- Nellie Read  Nancy Travis
- Mary Cunningham  Ella Hammac
- Dot Lambert  Rubye Bailey
- Bill Busch  Al Flesher
- Horace Myrick  Fred Stancliff
- Ray Dodd  Robbie Cravey
- Wyatt Blancheri (Born's grandson)
- Tony Busch (Busch's son)
- Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer's brother)
- Gabriel Stewart (Diamond's nephew)
- George Ness (Busch's brother-in-law)
- Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson's brother/sister-in-law)
- Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson's friend)
- Connie Kois (Ray Dodd's sister)
- Larry Randolph (Ashley Brower's grandfather)
- Alta Cork (Ashley Brower's aunt)
- Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks & Debbie Dawson's brother)

**Restored**
Asia McLeod was restored to Christ on October 3. Dale Cunningham was restored to Christ on October 7. Please keep Dale and Asia in your prayers and offer them encouragement.

**Please Remember**
**October 16**
Elders/Deacons' meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.
The public press recently brought to light the shameful fact that five denominational preachers admitted in testimony before the Federal Trade Commission that they paid a Washington “university” fifty dollars each, for “degrees,” ranging all the way up to Doctor of Philosophy. Evidence was produced to show that the “university” existed, for the most part, only on paper, yet had branches in most Southern cities. The inglorious publicity focused on these men for buying “degrees,” at fifty dollars each, though in the denominational sphere, affords an occasion to direct attention to a definite trend in the church today. It serves to bring to light the temptations some preachers feel to attract to themselves attention and the condition which prevails in the church which suggests such to them. It is pathetic that a man would so greatly desire to be called Doctor, he would actually stoop to buy such a title, and it is tragic that circumstances obtain which make him want (and perhaps feel the need of) such an empty title of honor.

Titles of honor, whether earned or unearned, whether real or “honorary,” are utterly foreign to the spirit and genius of Christianity; and their use unquestionably falls under the ban of the Lord. In His scathing denunciation of the Pharisees, He said: “they…love…greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren” (Mat. 23:5-8). It should be observed that the title “Rabbi” was not an empty honorary one, but the token of long years of sustained and persistent study. It was, as Albert Barnes points out: a title given to eminent teachers of the law among the Jews; a title of honor and dignity, denoting their authority and ability to teach. They were gratified with such
titles, and wished it given to themselves as denoting superiority. Every time it was given to them it implied their superiority to the persons who used it; and they were fond, therefore, of often hearing it applied to them. There were three titles in use among the Jews—Rab, Rabbi, and Rabban—denoting different degrees of learning and ability, as literary degrees do among us.

Jesus did not forbid the use of these titles on the ground that they were empty and unearned; they were real and bona-fide tokens of achievement and learning; they were condemned on the ground that they served to set up distinctions where there should be none—distinctions among those who have a common Master and Lord, and are, therefore, of a common heritage.

The command here, to continue with Barnes, is an express command to his disciples not to receive such a title of distinction. They were not to covet it; they were not to seek it; they were not to do anything that implied a wish or willingness that it should be appended to their names. Everything which would tend to make a distinction among them, or destroy their parity; everything which would lead the world to suppose that there were ranks and grades among them as ministers, they were to avoid.

To conclude with Barnes:

This title ("Rabbi") corresponds with the title "Doctor of Divinity," as applied to ministers of the gospel; and, so far as I can see, the spirit of the Savior's command is violated by the reception of such a title, as it would have been by their being called "Rabbi." It is a literary distinction. It does not appropriately pertain to office. It makes a distinction among ministers. It tends to engender pride, and a sense of superiority among those who obtain it; and envy and a sense of inferiority among those who do not; and the whole spirit and tendency of it is contrary to the "simplicity that is in Christ."

The logic of the foregoing quotation is irresistible; and Mr. Barnes' words apply with equal force to titles of any nature among Christians, whatever their significance may be. The desire for an education is a laudable one, and a willingness to make sacrifices to that end is commendable. But we cannot avoid a feeling of fear for the consequences to follow the present-day obsession of many among us to spend years of precious time and effort in delving deeply into matters which at the best cannot contribute to the work of preaching the Gospel, and which may, and sometimes do, shake their faith in it. Without any desire to cast reflection on anyone, it is nevertheless true that those who have accomplished the most for the cause of Christ are those whose formal scholastic attainments were nil, and who were utterly without recognition in such circles. We have long felt, and the conviction deepens with the passing of the years, that the best possible preparation a man may make to preach the Gospel, after a mastery of the three "R's," is to obtain a thorough familiarity with the Scriptures, and then to steep and saturate himself with the literature of the Restoration Movement, and go out and preach.

To qualify for the apostolic encomiums,
Reflections of the Power of the Word  

Jess Whitlock

“One sister related this interesting episode about the late brother J. W. Chism. Many years ago, Henry Stetson, related to the Texas hat maker of that name, came into Oklahoma preaching for the Baptists, enjoying great crowds wherever he preached. Some of our brethren in Ardmore approached Mr. Stetson about having a public discussion. They proposed that he meet with brother J. W. Chism. Mr. Stetson agreed to discuss the Bible plan of salvation in debate.

The first debate lasted almost a week, and centered on passages like Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Galatians 3:26-27; 1 Peter 3:21; etc. As the debate drew to a close, Mr. Stetson challenged brother Chism to meet for another debate in another community. Brother Chism picked up the gauntlet. On the third or fourth day of that second debate, brother Chism had just finished his second affirmative argument. Mr. Stetson walked slowly to the podium. Everybody assumed he would enter his negative speech. However, Mr. Stetson turned and spoke directly to brother Chism. He said that if brother Chism would take his good confession that he was ready to go into the water, and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Obviously, the debate closed with that act of obedience (Rom. 6:1-4; 16-18). Brother Stetson then held a meeting in that very community that resulted with somewhere between 40 and 50 people being baptized into Christ, and added to the Lord’s church (Acts 2:41-47). Brother Stetson continued as a faithful Gospel preacher for years to follow. Let us never underestimate the power of God’s Word. Remember, when a man who is honestly mistaken hears the truth, he will either quit being mistaken, or he will quit being honest.

Evant, TX
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams      Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read           Nancy Travis
Mary Cunningham       Ella Hammac
Dot Lambert           Ruby Bailey
Bill Busch            Al Flesher
Horace Myrick         Robbie Cravey
Fred Stancliff
Wyatt Blancheri (Born's grandson)
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Larry Randolph (Ashley Brower's grandfather)
Alta Cork (Ashley Brower's aunt)
Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks & Debbie Dawson's brother)

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family of Ray Dodd, who passed from this life on October 16. Please keep Dot and her family in your prayers and offer any assistance that you can.

Please Remember
October 24
Visitation Group 4 will meet at 6:00 pm.
In the Lord’s parable of the prodigal son, when the young man went into the far country, the father was grieved, of course, as any father would have been. However, there is no mention made that any member of the family went out searching for the young man to persuade him to return to his home. You see, he deliberately turned his back on his father’s house, knowing full well what he was doing (see Luke 15:11-24). When his unholy living led him to the position of feeding swine and hungering so that he would have eaten the husks that the hogs ate, he did not wonder within himself why his elder brother and father or any other family members did not come to warn him and rescue him from his despair.

Instead, he “came to himself” and made his own decision to return to his father’s house where there was plenty and to spare. This somewhat illustrates the passage of Scripture that says when a person sins against the Holy Spirit it is impossible to renew him again unto repentance (Heb. 6:6). The prodigal son already knew what blessings were in his father’s house, but he deliberately left the safety of that domicile and wasted what the father had given him. When one has tasted the good Word of God but then deliberately has forsaken it and thereby rejected the Holy Spirit, we have nothing more to offer him. But, like the prodigal son did, he can “come to himself” and returned. Sometimes when a child of God allows himself to become embroiled in sinful acts and involved in devilish situations, knowing full well that what he has done and is doing is not in accord with the will of the Father in heaven, he wants someone to come looking for him to persuade him to return to the fold of God and to the fellowship of his brothers and sisters in Christ. We readily admit that when we, as Christians, see
a brother overtaken in some sin, it is our duty to restore such a one. However, we are concerned with the one who, in spite of all cautioning and admonition, deliberately chooses to do that which he realizes is sinful. If the guilty person stands back just waiting to tempt his Christian brothers and to almost dare them to do what is right by coming to reprove him and plead with him, I am afraid it would not be with a pure heart even if he allowed himself to be persuaded to return to the fold.

The prodigal son “came to himself” and of his own accord turned back to his father’s house where there was plenty and to spare. He did not stay in the swine pen, rationalizing that first it was his elder brother’s duty to come looking for him. And he did not return with the attitude: See, here I am of my own volition; you receive no credit for my decision to return to my place in my father’s house; now, here I am and I should be restored to my former position!

Rather, he came humbly asking that he be counted worthy of nothing more than a hired servant. He was not haughty of spirit. What we all need to do when we are found in sin is to “come to ourselves,” as the prodigal son did, and humble ourselves to the point that we will again join ourselves with the family of God regardless of whether we will be placed on a pedestal or told to stand in a corner. As a matter of fact, one ought to have that kind of humility of spirit in everything he does. In one of His parables, Jesus taught:

When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with water and calling it infant baptism. But the death, Paul refers to is physical, not spiritual death. The Calvinist is right, and we should accept infant baptism. But the death, unless we miss our guess, sprinkling them with rose petals and calling it a baby dedication. Unless we miss our guess, sprinkling them that he no longer has free will, but no will at all! Unless we miss our guess, sprinkling them with rose petals and calling it infant dedication. If one has not done his duty.

The prodigal son returned humbly confessing his sin and desiring the lowest of positions in his father’s family, he was given the best robe, a ring was placed on his finger, and the father ordered that the fatted calf be killed in celebration of the one who was lost but had returned. Whether or not any of the other Christians do what is required of them, we can never be justified in continuing in sin because someone has not done his duty.

Deceased

Calvinism and Romans 5:12

Charles Pogue

Every tenet of the sad system of Calvinism is 100% in conflict with the nature of God, man, sin, salvation, and with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. God is no respecter of Person (Acts 10:34-35). Thus, unconditional election is false. Anyone can come to salvation (Rev. 22:17). Therefore, the doctrine of the limited atonement is error. Man chooses to obey God or rebel against Him (2 Thes. 1:8-9). Consequently, irresistible grace is against the truth of God. Sin is the transgression of the law of God (1 John 3:4), so, since an infant cannot transgress the law of God, they are not born in a depraved condition.

Over the past thirty or forty years much error, including Calvinistic error has crept into the churches of Christ. Some, for instance, claim that once a person has obeyed Christ, that he no longer has free will, but no will at all! Unless we miss our guess, sprinkling them with rose petals and calling it infant dedication. If one has not done his duty.

Consider, for instance, Romans 5:12. Brethren have debated over whether the "death" in this Romans passage refers to physical death or spiritual death. Those who insist that Adam and Eve died spiritually when they sinned in the garden, hold that Romans 5:12 refers to spiritual death. Romans 5:12 states: “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Notice that the death that entered into the world and passes unto all men was the consequence of the sin of one man, Adam. If the death that passes to all men as the result of Adam's sin is spiritual death, then all are born spiritually dead, the Calvinist is right, and we should accept infant baptism. But the death, Paul refers to is physical, not spiritual death. Verses 13 and 14 bolster this interpretation.

Someone asks why did Adam and Eve not die the day they ate the forbidden fruit? Genesis 2:17 says, “in the day” they ate they would die, not on the day. In other words, in the day Adam ate of the fruit, the consequences came into effect, not that he would die in that twenty-four-hour period. Calvinism is a deadly doctrine with widespread acceptance without incorrect interpretations giving them support.

Granby, MO
a brother overtaken in some sin, it is our duty to restore such a one. However, we are concerned with the one who, in spite of all cautioning and admonition, deliberately chooses to do that which he realizes is sinful. If the guilty person then stands back just waiting to tempt his Christian brothers and to almost guarantee that he realizes is sinful. If the guilty person then stands back just waiting to tempt his Christian brothers and to almost guarantee that he will not be with a pure heart even if he were to return to the fold. The prodigal son “came to himself” and of his own accord turned back to his father’s house where there was plenty and to spare. He did not stay in the swine pen, rationalizing that first it was his elder brother’s duty to come looking for him. And he did not return with the attitude: See, here I am of my own volition; you receive no credit for my decision to return to my place in my father’s house; now, here I am and I should be restored to my former position!

Rather, he came humbly asking that he be counted worthy of nothing more than a hired servant. He was not haughty of spirit. What we all need to do when we are found in sin is to “come to ourselves,” as the prodigal son did, and humble ourselves to the point that we will again join ourselves with the family of God regardless of whether we will be placed on a pedestal or told to stand in a corner. As a matter of fact, one ought to have that kind of humility of spirit in everything he does. In one of His parables, Jesus taught:

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Charles Pogue

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Over the past thirty or forty years much error, including Calvinistic error has crept into the churches of Christ. Some, for instance, claim that once a person has obeyed Christ, that he no longer has free will, but no will at all! Unless we miss our guess, sprinkling them with rose petals and calling it a baby dedication is a mere half step from sprinkling them with water and calling it infant baptism.

Calvinism is having success without any help from those who know it is a false system. Anyone can come to salvation (Acts 10:34-35). Thus, unconditional election is false. Anyone can come to salvation. Romans 5:12 refers to spiritual death. Romans 5:12 states: “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Notice that the death that entered into the world and passes unto all men was the consequence of the sin of one man, Adam. If the death that passes to all men as the result of Adam’s sin is spiritual death, then all are born spiritually dead, the Calvinist is right, and we should accept infant baptism. But the death, Paul refers to is physical, not spiritual death. Verses 13 and 14 bolster this interpretation.

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Sick

Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read  Nancy Travis
Mary Cunningham  Ella Hammac
Dot Lambert  Rubyey Bailey
Bill Busch  Al Flesher
Horace Myrick  Robbie Cravey
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Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Ray Dodd’s sister)
Larry Randolph (Ashley Brower’s grandfather)
Alta Cork (Ashley Brower’s aunt)
Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks & Debbie Dawson’s brother)

Restored

Terri Myrick was restored to Christ on October 23. Please keep Terri in your prayers and offer her encouragement.

Please Remember

October 30

Dinner on the grounds after the morning service. The evening service will be held at 1:00 pm.

He Came to Himself

W. L. Totty

In the Lord’s parable of the prodigal son, when the young man went into the far country, the father was grieved, of course, as any father would have been. However, there is no mention made that any member of the family went out searching for the young man to persuade him to return to his home. You see, he deliberately turned his back on his father’s house, knowing full well what he was doing (see Luke 15:11-24). When his unholy living led him to the position of feeding swine and hungering so that he would have eaten the husks that the hogs ate, he did not wonder within himself why his elder brother and father or any other family members did not come to warn him and rescue him from his despair.

Instead, he “came to himself” and made his own decision to return to his father’s house where there was plenty and to spare. This somewhat illustrates the passage of Scripture that says when a person sins against the Holy Spirit it is impossible to renew him again unto repentance (Heb. 6:6). The prodigal son already knew what blessings were in his father’s house, but he deliberately left the safety of that domicile and wasted what the father had given him. When one has tasted the good Word of God but then deliberately has forsaken it and thereby rejected the Holy Spirit, we have nothing more to offer him. But, like the prodigal son did, he can “come to himself” and returned. Sometimes when a child of God allows himself to become embroiled in sinful acts and involved in devilish situations, knowing full well that what he has done and is doing is not in accord with the will of the Father in heaven, he wants someone to come looking for him to persuade him to return to the fold of God and to the fellowship of his brothers and sisters in Christ. We readily admit that when we, as Christians, see
The apostle Paul, writing to the divided church in Corinth, had this to say:

For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God (1 Cor. 1:17-18).

He later would tell Timothy to “preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2). Furthermore, he told Timothy that there was a time coming “when they will not endure sound doctrine” (4:3). He had already written to Timothy informing him “that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (1 Tim. 4:1).

It does not take a genius to know that for many years we have witnessed the progression of false doctrine—false teaching—false teachers. Paul gave instructions to Titus regarding elders that they should hold “fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Tit. 1:9). There would be and there are false teachers and false doctrine even as we write some two thousand years this side of what Paul said on these matters. We must conclude from the above Scriptures that elders and preachers should have nothing to do with unsound doctrine other than reprove it (Eph. 5:11).

In the Greek, sound may mean “healthful.” Healthful teaching is that which is centered upon the Word. In fact, the ASV of 1901 lists 1 Peter 2:2 as, “as newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation.” Spiritual milk is the healthful Word. There is absolutely nothing that will take the place of God’s eternal Word. When men begin to add to it or diminish from it they break every law of
God and attempt to make Him something that He is not (Deu. 4:2; Rev. 22:18-19). A false teacher does not get his marching order from above where Christ sits on the right hand of God. The false teacher gets his information from below from the home of Satan. False doctrine does not come from above from the Father of lights (Jam. 1:17).

It is past time that we must stand for the Word of God without fear or favor. If a person does not teach sound doctrine they are to be rebuked sharply (Tit. 1:13). Paul said that if a man would put his brethren in mind of these things he would be a “good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished in the words of the faith, and of the good doctrine which thou hast followed until now” (1 Tim. 4:6—ASV). John added one dimension to this when he said, “If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting” (2 John 1:10—ASV).

How much unsound doctrine must one teach before we “receive him not”? How much unsound teaching does one have to agree with before it makes him a partaker of his evil works? Any unsound practice is condemned in the Word. Some will say “he only taught this once.” What about committing fornication once or murder or any other sin you wish to use? Any sinful practice taught or continued in will bring certain destruction upon the very best of us or the vilest sinner ever known.

No man who calls himself a preacher, elder, youth minister, Bible chair director, teacher or Christian, has the freedom to teach unsound doctrine. If they teach it once they are to be dealt with. An unrepentant false teacher only brings division in the church as well as the home. They should be marked and avoided (Rom. 16:17). A man that will not teach sound doctrine or the man who says “amen—give him greeting,” to unsound doctrine should never be given a platform to speak on again. The result of not doing the above has resulted on one of the worst divisions that we have ever witnessed in the Lord’s church.

The faithful must press on without fear or favor even if it means leaving kinfallows or close friends behind. After all, we must save ourselves and those who will hear and heed.

Obion, TN

The Standard in Religion

Paul Vaughn

In all realms of life there are standards that establish what is correct, reliable, and authoritative. An example of a standard that is authoritative is twelve inches equals a foot. This is true in any part of the country or the world. If one travels to Ohio twelve inches equals one foot. One may travel to Texas and find that twelve inches equals one foot. Twelve inches equals one foot period, whether it is in Hancock County, Kentucky or Hickman County, Tennessee. This principle of what is correct and reliable in inches is valuable for all to understand.

What is the standard in religion? First, one should understand what is not the standard. Our hearts or our feelings are not the stan-
Preaching with Conversions

Souls will not be converted:
- If your primary purpose in preaching is popularity.
- If you aim to please everyone whom you are addressing.
- If you avoid preaching doctrines that are offensive to at least some of your hearers.
- If you avoid preaching on specific sins of the people.
- If you preach on generalities and avoid preaching on the issues.
- If you preach God's forgiveness without repentance.
- If you preach in such a way as to make people continue in their sins and feel no guilt for it.
- If you present God as one who will never send anyone to hell.
- If you neglect preaching on the holiness of God.
- If you flatter the rich and pay no attention to the poor.
- If you make people believe that they are obligating God by serving Him or by giving offerings to Him.
- By neglecting to preach that the way of Christ is a way of sacrifice.
- If you preach that the entrance of the world into the church is unavoidable.
- If you compromise lest you run into difficulty with anyone.
- If you neglect to emphasize modesty in dress.
- If you neglect the efficacy of prayer in your own life and in the lives of the people of God.
- If you take a text out of context so it becomes nothing more than a pretext.
- If you fear people more than you respect God.

Author Unknown
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher      Marge Williams
Charles Williams      Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read          Fred Stancliff
Mary Cunningham      Ella Hammac
Dot Lambert          Bill Busch
Al Flesher           Horace Myrick
Robbie Cravey        Nancy Travis
Harold Cozad (West Florida Hospital)
Wyatt Blancheri (Born's grandson)
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Gabriel Stewart (Diamond's nephew)
George Ness (Busch's brother-in-law)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson's brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson's friend)
Connie Kois (Ray Dodd's sister)
Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks & Debbie Dawson's brother)
Donna Heck (Karen Diamond's sister)

Wednesday Bible Reading
November 2—Tim Cozad

Please Remember

November 7
Visitiation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.

November 13
Deacons' meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.

November 14
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.
Enemies of the Word of God

Bruce Stulting

The preacher spoke the truth when he said, “of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh” (Ecc. 12:12). From the beginning of the written word millions of books have been penned. From time to time a book comes along that receives such wide acceptance that it becomes the definitive work in a given field or subject. Other books are opposed and rejected by many for various reasons. Yet, of all the books ever written, none has had so many enemies as the Bible. Many dynamic, learned and influential men have openly declared that they would destroy this Book of books. Diocletian, Roman Emperor (a.d. 284-305), burned Bibles and erected a monument stating: “Extinct is the name of Christian.” The Roman Empire lay in ruins, yet Christianity continues today. Thomas Paine (1737-1809) made the statement, “Five years from now there will not be a Bible in America.” Yet, the Bible remains at the top of the best seller list. Voltaire (1694-1778), a French skeptic, said, “Within 100 years the Bible will be a forgotten book.” Voltaire’s own writing sits forgotten on the shelf and the Bible continues to grow in popularity. The Bible remains the most read, the most translated and most influential book ever written.

Surely, those who wage open warfare against the Word will soon be exposed. Truly, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Psa. 14:1). However, there are many, who are enemies of the Word, who are not so obvious. Jesus likened them to ravening wolves in sheep’s clothing (Mat. 7:15). These enemies are the most dangerous kind. They will profess to be followers of God and believers in Christ. Having gained the trust of the unwary, they will be able to beguile many who will be blinded to their cunning, treacherous attacks aimed at the authority of God’s
Word. Their attack will never be open and direct! It will come with subtlety and deceit, even as was used by their father Satan in the Garden of Eden (John 8:44). It is by such underhanded and cunning means that Satan beguiles the hearts of the simple, and weakens the faith of all! We must be set for the defense of the Gospel (Phi. 1:17).

Those who promise continuous revelation downgrade that which God has revealed in His Word, and minimize its completeness. Such are the enemy of the Bible. We are told that the Scriptures thoroughly furnish us unto all good works and contain all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3). Anyone relying on conferences, synods or councils to update and modernize God's Word arrays himself against the Bible's completeness and authority and thus becomes its enemy. The priest, who advises men that they must have his interpretation to understand the revealed Will of God, demeans the Scriptures and becomes an enemy of the Bible. Jesus stated, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). He did not say, "Ye shall know someone's interpretation of the truth." The Bereans were considered noble because they searched the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:11). The preacher who persuades men to seek salvation on any other terms than those set forth in the Gospel belittles the Word, and is an enemy of the Bible! The modernist, attacks the Holy Writ by trying to rationalize away the plain record of signs, wonders, and miracles recorded within its pages. The man who professes to believe, and does not live it, is also condemned!

Man has made progress by making improvement in industry, transportation, communication, et al. However, man cannot improve on God's perfect, inspired Will. We must never seek to add to, detract from or substitute anything in God's Word. Paul sternly warns, "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" (Gal. 1:8). Man will never prosper by trying to change God's Word. I cannot think of a more fitting verse with which to close this article than Acts 20:32: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

Huntsville, TX

Evidence and the Handling Thereof

Terry M. Hightower

If six people receive the same ( uninspired) letter from a friend, the basic elements involved in interpreting the letter would be: (1) the letter itself, and (2) the handling of the content of the letter. Similarly, before anyone can be a good student of the Bible (i.e., accurately interpret the message God has for man), he must understand that the basic elements involved in Biblical interpretation are: (1) the total evidence, and (2) the handling of that evidence.

Though God through Scripture was only giving one message (Acts 17:11) to everyone (just as the "friend" in his letter to the six meant to do), failure on either of these two ba-
sic elements may (and very likely will) result in conflicting Bible interpretations by different people. Since most of us use texts of the Bible that are alike, this practically eliminates the problem of our receiving a “different letter” as being the primary cause of contradictory interpretations and divisive doctrines. So what is left to claim responsibility for such?

**The Evidence Itself**

The phrase, *the evidence*, is synonymous with the expression, *the total context*, and refers to the adding together of three things: (1) the specific statement of the Bible under consideration, (2) the immediate context of that statement, and (3) the remote context of that statement. It is important to understand the meaning of these expressions.

**Handling the Evidence**

The mere reading (or even memorization) of the Bible text is not sufficient to guarantee that one will understand what the Bible actually teaches. One must surely know what the Bible says, that is, he must know the actual (explicit) statements making up Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. Additionally one must also learn how the various statements, paragraphs, chapters, and books relate to one another.

**Rational or Irrational?**

Basically, there are only two alternatives as to how one will react to evidence: (1) he can choose to be rational, or (2) he can choose to be irrational. Since the religious world has available for its use exactly the same totality of Bible statements or evidence, it should be perfectly clear to us all that it is not enough merely to know what the evidence consists of—one must properly interpret that evidence! One can learn what the Bible means only by correctly reasoning about what the Bible says. In short, one must correctly apply the principles and rules of logic to the totality of statements making up the entire Bible.

**“Not Going Your Way”**

“You’re out of date,” said young preacher Bate
To one of our faithful old preacher;
Who carried for years, in travail and with tears
The gospel to poor sinful creatures.
“You still preach on Hades and shock cultured ladies
With your barbarous doctrine of blood;
You’re so far behind you will never catch up—
You’re a flat tire stuck in the mud.”
For some little while, a wee bit of a smile
Enlightened the old preacher’s face;
Being made the butt of a ridiculer’s cut
Did not ruffle his sweetness of grace.
Then he turned to young Bate, so suave and sedate,
“Catch up, did my ears hear you say?
Why, I couldn’t succeed if I doubled my speed,
My friend, I’m not going your way!”

*Author Unknown*
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read  Fred Stancliff
Mary Cunningham  Ella Hammac
Dot Lambert  Bill Busch
Al Flesher  Horace Myrick
Robbie Cravey  Nancy Travis
Harold Cozad (Health Center of Pensacola)
Wyatt Blancheri (Born's grandson)
Tony Busch (Busch’s son)
Tim Busch (Busch’s son)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
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Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks & Debbie Dawson’s brother)

Wednesday Bible Reading
November 2—Tim Cozad

Please Remember
November 7
Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.

November 13
Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.

November 14
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.
Receive Him Not…Neither Bid Him God Speed

Tim Smith

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds (2 John 9-11).

It is always troubling to find it necessary to address matters of controversy with those who ought to be of a common and precious faith, but it is no less our duty to address such matters, despite the distastefulness. I urge every congregation, every elder, every preacher, and every member to evaluate the actions of every child of God in the light of the text above.

No matter how great some may seem to be, and no matter how great some may think themselves to be, none are above Biblical instruction. Every one of us will be judged by our deeds (2 Cor. 5:21) over against His requirements (John 12:48). Should we happen to be directors of preaching schools or directors of apologetics societies or instructors at preaching schools or elders or even little clones of the above, our actions are not above investigation and our deeds are not above rebuke when they fail to comply with the requirements of Holy Writ.

Know that, even before you begin to apply the above text to the lives of others, some will deny that they teach error even in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Some will say something like this: “I never taught that! And when did I teach it, it was not wrong. I no longer teach that! I teach now exactly what I taught then!” Now, even a small child can see the nonsense of such a statement, but some very educated and highly connected preachers claim they cannot see it!
It does not matter who it is, no matter how much you think of them or they of you, and no matter how much they think of themselves, when brethren fail to respect the authority of His Word, they are wrong. It is sinful to so behave. Such must be called down and rebuked before all that others may fear. My prayers to God are that those currently setting themselves above the very clear and plain teaching of the Scriptures will repent and bring forth the fruit thereof before any more damage is done to the body of Christ.

Please join with me in praying that those who have torn asunder the body of Christ will cease and desist soon—in fact, today, right now, this very instant. Perhaps more on this will appear in this space in the future—maybe a note that the schismatic have seen the forest and the trees. Either way, dark clouds are hovering over some institutions—one long supported by faithful brethren and one that use to be—clouds of destruction and impoverishment, and right so, if the current policies remain in place.

May God grant us the love needed to do what is right—no matter whose feelings must be hurt, no matter what the earthly consequences.

Dothan, AL

Let Us Love One Another

Al Brown

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God” (1 John 4:7).

As we look at this old world, most will agree that nothing is needed more than love. Yet, it is something that is not seen too often—at least, not as the word is used in Scripture. We are not referring to sensual love. We see plenty of that. Nor do we mean a strong affection for a person or thing (Webster’s definition). This is often a perverted love which amounts to idolatry, especially when it is directed toward things. The love to which we refer is not a romantic, sentimental thing. Agape, the word for love used most of the time in the New Testament, means to will and to do that which is good to another (Rom. 13:8-10; 1 Cor. 13:4-7). It means acting toward others the same way God, in Christ, acted toward us, even while we hated and despised God and refused to serve Him (Rom. 5:6-8).

This type of love is not entirely lacking in people of the world. Jesus used the word in referring to the way the world loves in Luke 6:32-33: “if ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for even sinners love those that love them. And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for even sinners do the same.” In this passage, however, He showed how limited that love is in that it operates only within a very small circle—“those that love them.”

The Christian’s love is much broader. He is to love as Jesus loved. Jesus said, “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another” (John 13:34). This includes even one’s enemies; that is, those who

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have malice and animosity toward oneself, not those toward whom one has hostility, for the child of God is not to harbor ill will. This is a distinctive mark that sets Christians apart from the people of the world.

This is not to say church members always love others this way. Indeed, churches have been torn apart from lack of love. Brethren have devoured one another, although such is condemned.

For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another (Gal. 5:13-15).

No matter how far we have progressed in loving others, there is always room to grow. Paul wrote:

brethren, we beseech and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as ye received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, even as ye do walk,—that ye abound more and more (1 The. 4:1).

Paul also penned these words:

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; so that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of offence unto the day of Christ (Phi. 1:9-10).

Loving one another is not optional. John wrote, “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love” (1 John 4:8). Jesus said, “this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ” (John 17:3). If having eternal life is contingent on knowing God (and it is); and if the person who does not love does not know God (and he does not), then the person who does not love does not have eternal life.

John said: “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death” (1 John 3:14). Death means separation. To abide in death means to be separated from God. John says we have passed from being separated from God into life because we love the brethren.

There is no room here for equivocation. You either love the brethren or you do not. To passively not love a brother misses the mark. Do you answer the question, “Do you hate your brother?” with something like “I don’t hate him; just don’t love him?” Then you are abiding in death, for you must actively love the brother to have life. God requires a more active quality. The trouble with “not hating” is that it never remains merely passive. Unless we love the other (i.e., will what is good toward him), the least injury, real or imagined, will produce a response in us which is anything but love.

On the other hand, if we actively love him, we will think the best of a brother, regardless of what he might do or say. We will ignore words or actions that hurt. We will have a magnanimous, attitude toward him which is willing and anxious to forgive. Such love makes us like God and shows to all that we really have passed out of death into life.
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read  Fred Stancliff
Mary Cunningham  Ella Hammac
Dot Lambert  Bill Busch
Al Flesher  Horace Myrick
Robbie Cravey  Nancy Travis
Harold Cozad (Health Center of Pensacola)
Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)
Tony & Tim Busch (Busch’s sons)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond’s nephew)
Donna Heck (Karen Diamond’s sister)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd’s sister-in-law)
Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks & Debbie Dawson’s brother)
Brian Silas (Aleacia Godwin’s friend)

Baptism
We rejoice with Glenda Pearson who was baptized into Christ on November 13. Glenda’s address is: 2310 W. Detroit Blvd, #120; Pensacola, FL 32534. Her telephone number is 904-487-3111. Please remember Glenda in your prayers and offer her encouragement.

Please Remember

November 21
Visitation Group 3 will meet at 6:00 pm.
Seasonal Matters

Tim Smith

As the ever-popular “holiday season” is upon us, it is good that we pause to consider (remember) a few things. We know that no one knows when Jesus was born—no matter who says what, we simply do not know when He was born. The reason we do not know when He was born is that God chose not to reveal when He was born. Rest assured, had He wanted us to know, He would have told us. “Christmas,” literally the Christ Mass, is not a biblically authorized celebration. There is not one word in all of the Bible telling us to celebrate the birth of Jesus, or when such a celebration should be held, or anything of the sort. The thing we are commanded to commemorate is His death—and that each week in the eating of the Lord’s Supper. Is it not strange that the one thing we are told to do each week is the very thing most “religions” omit while adding numerous other celebrations that have no heavenly sanction?

Most of us observe the festive season in one form or another, and I am not decrying the traditional family significance of this time of the year. But my point is this: had God wanted us to have special “Christmas” services or programs, He would have told us. Christians who would be true to the Book and the Author thereof will not stage such observances. Christians who would be true to Him will also not forsake the assembly of the saints for such unauthorized productions. Christians who would be true to the Book will no more allow family gatherings to interfere with the assembly of the saints now than they would at other times of the year. Christians who would be true to the Book will be present in each assembly of the Lord’s people—period.

Should you allow something to come between you and the kingdom (cf., Mat. 6:33), do not seek to justify it by saying, “Oh, well; it is Christmas.” No such word or concept ex-
How Old Was Noah?

- Take the number of chapters in Genesis.
- Multiply by the number of each kind of animal Noah took into the ark.
- Multiply by the number of adults saved in the ark.
- Add the number of days the waters prevailed on the earth (Gen. 7:24).
- Subtract the length in days before Noah opened the window in the ark (8:6).
- Add the number of times the dove came back (8:7-12).
- Divide by the number of times Noah sent out a bird.
- Multiply by the number of Noah's sons.
- Subtract the breadth in cubits of the ark (6:15).
- Subtract the height in cubits (6:15).
- Subtract the number of letters in Noah's name.
- The result is his age at the time of the flood.

Author Unknown

Christ and the Church

_Foy E. Wallace_

“For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church” (Eph. 5:23).

There is a common sentiment that it makes no difference what church one belongs to, if any at all, and that church membership is not essential to salvation. So the indifferentism of “join the church of your choice,” as though God had none, is age-old in religious nomenclature. Such expressions can only be viewed as a sort of “pious profanity” by those who know and believe what the Bible says about the church.

Jesus built the church; He died for it and purchased it with His blood; ransomed and redeemed it; washed and cleansed it. He is the Saviour of it and He will come again to own and claim it. Yet, we are told that it is a very “non-essential” thing.

There are only two senses in which the church can be Scripturally viewed. First, the comprehensive, or universal, sense, to include all the saved of the earth—all who have obeyed the Gospel. Second, the limited, or local, sense, to include all Christians, or saved people in a particular place described and limited by geographical terms. The denominational idea does not fit either case. A denomination is smaller than the whole church, but larger than a local church in that it is composed of many local churches of the same faith and order; therefore, a denomination is
both too large and too small to be Scriptural.

It is admitted that one can be saved without belonging to any denomination. The Lord adds saved people to the church (Acts 2:47). Therefore, a man can be added to the church and never belong to a denomination. Hence, it is the denomination and not the church that is non-essential.

**The Church Is the Body**

Paul's theme in Ephesians is the church in its relation to Christ—Christ and the church. In the first chapter he compares the church to a body, with Christ as head (1:21-22) and in chapter four he declares that “there is one body” (4:4), in chapter five he compares Christ to the husband and the church to the wife (5:21-23). Hence, Paul's view is, one head and one body—one husband and one wife.

Continuing his comparison, Paul uses the family analogy—God the Father, the church, the family (Eph. 3:15). Hence, one Father and one family.

Reverting to the second chapter, he points out the unifying power of the cross of Christ in making the “twain”—Jew and Gentile—one new man—the church—thus reconciling them “in one body.”

If Christ would not accept Jew and Gentile in separate bodies, but united them that they should be “one fold and one shepherd,” what must be His attitude toward the spectacle of (more than) 200 denominational bodies today that dishonor His name and ignore His prayer? (John 17:20-21). [Now well over 1,000—editor]

**Salvation Is in the Church**

The idea that one is first saved by some mystical or mystified, unintelligible or intangible process and afterwards “joins some church” is a common religious delusion. Yet, there is no truth more plainly emphasized in the Bible than the fact that the process of being saved is the process of entering the church (Acts 2:47).

First, it is affirmed in Acts 4:12 that salvation is in Christ. Then, to have salvation, one must get into Christ. Paul, by analogy, in Ephesians 5:30, teaches that as husband and wife are one, so Christ and the church are one. “I speak concerning Christ and the church,” he said. Christ and the church being one, how can one be in Christ and out of the church?

Second, Paul makes the fact that Christ is “the saviour of the body” (Eph. 5:23) the ground of his exhortation to the Ephesians concerning the church as the bride of Christ (5:25). He washed it and sanctified it; cleansed and saved it: purchased it with His blood and redeemed it: reconciles us to God in it and adds all the saved to it. Therefore, out of the church there is no cleansing, no blood, no redemption, no reconciliation to God, no salvation.

Third, the relation between Christ and the church is the same as that which exists between God and Christ. Christ is the “fullness” of God (Col. 1:19), and the church is the “fullness” of Christ (Eph. 1:22). Therefore, no man can come to Christ and ignore the church for the same reason that no man can come to God and ignore Christ.

We exhort the unsaved to come to Christ, “gladly receive the word,” be “baptized into Christ,” and the Lord will add you to His church.

Deceased
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher     Marge Williams
Charles Williams       Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read            Fred Stancliff
Mary Cunningham        Ella Hammac
Robbie Cravey          Bill Busch
Al Flesher             Horace Myrick
Nancy Travis           
Dot Lambert (West Florida Hospital)
Harold Cozad (Health Center of Pensacola)
Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)
Tony & Tim Busch (Busch’s sons)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond’s nephew)
Donna Heck (Karen Diamond’s sister)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd’s sister-in-law)
Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks & Debbie Dawson’s brother)
Brian Silas (Aleacia Godwin’s friend)

Wednesday Bible Reading
November 23—Ray Foshee

Please Remember
November 23
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

November 28
Visitation Group 4 will meet at 6:00 pm.
BEACON
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Minister: Michael Hatcher
Deacons: Henry Born, Elward Brantley, Bill Busch, Bill Crowe, Jim Loy

Sunday Bible Classes for all ages — 9:00 a.m.
Sunday Worship Services — 10:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

Thought for Today
Jimmie Z. Gribble

When wisdom entereth into thine heart,
And knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;
Discretion shall preserve thee. Understanding shall keep thee:
To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, From the man that speaketh froward things;...That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, And keep the paths of the righteous (Prov. 2:10-12, 20).

You are encouraged to read all of the chapter, as just a small portion of the chapter will be used for our “Thought for Today.” That “small portion” reads, “walk in the way of good men.” Let us see just a few good men.

Peter writes of One Good Man. He writes:
For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:
Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to

him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls (1 Pet. 2:21-25).

Jesus is our Great Example, and to walk in His steps is our charge.

Paul wrote of a good man, a good man whose way we would do well to walk in. He wrote:
Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but
God had mercy on him; and not on him only, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me (Phi. 2:25-30).

Here is a good man, a good man giving his life in the work of the Lord.

Paul wrote of two good people. And, to walk in their way would be a great honor. He wrote: Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles” (Rom. 16:3-4).

These were willing to lose their life for the Cause of Christ. Christ made mention of one that did lose his life for the Cause of Christ. John recorded the words of Jesus:

And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write: These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges: I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth (Rev. 2:12-13).

Beloved, there are many “good men” in whose way we should walk. Let us walk in their ways as they walk as Christ walked. Let us also be to our generation and the next, “a few good men.” And, yes, may the number of “good men” (men as in mankind) increase mightily!

Beloved, listen to all of God’s Word, God will do thee good! Portsmouth, VA

What Did You Say?

Richard Steven, III

Have you ever heard some brethren say things that made you question whether you actually heard what you thought you heard? And so you naively question them trying to get a better understanding only to learn you heard right. To say it’s strange what some brethren will say would be an understatement. Perhaps more brethren should read and study God’s Word before they speak. Review the following words:

➤ I only drink (alcohol) a little. When did a little wickedness become alright? (Pro. 20:1; 23:29-35; Gal. 5:19-21; Jam. 2:10).
➤ If I win the lotto (or other gambling activities) I’m going to help the church. When did it become alright helping the church by sinning? (Pro. 15:27; Heb. 13:5).
➤ The church failed my kids. When did it become the church’s responsibility to raise your kids? (Deu. 6:6-9; Eph. 6:4).
➤ I can worship and praise God anyway I want. When did God ever allow man to determine and dictate how He’s worshipped or praised? (John 4:23-24; Heb. 13:15).
➤ You see the Bible this way, they see the Bible that way; it’s a stalemate. When did God’s truth become ambiguous? (John 17:17; 8:32; 2 John 9; Eph. 5:17).
The Power of the Word

Jack Exum

The primary purpose of the New Testament is to produce faith. The simple statement of Paul is “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Here are some ideas that should help us tap the power that is given in the Word.

Hear the Word

Use every opportunity to hear the Word spoken. Attend every service. Go to the neighborhood Gospel meetings [of faithful congregations—editor]. Be present at Bible classes, devotions, and special seminars. Go where the Word can be heard!

Read the Word

Read the Word daily. Read it out loud, silently, to others. Read it at different times during the day. Carry a New Testament with you. Remember, that was one of the habits our parents had that we somehow have misplaced. Fill those vacant spots in the day with the reading of the Word!

Memorize the Word

If you read the Word enough, you will tend to automatically memorize it. Do it deliberately. Say it—speak it—hear it—read it—and then put it in the heart in a permanently positively way—memorize it! Your recall power will become greater and greater. What you see in life will call the Word to mind. This is the way that God gets His mind into us—through the Word.

Meditate on the Word

“O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day” (Psa. 119:97). Now reap the true benefit of the power of the Word—meditate on it. This method of spiritual digestion is the true fore-runner of strength. “But his delight is in the law of the Lord; And in his law doth he meditate day and night” (1:2). This “tree,” planted by the rivers of waters will bring forth fruit in its season. James says, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (1:5).

Surrender to the Word

To hear it and read it and memorize it and meditate on it, will do little good unless we surrender to it. If your faith is weak—read it. If your life is weak, surrender to it.

And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it (Mark 8:34-35).

Self-denial means self-surrender.

Wow! What power!!!
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher       Marge Williams
Charles Williams         Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read              Fred Stancliff
Mary Cunningham          Ella Hammac
Robbie Cravey            Bill Busch
Al Flesher               Horace Myrick
Nancy Travis             Dot Lambert (W FL Hospital Rehab)
Harold Cozad (Health Center of Pensacola)
Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)
Tony & Tim Busch (Busch’s sons)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond’s nephew)
Donna Heck (Karen Diamond’s sister)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd’s sister-in-law)
Kenny Dawson (Linda Parks & Debbie Dawson’s brother)
Brian Silas (Aleacia Godwin’s friend)

Baptized / Placed Membership
Felicia Hurley was baptized into Christ on November 27. Her address is 2310 West Detroit Boulevard; Pensacola, FL 32534. The telephone number is 476-6612 ext 314. Please keep Felicia in your prayers and offer her encouragement.

Wednesday Bible Reading
November 30—Andrew Hatcher
This is the time of year when most people are the happiest, friendliest, most hospitable, and most benevolent. I suppose the reason is what might be termed the “Christmas spirit.” What a wonderful world this would be if this spirit “ran loose” each day of the year, and indeed, this is what the Lord wills. Along with all of the good things this season brings, I have observed some who have extreme positions toward “Xmas.” Not long ago I received a question concerning defense of decorating a tree and giving gifts at this season of the year. This points up one of the extremes, namely, that it is wrong to practice such innocent customs as having a tree and buying gifts, exchanging cards, and such like. There are some religious groups that take this position and among individuals, I have known of brethren at various places who do, also. I think this is the answer to that extreme: if it is wrong to give gifts on December 25, it is wrong also on any other occasion. If it is not wrong on any other occasion (birthday, anniversary, etc.) then it is not wrong on December 25. There is nothing more wrong with decorating a tree with ornaments as merely seasonal custom than with raising a flag on Veterans’ Day or eating a turkey on “Thanksgiving” day. Another extreme is represented by the often-heard cliché, “Put Christ back into Christmas.” Perhaps this sounds good to many, but the truth is that Christ never was in Christmas until man put him there!

In the 5th century the Western church [Roman Catholic—DM] ordered the feast to be celebrated on the day of the Mithraic rites of the birth of the sun and at the close of Saturnalia, as no certain knowledge of the day of Christ’s birth existed (Encyclopedia Americana, 6:622). This statement clearly points out the fact that God was not very concerned about His Son’s
birth's being celebrated. The thing that God considered important for us to celebrate was His death, and we are thus to keep it in sacred commemoration each Lord's Day. It is not by the birth of Christ that we are saved, but by His death and resurrection. Thus when we sing, “Remember Christ Our Saviour Was Born on Christmas Day,” we know not what we sing. God has made it impossible for us to attach any sacred significance to one day as the birthday of Christ by withholding from both sacred and secular history the day on which He was born. For this reason churches of Christ have no special religious observances at this season of the year. The silence of the Scriptures forbids any such religious observance. A practice that began four centuries after Messianic and Apostolic times and gathered all of its ingredients from Pagan customs should indeed be looked upon with repugnance as a religious practice to those interested in New Testament Christianity.

One other extreme is especially noticed: Although I personally believe we are at liberty to exchange gifts at this or any other appropriate time, this can also be carried to extremes. We should not become enslaved by our freedom. Sometimes the contribution figure of the church sees a sharp decline at the close of the year. It may be because our prosperity has decreased, but it may also be because we went to the extreme with our gift-buying, decorating, and so forth. Some members of the church probably spend as much on gifts during this one season as they give to the Lord all year. We should never allow the Lord to suffer because we spent too much money on a wife, husband, child, or others. When such is done, we are in fact making Christ pay for our “Santa Claus.” We should never allow such a seasonal custom to interfere with our giving, church attendance, or other Christian duties. May we be delivered from these “Xmas extremes.”

Denton, TX

An Open Door

G. K. Wallace

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Mat. 7:7). Are we asking, seeking, and knocking? Our prospect for success in the Lord’s work is as bright as the promises of God. We should keep our minds more on the resources than on the difficulties. Let us attempt great things for God and expect great things. All great forward movements have been brought about by men who trusted the uncharted and unknown. Think of the work of Christopher Columbus, the Wright brothers, and Thomas Edison. Paul was not afraid to go to Rome with the Gospel of God. We have a promise of victory. The church will stand as long as the world lasts (16:18).

The messenger may be imprisoned, but not the Message. The Seed of the Kingdom is to grow silently and irresistibly. The door is open and God will answer prayer. His promises are conditional. Victory is conditioned on faith (1 John 5:4). Help from God is conditioned upon love and obedience. “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my
God’s Great Power
Jess Whitlock

In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights (Gen. 7:11-12).

The account of the worldwide floodwaters of Noah’s day is one of the earliest Bible stories that I can recall. I still marvel at the majesty of God’s power. In one day, the fountains of the great deep (oceans and seas) were broken up by God. The windows of heaven opened up with non-stop rain for forty days and nights! In the past few years we have beheld the incredible power of volcanoes. The lava from erupting volcanoes can move slowly. However, the pyroclastic flow travels rapidly. The temperature can easily exceed 800 degrees! That flow can destroy everything in its path. The volcanic eruption of Mount Saint Helen’s affected the weather of our planet for an entire year.

In the past few years we have beheld the incredible power of volcanoes. The lava from erupting volcanoes can move slowly. However, the pyroclastic flow travels rapidly. The temperature can easily exceed 800 degrees! That flow can destroy everything in its path. The volcanic eruption of Mount Saint Helen’s affected the weather of our planet for an entire year.

Geologists who believe the Bible to be inspired are convinced that the flood was a combination of volcanoes erupting in the great deep and volcanoes erupting on land. Erupting volcanoes can produce or destroy mountain ranges. The rains coming from the heavens, the destructive damage done by volcanoes, and God’s power coming over the earth resulted in a worldwide cataclysm. The power of God was made known to a corrupt people (6:5-6).

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise,…the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up,…by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? (2 Pet. 3:9-10, 12).

The first time God destroyed the entire earth was with water. The final time that He destroys the earth it will be done with fire and will include the entire universe! Should we not fear and respect such an awesome God? Should we not prepare for such a time? God will once again show forth His majesty and His power! Noah obeyed God (Gen. 6:22). We must do the same today (Heb. 5:8-9).

Evant, TX

New Arrival
Our congratulations is extended to Bill and Peggy Crowe in the birth of their great-grandson, Aiden Riley Wetter, on November 29. He weighed 8 pounds 14 ounces.

Deceased
Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Iris Gallaher     Marge Williams
Charles Williams       Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read            Fred Stancliff
Mary Cunningham        Ella Hammac
Robbie Cravey          Bill Busch
Al Flesher             Horace Myrick
Nancy Travis
Dot Lambert (W FL Hospital Rehab)
Harold Cozad (Health Center of Pensacola)
Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)
Tony & Tim Busch (Busch’s sons)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond’s nephew)
Donna Heck (Karen Diamond’s sister)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd’s sister-in-law)
Brian Silas (Alecia Godwin’s friend)
Dennis Smith (Dot Brantley’s brother-in-law)

Wednesday Bible Reading

December 7—Jim Loy

Please Remember

December 11
Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.

December 12
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.
Thanksgiving is over and the “sounds of Christmas” are being heard, special music on the radio, stores having their pre-Christmas sales, etc. Among these are the bell ringers outside many stores with their red kettles. Many volunteer to help ring the bells, and many more put money into those red kettles. Do you? If you do, do you know what you are supporting? The funds that are contributed are for the Salvation Army to enable them to raise funds for their various activities. We readily admit that this organization does a lot of good in helping people through disasters, either natural or man-made—fires, hurricanes, floods, etc. However, do you know that the Salvation Army is a church? That is not the face we normally see but I remember clearly working with a congregation in Australia back in 1968 whose building was just around the corner from the Salvation Army church building and often we heard their band playing during their worship services that were at the same time as those of the church. The proximity of the buildings caused much difficulty one Sunday morning as we began to sing a particular hymn when the band started playing the same tune at precisely the same time!

The Salvation Army was established in the East End of London, England in 1865 by William Booth to take religious teaching and benevolence to the downtrodden. It started life as the Christian Mission but in 1875 its name was changed to the Salvation Army. In describing this church, the Abandon Dictionary of Living Religions states:

“…The Army is generally described as ultra-conservative Protestant. Its conditions of membership include conversion, acceptance of its doctrines, abstinence from alcohol and a pledge to support energetically the Army’s principles and work. Membership is divided...”
Sin is from a word which means “to miss the mark.” The marksman could miss his mark by shooting over the mark or by falling short of it. In like manner, we can sin by going beyond what God has said (2 John 9-11), or by falling short of what He requires. Concerning the latter, James wrote, “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (Jam. 4:17). It is in this way that many members of the church sin. They are guilty of the sin of omission. They fail to teach their neighbors the truth; they fail to restore the delinquent members to duty; they fail in assisting the less fortunate; they miss services when they could be present; etc.

The tragedy of the sin of omission is seen in that (1) it breaks God’s commands to work and worship, (2) talent is wasted, (3) spiritual energy is not directed to commissioned officers (ordained ministers, male and female) and soldiers (laity). No sacraments are celebrated but emphasis is placed on public testimony and militant evangelism (646).

The teaching of the Salvation Army with respect to conversion is that of the “faith-only” position of many Protestant denominations. Note also the statement in the quotation, “No sacraments are celebrated” which simply means they do not practice baptism (sprinkling, pouring, or immersion) and that they do not partake of the Lord’s Supper. Also, the quotation states that both men and women serve as “ministers” thus having women take a leading role in the worship of that Church.

The question then arises, with respect to dropping money into these “kettles” is: Can a Christian contribute to this cause? Further, the Salvation Army has been known to ask for contributions from churches. Thus, we would ask: “Can a Christian or a congregation of the Lord’s church give even a dime to this organization and be pleasing to God?”

Since the organization is clearly a Church, would it not be a matter of having fellowship with them by contributing to their work? Indeed, Scripture shows that our giving is a matter of fellowship (2 Cor. 8:4). Can we fellowship those teaching false doctrine (2 John 9-11)? Would it not be “bidding them God speed” to contribute to their work? Clearly their work is done in the name of the Salvation Army and not that of the Lord or His church. We are taught: “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11). The Salvation Army teaches false doctrine and their works are “unfruitful” as far as the salvation of souls is concerned, theirs and those they seek to help. As Christians, we have, therefore a responsibility to “reprove them.” This we cannot do when, either congregationally or individually, we contribute to their causes for to do so is to have, to that degree, fellowship with them.

Similar things could be said with regards to other religious groups that seek contributions from the general public for their work. They all may be doing some good, but we cannot bid them “God speed” in any way to their works and be pleasing to God when they teach and practice false doctrine.

Belvedere, SC
growth is retarded, and (4) it causes one to lose his soul. The tragedy of the sin of omission can also be seen in the ultimate end of (1) the rich man (Luke 16:19-31), (2) the foolish virgins (Mat. 25:1-13), (3) the one talent man (25:14-30), and (4) those on the left hand at the judgment (25:31-46). These were all guilty of the sin of omission.

What a fearful thing to face the Lord at judgment in the same position of the aforementioned ones, being guilty of the sin of omission.

He made no mistake, took no wrong roads.
He never fumbled the ball.
He never went down 'neath the weight of a load,
He simply did nothing at all.

So, death came nigh, for life slipped by,
And he feared for the judgment hall,
When they asked him why, he said with a sigh,
"I simply did nothing at all."

Are we guilty of the sin of omission? Are we shouldering our responsibilities, meeting our obligations, and performing our Christian duties? Eternity is involved in this matter. Let us not fall short or go beyond. Remember, to be lost one need only to be guilty of "the sins of doing nothing."

Author Unknown

Keeping Distractions Out of the Worship
Johnny Oxendine

As we come together on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7) to worship the Lord in spirit and Truth, it should be with the utmost reverence not just for the worship, but also for the respect due our Lord and His disciples. The worship service is to be conducted with a seriousness and devotion to the commands of God and revealing a focused mind that is free of distraction. The Lord’s Supper is to be taken as we remember Him (1 Cor. 11:26)—hardly a time to have/start conversations with people next to us.

This means we need to be cognizant of whether our actions distract those around us from the worship, and that of the service at large. It is difficult for brethren to concentrate on the Scriptures (so this includes morning and Wednesday night Bible class also) if we are yawning out loud, stretching, sipping water (or coffee), clicking our cell phones, or any activities other than attending to the spiritual matter at hand. Is there something about the Lord that does not deserve reverence and our complete attention?

And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour? (Mark 14:37).

We must be able to put the world out of our lives and minds for at least those moments that the Lord should be the primary focus. The study of the Lord’s Word (in worship or class) is not a trivial experience that is no more important than a phone call or thirst-quenching sip. Let this time be for the Lord, and Him only!

San Mateo, CA

Check Out Our Website
www.bellviewcoc.com
Sick

Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams      Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read           Fred Stancliff
Mary Cunningham       Ella Hammac
Robbie Cravey         Bill Busch
Al Flesher            Horace Myrick
Dot Lambert           Nancy Travis
Harold Cozad (Health Center of Pensacola)
Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)
Tony & Tim Busch (Busch’s sons)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond’s nephew)
Donna Heck (Karen Diamond’s sister)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd’s sister-in-law)
Dennis Smith (Dot Brantley’s brother-in-law)

Wednesday Bible Reading
December 14—Ray Pierce

Please Remember

December 18
Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 7.

December 19
Visitation Group 3 will meet at 6:00 pm.

December 26
Visitation Group 4 will meet at 6:00 pm.
An Overlooked Realm
Roelf L. Ruffner

Our society and its religious institutions have forgotten the doctrine of Hell. I am speaking of a place of eternal punishment prepared by the immortal God. Our world would rather forget and ignore this clear teaching of the Bible. The terms hell and damned are used with increasing informality among people today. What once was considered the height of impiety is now considered passé. These terms are used frequently in everyday conversation by millions of ignorant souls. However, God hears and remembers what we say (Mat. 12:36-37).

Yet, Christ did not consider Hell a trivial matter.

It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched (Mark 9:43-44).

These forceful words were uttered by the gentle Savior of whom the prophet Isaiah wrote, “A bruised reed shall he not break, And the smoking flax shall he not quench” (Isa. 42:3). If the Son of God must use such language to warn us of the finality of Hell, it must be a place to be avoided at all costs!

It has been said that “Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.” Likewise, Hell is a prepared place for an unprepared people. God has prepared it primarily for Satan and his angels (Rev. 20:10). Reluctantly, God has also reserved it for those who have not believed in Him and obeyed the Gospel of Jesus Christ (2 The. 1:8-9). Those who have basked in His kindness and the unfathomable generosity of their Creator in this brief physical existence, yet either failed to respond to the call of the Gospel (2:14) or have not been faithful to God in this life will be there. The terms the Scriptures use to describe this eternal place
are frightening: unquenchable fire, lake of fire and brimstone, weeping and gnashing of teeth, everlasting punishment, everlasting fire, and torments.

Yet, I believe the worst punishment of Hell will be for one to be taken from the presence of God for all eternity. When Christ hung upon the cross of Calvary, He cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mat. 27:46). God was too righteous to look upon our sins His Son bore for us on the cross, so He looked away (Hab. 1:13). That utter, complete loneliness will be what the occupants of Hell will agonize over forever and ever. Yet, they will surely know why. Is not this the “second death” John spoke of (Rev. 21:8)?

Brother and sisters in Christ let us love our neighbors too much to see them condemned to Hell and not once warn them. May God grant us the courage and love to lead them to a life away from an eternal torment. “And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh” (Jude 22-23).

Columbia, TN

Zeal According to Knowledge

Many of our brethren are asking why they cannot have that zeal they see in the denominational world, especially since this is the church of the Lord. Paul said something about that type of zeal in Romans 10:1-3:

Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

This zeal, which the denominational world is caught up in, is based on emotionalism. The question asked most often by these people is: Do you know Jesus? They do not ask this in the sense of: Do you know His teachings? What they mean is: Do you have the right feeling, or do you have that warm saved feeling inside of you? Paul felt that persecuting the Christians was the will of God. Many men today do not hesitate in telling someone that it really does not matter whether you go by the Bible or not because God will judge your heart and not whether it is right or wrong according to His Word. How sad, our Father wasting all that time teaching obedience and then to say He really does not care! Jesus said to the contrary:

If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (John 8:31-32).

It is indeed a serious matter because of the scope of this type of attitude. It is not the attitude of a few, it is the prevailing view. On a recent Sunday morning television broadcast, a panel of five religious men of various faiths were answering questions asked by the viewers. The topic of the one church was brought up. The Jewish Rabbi stated that according to the Christian faith Jesus’ mission was one
of love, and, thus, it would not matter how many churches you have. Three denominational preachers agreed with him on this view. These men claim to teach the Gospel, but leave out the words that make up the Gospel. Jesus said:

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day (John 12:48). Jesus is not saying that these are just more words of love for you. These are truths that you will answer for.

This writer is not against zealous people. Paul said to Titus:

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Tit. 2:13-14).

Our Lord wants zealous people, but He wants them zealous “according to knowledge.” In this day of instant everything, men try to get around the chore of reading God’s Word for themselves. They call for the clergy to develop quick and shore formulas to use in personal work. This is the greatest mistake made by anyone.

The Bible will, when read with love for the truth, give one a well-grounded zeal that does not fade with the change of the wind. Acts 20:32 states it well:

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

There is no instant way to a steadfast unmovable faith, it must come from a personal study of the Word of God.

Like everything else, there must be a formula for reaching a desired level of this zeal. First, Paul said this zeal must be “according to knowledge.” This means studying the Word of God for yourself. Second, one must have a love for the truth to avoid believing lies (2 The. 2:10-11). Third, Paul said the Jews would not be saved because they would not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:3). There must be a submission by all to those commands found in the Scriptures.

The desire to be zealous as a Christian is a good desire. Let everyone everywhere be thankful for those zealous men to the restoration. They were truly zealous men according to the knowledge. It would be difficult to think of these men fighting the battles of truth with anything less than the truth. The battle is not over. Take up the sword of truth, love that truth, and give your life to defending that truth.

“Author Unknown

“The reason why worry kills more people than work is that more people worry than work” (Robert Frost). I am a firm advocate of worry-free living. I have not figured out how to perfect it, but I am for it! My rules are simple: Fix what you can. Endure what you must. Worry inhibits repair and impedes endurance. Prayer expedites both! Please pray for me as I pray for you. God bless!—Tim Smith

Dothan, AL
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read  Fred Stancliff
Mary Cunningham  Ella Hammac
Robbie Cravey  Bill Busch
Al Flesher  Horace Myrick
Dot Lambert  Nancy Travis
Harold Cozad (Health Center of Pensacola)
Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)
Tony & Tim Busch (Busch’s sons)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond’s nephew)
Donna Heck (Karen Diamond’s sister)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd’s sister-in-law)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch’s nephew)

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Dot Brantley in the death of her brother-in-law, Dennis Smith, who passed away on December 16. Please keep Dot and her family in your prayers.

Wednesday Bible Reading
December 21—Fred Stancliff

Please Remember
December 26
Visitation Group 4 will meet at 6:00 pm.
The Restoration Plea

Paul Vaughn

The Restoration of New Testament Christianity is the grandest plea that can be made by man. It is a plea for the fundamental truth of the Word of God and the integrity of the Bible. The purpose of the Restoration Plea is to point people back to the Scriptures, to follow the pattern for Christianity given by God in His Word. When men are in submission to the will of God, God is glorified.

The Restoration Plea is a plea for the authority of Christ. All that is done in religion must be done according to His will, authority. “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col. 3:17).

The Restoration Plea is a plea for Christian unity. Jesus prayed that His followers be united, having the same purpose, practice, and faith.

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me (John 17:20-21).

The only way to have the unity in Christianity that Jesus prayed for to come about is go to the Bible and the Bible alone, in this there can be unity.

The Restoration Plea is a plea for the doctrine of Christ. There is only one doctrine that is acceptable for man to follow, the doctrine of Christ. It is written:

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).

To go beyond the doctrine, teaching, of Christ means the loss of God and all the blessings that He gives. Paul told Timothy to "teach no
The Word of God Not Broken, Bound, Nor Buried

J. Noel Merideth

The Bible is a vast library of sixty-six books in one volume, written by forty men over a period of sixteen hundred years. It has one message—progressive, constructive, and complete. It is divine in authorship, human in penmanship, infallible in authority, infinite in scope, universal in interest, personal in application, regenerative in power, and inspired in totality.

This Word of God, the masterpiece of God, the Book above and beyond all books as a river is beyond a rill in reach, as the sun is beyond a candle in brightness, as the Atlantic is above and beyond a mud puddle in glory, is immortal in its hopes—a complete code of laws, the most authentic history ever published, the best covenant ever made, the best deed ever written, and the best will ever executed. The accuracy of its statements and prophecies is substantiated by every turn of the excavator's spade in Bible lands, by history, and by the multitude of inscriptions deciphered among classic ruins.

From rusty coins and corroded marbles we find confirmation of its own veracity. Infinite in height, infinite in depth, it is—and will forever be. It breaks the fetters of the slave, takes the heat out of life's fierce fever, the pain out of parting, the sting out of death, and the gloom out of the grave.

The Bible addresses all mankind, speaks with binding claims, and commands the obedience of all. It is the divine revelation of the world's creation, the soul's salvation, human destiny and the realities of eternity. It offers the first and demands the last by its unequivocal, “Thus saith the Lord.”

Not Broken

“If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came (and the scripture cannot be broken)” (John 10:35). The Jews in this passage took up stones to throw at Jesus because they said He should not apply the word God to Himself. Jesus’ refutation is accomplished by means of reason and Scripture. Major premise: The Scripture cannot be broken; minor premise: The Scripture calls men commissioned by God “gods” (quoted from Psalm 82:6); therefore: Jesus, sanctified and sent into the world by God, is rightly called God in a correspondingly higher sense. The axiom in parentheses “and the scripture cannot be broken” is objective and absolute. The parentheses simply show it is a parenthetic phrase or explanatory comment. Every statement of the Scripture stands immutably, indestructible in its verity, unaffected by denial, human ignorance or criticism, charges of er-
rancy or other subjective attack. No word of it can be destroyed.

Not Bound

"Wherein I suffer hardship unto bonds, as a malefactor; but the word of God is not bound" (2 Tim. 2:9). Paul, a mighty missionary, a valiant soldier of the cross, a great preacher who travelled the Roman Empire with the truths of redemption and left a trail of glory across the Gentile world, this marvelous man who dotted plains and cities with churches he built, was in bonds—but the Gospel he preached was not bound. Paul died, his pen is inactive, but the great message of Truth goes on. His epistles and message still continue. Time and again when the Word of God has seemed to be confronted by insuperable barriers of hostility, indifference, rivalry, and materialism, it has burst its bonds and gone on its conquering way. There is no prison for the word of God.

Not Buried

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword" (Heb. 4:12). "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:25). There have been and are those who have tried to bury the Word of God. (1) There was the Pagan persecution under Diocletian. He made death the penalty for any person who dared to own a copy of the Scriptures. After the decree had been in effect two years he boasted that he had erased the Scriptures from the earth. But this was soon found to be an idle boast for a few years later, Constantine desired copies of the New Testament for all the churches of his empire, and within a few hours fifty copies of God’s Word were made accessible to him. (2) There was the Papal persecution of the Bible in a different form—locking it up from the common people and putting the key in the hands of the priests. Rome became the jailer of the Word of God. Human legends and traditions were urged in its place. But John Wycliffe, after twenty-two years on the task, completed the first English Bible in 1382. Wycliffe was tried and excommunicated by the Roman Church, and forty years after his death the authorities dug up his bones, burned them, and scattered the ashes on the River Swift. Tyndale published the first printed New Testament in 1525. He said that one day he would make the boy that drives the plow in England know more Scripture than the pope himself. His last words, before being burned at the stake, were: “Lord, open thou the King of England’s eyes.” Today, the Bible has been translated into over one thousand languages and dialects. (3) Then another enemy of the Bible stood up as Goliath of Gath challenging Israel—Rationalism, the deification of human reason. The Bible miracles are denied, the deity of Jesus is denied, and the incarnation and resurrection are called myths. No matter under what veils of pretense it makes its assault, rationalism regards the Bible as a human product.

Some have cut up Scripture with a penknife, some have tried to drown it in the muddy waters of their philosophy and ignorance, and some have tried to laugh it out of court. But the Bible stands alive. It is a sword in battle, a guiding light, a gate to heaven, a standard for youth, a comfort for the aged, salvation for the sinner, and grace for God’s children.

Deceased
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill & Iris Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams      Marilyn Hall
Nellie Read           Fred Stancliff
Mary Cunningham       Ella Hammac
Robbie Cravey         Bill Busch
Al Flesher            Horace Myrick
Dot Lambert           Nancy Travis
Harold Cozad (Health Center of Pensacola)
Wyatt Blancheri (Born’s grandson)
Tony & Tim Busch (Busch’s sons)
Turner Risner (Bobbie LaBryer’s brother)
Gabriel Stewart (Diamond’s nephew)
Donna Heck (Karen Diamond’s sister)
Doug & Judy Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s brother/sister-in-law)
Susan Diaz (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Connie Kois (Dot Dodd’s sister-in-law)
Shane Norris (Pam Busch’s nephew)

Wednesday Bible Reading
December 28—Orville Worley

Please Remember

December 28
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

January 8
Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 7.

*Beacon*
This week’s *Beacon* was printed early due to the secretary being on vacation.