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Out With the New; In With the Old
Brad Green

To most, the title of this article probably seems reversed. The phrase, “out with the old; in with the new,” is a common one. This phrase is customarily used in regard to the always changing and progressing industries of technology. Computers, cell phones, iPads, and Blackberries sold today will be obsolete tomorrow. New cars become “used” cars immediately after they are driven off the lot. The world’s obsession with having the newest and best (and more of it) has driven the current downturn in the U.S. economy. People were buying new cell phones rather than paying their debts. They were buying houses with prices far exceeding their reasonable ability to pay, with no money down, and with the encouragement of liberal Congressional leaders like Reps. Barney Frank and Maxine Waters. The problem is not man’s desire to have a house, but man’s inability to be content with what he can afford (Phi. 4:11). The problem is not having things that are new, but rather it is the misplaced trust and love in the physical which leads man to do things he ought not (1 Tim. 6:10). The rich man who tore down his old barns to “build greater” (Luke 12:18) did not sin in that act. His sin was in placing his trust in himself and his earthly treasures rather than laying up for himself “treasures in heaven” (Mat. 6:20). Jesus concluded that this man’s error was that he was “not rich toward God” (Luke 12:21).

The same mentality has led to “new” innovations in the religious world as a means to attract and retain people who were supposed to have been converted out of such (Acts 3:19, Col. 1:13). In the minds of many, the Gospel is not powerful enough to save (Rom. 1:16) and new programs and sources of entertainment are needed to “keep up with the times.” Many in the church are saying, “out with the old; in with the new.” There exists a solemn need for the church to respond forcefully—“No! Out
with the new; in with the old.” The prophet Jeremiah states, “Thus saith the Lord. Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls” (Jer. 6:16). Dire consequences await if there is not a restoration and return to the “old paths.” The restoration led by King Josiah should serve as an inspiring Scriptural example. The restoration began with the reading of the Word of God (2 Kin. 22:8-11). This remedy is so simple to understand, seeing that the “new” innovations being introduced in worship and practice are themselves a product of disregarding the law of God. Next, Josiah proclaimed, “out with the new.” “Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to the children of Israel” (2 Chr. 34:33). Josiah then proceeded to enact the “old paths” by re-instating proper and authorized worship to God (35:1-19).

Sadly, our call to oust the new and return to the old will be received the same way it was in the days of Jeremiah. “But they said, We will not walk therein” (Jer. 6:16). However, our cause is just. Let us continue to plant, water, and let God give the increase (1 Cor. 3:6) as we walk in the “old paths.”

What Is Said When You Are Absent

Have you considered the comments made by fellow Christians when a member of the church is absent from a service? These comments, or lack of them, usually provide a good clue to the faithfulness and dependability of a church member. Note what the following remarks indicate:

“There must be something wrong!” This is usually heard when a member is unexpectedly absent who is ordinarily present for every service. It indicated that he is not one who lets trivial things like a headache or even house guests keep him from worship. He is always in his place unless something serious is wrong.

“Oh, they’re on vacation.” This remark about an absent family pictures Christians who are responsible. They let others know they are going to be away. They make arrangements for the classes they teach and leave their contribution to be given as they purposed so the church can carry on its work even though they are absent.

“They’re probably out of town for the weekend.” One gets the impression on hearing this that these make a fairly regular habit of being gone on Sunday. It causes one to feel that they are not exactly being fair to be gone so much and leave the teaching and other duties to the other members.

Nothing is said. When this occurs, it probably means that the person is absent more than he is present. He may be absent so much that no one notices it anymore, or they just assume that he is willfully forsaking the assembly as usual.

What do people say when you are absent? What does it say about you?

Author Unknown
Begin the New Year with God

Lester Kamp

This is the time of year when all of us do a little self-examination. We find that this is an appropriate time since the old year is now past and we stand at the gates of a New Year. This is the time when many of us look back and take note of the mistakes that we have made last year and determine or resolve to do better in the New Year. We look back on our personal habits, our likes and dislikes, our jobs, our home life, our role as father or mother or child, etc.

Let me urge you to examine your life and determine to begin the New Year with God! You are probably already involved to some extent in self-examination—do not forget the most important aspect of your life. You may be a baptized believer who has drifted away from the Lord. If so, you need to renew your relationship with God. You should realize the condition of your life at present and the things that you have done and the things that you have failed to do in the teachings of God’s Word which are wrong. Then you should determine to do God’s will, being sorry for the sins of the past. When the sin is publicly known, a public confession is necessary; when the sin is private, confess privately your sins to God. Pray for forgiveness. Know that God has forgiven you and live your life for Him.

You may have been putting off your becoming a Christian. Now is the appropriate time to obey without delay. If you believe the Truth, repent of your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of your sins. The time is now (2 Cor. 6:2). There are many who are concerned about you and are praying for you to obey. Many look to you for an example; will you not set the right example for them?

Life is fragile and death is so certain. Begin this year with God.

Evil Companions

G. K. Wallace

“Evil communications [companions] corrupt good manners [morals]” (1 Cor. 15:33). The choice of personal associates is very important. To go wrong here could cause one to lose his soul. There is an old proverb that says, “There were two dry logs and one green log, but the dry logs burned up the green one.” Our associates could destroy us. We all need congenial society. The kind of people with whom we associate is a sure sign of our character. We are the result of our choices. One may be ever so sound in the Faith, but if he frequents the company of corrupt men, he will soon become as they are. We should be careful of our company because of what we are. Evil companions will not tolerate us unless we adapt to their so-called “lifestyle.” Our dedication to Christ should be so complete that we will shun evil companions. Half-hearted men lead only half a life. The only way to keep character up is to live up to the highest standard at all times—Jesus Christ. Paul said, “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:1).
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher        Marge Williams
Charles Williams    Pam Busch
Ella Hammac         Harold Cozad
Bill Busch          Dot Lambert
Horace Myrick       Melvin Torrey
Al Flesher          Nancy Travis
Nellie Read         Bobbie LaBryer
Marilyn Hall (Sacred Heart Hospital)
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Chase Busch (Bill & Pam Busch’s grandson)
Sharon McCrory (Horace & Sheila Myrick’s daughter)
Jason Smith (Debra & Denise Mowery’s nephew; heart procedure–Jan 15)

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

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

Placed Membership
Heather Stark has placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Her address is 5515 Lovaleen Circle; Pensacola, FL 32526. Please welcome her and offer any assistance you can.

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Dub Mc лишь in the death of his wife Lavonne, on January 5th. Please keep Dub and his family in your prayers.
Topple the “TULIP” (Part 1)

Jessie Whitlock

John Calvin departed from the errors of Romanism with new errors of his own invention. It is hard to find a man-made denomination that does not subscribe to at least one of his tenants. Many religious groups have swallowed Calvin's acrostic TULIP hook, line, and sinker. The a.d. 70 doctrine that has invaded the Lord’s church has succumbed to such sectarianism (there was no other choice)! Using God’s Word as our sword (Eph. 6:17), let us turn and topple the TULIP!

The letter “T” stands for Total Hereditary Depravity. Since not one of these words is so much as found in the Bible, we must allow the false teachers to define what is meant. This doctrine simply asserts that man cannot think or will any good in this life. The idea is that Adam sinned and that all his offspring (all mankind) inherited his sin. It is sometimes called inherited sin, Adamic sin, or original sin. I once had a Calvinist give four proof-texts, but all fell short of the mark in light of all that God’s Word teaches.

(1) Psalm 51:5: “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” I replied that the sin involved in the passage applied to David’s mother (cf. 51:7). (2) Psalm 58:3: “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.” He failed to complete the verse. I know why—it says, “speaking lies.” We all know that babes are not born speaking (lies or truth). The references in Psalms are both hyperboles. (3) Job 14:4: “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.” The context deals with the frailty of man. In Hebrews 2:14 and following we learn that Christ was born into this world—as were we—yet, Christ was not “Totally Depraved” from the moment of His birth, nor at any time! Christ did say, “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of
“Be Not Ye Called,” “Call No Man,” and “Neither Be Ye Called”

David P. Brown

There are only three verses in the New Testament explicitly instructing us concerning religious “titles” and their application to Christians. Jesus taught His disciples concerning the use of “titles” before the multitude in Matthew 23:8-10. In these verses Christ prohibits religious “titles” to be worn by Christians and explains why they are condemned. In the King James Version we read:

But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master [Teacher], even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters [leaders]: for one is your Master [Leader], even Christ (Mat. 23:8-10).

In examining master (“teacher”) in Matthew 23:8, W. E. Vine states in his Greek Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words that master (teacher) is the Greek word didaskalos. Didache, a form of didaskalos, is translated “doctrine” 29 times and didaskalon, another form of didaskalos, is translated “doctors” in Luke 2:46 in the KJV.

Now we come to Luke 2:46:
And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors [didaskalos—teachers], both hearing them, and asking them questions.

Doctors translates the Greek word didaskalos (“teachers”).

Next, the Holy Spirit inspired the apostle John to render the Hebrew word “rabbi” into the Greek word didaskalos. Hence, we have a divine translation proving that the two words are synonymous. Therefore, the prohibition of our Lord found in Matthew 23:8 regarding rabbi is applicable to the word didaskalos. Didaskalos is translated in the next passage as “master.” In other texts it is rendered “doctor” in the KJV (“teacher”).
In John 1:38 the inspired penman wrote: “Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?”

Jesus also prohibited the use of the word Father as a title when addressing Christians. “Father” translates the Greek word pater in Matthew 23:9. In Matthew 23:10, masters translates the Greek word kathete. It is from kathete that we get our English words catechism and catechist as well as the words teacher and teaching, respectively.

Thus, contrary to denominational conduct, Jesus clearly prohibits Christians from addressing one another with religious titles such as father, rabbi, doctor, teacher, master, or leader. Clearly Jesus is prohibiting spiritual titles. Jesus sites two reasons for His prohibition: (1) Our Lord is our Teacher, and (2) God is our spiritual Father. A third reason is found in Matthew 23:11-12:

But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

Although Christians have different roles to fulfill in the Lords church with different authority delegated to them by Jesus, all of them are simply areas of service to the Christ. Thus, our Lord forbids any conduct on the part of Christians or terms to be applied to our brethren that would serve to exalt one Christian above another or encourage pride, arrogance, or haughtiness to develop or be encouraged among and between the brethren.

When Peter referred to Paul as “brother Paul” (2 Pet. 3:15), he was not using brother as a title, but simply to show their spiritual relationship in the Lord’s family—the church of Christ. One never reads in the Bible of the Reverend Dr. Paul or Peter, His Holiness the Pope. The terms elder, deacon, minister, evangelist, and gospel preacher are descriptive of the work done by those referred to by these terms. Such terms should never be used as titles. Each Christian is to revere all other Christians, but this does not give any Christian the authority from the Lord to apply reverend as a title to any member of the church. If we do so we violate the Lord’s prohibition previously studied and thereby sin against God.

Academic degrees or titles designating one’s level of study in certain subjects, “Dr.” as commonly applied to physicians, master plumbers, master electricians, and the like are not necessarily wrong. However, they are not to be allowed by the persons to whom they apply to enter into the spiritual relationships in the church. They must never be employed among church members in such a way as to encourage elevating brethren above their fellows. Indeed, because a person has an academic doctorate of some kind does not necessarily mean that person knows much of anything about the Bible. But even if an academic degree is in some area of religion, our Lord prohibits Christians from using them in the church to elevate one church member above other members.
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Pam Busch
Ella Hammac  Harold Cozad
Bill Busch  Dot Lambert
Horace Myrick  Melvin Torrey
Al Flesher  Nancy Travis
Anthony Polnitz  Nellie Read
Linda Worley  Marilyn Hall
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Chase Busch (Bill & Pam Busch’s grandson)
Jason Smith (Debra & Denise Mowery’s nephew)

Please Remember

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

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

January 21
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.

God Is One God
Delbert Goins
The whole Bible emphasized this fact! Yet, the Bible also indicates God has personality that consists of three identifiable areas: the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. These make up God. Our God is one God!
We unsheathe the sword of the Spirit to cut away another petal of the Calvinistic TULIP. At this time we consider the letter “U” which is our second petal: **Unconditional Election**.

This heretical doctrine asserts that you and I have been predestined (foreordained) to be either lost or saved. There is nothing man can do to have anything to do with his salvation or damnation. All was supposedly predetermined before our birth. What is wrong with this particular petal?

The Bible clearly affirms that God will judge every man according to his works…not according to an election that was determined before he was born! 1 John 2:2 declares that Christ died for all—why should Christ die for all if only a predetermined number are going to be saved? Again, why did our Lord give the Great or Last Commission (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:40ff) if this man-made doctrine be true? If one is elected to be lost it would do no good for him to obey that commission, would it? Put your ear down here—Revelation 22:17: “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” May I submit that if this tenant of Calvin’s doctrine has one grain of truth in it—that this and a hundred more passages in the Bible would make no sense whatsoever!

Sometimes Romans 9:10 and following is appealed to for support of this false teaching. However, a careful study of this entire context notes a discussion of two nations and their eternal destiny. God did choose the nations He willed; this is not a discussion of individual salvation. I believe that God did foreordain the plan; but not the man whereby any can be saved who desires to be saved. Any man who obeys the plan and remains faithful to death is promised the reward; i.e., Revelation 2:10.
The A.D. 70 doctrine must support this tenant of Calvinism. This heresy asserts that all men received final judgment with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. If that be true, then they are teaching Unconditional Election; if not, why not? Calvinists have the final judgment prior to the creation of the heavens and earth; Kingism has it in A.D. 70. The only difference in the two positions is a matter of time. But, for every soul born after A.D. 70, it is Calvinism.

The late brother Marshall Keeble said it perfectly: the “elect” are the “whosoever wills”; the “non-elect” are the “whosoever won’ts”! What was that? Did you hear it? Why, I believe I just heard another petal fall to the ground.

Serving in Public
Guy N. Woods

“Ought men to be used to serve the Lord’s table, lead in prayer, and otherwise participate actively and publicly in the worship, who attend only on Sunday morning? The answer is no. The querist indicates in the letter that these are people who simply do not have sufficient interest to attend other services of the church, choosing to engage in worldly and material affairs rather than to attend services on Sunday evenings and Wednesday nights. Those who take part in the services are to serve as examples (1 Tim. 4:12), to follow that which is good (1 Th. 5:15), and to forsake not the assembly of the saints. How can we hope to influence others to be faithful if those in public view in the church are not themselves faithful? If we truly love the Lord we will be present in all the services possible.”

Deceased

False Notions Concerning the Church
Cled E. Wallace

Notions and opinions contrary to plain Bible teaching, or at best unsupported by the Scriptures, multiply in the minds of the people. They are barriers to the reception of the truth which are very often difficult to remove. Objections to the truth are always based either on ignorance of the truth or prejudice, which is the handmaiden of ignorance. It must be recognized that both ignorance and prejudice in religious matters may exist in a character well informed and culturally developed along other lines.

Some very capable people have rejected the law of God and made it void by their traditions. A querist more informed about nearly everything else than New Testament teaching, makes some inquiries about the church:

“What positive proof have you that your church is the only one? Can you prove that this is the church that Christ founded? All Chris-
tian people are working toward the same goal. What possible difference can the church make when the heart is right? Do you think that your church can save you?

It is not my manner of speech to speak of “my church” and “your church,” as is commonly done. I am not a party man and belong to nothing in religion that had a human origin. The New Testament contains “positive proof” that the Lord established “one body,” and that is “the only one” which He approves. “There is one body” (Eph. 4:4). “Many members, yet but one body” (1 Cor. 12:20). “For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body” (12:13). This body is the church. “And he is the head of the body, the church” (Col. 1:18). “The church, which is his body” (Eph. 1:22-23). All other bodies are unauthorized and condemned. They set up rival authority against the Head of the “one body.”

In New Testament times, “all Christian” people were working toward the same goal in this one body. It included all the people of God. They simply became Christians in their obedience to the Lord, and He added them to the body, the church. It was not a human set-up at all.

The querist is wrong in his very assumptions regarding the character of the New Testament church. The way for a man to know that he belongs to the true church is to do what the New Testament requires in becoming a Christian and leave it to the Lord to add him to the right body. The Lord has not added anyone to the wrong church yet. The surest way to know that you do not belong to the right church is to accept the doctrines and commandments of men and join something the New Testament says nothing about. Usually people who ask such questions as the above have made the mistake of doing just that.

Since the church is the body of Christ and includes all Christians because they are Christians, it makes a lot of “difference” whether a man is a member of the church or not. It would be as sensible to ask, what difference can it make whether a man is a Christian or not “when the heart is right”? The heart is not exactly right, to say the least of it, when it leads a man into unscriptural church relations.

It is a favorite saying with the sectarians that, “your church cannot save you.” Just a little New Testament information drives that fallacy out into the light where its absurdity is manifest. The church is the family, including all the children of God. “For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ” (Gal. 3:26-27). The church was established that both Jews and Gentiles might be reconciled in it. “Reconcile them both in one body” (Eph. 2:13-16). Christ saves in the church, or adds them to the church when He saved them, which all amounts to the same thing. Surely parties do not save, and a man can be a Christian and keep all the commandments of God and stay out of all denominations, which is reason enough to do so.

If people generally would spend as much time and energy in seeking the will of God that they might do it, as they do in hatching up excuses to evade it, more of them would be on the Lord’s side of that line which separates those who love Him from those who do not. Deceased
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams Pam Busch
Ella Hammac    Harold Cozad
Bill Busch     Dot Lambert
Horace Myrick  Melvin Torrey
Al Flesher     Nancy Travis
Anthony Polnitz Nellie Read
Linda Worley   Marilyn Hall
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Maybelle Brown (Dot Brantley’s mother)
Randall Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s husband)

Please Remember
Every Sunday
  Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
January 23
  Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
January 30
  Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

God Calls His Children:
Saints because of their character,
Disciples because they are learners,
Believers because of their faith,
Brethren because of their relationship,
Christians because of their birth in Christ.

Author Unknown
Many of the “petals” to this “TULIP” are dependent upon the others. Closely related to the petal of Unconditional Election we move on to the third petal of Calvinism: **Limited Atonement**! Now, remember that unconditional election asserts that certain ones are pre-determined (elected) to be saved and other selected ones were foreordained to be lost.

Hence, **Limited Atonement** must concede that God provided salvation for a “limited” number who were chosen at random, prior to the beginning of time. Of necessity, all others are predestined to be lost in eternity. There is nothing that any man can do about it. Man has no freedom, responsibility, or obligation whatsoever. God determined everything for both the elect and the non-elect.

What saith the Scripture? John writes, “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). Why did John write that Christ died for the sins of the “whole world” if this Calvinistic doctrine is true? Now, put your ear down here—1 Timothy 2:4: “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” Why does Paul use the expression “all men” if this doctrine has any truth? Watch what Peter writes—2 Peter 3:9: “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” Why would Peter speak of God’s not desiring that “any” should perish, but that “all” should obey in repentance? Calvinism cannot be true in light of Scripture. Consider just one more passage—Hebrews 2:9: “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” Surely, we can see that the death of Christ was intended for “whosoever will.” The heresy of Calvinism would deny all of these passages and many more.
We must point out that the a.d. 70 heresy, once again, is in perfect alignment with the false doctrine of the Calvinists. This heresy contends that the final judgment day for all men took place during the destruction of Jerusalem in a.d. 70. If all men were judged in a.d. 70, then certain ones are predetermined to be saved and all others are foreordained to be lost, and if not, why not? Therefore, we must reject not only Calvinism but also the a.d. 70 theory as being diametrically opposed to the plain and authoritative teaching of Holy Writ.

Listen! I heard it again. Did you? Yes, I believe that it was another petal falling from the TULIP!

Evant, TX

“What Is Your Life?”

Ken Chumbley

In October 2003 the widow of General Chiang Kai-Shek passed away at the age of 105 in New York. She had lived to a “ripe old age” when we consider the three score and ten mentioned in the Scriptures. However, in the overall picture, 105 years is not a vast amount of time. It matters not how long we live here on this earth, it will end in a comparatively short period of time. James states, “For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (Jam. 4:14). As we look back over our lives, we realize that the years seem to pass by with astonishing speed. It seems just yesterday that we were welcoming in the new year of 2013. When, as adults, we think back to our childhood, we remember that it seemed like special events during the year would never arrive but now they are here and gone before we realize it. We wonder, “Where have all the years gone? Why, it only seems like yesterday we were starting school and now look at us as we show the signs of growing older.”

Life is short, even at its longest. Thus, we need to make good use of the time that we have here on this earth. We may have the opportunity to live out a long life, but we have no guarantee of tomorrow. Indeed, we do not know what the morrow may bring, hence James’ statement, as we look at the context (4:13-14).

We should not live our lives as though we have many tomorrows to make changes. All need to realize that “it is appointed unto men once to die” (Heb. 9:27). Yes, the day of our passing will come and after that will come the judgment. Once this life is over there will be no possibility of making changes that should have been made in this life that we might be able to be with the Lord through eternity.

The rich man, in the story that Jesus told of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16), realized that he had lost his opportunities to set this life straight. He learned that here was indeed “a great gulf fixed” (16:26).

The rich man in the parable of Luke 12 was making plans for the future when 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?” (12:20). The rich man, in the parable, needed to learn that he could not prolong his life because he wanted to do so. He had made plans for this
The Bible teaches that life begins at the seed and growth proceeds only after the seed is planted and germinated (Luke 8:5-15). The Bible also teaches that every seed will only bring forth after its own kind (Gen. 1:12). Therefore, when Jesus referred to God’s Word as being “the seed” (Luke 8:11), He was teaching that the Bible (1) is the only seed that can produce a Christian, and (2) if followed honestly, will only produce a Christian. No other book can produce a Christian and the Bible will not produce anything but a Christian. The logical conclusion then, for someone who desires to be a follower of Christ, is to simply study God’s Word and obey God’s plan to save.

Since the Bible only makes Christians only, from whence do denominations come? Denominations are produced by man-made seeds or creed books. The Bible does not produce Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, etc. Man-made creed books are the seed which bring forth denominationalism. Consider the following table:

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<tr>
<th>Seed</th>
<th>Fruit</th>
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<tr>
<td>Baptist Manual/Baptist Faith and Message *</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book of Discipline</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book(s) of Confessions/Order</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Articles of Faith/Book of Mormon</td>
<td>Mormon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faith and Practice</td>
<td>Quaker</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Word of God</td>
<td>Christian</td>
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* Different types of Baptists have different creeds.

While men join “the church of their choice” daily, God adds those who are being saved to the only church bought by the blood of Christ—The church of Christ (Acts 2:47; 20:28). If you desire to be added by God to His church, simply plant the seed, God’s Word, in your heart and humbly obey. By obeying God’s plan to save: hear (Rom. 10:17), believe (Heb. 11:6), repent (Acts 2:38), confess (Rom. 10:9-10), and be baptized (1 Pet. 3:21), you can be a Christian.

Lenoir City, TN

 life, but like the rich man in Luke 16 he had not made preparation for eternity.

What about you? Have you thought beyond this life and made preparation for the life that follows? If you have not made preparation, or if you once prepared and now have allowed the things of this life to crowd out the things of eternity, we would plead with you, while you have the time and the opportunity, to make ready for that life which is beyond this that you may indeed be ready to be with the Lord through all eternity.

Remember, “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). Do not put it off; make your preparation today.

Belvedere, SC
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Pam Busch
Ella Hammac    Harold Cozad
Bill Busch    Dot Lambert
Horace Myrick    Melvin Torrey
Al Flesher    Nancy Travis
Anthony Polnitz    Nellie Read
Linda Worley    Marilyn Hall
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Randall Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s husband)
Barbara Busch (Bill Busch’s mother; Hospice care)

Restored
Anthony Hall was restored to Christ on January 28. He is the grandson of Marilyn Hall. Please keep him in your prayers.

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

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

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

2 Corinthians 9:7
“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver.”
Topple the “TULIP” (Part 4)

Jess Whitlock

Let us continue to topple the Calvinistic “Tulip” with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. In this acrostic we now come to the letter “I” which stands for the Calvinist’s doctrine of Irresistible Grace. Calvin taught, as do many preachers today (including many in the church of my Lord!), that the Holy Spirit operates in the hearts and lives of men separate and apart from the Holy Word. This is God’s grace being placed in the heart of man forcing that man to accept salvation. Man cannot resist this grace when the Holy Spirit arbitrarily chooses him, hence Irresistible Grace.

You cannot fail to see that this is the natural result of “Unconditional Election” and “Limited Atonement.” If only certain ones will be saved and all others are doomed to be lost—then the saved ones cannot refuse salvation. They are to be overwhelmed with God’s grace. Once again, we see that the a.d. 70 doctrine supports the teaching of John Calvin. This heresy asserts that the final judgment day for all mankind took place in the destruction of Jerusalem in a.d. 70. It necessarily follows that when you and I were born that our judgment was over and done (predestined, foreordained) and there is nothing we can do about it. Therefore, we are automatically counted among the elect or the non-elect, as per Calvinistic TULIP.

Now, let the Bible speak. It is possible to receive God’s grace in vain. “We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain” (2 Cor. 6:1). Notice that Paul is beseeching that His grace be not received in vain. Therefore, the grace of God that hath appeared to all men (Tit. 2:10ff), is possible of being resisted. Man is still able to choose (Jos. 24:15).

Jesus cried in Matthew 23:37: O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I
have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Did you catch that? “Ye would not.” Not that the Holy Spirit or God’s grace could not, but they would not.

No man on earth today knows any truth in relation to eternity unless it is learned in God’s Word. The Holy Spirit operates through the Word. He guided the Apostles into all truth (John 16:13). They penned that truth for all men (2 Tim. 3:16-17). That which is written is intended to cause men to believe (John 20:30-31). Faith comes by hearing God’s inspired Word (Rom. 10:17). To be pleasing in God’s sight man must be obedient (Heb. 5:8-9). Everything the Bible says that the Holy Spirit does for us on earth, it also states the Word of God does for us. Therefore, the Holy Spirit works today in the pages of Holy Writ—the Bible. Any teaching, doctrine, or stance that asserts that the Holy Spirit operates in some manner separate and apart from the divine Word of God is Calvinism! Nothing more, nothing less, and nothing else! What is that? You heard it, too? I believe another petal just fell down!

Evant, TX

What Exactly Does Revellings Mean in Galatians 5:19-21?

Johnny Oxendine

Sometimes we are asked about words found in the Scriptures; it helps to look a little deeper for a better understanding of terms. In Galatians 5 there is a list of works of the flesh. Included is “revellings,” which is also found a few other places in the New Testament. What does this word mean? We will look at several lexicons for help in this study.

The Greek word, komos, is described as meaning “feasts, accompanied by music and dance” according to Spicq’s Theological Lexicon of the New Testament. Spicq continues, “The Bible uses the word only in this pejorative sense.” The Louw & Nida Greek Lexicon includes a similar description, “drinking parties involving unrestrained indulgence in alcoholic beverages and accompanying immoral behavior.” Other sources (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, Bauer’s, etc.) give the same definitions, but it is also found in a passage in 1 Peter 4:3 with an added word that informs us ever more precisely to the harms of these activities.

For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.

“Banquetings” is a word that, when coupled with “revellings,” gives the Christian a clear in-
What If Christ Had Come Yesterday?

We always have a tendency to place the coming of Christ in the future. We are always saying maybe tomorrow, maybe the next day, or even maybe later on today. We always live thinking Christ will return in the future. Our lives show that we are not thinking that Christ will come now.

Some have said, “I will change my life before Christ returns.” Let us stop for a moment and do some thinking. If Christ had come yesterday, where would you be today? Would you be singing in heaven or crying in hell? Would you be with the Father or with Satan?

If the answer is not good, then it is time you do something about it. Answer the call of the Lord today so upon His return you will not be found wanting but waiting!
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Pam Busch
Ella Hammac  Harold Cozad
Bill Busch  Dot Lambert
Horace Myrick  Melvin Torrey
Al Flesher  Nancy Travis
Anthony Polnitz  Nellie Read
Linda Worley  Marilyn Hall
Robbie Gravey (The Haven)
Randall Johnson (Joyce Johnson’s husband)

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Bill Busch in the death of his mother, Barbara Busch, on January 30, 2013. Please keep Bill and Pam and their family in your prayers.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Dot Brantley is the death of her mother, Maybelle Brown, on February 2, 2013. Please keep Elward and Dot and their family in your prayers.

Please Remember

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

February 10
Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 5.
Topple the “TULIP” (Part 5)

Jess Whitlock

Timber!!! We come to the final letter of the “Tulip,” i.e., “P” which stands for Perseverance of the Saints. This doctrine asserts that when God takes a man out of sin by the irresistible grace of the Holy Spirit, then that man cannot so sin as to be lost. God will not allow that one to sin. We know this doctrine by many terms: “once saved, always saved,” “impossibility of apostasy,” and “once in grace, always in grace.”

There are literally multiplied hundreds of Scripture references warning God’s followers about being lost, falling away, or being rejected. In the beginning God warned His children, Adam and Eve, that if they refused His negative command regarding the forbidden fruit they would suffer. Satan convinced them that they would not suffer at all. They listened to Satan and God cast them out of Eden. Sin entered the world. Paul feared that the same thing that happened to Adam and Eve could happen to Christians today (2 Cor. 11:3).

Several years ago I met this amazing false doctrine in public debate. I pointed out that numerous passages of Scripture did not belong in the Bible if this doctrine were true. I gave my opponent a list of over a hundred references and asked him to take just one passage and refute it. He never even picked a passage—much less refuted the repeated warnings of God.

Galatians 1:1-5 points out that Paul is writing to New Testament Christians. Now put your ear down here. “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace” (5:4). That is a matter of divine record.

Yet, the advocates of the a.d. 70 heresy must accept this point of Calvinism as being true. Remember that this equally amazing false doctrine asserts that the judgment for all mankind took place in a.d. 70. Whatever the decree was in a.d. 70 cannot be altered. If “once saved, always saved” was ever taught by a Calvinist, it is
most certainly taught in Max King’s pet doctrine! If not, why not? We have examples in the New Testament of many who did fall—Demas, Judas, Hymenaeus, Alexander, and Simon, to name just a few. Christ taught against this doctrine of men in Matthew 13:4-6, 40ff, Mark 4:18ff, and Luke 15:24ff. Do we not recall the case of Diotrephes in 3 John 9-10? Also, 1 John 1:9 is a law of pardon for Christians who have sinned. Why is this law given if this final “petal” of the “Tulip” contains any truth at all? The Scripture warns that a Christian can fall (1 Cor. 10:12; Gal. 5:4; Rev. 2:1-5).

Anyone who still believes that a child of God cannot so sin as to be lost needs to study again 2 Peter 2:20ff. I quoted that in the aforementioned debate before over four hundred people. Why? Because my opponent made the mistake of saying that you cannot lose what you once had. After the quotation was finished, I observed, “The dog lost what he once had!” Timber!!!

Evant, TX

Remission of Sins

Jimmie Z. Gribble

Paul, in his preaching to the people at Antioch in Pisidia, preached about remission of sins. He said, as recorded by Luke, “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:38-39). Paul declared that through “this man,” Jesus, remission of sins is available. Jesus charged His apostles to do this very thing. He stated, “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47). These, to whom Paul spoke, could have received remission of sins.

Because of envy on the part of “the Jews,” the Word of the Lord went unto the Gentiles. These, Gentiles, were granted remission of sins.

Paul, in the above passage, emphasized that this remission was not available under the Law of Moses. He used justified. One cannot be justified unless he has remission of sins, and in receiving remission of sins one is justified. The writer of Hebrews emphasized this very point. One such emphasis is found in chapter 10. The text says, “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (10:4). In addition, “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (9:12).

Who can receive remission of sins? All who believe and obey! Those who crucified the Son of God, can they have remission of sins? Yes, it was so stated several times in Acts. Those who persecuted the children of God, can they have remission of sins? Yes, for the apostle Paul was one who persecuted the saints and he received remission of his sins (Acts 22:16). Can one, today, receive remission of sins? Yes, by obeying the will of God.

This remission comes about in the name
of Jesus. That was what was preached (Luke 24:27). This is what is needed to be preached today. The means and the way of remission have not changed since they were given, and they will not change.

Beloved, remission is available. We ought to be like the Gentiles mentioned above. The text says concerning them:

For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed (Acts 13:47-48).

Thanks be unto God for the preaching of remission of sins in His name and for the remission of sins that we can have.

Beloved, listen to all of God’s Word, God will do thee good!

Portsmouth, VA

Paul Vaughn

Paganism

There are many cultures in the world that are called pagan. They are primitive in many aspects such as idolaters worshiping stone images and the dead. Others are barbaric without civilizing influences, some are immoral, not adhering to any ethical or moral principles, and still others are without the advantage of a modern culture.

As inhabitants of the greatest country on earth, we have advantages of a modern society, but paganism is strong and healthy in America. In the most advanced nation on earth, life is not valued. There are thousands of babies who are killed every day through abortion. Morality is at an extremely low ebb with moral decay progressing to destroy the home, while thousands are seeking to normalize homosexual activity and untold numbers advancing cohabitation. All of these are on a course to destroy the family and weaken principles of Christian ethics that this country was established upon.

We are living in a country that has turned its back on God. Without God we are pagan and lost. Jesus said, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Mat. 6:33). Yet, in this land of freedom, people are seeking everything but God. Let us all take a stand for God and oppose the pagan influences a godless society is seeking to enforce on all.

Marion, VA

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.


2013 Spring Church of Christ
CFTF Lectureship
Christ—The Great Controversialist
February 20–24

Portsmouth, VA

Paul Vaughn

Paganism

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Marion, VA
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher     Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Pam Busch
Ella Hammac      Harold Cozad
Bill Busch       Dot Lambert
Horace Myrick    Melvin Torrey
Al Flesher       Nancy Travis
Anthony Polnitz  Nellie Read
Linda Worley     Marilyn Hall
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Ruby Bailey (West Florida Hospital)
Randall Lawson (grandson of Marilyn Hall's friend)

Please Remember
Every Sunday
  Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
February 17
  Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 5.
February 18
  Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.

38th Annual
Bellview Lectures
Innovations
June 7 - 11, 2013
(Friday - Tuesday)
Our Completeness in Christ (Col. 2:6-15)

Tim Smith

To the believer, Christ is all in all. He is in every respect the light of the world, “Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). Christ is the Savior of the world, “And thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour And thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob” (Isa. 60:16). “For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Rom. 11:36). In Christ, we have all that we need, we are made complete.

Our Redemption Is Complete in Christ

Sin is that which stands between us and eternal life. The price for sin must be paid, thereby removing it from us. Christ did this:

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh (8:3).

The Law of Moses could not pay the price for sin. Satan was not only unwilling to pay it, but also unable to also, and you and I could not pay it, but Christ could and did. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Eph. 1:7).

Our Justification Is Complete in Christ

Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses (Acts 13:38-39). To be pardoned is to stand guilty yet forgiven, thus to have the just and due penalty for guilt removed. To be justified is to stand as though no sin was ever committed. We stand before the eyes of God not as guilty sinners, but as ones who are without sin. We are able to do this because our Lord and His sacrifice is what the eyes of Jehovah behold, and not the short-
comings in our lives. “And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11).

Our Holiness Is Complete in Christ
My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:1-2).

That we are, of ourselves, unholy and wretched there is no doubt. That we are destitute and without hope on our own, there is no doubt. That with Jesus, and by His sacrifice, we are made Holy, we joyfully declare there is absolutely no doubt. According to Romans 6:22, we are “made free from sin” by Jesus and His sacrifice. We are truly made “Godlike” by and in Him.

Our Peace and Comfort Are Complete in Christ
We need peace and comfort, for our world is filled with conflict and hurt. Paul said, “For he is our peace” (Eph. 2:14). And again, “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Rom. 14:17) As the sorrows of life mount, and as the suffering and sickness grows on us with the passing of the years, it is surely comforting to know that “as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ” (2 Cor. 1:5).

Our Labors and Toils Are Complete in Christ
We know that our “labour is not in vain in the Lord.” (1 Cor. 15:58). Most workers will do better work if they know why they are doing what they are doing. In this verse we are plainly told why we work for Christ. Ours is not an empty or meaningless endeavor, but one with hope, one with purpose. This allows us an opportunity to be both the one who works and the recipient of the works that are done. Thus, in Christ, all that we do is complete.

Our Triumph over the Adversary Is Complete in Christ
A study of the Revelation which was received by John on the Isle of Patmos reveals the ultimate triumph of the saints over their enemy, the forces of evil. Paul assured them, and assures us even now, that we have the power to do (or accomplish) all things through Christ (Phi. 4:13). We know, and are assured by the Bible, that we are more than conquerors in Christ. Paul declared that God “always causeth us to triumph in Christ” (2 Cor. 2:14). There is nothing that Satan can throw at us that we are unable to overcome.

Our Tranquility and Happiness Are Complete in Christ
The Christian can face the “grim reaper” happily, even unafraid. With Paul we can say, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phi. 1:21). We know that if we live on another 50 years that we will live them for Christ and that if our next breath is our last that we will go home to be with Christ. This removes from the faithful the fear of some calamity overtaking us or some illness striking us down, and it allows us to press along no matter come what may.

Our Resurrection and Eternal Glory Are Complete in Christ
There is nothing as reassuring for me than the knowledge that someday Jesus will come
to receive His own and to carry them home to glory and that I will be in that number. I know that I will hear His voice, and that I will meet Him in the air, and that I will live on forever and ever, age without end, if I am living for Him. I further know that my redemption in Him is full, not partial, not contingent on some future battle that is to be fought after the end of time. All that needs to be done for me to be saved by Christ has been done. The only question that remains is this: Have I done my part? Have I obeyed the Gospel? Am I living right? If not, please allow us to assist you.

Dothan, AL

Disinherited Children

Dub McClish

The late movie star, Joan Crawford, withheld their expected inheritance from some of her children. She was not the first to do so. Nor is she likely to be the last. It is the right of a parent to disinherit a child if the parent so chooses. Let it be observed that such disinherited children do not cease to be the children or off-spring of the withholding parent; they simply are left out of the will, cut off from receiving any of the estate.

Can and will God ever disinherit His children? One of the major tenents of Calvinism answers, “No, once a person is a child of God he can never do anything sinful or evil enough to fall from God’s grace and lose his eternal inheritance.” However, those who will read the New Testament with clear glasses, rather than Calvinistic ones, will discover a plethora of passages that teach otherwise. Simon became a Christian, but fell into the “bond of iniquity,” for which he was commanded to pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:21-24). The Galatians were in danger of falling from grace (Gal. 5:4). Even in the Old Testament, God literally disinherited an entire generation of His people for faithless rebellion (Num. 14:26-30). It is a tragedy that so much of the Protestant world has been lulled into a false sense of security by this false teaching.

Is it possible that some of us have unwittingly drifted into this very dangerous position? I fear so. Otherwise, it is very difficult to explain how some of us can go hunting and fishing, visit relatives, or take a vacation, and not make any provision whatsoever for assembling with the saints on the Lord’s day. Yet, some church members do this and apparently never feel any guilt at all.

Then, there are those who attend regularly and even give generously, but their lives are regularly marred by ungodly habits that dishonor God and disgrace the church before unbelievers. Yet, their attitude seems to be, “I am what I am and I cannot change.” And what of those who “drop out” for weeks or even months at a time and then just sort of “drop in” again as if nothing were wrong with their relationship to God and the church. Surely, they must labor under the assumption that God will not keep His promises of condemnation of His faithful children. Brethren, once we are God’s children we never cease to be. But let us soberly remember that God has promised to disinherit unfaithful children.

Denton, TX
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Pam Busch
Ella Hammac  Harold Cozad
Bill Busch  Dot Lambert
Horace Myrick  Melvin Torrey
Al Flesher  Nancy Travis
Anthony Polnitz  Nellie Read
Linda Worley  Marilyn Hall
Ruby Bailey
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Jason Smith (Debra & Denise Mowery’s nephew)
Gary Borden (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Randall Lawson (grandson of Marilyn Hall’s friend)

Please Remember

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

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

38th Annual
Bellview Lectures
Innovations
June 7 - 11, 2013
(Friday - Tuesday)
Some Fruit of “Osas”

Lee Moses

For 36 years, Exodus International (EI) has striven to help homosexuals leave their sinful addiction. While Christians can certainly appreciate their intent, their theology in many respects leaves much to be desired—they generally align themselves with common “evangelical Protestant” beliefs. These beliefs have led to a twist at Exodus International.

In January, EI president Alan Chambers said to a group of homosexuals who claim to be Christian, “We’re Christians, all of us…we all love Jesus.” This is clearly false, since one who loves Jesus will keep His commandments (John 14:15), and His commandments include abstaining from homosexual practices (1 Cor. 6:9-11). Chambers knows this, and continues to acknowledge freely that homosexuality is a sin. But he adds, “While behavior matters, those things don’t interrupt someone’s relationship with Christ.”

How could Mr. Chambers say such a thing? “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). Someone who fails to keep Christ’s commandments has no relationship with Him whatsoever, and certainly does not have Heaven as his reward (Mat. 7:21-23).

As one writer observed, Chambers’ central argument is that if a person is saved, he cannot lose his salvation (Dean 13). This is the doctrine of “once saved, always saved” (OSAS), also known as “perseverance of the saints” or “the impossibility of apostasy.” Here is a clear example of this doctrine’s compelling people to remain in their sins instead of repenting. If something does not compel them to change their minds, they will die in their sins with no hope of eternal life.

But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are
entering to go in (Mat. 23:13). When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand (Eze. 3:18).

But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea (Mat. 18:6).

These three passages serve as warnings to anyone who would encourage another to sin, or who would allow another to remain in sin. Truly, “once saved, always saved” is a hideous doctrine of demons.

Work Cited

The Lure of Money
Lester Kamp

Jesus in Matthew 6 is not giving attention to the luxuries of life. He does not in this passage point our attention to some things, but “all these things.” Jesus in this context has discussed material possessions as a potential idol that is worshiped and served. In verse 24, Jesus tells of the impossibility of serving two gods. We cannot divide our allegiance between two gods. Jesus states clearly, “for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other” (6:24). There is no middle ground. Religiously we cannot occupy middle ground. Religion is a “love” or “hate” relationship.

Of all that could be named as an illustration of “another god” that could have been named, Jesus, in this verse, said, “Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” Mammon means “money and what money can buy, possessions.” Perhaps man’s greatest threat to idolatrty is here, in money and possessions. Perhaps the lure of materialism is man’s greatest weakness. Man needs to know of the danger of “these things.” Man needs to know that materialism is not something to be shrugged off as if it does not matter. Materialism is idolatry! Possessions can keep us out of heaven. “Covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col. 3:5).

Calvin accurately wrote, “Where riches hold the dominion of the heart, God has lost His authority.” According to Jesus in Matthew 6, our treasure is either in heaven or on earth, our life is either full of light or darkness, our master is either God or mammon. This is not our only warning about the lure of possessions.

A familiar parable begins with these words of warning and the theme of the parable, “Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15). In the parable of the rich, young ruler, we are introduced to a prospering young man. His crops had been so abundant that he had no place to store them. His solution to the problem was to pull down his barns and build bigger ones. His attitude was, “take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry” (12:19) because his life was good for many years to come because of the quantity of...
his possessions. He believed that his life was determined by things. He was wrong. God corrected his impression, “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” (12:19-21). Paul points us to the same danger, “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim. 6:10).

In another familiar parable the sower sows seed in thorny ground. Jesus interprets this portion of the parable for us. He states, “And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection” (Luke 8:14). Notice carefully that the seed which is the Word of God is sown into the heart where it is eventually “choked” by the “cares and riches and pleasures of this life.” It is interesting to observe here that the word for worry comes from an old German word which means “to choke, to strangle.” Worry usually has to do with these very things, the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life. We are physically affected by worry so we choke and strangle. These same things can affect us spiritually in a similar way. The growth of God’s Word in our lives is choked by the “cares, and riches and pleasures of this life.” When this life becomes more important to us than the life which is to come then the process of choking has begun.

Christ here is not speaking of the extras, the luxuries of life. The questions He gives suggest the very essentials of life can become so important to us that they can keep us from being saved. His questions have to do with food, drink, and clothing. If we can place too much importance on these things, then how much more dangerous are the “wants” of life available to us.

The Greatest Work

A builder builded a temple,
He wrought it with grace and skill;
Pillars and groins and arches,
All fashioned to work his will.
Men said, as they saw its beauty,
“It shall never know decay.
Great is thy skill, O builder;
Thy fame shall endure foraye.”

A teacher builded a temple
With loving and infinite care,
Planning each arch with patience;
Laying each stone with prayer.
None praised her unceasing effort;
None knew of her wondrous plan—
For the temple the teacher builded
Was unseen by the eyes of man.

Gone is the builder’s temple,
Crumpled into the dust;
Low lies each stately pillar,
Food for the consuming rust.
But the temple the teacher builded
Will last while the ages roll,
For that beautiful unseen temple
Was a child’s immortal soul.

Author Unknown
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher       Marge Williams
Charles Williams   Pam Busch
Ella Hammac        Harold Cozad
Bill Busch         Dot Lambert
Marilyn Hall       Melvin Torrey
Nancy Travis       Rubye Bailey
Anthony Polnitz    Nellie Read
Linda Worley
Robbie Gravey (The Haven)
Al Flesher (The Haven)
Horace Myrick (Sacred Heart Hospital)
Gary Borden (Joyce Johnson's friend)
Randall Lawson (grandson of Marilyn
Hall’s friend)
Joan Furman (Debra Mowery’s co-worker)

Please Remember

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

March 4
Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00
pm.

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

38th Annual
Bellview Lectures
Innovations
June 7 – 11, 2013
(Friday – Tuesday)
Marriage is an institution of God. When our heavenly Father made Eve and brought her to Adam He declared that a man is to cleave to his wife (Gen. 2:24). In Jesus’ response to the Pharisees about divorce, He said, “Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Mat. 19:6). The union between the husband and wife is thus a sacred one. God’s prophet, Malachi, wrote that God hates putting away (Mal. 2:16).

When men lose their respect for their Creator, they also lose respect for what He has said and instituted. It was only in Genesis 6 that we read:

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose (6:1-2).

Because of the hardness of their hearts, the Israelites of old were suffered to put away their wives with a writing of divorcement, but Jesus said that from the beginning that was not so. It was Herod’s taking of his brother’s wife that caused him to come under the rebuke of John, “It is not lawful for thee to have her” (Mat. 14:4).

Unfaithfulness in one’s marriage is a sin which, without repentance and subsequent loyalty to one’s spouse, will prevent one from inheriting the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9). In other words, such individuals will be eternally lost. “Thou shalt not commit adultery” was one of the Ten Commandments (Exo. 20:14). “Thou shalt not commit adultery” is still the commandment of God (Rom. 13:9). Adultery
is one of the works of the flesh listed by Paul in Galatians 5:19. Study of both the Old and New Testaments makes it very plain that men of old often paid little heed to God's instructions regarding the most sacred relationship of marriage that can exist between a man and a woman. Unfortunately, not much has changed in that regard.

Increasingly, people are ignoring the need for marriage and instead select a convenient partner and live together outside of marriage and a commitment honored by God. Men with men and women with women work that which is unseemly, but are obtaining greater public and private support. As far as the commitment to marriage and promise of staying together until death do us part is concerned, it has been discarded by many like so much garbage. Divorce is rampant! One supposes that it began in the denominational bodies, where even religious people decided to ignore the commands of God regarding marriage, and now one may divorce and remarry for any reason, as many times as they please, and still be regarded as faithful members. Presently, the Lord's church is no exception to that serious disobedience to the will of God. Couples that have been divorced from their original spouses without scriptural cause, and remarried (some multiple times) are accepted by congregations as faithful Christians. The men in such unholy unions are used to lead prayers, wait on the Lord's Table, and as song leaders. What irreverence to God and His commands!

Yes, man's lack of seriousness and respect for the husband and wife relationship established by God, is very prevalent and growing in today's world. Recently a website, originally launched in 2001, was featured on the Internet. This site, www.ashleymadison.com, demonstrates just how low people have sunk in their sin and debauchery when it comes to marriage. Boasting 10,320,000 members, this is a website for men and women providing them with opportunities to cheat on their spouses. One review of the site reads in part:

www.ashleymadison.com is a married dating site designed specifically for casual encounters, secret romances and adult fantasy. The target audience? Men and women alike who are interested in being a tad naughty and stepping outside their relationship.

A tad naughty indeed! It is not a tad naughty; it is heinously and despicably sinful. It makes a total mockery out of God and His commandments. It shows total disrespect for one's spouse, for himself, and for marriage in general. Furthermore, ashleymadicon.com and its subscribers, turn the vow to keep one's self from all others into nothing more than a cheap lie.

In June 2010, there were an estimated 60.3 million marriage in the U.S., or 120,600,000 married persons. In other words, this offensive site claims that 8.6% of all married individuals in the United States are consumers of its filthy service. Sadly, while the claims may be somewhat exaggerated, they are probably not overstated by much if at all.

One obvious question that is raised by the foregoing is, "Are we surprised?" Shocked, yes, but surprised? Unfortunately, no! We live in a world where even belief in God is on the decline. Among those who believe in God, accepting the Bible as His inspired Word and rulebook for man's behavior is also on the decline.
Having God on Our Side

Often we hear people talk about having God “on their side.” Certainly the idea is comforting and reassuring. However, does God look at Himself as being “on our side,” even if we are His faithful children? In one way He does, in the sense that He has promised to be with us in our lives as Christians (Mat. 28:20; Heb. 13:5-6). One of the richest blessings the Christian has is that of the abiding presence of God and His constant help.

There is another sense, however, in which it would be presumptuous to view God as being “on our side.” In the days just before the conquest of Jericho, Joshua looked up and saw a man standing near him with a sword in his hand. Obviously startled and momentarily unguarded, Joshua asked him, “Are you for us or for our adversaries?” The soldier answered, “Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come” (Jos. 5:13-14). The commander of God’s army was on God’s side. Whatever else that meeting did for Joshua, it certainly reminded him that God was not in his army, but that he was fighting for God’s cause.

It is possible for people to approach God with the idea of trying to force Him (or at best, to make Him appear) to be on their side of some issue or dispute. What begs to be understood, however, is that God is not there to line up with us on our side of some human cause; rather, we need to make His cause our cause. We might imagine Him to say, “I’m not joining your team—you need to join mine.”

The question to ask regarding any situation, dispute, doctrine, practice, organization, or personal agenda is not “Whose side is God on?” but rather, “Who is on the Lord’s side?” (Exo. 32:26).

Author Unknown

People are attempting to do what the prophet Jeremiah wrote they cannot do, direct their own steps (Jer. 10:23). Among other things when people attempt to do that, they end up hurting the individuals who are supposed to be the closet to them on the earth, their spouses. “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4).

Granby, MO

Postage Increase

Due to the postage increase that went into effect on January 27, the cost for mailing the Bellview Lectures books has had to increase. The cost of mailing one book will now be $3.50. This will affect the hardcover books and the 2012 softcover book. The postage chart for the 2010 book is listed below.

Postage Chart for
2010 Bellview Lectures Book Only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Books</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$3.00 per book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>$5.00 per order</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-9</td>
<td>$6.00 per order</td>
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<td>10 or more</td>
<td>Pay by Invoice</td>
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</tbody>
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Postage cost subject to change based on U.S. Postal Rates.

Granby, MO
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher   Marge Williams
Charles Williams   Ella Hammac
Harold Cozad   Dot Lambert
Marilyn Hall   Melvin Torrey
Nancy Travis   Rubye Bailey
Anthony Polnitz   Nellie Read
Linda Worley   Horace Myrick
Robbie Gravey (The Haven)
Al Flesher (The Haven)
Gary Borden (Joyce Johnson’s friend)
Joan Furman (Debra Mowery’s co-worker)

Please Remember
Every Sunday
Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
March 10
Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 5.

These Are the Best Things to Give Away
To a friend ......................... Loyalty
To an enemy ..................... Forgiveness
To your boss ....................... Service
To a child .................... A Good Example
To your Father .................. Respect
To your Mother ................. Gratitude
To your wedded mate ............ Love &
Faithfulness
To all men ....................... Charity
To God .......................... Your Life

Author Unknown
I Was Wrong
W. L. Totty

Why should it be so difficult for a Christian to confess, “I was wrong”? Throughout the history of God’s dealings with His people, He has demanded that His children confess their iniquity in order to have His approbation. Of the children of Israel, God said:

If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land (Lev. 26:40-42).

Through Moses, the Lord spoke unto the children of Israel, saying:

Bishops: Paul Brantley, Fred Stancliff
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.
Worship or Entertainment?

Bob Pritchard

Neil Postman described serious problems in modern culture in his insightful 1985 book, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. His thesis was that public discourse has been reshaped to such an extent by television and entertainment that thoughtful discourse is missing. “Show business” hype has affected advertising, politics, and religion. Postman’s conclusion is that none of these changes have made for improvement.

In our entertainment-oriented culture,
many churches find themselves trying to "outdo" themselves with more and more elaborate additions to worship. What began as special music by a choir becomes a full orchestra with professional soloists. A dramatic reading necessitates a full Broadway stage production. And as long as those who come to worship enjoy what is offered, anything goes. The expectation is that sermons will be shorter, wittier, and more uplifting. Anything in worship that cannot be jazzed up must be abandoned as boring—and there is nothing worse than being boring, we are led to believe.

The problem with this entertainment orientation is that the very object of worship is forgotten. God is the audience in worship. Jesus told the Samaritan woman that ignorant worship was unacceptable to God, even though it may have been sincere or enjoyable. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). To worship God in spirit and truth means that worship must be from the heart, not just outward acts, and that it must be done in exact obedience to God's commands. The worship must be directed to Him, not to the whims of the worshipers.

God's regulations for worship as set out in the New Testament are neither boring nor out-of-date. They are God-centered, while entertainment is man-centered!

Culture relevance is important—thus many churches are implementing modern technology such as projection systems to enhance sermons. And there is nothing wrong with the worshipper enjoying worship. God intended worship to bless His children. But when worship is merely window dressing for an entertainment performance, it cannot please God. The apostle warned, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God" (2 John 9). Paul condemned things that "have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship" (Col. 2:23). "Will worship" is that which is fashioned after man's desires.

What Is Personal Work?

It Is
…Discussing Christianity with a friend.
…Telling and showing your neighbor the happiness of being a Christian.
…Teaching or hosting a home Bible study.
…Planting the Word in someone's heart.
…Writing a letter to a loved one expressing interest in his soul.
…Having a prospect in your home for dinner and fellowship.
…The encouragement given to a new member.
…Any deed that shows the love of God working through you.

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (Heb. 10:24).
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher       Marge Williams
Charles Williams   Ella Hammac
Harold Cozad       Dot Lambert
Marilyn Hall       Melvin Torrey
Nancy Travis       Rubye Bailey
Anthony Polnitz    Nellie Read
Linda Worley       Horace Myrick
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Al Flesher (The Haven)

Please Remember
Every Sunday
   Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
March 17
   Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 5.
March 18
   Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.

Which One Are You?
There are at least four types of members of the church:
1. Those that make things happen.
2. Those that watch things happen.
3. Those that don’t know what is happening.
4. Those that criticize what is happening.
Which are you?

Author Unknown
Do You Recall These Words?

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 Matthew 1. 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. 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 bidden 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
Lessons from the Past

David P. Brown

Almost a generation ago the church was assailed from within by those who bound where God had not bound. Although legislators for God are still a problem in some areas, for the most part they have dried up on the vine.

Today, from within, the church is harangued by the opposite extreme. This faction is bent on loosing where God has not loosed. Such speak much of love but practice the opposite. They are an “anything goes” people; accept anything as long as one does it with a smile and jump like a flea on a hot griddle. One does not need to know much Bible, just be able to do the “ Sanctified Boogie,” and he will be noted for his great spirituality. Possibly this will allow one to be placed in the exalted positions of “Minister of Smiling” or maybe “Minister of How To Pin Your VBS Button On.”

Over one hundred years ago the apostasy that digressed into the Christian Church denomination had started. They too followed the principle of, “If it is not expressly forbidden, we can do it.” Although the error that this false premise rode out on was different, having to do mainly with mechanical instruments of music in worship and the missionary society, it still was loosing where God has not loosed. The attitude or spirit of these apostates toward those 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.

Huntsville, TX

Books-on-CD

The 1988-2005, 2007-2012 books, all Defender issues of 1970, 1972-2011, and the weekly bulletin Beacon 1974-2011, along with numerous other books, tracts, and studies are available on computer disk in Adobe Acrobat Reader (PDF) format (making it useful for both Windows and Macintosh computers). The CD is completely indexed allowing searches of all the books at the same time (you can find every occurrence of a word or phrase such as “baptism for the remission of sins” in every book at the same time). The cost of the CD is only $35 plus postage/handling fee of $2.50 (total is $37.50) in which you receive all the lectureship books (about $1.25 per book) and other material. If you purchased a previous version of our CD, the upgrade price upon return of the previous CD is only $7.50 (includes postage). Take advantage of this great offer. Order from Bellview Church of Christ.
who opposed these innovations was the same as those who occupy their position today.


We have been pained for some time to see reproach cast upon those who insist upon faithful obedience to the law of God, as the condition of his blessing, as legalists, and the principle that required the submission of our progressive brethren have even gone so far as to deny there is any law in the New Testament as there was in the Old.…

The tendency of our brethren’s speculative distinction on these subjects is to weaken the sense of obligation to comply with the full requirements of God’s will, and to give people license to follow some impulse, passion or prejudice which they may conceive to be the suggestion of faith within, that becomes law to itself (David Lipscomb, “Legalism and Obedience,” *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. XIII, No. 17 (April 27, 1871), pp. 389, 390).

They are partial to the “pious” in other sects; yet they pounce unmercifully upon the faults of their own brethren. They appear doubtful that their brethren are right in anything. They claim to have made greater progression spirituality; in that inner life, and in the secret walks with God. Are they less tyrannical than others? or more lowly in their look, in their walk, or in their talk? Eat less than their brethren of the vulgar rout; pray they more, or just less coarsely? Give they more than others to the cause of God; work they more assiduously, or grumble less? In what do they excel? I clamor, in what?… No one emotion of piety ever trembled in their souls to which their brethren of the baser sort are strangers. Closely as they have gone to the presence of God, so closely have gone we; deeply as they have drunk at the fount of spiritual life, so deeply have drunk we. Not a flower blooms on the tallest peak their feet have ever pressed whose fragrance we have not inhaled. These men lack the gift to see themselves as others see them (Moses E. Lard, “The Progressive vs. The Sound,” *Apostolic Times*, Vol. K, No. 1 (April 15, 1869), p. 1).

We dare say that these words from the past will not mean anything to those who worship at the shrine of popularity and kiss the big toe of the great god “Go, God, Git ’Um, Git ’Um, Ugh! Ugh!” However, we know that there are “seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him” (1 Kin. 19:18). To the faithful who “ask for the old paths, where is the good way; and walk therein” (Jer. 6:16), there will be steadfastness in following “the perfect law of liberty” (Jam. 1:25—KJV).

*Spring, TX*

“Life is occupied in both perpetuating itself and in surpassing itself. If all it does is maintain itself, then living is only not dying” (S. de Beauvoir). Life really is what you make of it. Others may treat you well or ill but their treatment is not what defines your life: how you handle what happens to you determines the measure of your success. Do not be content with what happens to you, contribute! God bless!

*Tim Smith, Dothan, AL*
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Ella Hammac
Harold Cozad  Dot Lambert
Marilyn Hall  Melvin Torrey
Nancy Travis  Ruby Bailey
Anthony Polnitz  Nellie Read
Linda Worley  Horace Myrick
Al Flesher
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Sarah O’Rourke (Dale Cunningham’s daughter)

Please Remember
Every Sunday
Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
March 27
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
March 31
Fifth Sunday Dinner on the Grounds, evening service at 1:00 pm.

Four Things Belong to a Judge
1. To hear courteously
2. To answer wisely
3. To consider soberly
4. To decide impartially

*Author Unknown*
“Is the Church for Which Jesus Died Still ‘Relevant’ and Is the Gospel of Christ Still ‘Enough’?”

Brad Green

For some time now, there has been a movement attempting to draw the church for which Jesus died closer and closer towards denominationalism. Similar to the cry heard by Samuel, “thou art old…now make us a king to judge us like all the nations” (1 Sam. 8:5), now faithful leaders hear, “thou and thy ways are old, now make us more relevant to the new generation like all the denominations.” By relevant, primarily, is meant more attractive by means of entertainment and appealing to man’s social needs. Denominations have held a monopoly on this relevance due to the fact that they do not respect nor seek Scriptural authority for all that they say, practice, and do (cf. Col. 3:17). This is why one can expect to see just about anything today in a church parking lot or on church grounds—from petting zoos, carnivals, gymnasiums, and musical concerts (just to name a few). These activities do appeal to man’s social needs and generate lots of publicity and people in attendance but seems more closely related to what Jesus calls “a den of thieves” which He summarily “cast out” of His Father’s temple (Mat. 21:12-13). Still, the idea that we assemble together as the church of Christ to worship God and not to be entertained is mocked and ridicules. One author writes: the greatest need for people today in their 20’s is the need for social interaction and social connection…Here’s the thing we know: The world (through Satan) is very good at meeting social needs. Very good! The Church needs to be very good as well. It is important to note that no Bible verses were provided in reference to these statements. It is equally important, and extremely sad, to recognize the standard used to promote why “the
Church needs to be very good” at meeting social needs—“Satan.” The claim is simply this: “since the world (through Satan) is good at meeting social needs, then the Church needs to be good as well.” First, man’s “greatest need” has never been “social interaction and social connection.” Man’s greatest need is to be reconciled to God and salvation from sin—“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mat. 16:26). Second, God devised and ordained an institution by which social needs can be met—the home (Eph. 6:1-4). The New Testament very clearly teaches that the work of the church is spiritual in nature, not physical—“the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24). Jesus also says, “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence” (18:36). Though we Scripturally encourage Christians to gather as often as they can in addition to the designated times for Bible study and worship, it must be understood that this social interaction is a work of the home. Would to God that faithful Christians meet and enjoy one another’s company more often than they do with those in the world (where they get the ideas that the church is not fulfilling social needs). However, the work of the church and social connections must not be entwined. If God saw the need (and desired) that there be two, separate Divine institutions, one for spiritual needs and one for social needs, then why should man tamper with God’s plan? Is God’s design not perfect?

The Church of Christ Is Still Relevant because she is still the only church built by Jesus (Mat. 16:18; Eph. 4:4) and the only body purchased with His blood (Acts 20:28). The church is still relevant because God still adds those being saved to her number (2:47) and there is no salvation outside of the body of Christ (4:12; Eph. 1:22-23). The church is still relevant because Jesus is still her Master (6:9), Lord (Mat. 7:21-23), and Savior (Eph. 5:23). The church is still relevant because it is the only body that Jesus will take to Heaven at His second coming (5:27).

The Gospel of Christ is still “the power of God unto salvation…. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed” (Rom. 1:16-17). Despite weak men’s faith in the power of God’s Word, it is still the only thing powerful enough to draw souls to Christ. Many souls have been drawn away from Christ and His church by any number of means, but God’s plan to save is only found in the Gospel. The church can most certainly open doors to evangelism by letting our “light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 5:16). We should always exhibit the mercy and compassion of Christ in our lives, and in so doing, hearts may be softened and receptive to the Gospel. However, it is the Gospel that produces Christians (2 Tim. 3:15). Our benevolence and edification are manifestations of our obedience to God’s Word and thus any good accomplished by such is still attributable to the Truth, not to man.

The church of Christ is comprised of souls
who are obedient to the Gospel, having heard the Word (Rom. 10:17), believed (Mark 16:16), repented of their past sins (Luke 13:3), confessed that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 8:37), and were baptized to have their sins forgiven (2:38) and be added, by God, to His church (2:47). Let us love and appreciate the church for which Jesus died rather than seek man-made ways of changing her into something God never intended nor wanted.

Automatic Forgiveness?

Al Brown

No one, as long as he is clothed with this body of flesh, will be immune to fleshly desires. Even Jesus was tempted (Mat. 4:1ff; Heb. 2:18), but like Him the Christian can be so committed to God that he will be adamantly determined not to give in to such desires. Indeed, this is what Christ expects him to do (Mat. 16:24). He may sin in a moment of weakness, but sin will not be the rule of his life (cf. Rom. 7:21ff). On the contrary, the rule is that he does not sin; the exception to the rule is that occasionally he does, but his determination to walk with God will cause him to quickly repent of his weakness and sin and ask for forgiveness. It is because he has such an attitude of submission, and such a determined commitment, that Jesus' blood is said to continually cleanse him of his sins (1 John 1:7-10).

No one should assume, however, that such cleansing will automatically continue if he refuses to repent, no matter how trivial and insignificant the sin may seem to be. The commission of even one sin, for which one will not or does not repent, will result in his alienation from God (Jam. 2:10).

Simon is an inspired example of this (Acts 8:9-24). Although some claim he was never a believer, Luke clearly says that he was (8:13) and that he was baptized just as the other Samaritans were. Simon sinned by lusting for, and trying to purchase, the power of imparting miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands (8:18-19). Peter, in rebuking him, named the sin he had committed: “Thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money” (8:20). He charged that Simon’s heart was “not right before God” (8:21) and that he was “in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity” (8:23). Although Simon was a Christian, who can doubt that he was cut off from God’s favor at that moment and fallen from grace? Yet, Peter told him to repent of his wickedness and pray to the Lord “if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee” (8:22). It would appear that Simon believed what Peter told him, for he asked the apostle to pray for him (8:24).

Since Peter told Simon that he would “perish” in his present condition (8:20), it is ludicrous to think that Jesus’ blood was cleansing him of his sin before he repented. On the other hand, if he obeyed Peter’s command, there is every reason to believe that Jesus’ blood did continue to cleanse him after his repentance and prayer. Since God is no respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11), He likewise expects repentance and prayer from Christians today whenever awareness of sin takes place—if they expect the blood of Christ to continue cleansing them.
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams Ella Hammac
Harold Cozad Dot Lambert
Marilyn Hall Melvin Torrey
Nancy Travis Rubye Bailey
Anthony Polnitz Nellie Read
Linda Worley Horace Myrick
Al Flesher Fred Stancliff
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Sarah O’Rourke (Dale Cunningham’s daughter)

Please Remember
Every Sunday
   Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
March 27
   Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
March 31
   Fifth Sunday Dinner on the Grounds, evening service at 12:30 pm.

Get Rid of That Pole!
If your own eyes are blurred and you see a work that needs to be done, make certain you offer to help, even take the lead, before you start harping on the others for not doing. Need to help a missionary? So take the lead by giving names and lists of good works. Else why make the suggestion?

Delbert Goins
A Beer Joint Church Is Not the Church Of Christ

Dub Mowery

The church in Abilene, Texas known as the Southern Hills Church of Christ is evidently all mixed-up concerning reconciliation. Bibli- cally to be reconciled is "to be brought into fa- vor and harmony with." In respect to God and man it has to do with bringing man into favor and harmony with the Will of the Heavenly Fa- ther. The apostle Paul brought this out when he wrote to the first century church of Christ at Corinth. He wrote:

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath giv- en to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconcil- ing the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath com- mitted unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ,

as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:17-20).

In their misguided approach the Southern Hills church is placing emphasis upon accept- ing our fellowman as he is. This is contrary to the teachings of the inspired Word of the Lord. Rather than accepting people as they are, the Son of God places emphasis upon a sinner needing to repent and be converted. Here are the Words of the Lord concerning this: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all like- wise perish" (Luke 13:3, 5). Throughout the New Testament it is taught that a sinner must turn from his sins and repent before obtaining forgiveness and fellowship.

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto
you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Mat. 18:1-4).

The Son of God declared that man must be converted to enter the kingdom of Heaven. The Greek word translated converted at Matthew 18:3 means "to turn around, to change one's course of action, and to change one's mind."

Those misguided members of the Southern Hills church of Christ are starting a church in a beer joint in Abilene with emphasis of accepting those who frequent that bar as they are. They admit that some drinking of alcoholic drinks may take place while their worship service is still going on. Also, that some of their singing will be accompanied with instrumental music. Those people will not see any need to change their lifestyle if "church people" are going to accept them as they are.

Faithful brethren throughout the brotherhood should participate in a withdrawal of fellowship from the Southern Hills Church of Christ unless they repent. Their foolishness is bringing reproach upon the church of our Lord.

Pittsburg, TX

Bellview Lectures Information

New Dates for the Lectureship
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Housing
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You and Sin
When you are wrong, admit it;
It will bring you great relief.
Don’t try to ignore or hide it
And suffer the pain and the grief.
Confess your faults to another;
It’s the manly thing to do,
If you have harmed a brother,
Tell him, and win his faith anew.

Author Unknown
A Disturbing Trend

Dub McClish

Am I just imaging things, or is there a trend among members of the body of Christ to treat all of the church’s worship and study assemblies as optional anymore?

Ever since I can remember anything about “going to church” I have been aware that a few people never come to their Bible class on Sunday morning or Wednesday night, almost as a matter of principle. I have also observed that some would never be seen at worship on Sunday evening and a still smaller percentage would seldom come even on Sunday morning. Those who would never show up on Sunday evening or Wednesday evening and only once or twice during a Gospel meeting have always proved themselves to be among the spiritual weaklings in every church.

It is quite distressing to see brethren who know better, forsake even the Sunday morning assembly when they find something they want to do more (fishing, sleeping late, unnecessary travel, etc.). It appears that some almost go out of their way to avoid coming into the assembly. I have even known of some brethren who would come to the church building, but would find somewhere else to go while the saints were assembled for worship (teachers’ workroom, the halls, out on the parking lot, the foyer, etc.). It is distressing to realize that many children do not get to attend their Bible class on Sunday morning or Wednesday evening because their parents will not bring them. It is also sad to see children placing public school activities and homework before Bible school and worship attendance. (One can still excel in school activities and studies without neglecting their Bible classes on Sunday morning or Wednesday night—one of my children did so.) Is that hour and one-half required to be here on Wednesday night really that critical to the child’s education?

How can those who treat worship and study assemblies with nonchalance satisfy their con-
science? Or do they listen anymore? What might be some of the factors in this apparently growing attitude? 1) Some may still be ignorant of God’s Word on the subject, but only a few. 2) Some have slipped into a careless habit and need to be challenged to break it. 3) Do some feel themselves to be so spiritual that they can be taught nothing more? Hebrews 10:25 still reads like it always did. Many of us need to carefully reread it. Can we ignore this direct command of God with impunity? If so, why can we not ignore them all? Do some of us need to re-examine our attitudes toward worship and study opportunities? Do some of us need to make some changes? Do some of us need to publicly repent of forsaking the assembly?

Denton, TX

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“Not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh” (Heb. 10:25).
38th Annual Bellview Lectures
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(Friday – Tuesday)

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When the Bible Was Put into Chapters and Verses
The Bible has 66 books, divided into 1189 chapters consisting of 31,173 verses. The Bible was divided into chapters by Stephen Langton about 1228. The Old Testament was divided into verses by R. Nathan in 1448 and the New Testament by Robert Stephanus in 1551. The first printed Bible into verses was an Old Testament Latin edition by Pagninus, printed in 1528. The first complete English version of the Bible divided into verses was the Geneva Bible, printed in 1560.

Author Unknown
Was the Church Established on the Day Our Lord Was Resurrected?

Ken Chumbley

Throughout the years there have been those who have contended that the church was established in the days of Abraham; others say that it was established by John the Immerser as he preached and baptized by the Jordan River. Now, from a church web site comes this remarkable statement: “We believe that the Church was established on the very day that Jesus the Christ was resurrected.” Note that they are teaching that the Lord’s church was established before the day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2. They have the church established before the Lord ascended to sit on the throne of David, before the power came with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the apostles on the day of Pentecost.

Just think, for a moment about the implications of their statement. If that statement be true then the church is not the kingdom for they would not have been established at the same time. The death and burial of Christ are vital parts of Bible doctrine, but they would be meaningless without the resurrection for without the resurrection there would be no salvation. However, without Christ’s ascension, then even the resurrection would not mean anything. Further, the ascension would also be meaningless without our Lord’s coronation as King to sit and reign on David’s throne. All were essential for the establishment of the kingdom.

That the church was established on that Pentecost day when the first Gospel sermon was preached (Acts 2) is clearly shown in that all references to the Lord’s church prior to Acts 2 speak of it in terms of its being established in the future. Following Acts 2, all references to the Lord’s church show that it
had been established, that it was in existence. As to the church and the kingdom being the same institution, this is clearly seen in Matthew 16. In that chapter our Lord speaks of establishing the church in the future, but He also speaks of the kingdom when He speaks of the keys of the kingdom, the means of opening the kingdom were given to Peter who preached the Gospel of the kingdom first to the Jews (Acts 2) and then to the Gentiles (Acts 10). We also note that Jesus promised that the kingdom would come with power while some who were standing there with Him (including the apostles) were still living. The power came when the Spirit came (2:1-4), the day when the church was established and about three thousand were added to it (2:41) and from then on there were daily additions to the church (2:47).

Thus to teach that the church was established during the days of Abraham, that it was established by John the Immerser during his ministry, or that it was established “on the very day that Jesus the Christ was resurrected” is to teach false doctrine and to teach another gospel (Gal. 1:8-9).

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# 38th Annual Bellview Lectures

**June 7-11, 2013**  
*(Friday – Tuesday)*

**Innovations**

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April 21

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April 22

Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.

April 24

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

Statements

George Washington, 1st President, 1732-1799: “It is impossible to rightly govern the World without God and the Bible.”

Abraham Lincoln, 16th President, 1809-1865: “I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Saviour of the World is communicated to us through this book.”
Chloe—the Troublemaker
Johnny Oxendine

Though the Bible tells us that those who are engaged in the works of darkness (which would include false teachers, false doctrines, and those who fellowship such) should be reproved (reprimanded, censured, rejected), there are those brethren who see such attempts as “trouble making” and who push to stop such efforts.

This attitude is not very different from that in various governments and businesses around the world toward “whistleblowers,” who are generally looked upon with scorn. Tattlers! In other words, they want you to reveal/squeal/tell management if someone else is doing something wrong, but not if management is doing something wrong. Then you will be fired. Such is the attitude toward anyone in the church who exposes error if it is being perpetrated by someone of stature or someone with a big “circle of fellowship” (i.e., institutional influence).

Let us look at the situation in Corinth: One might want to lay the blame for this calamity on Chloe, as some of her household are the ones who exposed this series of ungodly actions. Today, she would be “blacklisted” as a troublemaker, as one who lacks love and compassion for the brethren if she dared to expose those who jaunt with the “Recharge Ministry,” Sunset Workshops, the Polishing the Pulpit crowd, the Memphis School of Preaching, the Bear Valley Lectures, or the Tahoe Family Encampment groups.

These gatherings (or speaking engagements) and more are the result of a refusal to address sin on some level, and this refusal has created a mammoth Corinthian Country Club for formerly conservative members of the body of Christ. It would have been a curiosity to know what the brethren in Corinth might have considered as sinful, since Paul addresses nearly every possible sin of the flesh (1 Cor.
yet they seemed content with their divisions and sinful activities. Remember how many things actually were already in progress in Corinth, and the fact that Paul was entirely amazed that such could go on without the slightest indication that these brethren were upset about any of it—not one bit! Contentions, divisions, carnal mindedness, fornication, lawsuits, marriage concerns, spiritual gift arguments, and more, but none of it seemed to matter, and that is what was so repulsive to the apostle and the Lord!

Let us understand fellowship as we find it revealed to us in the Scriptures, a relationship we have with each other that is based on our relationship with the Father and the Son. Let us continue to foster that relationship by our strict adherence to His Word.

San Mateo, CA

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Dot Dodd         Horace Myrick
Al Flesher       Fred Stanchiff
Heather Stark    
 Robbie Cravey (The Haven)

Please Remember

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

April 24
  Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

Sometimes I feel weak, alone, useless, worthless, an expense, a burden, sad—
I have no reason to feel that way, but sometimes I do. I have the greatest fam-
ily in the world—they are so good to me! Yet still, sometimes I feel that way.
When I get really down, I tell the devil to go away and remember that Jesus is
with me “alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mat. 28:20). If you feel that
way, give it a try. God bless.

Tim Smith
Dothan, AL
Do Not Forsake Me When I'm Old

Terry Hightower

The Psalmist pleads, “Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; Until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, And thy power to every one that is to come” (Psa. 71:18). God, of course, will, never forsake His own, but unfortunately sons, daughters, grandsons, and granddaughters sometimes do. Solomon described what our relationship with or common practice toward the elderly should be so that “Children’s children are the crown of old men; And the glory of children are their fathers…And despise not thy mother when she is old” (Pro. 17:6; 23:22). Yet, numerous professed followers of God and His Word violated the normal expected pattern in the first century just as they do now (Mat. 15:1-14).

Our Lord “pulled no punches” when He thundered to these ingrates:

For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition (Mat. 15:4-6).

The Old Man’s Birthday

Yesterday was an old man’s birthday. He was 91. He awakened earlier than usual, shaved, and put on his best clothes. Surely they would come today, he thought. He did not take his daily walk to the gas station to visit with the old-timers of the community, because he wanted to be right there when they came. He sat on the front porch with a clear view of the road so that he could see them coming. Surely they would come today. He
38th Annual Bellview Lectures
June 7-11, 2013
(Friday – Tuesday)

Innovations

Friday, June 7
7:00 pm Bible Authority
Daniel Denham
7:45 pm Silence of the Scriptures
Dub McClish

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10:00 am Logic and the Bible
Terry Hightower
11:00 am Direct Operation of the Spirit
Johnny Oxendine

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Lee Moses
2:00 pm Disaster Relief Organizations
David P. Brown
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Dinner Break
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decided to skip his noon nap because he wanted to be up when they came. He has six children. Two of his daughters and their married children live within four miles. They have not seen him for such a long time. But today was his birthday. Surely they would come today. At supper time he refused to cut the cake and asked that the ice cream be left in the freezer. He wanted to wait and have dessert with them when they came. About 9 o’clock he went to his room and got ready for bed. His last words before turning out the lights were “Promise to wake me up when they come.” It was his birthday and he was 91.

Amarillo, TX

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(includes postage/handling)—call for upgrade price

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Every Sunday
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May 6
Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.

Paragraph Sermon
“If we received the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son” (1 John 5:9). It is true that every Christian has the witness in himself, but that witness is the testimony that God hath given of His Son. “So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). There are no direct revelations today.

E. M. Borden
Firm Foundation, 9 Jan. 1934, p. 2
The Resurrection of the Dead

Paul Vaughn

The resurrection of the dead is the most critical issue in Christianity. Paul stated very powerfully that the resurrection of Christ is the foundation upon which the Gospel message is built and proclaimed.

But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain (1 Cor. 15:13-14).

If Christ Jesus is not risen from the dead, there is no value or hope in Christianity and no future for the soul of man. How can the resurrection of Christ be proved? One must look at the evidence that verifies and confirms the resurrection of Christ Jesus.

The resurrection of Jesus is confirmed by fulfilled prophecy. In Psalms, David prophesied about the resurrection of the coming Christ. “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption” (Psa. 16:10). David wrote this Psalm about a thousand years before Christ’s death and resurrection. Peter said that David was not speaking about himself, but Christ Jesus (Acts 2:30-31). The fulfilled prophecy of David proves the resurrection of Christ.

There were eyewitnesses who declared the resurrection of Christ. The testimony of Thomas is strong evidence which proves that the grave had no power over the Lord. Jesus appeared to His disciples on the first day of the week after His resurrection. One disciple was not present at that time (Thomas).

The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe (John 20:25).

Thomas is just simply stating that he will not
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believe unless he has evidence to prove the resurrection of Christ. The next week Thomas saw the evidence he needed to believe in the resurrection of the Lord. When Jesus appeared, Thomas “said unto him, My Lord and my God” (20:28). The eyewitnesses prove the resurrection of Jesus.

During the past few weeks some journalists have tried to deny the resurrection of Jesus, using fabrications to advance their beliefs. There is ample evidence to prove the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Do not let anyone rob you of your faith in the Lord. Your soul depends on it.

Marion, VA

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

May 12
Deacons' meeting will be held at 5:30 pm, in room 5.

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Nancy Loy and her family in the death of Jim, who passed from this life on May 4, 2013. Jim and Nancy have been members of the Bellview congregation since 1977 and in 1978 Jim was appointed a Deacon. He taught in the Adult Bible Class program for over 30 years. He was a Christian, a devoted husband, father, and grand-father. Jim will be greatly missed in the congregation. Please keep Nancy and her family in your prayers.
The Right Attitude for Unity

J. Noel Merideth

Not only must one believe the right thing to have unity but one must also have the right attitude and disposition of heart to have unity. Having the truth is no justification for having a haughty disposition. We must have lowliness and meekness with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.

Of Diotrephes, the beloved John wrote: 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 (3 John 9-10).

The sin that John charges against Diotrephes is that he loves to have the preeminence. The word here employed by John is a very rare one and means “fond of being first.”

Years ago A. T. Robertson wrote an article on Diotrephes. He set him forth as “a church regulator,” “a short-horn deacon.” He of course, never knew all the results of the article. But one thing he did learn twenty-five subscribers to the paper in which the article appeared, asked that their subscription be canceled immediately. They did this as a protest against the personal attack that they thought had been made upon them. These twenty-five men recognized themselves in the picture of Diotrephes which the writer had painted. The shoe fit; the hit dog howled; the guilty conscience saw its owner in such a setting.

The church does not need men like Diotrephes. We do not need men who seek to rally parties about them. We need people who will follow Jesus and preachers who point people to Jesus and not themselves. Men heard John the Baptist preach and they followed Je-
This was great preaching. John was a great preacher. He was no Diotrephes. He said Jesus must increase but that he himself must decrease. He could gracefully grant the preeminence to Christ, where it belongs, in all things.

Paul did not want the brethren at Corinth divided into parties with each following their favorite preacher. That is the wrong attitude. The glory in the church is not to go to the preacher who plants or the preacher who waters but to God who gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:1-9). We should step out of selfishness and into the service of God. With the proper attitude among brethren all of the small things vanish away.

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May 19
Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 5.

May 20
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.

May 22
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Bill Gallaher and his family in the death of his brother, Edwin Gallaher, on May 6, 2013. Please keep Bill and his family in your prayers.
And We Call Them Pagans!

Andrew M. Connally

A lot of people have misconceptions concerning Africans. We could well profit from many things Africans do. After 25 years of living, working, and studying their culture, I have observed the following things:

Africans come to church with their best. Even people who have not become Christians wear their best clothes and bring their best attitudes to church. They may be poor, but whatever best they have wear! They bring their best conduct, best attention, and best service. They sing heartily, they pray fervently, and will sit for hours to listen. Never do you have to call any down nor do kids cut up. And we call them pagans!

African women will not wear shorts and halters in public. A friend of mine, a white hunter, married an African woman. She considered this a step up. One day she decided to show her new position by dressing like some of the white women in Africa; she paraded herself in short shorts and a halter. The African women were scandalized. They said, “She is dressing like a prostitute.” A few months later the woman left her husband for another man. All the African women “knew” this was going to happen because of her lack of modesty. And we call them pagans!

Africans quite often kill rapists, child molesters, and homosexuals. Many tribes pronounce and carry out the death penalty on such people. While African sexual morals leave much to be desired, they have no patience with rapists, child molesters and abusers, and homosexuals. They believe our attitudes and slap-on-the-wrist treatment of sex offenders is ludicrous; Africans believe evil should be punished. And we call them pagans!

Africans punish murderers immediately. Most often when one is convicted of murder he is sentenced and executed in six to eight weeks. Otherwise they feel justice is not being
done. Very often thieves are killed by crowds of people on the street when caught. This happened twice in one week in Arusha where we lived. They beat the thieves to death only minutes after the robbery. Somewhere they got the idea that “if judgment against evil work is not executed speedily then the hearts of men are set in them to do evil.” And we call them pagans!

Deceased

H. L. Gradowith

I’m a blessing to you:
You’re a blessing to me:
Together we will work
To be all we should be!

Dothan, AL

Bellview Lectures on the Internet
Lessons from Innovations will be available for viewing during and after the lectures at:
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**38th Annual Bellview Lectures**

**Innovations**

**June 7-11, 2013**

(Friday – Tuesday)

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**Friday, June 7**

7:00 pm  Bible Authority

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7:45 pm  Silence of the Scriptures

Dub McClish

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9:00 am  Special Services (Easter, Christmas)

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Terry Hightower

11:00 am  Direct Operation of the Spirit

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Danny Douglas

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Terry Hightower

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11:00 am  Children’s Worship/Divided Assembly

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Bruce Stulting

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Marilyn Hall      Melvin Torrey
Nancy Travis      Ruby Bailey
Anthony Polnitz   Nellie Read
Dot Dodd          Horace Myrick
Al Flesher        Fred Stancliff
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Doris Smith (Sheila Myrick's sister)

Please Remember
Every Sunday
  Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
May 22
  Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
May 29
  Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.
June 2
  Pre-lectureship meeting after the evening service, in room 1. All members of the congregation are encouraged to attend.

New Address
Tony Hall’s new address is: 4005 West Bobe Street, Lot #37; Pensacola, FL 32505. His telephone number is 221-4090. Please update your directory.
Newspapers seldom print all of it; the entertainment media usually hides it; philosophers ignore it because of its simplicity. There is only one place that one can find the Truth—all of the Truth that will enable a person to live righteously here before God and prepare one for Heaven—in the Word of God.

Some Truths are discovered through research and exploration—but none of a spiritual nature is, because they have been available for hundreds of years. In one sense, they are discovered afresh by every generation, but it is not as though they have never before been known.

A person must go to the Source to get the full benefits because Satan has distorted many of its teachings; he is skillful at misrepresentation and deception. Just as the news media withholds pertinent data about the source of a problem, he will emphasize grace and faith, keeping people’s attention away from repentance and baptism.

For that reason, people must not be satisfied with anything less than learning “all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). “Thy word is true from the beginning: And every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever” (Psa. 119:160). Too many people have camped on a particular verse or passage, thereby excluding others that modify or explain it. Sometimes useless divisions have occurred by a failure to approach the sacred Word properly.

Buy the truth and sell it not (Pro. 23:23) means that, once we understand its teachings, we must hold on to them. First, however, we must be certain that our understanding is correct. Many are easily susceptible to error because they have not hungered or thirsted after righteousness (Mat. 5:6), nor have they been diligently seeking Him (Heb. 11:6). No one is a success in business because of a casual interest in the marketplace. No one sets eight
world records in swimming because he had a mild interest in the sport. No one becomes a champion runner because he or she possesses a nominal interest in jogging.

Truth is only located in one place—the Bible. Therefore, we must have the Book open frequently; we must study at home consistently; we must be present for Bible study always when the saints meet. There is no danger of an overdose; overexposure might be a problem with the sun—but not from the Son. Searching the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:11) not only serves as a good precedent, it is the pathway to eternal life.

Winter Park, FL.

Open Forum Questions
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Dot Dodd  Horace Myrick
Al Flesher  Fred Stancliff
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Marilyn Hall (Sacred Heart Hospital)
Melvin Torrey (West Florida Hospital)
Doris Smith (Sheila Myrick's sister)
Octavia Randolph (Ashley Brower's aunt)

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

June 2
Pre-lectureship meeting after the evening service, in room 1. All members of the congregation are encouraged to attend.

Just a Minute
I had only just a minute
Just sixty seconds in it;
Forced upon me—can't refuse it,
Didn't seek it, didn't choose it.
I must suffer if I lose it,
Give account if I abuse it;
Just a tiny little minute
But eternity is in it.

Author Unknown
When Will He Return?

Dub McClish

That Jesus Christ will come again is a prominent New Testament doctrine. Every writer refers to the Second Coming, Jesus summarized this great promise in John 14:3: “I will come again.” In this promise the hope of His people has rested through the centuries.

Can we determine when the Lord will return? Even in the first century, some thought they could do so (2 Thess. 2:1-3). From that time to the present, time-guessers have proliferated. They seem to resurface with each major military conflict or earthquake. Are there “signs of the times” for “the day of the Lord”? Can men discern the time of His coming from the numerology of Daniel or The Revelation?

The fact that many men scattered over several centuries have been “certain” of the accuracy of their predictions of the time of the Lord’s return (but just as certainly wrong), should be instructive. If the time could have been deciphered, it surely would have been deciphered by now.

Jesus’ coming will be “as a thief in the night,” not at a time expected (Mat. 24:43-44; 1 Thes. 5:2-3; 2 Pet. 3:10).

There are no “signs of the times” for the Lord’s return. The “signs” of which Jesus spoke (i.e., wars, rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes) relate to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman Legions in a.d. 70 rather than to His Return (Mat. 24:6-22; Mark 13:1-20; Luke 21:5-24). When the disciples saw Jerusalem under siege (Luke 21:20), they were to flee immediately to the mountains for their lives, disregarding all possessions and not looking back (Mat. 24:15-18; Luke 21:21-24). At the coming of the Lord, all attempts to flee and hide will be futile.

Jesus’ words concerning the time of His return could not be plainer. After describing the “signs” by which they could recognize Jerusalem’s impending doom, He then said of His
Second Coming:
But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only…. Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh…. Therefore be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh (Mat. 24:36, 42, 44).

Jesus then told two parables that teach the same message (24:45-51; 25:1-13).

Whether from ego, ignorance, or avarice, all predictions of the time of Jesus’ return are doomed to certain failure.

Denton, TX
### 38th Annual Bellview Lectures

**Innovations**

**June 7-11, 2013**

(Friday – Tuesday)

<table>
<thead>
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Al Flesher    Fred Stancliff
Marilyn Hall
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Nellie Read (Baptist Hospital)
Octavia Hill (Ashley Brower’s cousin)
Jake Johnson (Joyce & Randall Johnson’s great-nephew)

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June 16
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June 17
   Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.

Best Example of All
Christ Jesus is the best model for us to follow in carrying out every principle which God would expect us to incorporate in our lives. Study very carefully 1 Peter 2:21-23.

Delbert Goins
Romans 13:1-2 and Acts 5:29 and Obama Care

Charles Pogue

In the first two verses of Romans 13, Paul wrote:

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

Almost every time I have heard those two verses quoted (and every time I have quoted them myself), the reference has been accompanied with the words of Acts 5:29: “Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men”

When I have heard those verses used together it has sometimes struck me to ask the question, has there ever been, is it the case now, or can we foresee an imminent event when the powers that be have crossed the line, and Christians must now resist the higher power to obey God? As I have listened to brethren talk about the disjunct that can arise between these two passages, I have always come away with the impression that government, not God, receives the deference when a possible contradiction arises. Actually, I cannot remember anyone raising the possibility that a conflict has arisen. It is my personal conviction that such conflicts have occurred, and that some, using the rationalization of obedience to the Romans passage, have failed to “Obey God rather than men.”

We are now faced with such conflict in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, or Obama Care, as it is usually called. On March 12, 2012, the Department of Health issued a final rule regarding the premiums of any health insurance plan that contains an abortion elective. From the monthly premiums it would be mandated that one dollar go specifically to fund abortions. Obama Care would
be one of those plans.

We know very few Christians (though there are a few of them around), who deny that abortion is murder of an innocent baby. Is it wrong to assist in the payment of a woman who seeks to have an abortion? How can anyone answer in the negative?

Most of us have probably heard by now that for a private health plan to fulfill the required government mandate regarding benefits that such plans must provide, the premium cost will be in excess of $20,000 per year. Within the circle of people I know, if there are any who can afford that cost, I am unaware of it. Beginning in 2014, there will be a penalty imposed upon those who are without insurance. Although the penalty starts small ($95 per individual), by 2016 it reaches $695 per individual, up to a family maximum of $2,085. The penalty will rise yearly based on the cost of living increase.

Here is the problem for many Christians. They cannot afford the private insurance, or the penalty for not having health insurance. The only option left is Obama Care which will collect the $12 per year from every individual policy holder to fund abortions. What do you do? Is this a case where Acts 5:29 supersedes Romans 13:1-2? It seems to me that many of us are between a rock and a hard place, not being able to afford private insurance (which will soon be gone anyway) or the penalty. The choices are, enroll in Obama Care, which I believe would be sin, or eventually, because of inability to pay the additional tax, be in serious debt jeopardy with the federal government.

We hear from various groups that our religious freedom guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution is under attack by Obama Care. It is. That is an absolute fact. If you happen to be in a similar financial situation to a lot of others, you have probably been flailing about in confusion and doubt about what you can do and what will happen to you in the next five or ten years if you live that long. Whatever the answer for us may be, I have no doubt in my own mind that we are faced with the question, has the Government created a dilemma between Romans and Acts? For me, I believe it has.

Granby, MO

“I’m Satisfied”

“Satisfaction Guaranteed” has been a selling point with numerous businesses. The product is to fulfill the needs and desires of promise. Sellers rejoice to hear of a satisfied customer. Some will accept almost anything with satisfaction while others are more discerning. This satisfaction may be short lived when after the guarantee time has elapsed and the requirements of the product are not fulfilled.

Many in religious matters seem to think that if they are satisfied that makes the practice guaranteed. But our being satisfied with a practice or doctrine does not equate God being satisfied! Repentance is that act of heart of
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Address: ________________________________________________________________
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man's part that brings his religious doctrine and practice into alignment with God's satisfaction (Rom. 6:16-18).

The Jews in Jesus' day were satisfied with rejecting Him as Lord. Jesus said, "ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). Their satisfaction did not mean they were pleasing to God! Likewise, mention could be made of the Atheist, infidel, Denominationalist, and others who think because they are satisfied with their religion that God must also be satisfied! Not so!

When we warn brethren about departures from the Faith, often they retort, "Well, we are satisfied." When we warn about mistranslations and their destructive force, "Well, we are satisfied." Or, the church of God preacher (James Dobson) films "Focus on the Family" with its doctrines of Direct revelation, direct intervention, tithing, and instrumental music, "Well, our elders are satisfied" It does not mean God is pleased with the matter.

Until we bring our religious practices and doctrines into harmony with God's will and to His satisfaction, we need to know that we walk on dangerous grounds. Paul did not say in vain, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11).

Author Unknown
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Ella Hammac
Harold Cozad    Dot Lambert
Nancy Travis    Rubye Bailey
Anthony Polnitz  Melvin Torrey
Dot Dodd        Horace Myrick
Al Flesher      Fred Stancliff
Marilyn Hall    Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Nellie Read (Baptist Hospital)
Octavia Hill (Ashley Brower’s cousin)
Jake Johnson (Joyce & Randall Johnson’s great-nephew)

Please Remember

June 16
Lectureship critique after the evening service, in room 1. All members of the congregation are encouraged to attend.

June 17
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10).

“The most important thought that ever occupied my mind is that of my individual responsibility to God.”

Daniel Webster
Salvation by Grace  
David P. Brown

Salvation from sin is made possible by God’s grace (Eph. 2:8-9). Grace is the unmerited favor of God. Man has never deserved salvation and there is not one thing that he could do to obligate God to pay him with salvation (Rom. 5:8). Salvation is, therefore, the free gift of God.

Hence, grace involves a giver, gift, and receiver. In John 3:16 this is readily seen. God (the giver) motivated solely by love for lost mankind gave Christ (the gift) to man (the receiver). Clearly seen from these foregoing simple facts are two sides to salvation. On one hand there is the Divine side and on the other is the human side. The Divine side has to do with what God has done for man that he never could do for himself. The human side takes into account that man can do certain things and that, therefore, God expects him to do them.

This raises the question: “Is salvation free if man does anything?” This query is illustrative of the fact that man will reason in regard to religion in a way that he would never do in his secular endeavors. It also indicates to what extent men will go to uphold a man-made doctrine.

What person would take the absurd position that air is not free because one must do what is necessary to receive the singular blessing obtained therefrom? The same is true of water, sunshine, food, and a host of other items in God’s natural world. It is elementary indeed to conclude that for man to benefit from God’s freely given natural gifts that he must do or work something to appropriate their blessings to himself.

Relative to man’s salvation from sin, man must appropriate or receive the free gift of salvation. How does he do this? He cannot do so by the works of the law of Moses (3:20) or by any meritorious works devised by man.
The inspired James, however, declared that, “by works a man is justified” (Jam. 2:24). It is obvious that James is not speaking of the works of the law of Moses or the meritorious works of man. What works, then, could justify a man in God’s sight? Or the question could be phrased in another way: “How does one take hold of or receive God’s free gift of salvation?

In answering the aforementioned question one must remember that at this point the human side of salvation and not the Divine side is being investigated. The only works that will save anyone are the works of God and man can do them (John 6:29). David declared, “My tongue shall speak of thy word: For all thy commandments are righteousness” (Psa. 119:172). At the house of Cornelius it is then no wonder that Peter declared that “he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:35). It is obvious, therefore, that the works that James and Peter are speaking of are works of obedience to God’s commandments (Heb. 5:9). By obedience to God’s commandments is God’s work done and man thereby receives or appropriates the free gift of salvation to himself.

The denominational world ignores man’s part in salvation. They, thereby, are blind and dumb when the Biblical question of “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” is put to them (Acts 2:37). It is obvious that if the Divine side was the only side to salvation that all men would be saved regardless of anything they might do or not do (Tit. 2:11; 2 Pet. 3:9). The whole truth is, however, that “the grace of God that bringeth salvation” came “teaching us that” man must abstain from certain things and also do other things (Tit. 2:12; 2 Pet. 3:9).

In Noah’s day, after God had resolved to destroy man the Bible records that “Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Gen. 6:8). Because Noah “found grace,” God instructed him as to how he could appropriate the blessings that had been so freely made available to him by God. Noah had to do what God said do, in the way He said do it, and for the reason God said do it, or God’s grace could not save him. Hence, Noah “prepared an ark to the saving of his house” (Heb. 11:7). Noah’s faith saved him only when it was strong enough to obey the teaching that God’s grace provided. Thus, both the Divine and human sides of salvation are clearly seen in this example that was “written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Rom. 15:4).

No man could love as God loved, nor give the gift (the Christ) that God gave. Neither could man live, suffer, die, rise, and ascend back to heaven as Christ did. No mortal could build the church and give the human race the Bible as God has done. Deity did all of this because man could not.

Man can study the Bible, have faith created in him by God’s Word and do what God said (John 5:39; Acts 17:22; Rom. 10:17; Jam. 2:24). In doing what God said he is simply taking hold of the free gift of salvation. Such work has no connection whatsoever with the meritorious works men have concocted to obligate God to pay man with salvation. Much studying and teaching regarding “the grace of God that bringeth salvation” needs to be
“Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24).

Have you ever tried to convince someone that the particular religious position he/she held was incorrect? If so, you most probably received an answer somewhat like this: You are judging me and that is wrong. While we are never to presume to judge one’s motives, a certain amount of judging is absolutely necessary to pleasing God. We cannot judge what is beyond our ability to perceive, but that which is before us and regulated by His Word we must judge.

We are not, according to our text, to judge “according to appearance,” or only based on externals when the matter pertains to the inner man. I cannot see whether your secret thoughts are right with God unless you manifest your motive incontrovertibly by your actions. I cannot perform a cursory review based on my own preferences or rules. These things are strictly forbidden.

But notice that in our text there is a judging that we are compelled to engage in and it is called “righteous judgment.” We consider the works of an individual and compare them with the standard of righteousness (God’s Word—cf., John 12:48) and arrive at a conclusion as to the propriety of those works or deeds. It is not wrong to engage in this kind of judgment, and in fact, it is wrong not to engage in this kind of judging!

How can we oppose a man like Hitler without judging righteous judgment? How can we say that Saddam Hussein or the devil himself is wrong without comparing their deeds with the Bible? And is not such a comparison judging? Indeed. It is judging righteous judgment.

Someone who says, “You are wrong for judging” has engaged in the very activity they condemn. They have judged you for judging. They condemn you for condemning. Where is the consistency? To judge righteous judgment is to preach the Truth. To judge righteous judgment is to determine what is required of God on a given matter and to then pronounce His requirements to one in danger of hell-fire.

Heed His Word: “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24).
Sick

Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams Harold Cozad
Dot Lambert     Nancy Travis
Rubye Bailey    Nellie Read
Anthony Polnitz Melvin Torrey
Horace Myrick   Marilyn Hall
Al Flesher      Fred Stancliff
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Ella Hammac (West Florida Hospital)
Jake Johnson (Joyce & Randall Johnson’s great-nephew)

Please Remember

June 26
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

June 30
Fifth Sunday Dinner on the Grounds, evening service at 1:00 pm.

Calendar Changes

July 8
Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.

July 22
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.

Romans 5:8
“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”
Let Us Be Noble
Bruce Stulting

The Hebrews writer stated:
without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him (11:6).

Knowledge of God can come in one of two ways: the natural revelation which is the creation and the special revelation which is the Bible. Regarding the natural revelation the Psalmist said, “The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament sheweth his handywork” (19:1). Also, Paul stated: the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse (Rom. 1:20).

From the foregoing we learn that it is possible to know some things about God, however this knowledge is insufficient for salvation. For this cause God has given us the special revelation—the Bible. The faith spoken of by Paul comes from this source: “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (10:17).

“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple” (Psa. 19:7). Since the Bible is the source of saving faith, it is the most important book man has ever been privileged to read. This article is designed to encourage devoted Bible study so Bible devotion can be perfected. There are many difficult problems with which we must deal with in this life. When seeking answers to these problems, the world often turns to man-made philosophies and self-help books with the results often leading to more complicated problems. The only answer to a better life today and eternal life in the future is by living a life of faith as the Bible directs. With this in mind let us prayerfully consider the following.
The Importance of Bible Study

The Bible is the only all sufficient guide to all of our spiritual needs. We are told that God “hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Pet. 1:3). There are many things that are attributed to the Word of God. Notice the following: (1) The Word will be our standard in the day of judgment, it will be that by which we shall be judged (John 12:48). (2) The Word has the power to cleanse us (John 15:3). (3) The Word is an agent in sanctification (John 17:17). (4) By abiding in the Word we become true disciples (John 8:31). (5) The use of the Word brings knowledge which in turn brings freedom from sin (John 8:32). (6) The Word produces faith (Rom. 10:17). (7) The Word exerts an influence in the lives of people which can increase and grow in its effect (Acts 6:7; 12:24). (8) Through the Word Christians are able to comfort sorrowing loved ones (1 The. 4:18). (9) The Word is able to pierce the innermost self of man (Heb. 4:12). (10) By having the Word living and abiding in us, our prayers will be more effective (John 15:7). (11) The directing of one’s life should be left to the power of the Word (Mat. 4:4). (12) It is through the Word that we are begotten again unto salvation (1 Pet. 1:23; Jam. 1:18). (13) The Word is God’s instrument of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19). (14) The Word is able to save sinners (Jam. 1:21; Acts 11:14). (15) The Word, which is the Gospel, is also said to save (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 15:2). (16) Finally, the Word is able to produce growth to maturity in Christ (1 Pet. 2:2). All of the foregoing is made possible through a knowledge of God’s Word. Thus, the apostle Paul exhorted: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). We are reminded that

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works (3:16-17).

The Tragedy of Ignorance

Speaking through the prophet Hosea, God said:

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 law (Hos. 4:6).

Notice that when one generation neglects their study of God’s Word that generation suffers as well as the next. This pattern is repeated over and over again in the Old Testament. In contrast to this the Psalmist said, “I have been young, and now am old; Yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his seed begging bread” (37:25). There are those today who have received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness (2 The. 2:10-12).

Jesus repeatedly said to the Scribes and Pharisees “Have ye not read.” It is a sad commentary on the state of religious affairs when the
religious leaders of the day know not the Word of God.

Therefore, let us be noble like the Bereans who “received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). May we all “receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” and “be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only” (Jam. 1:21-22). Finally, brethren, may we take heed unto ourselves and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this we shall both save ourselves and them that hear us (1 Tim. 4:16).

Huntsville, TX

Take Heed How You Hear
James Burton Coffman

The message of John the Baptist, when he came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, was not, “Smile, God loves you!” It was “O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” (Mat. 3:7).

The prophet Jeremiah was not cast into the miry pit for preaching, “I’m OK: You’re OK!” He suffered the wrath of his contemporaries for crying out against their adultery, idolatry, violence, injustice, and shameful indifference to God’s commandments.

Noah’s message from the steps of the ark was not, “Something good is going to happen to you!” He condemned the world and was called by the Holy Spirit, “A preacher of righteousness” (2 Pet. 2:5).

Jesus Christ was not crucified for saying: “Consider the lilies, how they grow.” He went to the cross for demanding of all the dwellers in Jerusalem:

except ye repent…Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites…child of hell…fools…blind guides…ye are children of your father the devil (Luke 13:3; Mat. 23:14-16; John 8:44).

Paul was not commissioned to write about half the New Testament because he taught that men are “saved by faith only.” He taught: vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ…wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness…obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil (2 The. 1:8; Rom. 1:18; 2:8-9).

There is no record of Jesus Christ trying to help men find out who they were. When they went up into the mountain, Jesus did not ask, “Peter, who are you?” The Lord never directed any follower to try to identify himself, but He did demand, “What think ye of Christ; whose son is he?” (Mat. 22:42). It is not, who am I, but who is He!

Deceased

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Rheba Stancliff in the death of her brother, Vernon Matthews, on June 23. Please keep Rheba and her family in your prayers.
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher       Marge Williams
Charles Williams    Harold Cozad
Dot Lambert        Nancy Travis
Rubye Bailey       Nellie Read
Anthony Polnitz    Melvin Torrey
Horace Myrick      Marilyn Hall
Al Flesher         Fred Stancliff
Ella Hammac
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Gabriel Stewart (Dallas & Karen Diamond’s nephew)
Melanie Crowe & Cheyenne Borne
(Bill & Peggy Crowe’s grand-daughter & great-grand-daughter)
Tim Smith (ICU)

Please Remember
June 30
Fifth Sunday Dinner on the Grounds, evening service at 1:00 pm.

July 8
Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.

New Arrivals
Karen Ayliffe has a new granddaughter: Amelia Grace Hoffay was born on June 19. She weighed 7 lbs 10 oz and was 19 inches long.
Bill and Peggy Crowe have a new great-grand-daughter: Cheyenne Raine Borne was born on June 20. She weighed 5 lbs 2 oz and was 18 inches long.
Our congratulations are extended to everyone.
Thoughts on the Words of Our Prayers

Dub McClish

All that we do in word or deed (prayer involves both) must be that which the Lord authorizes (Col. 3:17). Those who lead such prayers in our assemblies at times use expressions they apparently have not thought about very carefully. Faithful brethren will ever seek to conform their prayers to wording that conveys only Scriptural concepts. With these factors in mind, as one who at times misspeaks, I humbly suggest reappraisal (and abandonment) of some of the prayer terminology I hear on occasion. Please consider the following:

• **Godhead Confusion:** Prayers at the Lord’s table often mix the respective identities of the Father and the Son. When one, in giving thanks to the Father for the elements of the supper says, “We thank thee for this bread, which symbolizes thy body” or “We thank thee for this fruit of the vine, which represents thy blood,” the confusion is unmistakable. The Father never had a body or blood to offer. Rather, His Son made the ultimate offering of body and blood for our sins (Mat. 26:26-28), and we err when we confuse this Scriptural distinction. This confusion is also evident when a brother, in a prayer addressed to the Father (there is no authority for thus addressing Jesus or the Holy Spirit), closes his prayer with, “In thy name we pray.” I mean no unkindness, but it is nonsensical to pray to the Father in the name of the Father. We are to pray to the Father in the name of His Son (John 16:23-26).

• **Worshipping the Word:** Liberals have long hurled Bibliolaters (Bible worshipers) at those of us who dare insist on Scriptural authority for all that we do. (They apparently do not believe that contempt for the Lord’s Word equals contempt for Him—John 12:48). No, we do not worship the Bible; we worship the God who speaks through
the Bible—and by no other means. I have, however, heard otherwise knowledgeable brethren pray: “We are thankful we can come together to worship thy Word.” Such unfortunate (and unauthorized) wording plays right into the hands of liberal accusers. If one does not believe in “worshipping the Bible,” he should never say so in his prayer. If he believes in “worshipping the Bible,” he needs additional teaching before further leading public prayers.

• **“Just” Prayers:** “Father, we just pray that..., and we just thank thee for..., and we just ask for forgiveness...,” have become all too common prayer expressions in recent years. Just in such contexts conveys the idea of “merely” or “only” (viz., “I have just [merely, only] five minutes to speak.”). Is it fitting to “merely” ask God to forgive us when we sin, knowing the cost of our redemption (Acts 20:28)? And how can it make sense to ask for just (i.e., “only”) one more thing repeatedly (this is about as rational as to claim that one is saved both by faith “only” and by grace “only”). Over the years I have heard many denominational preachers offer prayers filled with “just” this and “just” that. I suspect that brethren have, wittingly or unwittingly, adopted this practice from them. The Truth will be better served if they leave it where they found it—with the denominations.

• **Worship or Learn About?** Some apparently confuse these two activities by stating that we have gathered “to worship about God.” No, we assemble to worship God and His Son (John 4:23-24). In the process of studying the Bible and singing spiritual songs, we learn about God and His Son, but this does not constitute “worshipping about God.” Such an expression is foreign both to Scriptural concept and terminology, as well as to grammatical sense.

I do not believe that brethren who thus speak in their prayers intend to make unauthorized statements. I think such untoward expressions stem mostly from thoughtlessness, along with ignorance of grammar and/or of Scripture. Let us be more conscious of our words and of their implications. Let us be concerned in our assemblies with representing the Truth of God’s Word in our prayers, even as we must be with our sermons and our songs.

Denton, TX

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More Thoughts on Who We Think We Are:

**Johnny Oxendine**

I will be forever grateful to a lady by the name of Gertha Alston? Why? Because she said something to me before I obeyed the Gospel that still resonates in my ear when we are discussing certain passages of Scripture. Without going into the word for word, she said to make sure that the person you are interested in puts the Lord first.

I thought about this again, not just in the context she spoke it (which would only make perfect sense that a faithful Christian would look first at the spiritual personality as a primary consideration), and then put some other things we think/do that should demand the same conscientiousness:

1. Do I think of my responsibility to the
Lord when considering a job? Will it interfere?
2. Do I think of the Lord first when considering my vacations? Do I make sure that I will be able to worship with sound congregations and not just whoever is available?
3. Is God first when I look for a place to live (or relocate), or does the place and price (my agent) determine what I do?
4. Do people who visit me attend the worship (and classes) with me—or do we just come in the morning and run off to meet them/pick them up/show them the area and miss evening services?
5. Am I often too sick for worship or Bible class, but up bright and early for work the next day?
6. Are my best friends strong Christians or are they in the weak and non-Christian category?

You could easily add more, but the point is hard to miss. Mrs. Alston spoke of the importance of putting the Lord and church first, and we have certainly seen how the Lord emphasized that many times.

San Mateo, CA
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher         Marge Williams
Charles Williams     Harold Cozad
Dot Lambert          Nancy Travis
Ruby Bailey          Anthony Polnitz
Horace Myrick        Melvin Torrey
Al Flesher           Marilyn Hall
Ella Hammac          Fred Stancliff
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Nellie Read (Baptist Hospital)
Gabriel Stewart (Dallas & Karen Diamond's nephew)
Cheyenne Borne (Bill & Peggy Crowe's great-grand-daughter)

Please Remember
July 8
Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.

Drifting Trust
Trust is often allowed to slip unchecked through our minds. This creates an “I don’t care” attitude toward truth and righteousness. This is why brethren cause division in the church, why they leave and or forsake Christ altogether. God chides His people who possess a lack of trust. He does not want any to perish. How about your truth? Where are you in the scheme of things? Are you growing in it?

Delbert Goins
Are Some Exempt from God’s Law on Fellowship

Danny Douglas

If one considers the example of certain brethren, it would seem that they are exempted from God’s law on fellowship. Does God allow those who specialize in such areas as marriage and the family, church growth, or Christian apologetics, to ignore His law on fellowship? May they go and work with congregations that are in error, even if it is only for a few days, and be allowed to ignore the established errors of these congregations?

May speakers from Apologetics Press, or other well-known speakers among us, speak in places where error needs to be refuted, without reproving their established error(s)? Is it acceptable for them to align their influence with brethren and congregations caught up in false doctrine? Indeed, people may be fully convinced of the existence of God and the veracity of the Bible, and certain other topics, and still be lost because of their false doctrine on worship, marriage, divorce, and re-marriage, fellowship associations, support of unscriptural para-church organizations, the Holy Spirit, or on other issues contrary to the doctrine of Christ.

Those who do this are in violation of clear New Testament teaching:

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).

To deal with Christian evidences or some other category of the Truth, while ignoring sin being practiced in another area, would be as fallacious as a physician doing knee surgery on one in need of quadruple heart bypass surgery. Rather than fellowshipping those in er-
When Can We Know We Have Lost Our “First Love” for the Lord?

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

- When my delight in the Lord is no longer as great as my delight in someone else, I have lost my “first love.”
- When my soul does not long for times of rich fellowship in God’s Word or in prayer, I have lost my “first love.”
- When my thoughts during leisure moments do not reflect upon the Lord, I have lost my “first love.”
- When I claim to be “only human” and easily give in to those things I know displease the Lord, I have lost my “first love.”
- When I do not willingly and cheerfully give to God’s work or to the needs of others, I have lost my “first love.”
- When I cease to treat every Christian brother as I would the Lord, I have lost my “first love.”
- When I view the command of Christ as restrictions to my happiness rather than expressions of His love, I have lost my “first love.”
- When I inwardly strive for acclaim of this world rather than the approval of the Lord, I have lost my “first love.”
- When I fail to make Christ or His words known because I fear rejection, I have lost my “first love.”
- When I refuse to give up an activity which I know is offending a weaker brother, I have lost my “first love.”
- When I become complacent to sinful conditions around me, I have lost my “first love.”
- When I an unwilling to forgive another for offending me, I have lost my “first love.”

Author Unknown

Murder Plus Murder Does Not Equal Righteousness

Paul Vaughn

It was in January of 1973, when the Supreme Court ruled that a woman had the legal right to terminate a pregnancy. There have been numerous attempts to get the Supreme Court to reverse this decision. Anti-abortion groups have formed throughout the country
to protest against taking the innocent life of a baby. Yes! It is a human baby not just a blob of tissue or a fetus. Abortion is the planned destruction, murder, of a human life. The innocent baby cannot speak for itself therefore others must stand boldly to seek protection of the unborn child.

Those who protest against abortion, for the most part, do not use violence. In Wichita, Kansas, a gunman killed Dr. George Tiller for his work in Tiller’s Women’s Health Care Service Clinic. Dr. Tiller was noted for his work in termination of unborn babies through abortion. As stated above abortion is the destruction, murder, of an innocent child. Sadly, the Supreme Court makes it legal in this country. But, the murdering of Dr. Tiller does not make it right! God forbids murder.

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Rom. 13:8-9).

Christians must love people enough to take the Gospel of Christ to them to affect change. It is the doctrine of Christ that can stop abortion: not murder. One cannot murder a fellow human and expect to go to Heaven. Murdering those who murder does not make one righteous. Government has the right to administer the death sentence (13:1-4), but not evil wicked men. They only give non-believers the opportunity to speak against God. Therefore, all of us should speak out against abortion and all sin. Are you prepared to stand against all wickedness?

Any wickedness is wrong in the sight of God, even that done in His name.

Marion, VA

If You Had Died for the Sins of the World
How Would You Feel:

When men took your name in vain?
When men damaged their bodies dabbling in sin instead of glorifying you as their savior in their bodies?
When men fussed and got angry among themselves in which you had established and thus brought reproach upon you?
When men chose to go somewhere else on the day which you had set aside for men to worship you?
When men refused to obey what you said they had to do to gain the benefit of your death?
When men did not appreciate your sacrifice enough to stay for the supper you had left as a memorial of it?
When men did not respect you enough to wear your name?
When men did not care whether their conduct caused anyone else to stumble?
Did you ever stop to think? The Son of God probably would think the same as you would about such thoughtless people.

Author Unknown
Sick

Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher       Marge Williams
Charles Williams    Harold Cozad
Dot Lambert        Nancy Travis
Rubye Bailey       Ella Hammac
Anthony Polnitz    Melvin Torrey
Horace Myrick      Marilyn Hall
Al Flesher         Fred Stancliff
Peggy Crowe
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Gabriel Stewart (Dallas & Karen Diamond’s nephew)
Cheyenne Borne (Bill & Peggy Crowe’s great-granddaughter)
Doris Gulsby (Phyllis Brantley’s aunt)

Sympathy

Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family of Nellie Read, who passed from this life on June 30, 2013. Nellie had been a member of the Bellview congregation since 2005. Please keep Nellie’s family in your prayers.

Please Remember

July 14

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

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 (a free reader is available from www.adobe.com).
The apostle Paul, through inspiration of the Holy Spirit, informed us that when he became a man he put away childish things (1 Cor. 13:11). We are all aware that in this instance he was using that example to teach that, when the Gospel message was completed, the childhood age of bringing the Gospel was to be done away, such as the use of performing miracles, speaking in tongues, etc., to prove they were sent from God.

However, we can make an application from this principle taught here, as well as from Hebrews 5:12:

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.

Some members of the church never grow past the childhood era, even though they may have become Christians in their youth and have matured bodily to reach the threescore and ten years that God says we may expect to live upon this earth. That type of person still needs “toys” to play with in the church. He cannot conceive of being a Christian without all the paraphernalia found in some elements of the body of Christ, such as ball games, all sorts of entertainment, every gimmick imaginable, and all varieties of “make work” and “programs” to try to make him act like a Christian should.

Some churches hire a “youth director” or “youth minister” (whatever that is, I find nothing in the Bible authorizing such) whose main duty is to instigate “programs” to “keep the youth involved.” But all the time they are merely involved in “programs” which in reality are not part of the church activity. The young man Timothy assisted the apostle Paul. However, his job was not to organize ball teams, hay rides, picnics, etc. He was charged
Too, there is a disposition on the part of some to think that, unless we are involved in group activity, we cannot practice Christianity. In other words, “I won’t do it unless we can get a group together to do it.” We are so afraid, I suppose, that we will be found doing “more
than our share.” But the Bible says that a cup of water given in the name of Christ will bring reward in Heaven (Mat. 10:42; Mark 9:41).

One does not have to do his benevolent acts as a group activity. We are all going to be judged individually before God. The Samaritan did not have to call the leader of his group to get his assignment. He, when he saw the need, fulfilled his obligation as neighbor to the man who fell among thieves (Luke 10:30-36).

Now, lest someone might be disposed to think that I am turning my back on all that I have taught in times past about our doing benevolence through the church treasury, let me point out that there is Biblical example for such. The apostle Paul said, “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye” (1 Cor. 16:1). There is a place for collective action: yes. But we must also assume our individual responsibilities as well. We must not wait for others to do what we can do individually!

The Embarrassed Atheist

A certain atheist lecturer was parading up and down the countryside pouring out his verbiage against the very thought of God, and heaping ridicule upon all those foolish enough to believe in God, and in the Bible as the Word of God.

On one occasion, he addressed a group who were gathered in a large hall. His wordy eloquence stirred them to a high pitch and deeming himself master of the situation he hurled a challenge to Almighty God. If there be a God, he challenged Him to reveal Himself by smiting the lecturer to death. When God did not do this, the man turned to his audience and exclaimed: “See, there is no God!”

Whereupon a little woman, with a shawl about her head, arose to her feet. She addressed her remarks directly to the lecturer, as follows:

Sir, I cannot answer your arguments, your superior intelligence, will you answer me one question? I have been a believer in Christ for many years. I have rejoiced in His salvation and I have enjoyed my Bible. His comfort has been a tremendous joy. If, when I die, I come to learn that there is no God, that Jesus is not the Son of God, that the Bible is not true, and that there is no salvation or heaven, pray, sir, what have I lost, believing in Christ during this life?

The room was very still. The audience quickly grasped the logic of the woman’s question. Then they turned to the atheist, who was swayed by the woman’s simplicity. In quiet tones he made an answer: “Madam, you won’t stand to lose a thing.” Hearing this, the woman spoke again:

You have been kind to have answered my question. Permit me to ask another. If, when it comes time for you to die, you discover that the Bible is true, and that there is a God, that Jesus is His Son, and that there is a heaven and a hell—pray, sir, what will you stand to lose?”

The atheist had no answer.

“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Psa. 14:1).
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Harold Cozad
Dot Lambert     Nancy Travis
Rubye Bailey    Anthony Polnitz
Melvin Torrey    Ella Hammac
Horace Myrick   Marilyn Hall
Al Flesher      Fred Stancliff
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Gabriel Stewart (Dallas & Karen Diamond’s nephew)
Cheyenne Borne (Bill & Peggy Crowe’s great-granddaughter)
Tony Busch (Bill & Pam Busch’s son)

Prayers Requested
Nelda King requested prayers of the congregation on her behalf. Please keep Nelda in your prayers and offer her encouragement.

Please Remember
July 21
Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 5.

July 22
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.

July 24
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

Pantry Items Needed
Juice
Canned Vegetables
Canned Soups
We have all heard someone say, and probably said it ourselves, “I was confused enough until you said that, and now I am really confused!” Those in the religious error of denominationalism are confused enough without us saying one thing and saying another, and adding to their already befuddled understanding of religious truth. If we say one thing and say another about the church, for instance, we can really cause confusion in an already mistaken world.

Jesus said He would build His church (Mat. 16:18). We have long and correctly pointed out to the religious world that Jesus used the possessive pronoun “My” in Matthew 16:18 to show the church belongs to Him. It is not “our church.” Consequently, we have pointed out in the past that to use the phrase, “our church” is incorrect. Actually, if the members of the Lord’s body are the church then it is both linguistically and doctrinally wrong to refer to “our church.” A thing possessed cannot be both the thing possessed and the possessor of it. That accords with the Scriptures, too, in that we are not our own, but are bought with a price and are God’s (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

If we are the church, the church is Christ’s, then how say some among us, “our church.” For instance, the website of the Oak Forest congregation in Goldsboro, North Carolina, with elders and preacher who ought to know better, has the phrase, “about our church” at least five times on various pages of the site. We are trying to convince the world that the church belongs to Jesus. That truth goes to the exclusivity of the church, the church’s submission to Christ, and to all of those things that are identifying marks of the church. If we say the church belongs to Christ and then say, “our church,” our religious friends are going to be like the poor algebra student who is being helped by another poor algebra student; now
he is really lost!

The time was when we in the Lord’s church were very careful about being both specific and accurate in our language. We recognized the errors in the religious world in what they believed and in what they said. We fear some of us are now either untaught or unconcerned about getting the details right. Some would say using the phrase “our church” is no big deal. This writer was one of the few who was concerned with the phrases that led up to this “our church” business. Brethren, it is not our church family either! It is not our congregation! We are the family. Locally, we are the congregation; it is not ours. The thing possessed cannot be both the possession and the possessor principle applies with those kinds of statements, as well. I have no doubt at all that those phrases led up to the egregiously erroneous and false claim of ownership phrase, “our church.”

Where will it end? In as much as the last few years has seen a pooh-poohing of those who seek for authority in all of the things they do and say (Col. 3:17), we just wonder how far many are going to go in making the accusation, “you are binding where God has not bound.” These who are drifting farther and farther away from the things which they have heard (Heb. 2:1); these accusers—are becoming lax, lenient, and are losing their grip on the proper application of New Testament language and behavior that has distinguished the Lord’s church from the churches of man for lo these many years.

Neither you nor I suffered the cruel abuse of the Jewish leaders, or were targets of the emotionally aroused mob calling, “Crucify Him, Crucify Him!” We did not hang on Calvary’s cross and die for the church. Neither your blood nor mine was the purchase price of the heavenly kingdom instituted on earth as a result of the heavenly message delivered by the apostles beginning at Pentecost. There are no nail prints in your hands or mine. Our sides do not bear the scar of a spear thrust into our bodies even after we were dead, which side gave forth both blood and water. However, Jesus did suffer those things, and He suffered them to be the savior of the body, His body, the church: the church of Christ, not our church!

I have my wife, and Christ has His. Please, let us stop this drifting away from speaking as the Bible speaks, embracing the language of Ashdod instead. Let us stop saying one thing and saying another.

Granby, MO

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**God’s Plan of Salvation**

- **Hear** …………………………………………………………. Romans 10:17
- **Believe** ……………………………………………………….. Mark 16:16
- **Confess** …………………………………………………………. Romans 10:9-10
- **Baptism** ………………………………………………………… Acts 2:38
- **Be Faithful** ……………………………………………………. 1 Corinthians 15:58
I have heard the old saying used as the title for this piece many times through the years—and, being somewhat of an unofficial pessimist on occasion—I may even have said it myself. Sometimes it seems that such is true, but upon closer examination it is merely an old saying—and one that is not wholly founded in literal truth.

We know that it is possible for one to do a good deed for another and have things work out fine. It happens. We are told to do good to all men (Gal. 6:10), and there is no warning appended that for doing so we will receive some sort of punishment. Jesus went about doing good, as did the apostles and before them the prophets of Old Testament fame. Doing good deeds is a good thing and we should do them.

What happens when we do a good deed and are ill treated for it? We enter some pretty good company. Like those mentioned in the previous paragraph, it is the case that sometimes we will go out of our way to help someone only to have them requite our kindness with anger or malice. Sometimes we will say a kind word to someone only to have them snap back at us. Such is regrettable, but such is a very real possibility.

We need to know of the possibility of good repaid with evil. It sometimes happens. Additionally, we need to be careful not to allow our good to become a source of sin to us when it is repaid with evil. Our duties remain unchanged—we must do good to others irrespective of their requitals. If you say, “Good morning,” and they say “mind your own business” smile and go on. If you pick up a dropped book and they fail to say, “thank you,” just smile and go on. If you answer them in the same spirit in which they answer you what have you done? You have taken your good deed and erased it by ending with an evil deed. There is another old saying that has a higher source than the one serving as our title, I believe it goes something like this: turn the other cheek.

If You Have Never

If you have never felt the joy
Of sharing a brother’s loss;
If your own arms have not grown strong
By bearing another’s cross;
If you have never brought a smile
To a face tear-stained and grim;
If your own hands have not held up
The light when the way grew dim;
If you have never told someone
Of a better life to be;
Then you have walked in a path unknown
To the man of Galilee!

Author Unknown

Dothan, AL
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Harold Cozad
Dot Lambert      Nancy Travis
Ruby Bailey      Anthony Polnitz
Melvin Torrey    Ella Hammac
Horace Myrick    Marilyn Hall
Al Flesher       Fred Stancliff
Peggy Crowe      Alecia Godwin
Robbie Gravey (The Haven)
Gabriel Stewart (Dallas & Karen Diamond’s nephew)
Cheyenne Borne (Bill & Peggy Crowe’s great-granddaughter)
Tony Busch (Bill & Pam Busch’s son)
Wendell Harrison (Ashley Brower’s step-father)

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

Pantry Items Needed
Juice
Canned Vegetables
Chicken & Vegetable Soups

Galatians 6:9-10
“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”
“As Long As They Are Happy”

Lee Moses

While awaiting a flight at Dallas Love Field, this writer observed a number of small children traveling with their mother. They were a fine looking bunch, and all seemed cheerful. A flight attendant commented to their mother, “As long as they’re happy, that’s what’s important.” However, while the sight of happy children is wonderful indeed, their happiness is not the measuring stick of successful child rearing.

Having a child’s happiness as a parent’s primary goal is not conducive to successful child rearing. Clearly, children are not happy when being disciplined; so a parent seeking his children’s happiness at all costs and all times would not discipline his children. Yet, proper discipline is crucial to a child’s upbringing: “Thou shalt beat him with the rod, And shalt deliver his soul from hell” (Pro. 23:14). Parents are warned, “Chasten thy son while there is hope, And let not thy soul spare for his crying” (19:18). Refusing to discipline children and giving them everything they want spoils them, and leaves them never satisfied. Parents who do everything in their power to maintain their children’s happiness usually have miserable children.

A major problem with using happiness as the measuring stick of successful child rearing is that happiness can be very ambiguous. The Oxford American College Dictionary defines happy as “feeling or showing pleasure or contentment.” While it is certainly true that “he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast” (15:15) and that “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine” (17:22), making happiness the ultimate end has justified many unjustifiable means. Some are able to find pleasure in immorality, such as recreational drug and alcohol use or extramarital sex. However, those who continue therein “shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6:9-10),
Twenty-Four Years in the First Grade!!

Jess Whitlock

A bulletin crossed my desk years ago. It contained this clip “Twenty four years in the 1st Grade—that is how long it would take to pass if public schools met only as often as Sunday School, and IF NO BIBLE CLASS-ES WERE MISSED!” The Word of God, according to a 2012 survey (Rankin), revealed that only 19% of “churchgoers” read the Bible daily. Twenty-five percent stated they read the Bible a few times each week. A staggering 14% indicated they read the Bible once a week. Twenty-two percent confessed to reading the Word of God “once a month or a few times each month.”

Several months ago brother Jack Wall, brother Dale Vann, and myself had a long discussion of our Bible class curriculum. So much of “our literature” has to be proofed to make sure it is Scriptural, and so much of the instruction has to be “weeded out,” and then the price is atrocious. We decided to write our own material. In asking around, I contacted Gary Summers, who responded by saying, “We’ve done that!” The elders looked over that material, ordered the material, and we are now implementing Bible material that covers the Bible in 5 ½ years! This means our very young kids could cover the Old and New Testaments twice before High School graduation.

The late brother Eldred Stevens once observed that if a person spent 20 minutes a day on any given subject for a period of 20 years, that at that time, he/she would be considered an “authority” in that field! The Bible and thus “shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Mat. 8:12).

Some take their pleasure at the expense of others; yet such shall eventually receive miseries (Jam. 5:1-5). Many of these find themselves very content in their unjustifiable means of seeking happiness. Others may indeed “show pleasure or contentment,” but they are truly neither pleased nor content. After many a teenage suicide, the dead child’s parents have lamented, “But he seemed so happy!” As Solomon found long ago, true happiness will never be found unless one determines to “Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecc. 12:13).

The flight attendant who made the statement, “As long as they’re happy, that’s what’s important,” likely was not attempting to provide sound advice for child rearing. He probably was expressing his appreciation for the sight of happy children, a sentiment shared by this writer. However, there are far too many parents who do make their children’s “happiness” their nebulous goal. Let each parent instead heed the inspired instruction, “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). No, children’s apparent happiness is not what is important; what is important is that they are taught to become faithful Christians for the remainder of their lives.

Mammoth Spring, AR
furnishes us completely unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17); the Bible is the Truth that can set us free (John 8:32; 17:17); the Word of the Lord is pure and righteous (Psa. 119:140; Pro. 30:5-6). Let us never forget the value of God’s Word and that His Word will be the final standard of judgment for all mankind (John 12:48). By the way, the Supreme Court is not the final authority! That august body will one day stand before the real Supreme Court!

Every parent and grandparent should think seriously about our opening statement! How do your children (grandchildren) do in attending Bible classes? If they only make it to about half of those classes, that would mean it would require 48 years to finish the First Grade! What if public schools met only as often as our Bible classes? Do you realize that the majority of youth in this nation would not live long enough to enter Junior High School! Let us get serious about studying the Bible. If we love Christ, we will follow His will (John 14:15; 15:14), we will handle the Word correctly (2 Cor. 4:2; 2 Tim. 2:15), we will abide in Truth (2 Tim. 3:14), and we will not tamper with His Holy Word (Rev. 22:18-19; Deu. 4:2; Pro. 30:6). To do this will require time and effort on your part and mine. Years ago the late brother Guy N. Woods had completed a week long Gospel meeting. One sister in Christ had attended each service and was impressed with his masterful knowledge of Scripture. This sister shook his hand, and said, “Brother Woods, I would give half my life to know the Scripture as well as you do.” Brother Woods replied, “Madam that is precisely what it has cost me.”

The Lord’s church must get the Bible back into Bible classrooms at every opportunity. It is time for the Lord’s people to remove the skits, crafts, and silliness gone to seed. Instead let us teach our youth what it means to “speak where the Bible speaks, and to be silent where the Bible is silent.” We live in an age of continuing education. You may have graduated from High School or college back in nineteen-hundred and none-of-your-business! My friend, you have not graduated from Bible knowledge and learning. This is “higher learning” that is needed by every Christian in every congregation.

The Word of Jehovah is powerful (Heb. 4:12-13; Mat. 24:35), God’s Word is able to purify the soul (Psa. 119:9; 1 Pet. 1:22), the Word of the Lord can build us up (Acts 20:32; 2 Tim. 3:16-17), and His authoritative Word is forever settled in heaven (Psa. 119:89; 1 Pet. 1:23-25).

How much longer will our young people spend so much time preparing for a profession that may last forty or fifty years at the most, and so little time in making preparation for a ceaseless eternity the other side of death’s door (Heb. 9:27)? I was a student to the late brother Hugo McCord (Oklahoma Christian College). I once commented on his tremendous knowledge of the Scripture. He replied, “Jess, if I could study the Bible for another hundred years, I would still be a novice.” Then, I did not understand what he meant, however, today I understand fully. As a Christian may I ask of you this one question: “Have you graduated from your study of the Word of the Living God? I sincerely hope not!!

Evant, TX
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams Harold Cozad
Dot Lambert     Nancy Travis
Ruby Bailey     Anthony Polnitz
Melvin Torrey   Ella Hammac
Horace Myrick   Marilyn Hall
Al Flesher      Fred Stancliff
Aleacia Godwin  Bobbie LaBryer
Robbie Gravey (The Haven)
Gabriel Stewart (Dallas & Karen Diamond’s nephew)
Tony Busch (Bill & Pam Busch’s son)
Wendell Harrison (Ashley Brower’s step-father)

Restored
Terri Myrick was restored to Christ on July 28. Please keep Terri in your prayers and offer her encouragement.

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

August 5
Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.

Pantry Items Needed
Juice
Canned Vegetables
Chicken & Vegetable Soups
The Kind of Preaching We Need

Dub McClish

Bible Preaching

“Preach the word” is Paul’s command (2 Tim. 4:2). The Bible must be the content and focus of our preaching, for such alone can be called “sound [healthy, health-giving] doctrine” (4:3). If we hear only jokes, amusing anecdotes, personal experiences, and “nice little talks” instead of God’s Truth, our souls will die from spiritual malnutrition. So much of what is being heard in our pulpits currently is not at all distinctive, which true Gospel preaching always is. Instead, many pulpits are platforms for brief popular psychology lectures or religious “pep rallies.” Sadly, many members refuse to listen to anyone who is determined to preach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). Such debunk Bible preaching that cites book, chapter, and verse, labeling it “concordance” preaching. Even if some reject Bible preaching (as Paul prophesied, 2 Tim. 4:3-4), the preacher who is more serious about helping people get to Heaven than he is about keeping his job will pay the price to keep on preaching it (4:5). Listeners who are more interested in going to Heaven than in satisfying their own selfish, carnal desires will support, encourage, yea, demand such preaching and will refuse any other kind as so much pulpit waste material. If one is not going to preach (or hear) the Bible, why preach (or listen) at all?

Powerful Preaching

Preachers need to take Paul’s words to heart: “be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might” (Eph. 6:10). The devil, not the Lord, makes us weak and cowardly: “For God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness; but of power and love and discipline” (2 Tim. 1:7). R. N. Hogan was right: “The brethren have heard so much sweet-talk preaching that most of them have spiritual sugar diabetes.” If the Gospel teaches it, do not be afraid to
Let Us Not Complain When Prophecy Is Fulfilled

Bill Jackson

Paul gave this warning to Timothy: “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Paul had earlier warned the elders from Ephesus that “grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30). Here, prophecies uttered, and we, today, are seeing some fulfillment. It is not at all pleasant, but it is the fulfilling of prophecy and thus we need to note it as such.

Once again, we are reminded of the free-will of man, and man thus possessing free-will because God made him so. The design of God man in the pulpit. Preacher, raise your voice and shout, lower your voice and whisper, slap your hands together, pound the pulpit, stamp your feet—emphasize appropriately what you are preaching. Drive the point home.

Emphatic Preaching
Many a pew-sitter has been sung to sleep by the perfectly-rounded, golden tones of the

Persuasive Preaching
Preaching that does not challenge us to deeper service, move us to greater faithfulness and prompt self-searching and rededication misses its mark. Preaching should stir up and touch our hearts. Paul was constantly beseeching, persuading the brethren, and so will God’s preachers in every age be ever seeking to do.

Gospel Meeting
with
Gene Hill
September 29 – October 4
Denton, TX

Gospel Meeting
with
Gene Hill
September 29 – October 4
Denton, TX
will be seeking those who will bring a soothing message to them.

(4) In such times, Satan will always see that teachers/preachers are available to thus sell themselves to men.

(5) The teachers obtained will join the hearers in a turning away from truth, for truth will have lost its appeal for them.

(6) All these, in spurning truth, will find that Satan has plenty of fables they can and will embrace.

(7) And, in such times when there are departures, some of those who served as overseers and shepherds of the flock will themselves turn out to be “grievous wolves” and will be prominent in damaging that which they were charged with protecting!

We greatly lament the apostasy now underway, just as we are pained at any time when God is rejected and Satan is given the day. We very much regret that a time has come when the clear distinctive features of the New Testament church are being ignored, with such teaching now underway that keeps men from seeing those features. We very much regret that the view is now so prominent that “there is no such thing as restoring the New Testament church, and no such thing as a non-denominational versus a denominational stance.” We regret all of that, and feel the pain that any lover of truth would have to feel, but we will not complain. God has placed the prophecies in the Word that point to just such a time, and God never made the promise that you, or I, would not have to live through such times!

And that last point is vital: We **can** live through these times, and maintain our faithfulness to God all the while. It will come, as it has come in many places, to this particular congregation, and these particular members who make up the congregation, putting forth great effort to be true to God, regardless of what others do and regardless of how widespread the apostasy becomes! Granted, that will interfere with fellowship and participation members and congregations have had in the past with other members, other congregations. No way to avoid it, in fact! Men deviate because they no longer value truth. In the Word of truth, I am told that fellowship is to be restrictive (Eph. 5:11; 2 John 9-11). Some men will howl and protest, but when they do we must remind them that the once-held fellowship has been damaged not by us, but by them! Let us never be on the defensive in this regard, for Satan is not above trying to make the saints of God feel badly because they stand for the truth! Apostasy? Yes. Are we pained that such is so? Yes. Will we complain? No. Is there a course for us? Yes: Keep on keeping on, steadfast and unmovable in teaching and living by the truth! (1 Cor. 15:58).

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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 (a free reader is available from www.adobe.com).
**Sick**

Remember in your prayers:

- Bill Gallaher  
- Marge Williams  
- Charles Williams  
- Harold Cozad  
- Dot Lambert  
- Nancy Travis  
- Rubye Bailey  
- Anthony Polnitz  
- Melvin Torrey  
- Ella Hammac  
- Horace Myrick  
- Marilyn Hall  
- Al Flesher  
- Fred Stancliff  
- Aleacia Godwin  
- Bobbie LaBryer  
- Robbie Cravey (The Haven)  
- Gabriel Stewart (Dallas & Karen Diamond’s nephew)  
- Tony Busch (Bill & Pam Busch’s son)  
- Wendell Harrison (Ashley Brower’s step-father)

**Please Remember**

**August 11**

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

**Pantry Items Needed**

- Juice  
- Canned Vegetables  
- Chicken & Vegetable Soups

**Matthew 6:24**

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”
What Is Worship? (No. 1)

David P. Brown

Knowing that the Bible is the infallible, inerrant, all-sufficient Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17), we must appeal to it alone in answering the question that serves as the title of this article. With this approach to our subject, we shall rule out all unnecessary matters that might impede our search for the truth.

Christians have a rule or standard of truth by which we worship. Jesus said, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). It is imperative that we worship according to this rule. If we would please God, we have no choice in the matter.

Within this verse are three principles laid down as a basis for our worship today. First, the object of our worship is designated. Only God is worthy of such action (Exo. 20:3-5; Dan. 3; Mat. 4:8-10; Acts 10:25-26; Rev. 19:10; 22:8-9). Second, our worship must be offered to God in spirit. This simply means in the right manner, state of mind, or purpose of heart (Mat. 15:7-9; 22:37; Luke 6:45). Third, worship must be in truth. Jesus said, “Thy word is truth” (John 17:17). Hence, there is a law that governs worship. Therefore, in order for worship to be acceptable, it must be offered to God in the right spirit and in compliance with the New Testament.

What does worship mean? Some people have declared that they have “just sat and worshipped God in their heart.” Thereby, they imply that “worship is something wholly of the heart.” The ultimate and erroneous conclusion of this thinking is: “Since worship is something wholly of the heart, such things as prayer, the Lord’s supper, and giving could not be worship.” Hence, they further conclude that “mechanical instrumental music could not be in worship because you could not put it in the heart.” Such a definition and conclusion could not be further from the truth of the
Why Is the Expression “Lord’s Day” Applied to the First of the Week, or Sunday?

William C. Hatcher

Lord’s Day occurs but one time in the Scriptures, Revelation 1:10, where it is said that the apostle John “was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.” Since the Bible does not say that the Lord’s Day is the first day of the week sincere Bible readers often wonder why the expression is so applied. It is true that post-apostolic writers and that Bible scholars, almost without ex-

New Testament! Others have concluded that everything we do in life is worship. As we shall see, both ideas are not taught by the Bible.

When we know what worship means, we will then know what it does not mean. In the New Testament proskuneo is the Greek word most commonly used to denote the act of worship. Its basic meaning is to kiss the hand. Such an act demonstrates obeisance on the part of the one person to another among Orientals. Hence, the acts of worship, not only the attitudes and emotions of it, are within the meaning of proskuneo. When we worship we pay our respects to God as His Word directs. How would the reverence in the heart be expressed if the act of expressing it was ruled out?

It is obvious from the meaning of proskuneo that whenever a Christian would worship (engage in acts the design of which is to praise God) that these are different acts from visiting the sick, being a godly father (mother), neighbor, etc. These aforementioned matters that characterize Christian living are areas of service, but not the specific acts of reverence through which Christians are to pay their respects (worship) to God. The Holy Spirit chose latreuo, not proskuneo, to describe the service of the Christian in his daily living.

What we have learned is that to worship God is a part of our service to Him, but that all of our Christian living (service) is not engaging in the specific acts of worship, i.e., acts from the heart that are designed and ordained by God for His worship.

Our Lord has not left us without direction in our acts of worship. God has ordained what we do. He has given us specific instructions in matters of worship. The acts of worship to be performed are governed solely by the doctrine of Christ. “Whosoever transgresseth [‘goeth onward’—ASV] 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).

When we assemble for worship on the first day of the week, there are only five acts of worship that Christians are authorized to engage in. They are: teaching, praying, giving, eating the Lord’s supper, and singing. Anything more or less is sin. These are the acts that God has authorized whereby Christians are to express or pay their reverence to God. He knows what He wants and we should be disposed to give Him only that which He has ordained. (In next week’s article, we shall learn how we arrived at only these five acts of worship.

Spring, TX
ception, refer to Sunday as the Lord’s Day, but again, why this supposition?

The Greek word usually translated into our English Bibles as Lord is kurios, however, in Revelation 1:10 the word is translated from kuriakos which, according to the outstanding Greek lexicographer Dr. J. H. Thayer, literally means “of or pertaining to The Christ, relating to the Lord.” Kuriakos occurs but one other time in the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 11:20, where it speaks of the “Lord’s supper.” Hence, the day of which John speaks in Revelation 1:10 is associated with the Christ in a very peculiar and singular way.

Surely there can be no doubt but that the day most peculiarly associated with Christ is the first day of the week, or Sunday. This can be seen from a study of such Scriptures as Mark 16:9 which affirms that our Lord was raised from the dead on that day. Again, in John 20:19 and 26 we are told that after His resurrection Jesus appeared to His apostles at least twice on the first day of the week. According to Acts 2, the New Testament church, our Lord’s church, was established on the first day of the week, the first Pentecost after His resurrection (Pentecost always came on Sunday—Lev. 23:15-16). Further, the church worships the Father, on that day (cf. Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). More, a number of outstanding prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Lord, His church or kingdom, and the salvation offered in His name, find their fulfillment on this day.

Truly, the first day of the week, or Sunday, is that day “of or pertaining to the Christ, relating to the Lord,” hence, the “Lord’s Day.”

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**Nine Great Ideas:**

**All Mine!**

1. My idea of visitation: everybody comes to see me.
2. My idea of sympathy: everybody suffering with me.
3. My idea of a sinner: the man for whom I have a great dislike.
4. My idea of a meek man: the man who yields to me.
5. My idea of a contentious man: the man who takes issue with me.
6. My idea of a wise man: the man who listens to me.
7. My idea of unity: everybody agreeing with me.
8. My idea of cooperation: everybody working with me.
9. My idea of a good sermon: one that fits and hits everybody but me.

*Author Unknown*

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**Gospel Meeting**

**with**

**Gene Hill**

**September 29 – October 4**

**Sunday:**
9:00 A.M., 10:00 A.M., & 1:00 P.M.

**Monday – Friday Evenings:**
7:30 P.M.

*Deceased*
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams Harold Cozad
Dot Lambert     Nancy Travis
Ruby Bailey     Anthony Polnitz
Melvin Torrey   Ella Hammad
Horace Myrick   Marilyn Hall
Al Flesher      Fred Stancliff
Aleacia Godwin  Bobbie LaBryer
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Gabriel Stewart (Dallas & Karen Diamond’s nephew)
Tony Busch (Bill & Pam Busch’s son)
Wendell Harrison (Ashley Brower’s step-father)

Please Remember
August 18
Elders/Deacons’ meeting will be held at 5:00 pm, in room 5.
August 19
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.

Pantry Items Needed
Juice
Canned Vegetables
Chicken & Vegetable Soups

A Blessing
I’m a blessing to you:
You’re a blessing to me:
Together we will work
To be all we should be!

H. L. Gradowith
In our last article, we examined what worship is. We ended the article by pointing out that there are only five acts of worship—teaching, praying, giving of our means, eating the Lord’s supper, and singing. In this and next week’s article, we will set forth the way that we arrived at these five acts of worship.

To understand this, we concentrate on the words command, act, and expedient. First let us study the significance of the command and act. When Peter “commanded” Cornelius and his household “to be baptized in the name of the Lord” (Acts 10:48), he used the Greek word protasso. It means “to arrange or set in order towards” (Vine’s Dictionary of New Testament Words, 210). Though there are several Greek words translated command or commandment, they all involve the idea of one in authority exercising his prerogative. In the case of Cornelius, it was the Christ through Peter authorizing by commandment the necessary action for Cornelius and his household to observe or act upon. Hence, the command demands from the heart the act (Rom. 6:17-18). Therefore, there can be no act acceptable to God that is not authorized or commanded by the Christ.

Now let us consider the relation of the word expedient to the acts commanded by the Christ. We have already mentioned the five acts of worship. For the acts to be engaged in, they must be expedited. To expedite is to get the act done! But there can be no expedition without authorization. If an action is commanded or lawful, we can expedite it. Where there is no law, authorization, or commandment, there can be no expedition. “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient” (1 Cor. 10:23).

We are commanded in Matthew 28:19 to “Go.” Notice that the how or expediting of the commandment is left up to the one go-
ing. Our Lord did not specify the how. In the passage He loosed the how but bound the what to do and teach. We must not lose where God has bound or bind where God has loosed! Of course, this principle must be understood and applied to this present study of the five acts of worship. For every act of worship, the New Testament has a direct command. We should know them and conduct ourselves accordingly.

Matthew 28:19-20 commands us to teach. Teaching the world and the church is involved. How am I to teach? Our Lord did not specify the how. It might be by blackboard, articles such as this, flannel-board, overhead or slide projector, movie film, etc. Whatever
Salvation Is in the Church

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

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).

1. It is affirmed in Acts 4:12 that salvation is in Christ. Then, to have salvation, one must get into Christ. But 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?

2. Paul makes the fact that Christ is “the saviour of the body” (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.

3. 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

Galatians 1:8

“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.”
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Harold Cozad
Dot Lambert  Nancy Travis
Ruby Bailey  Anthony Polnitz
Melvin Torrey  Ella Hammac
Horace Myrick  Marilyn Hall
Al Flesher  Fred Stanchiff
Aleicia Godwin  Bobbie LaBryer
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Gabriel Stewart (Dallas & Karen Diamond’s nephew)
Tony Busch (Bill & Pam Busch’s son)
Wendell Harrison (Ashley Brower’s step-father)

Please Remember
August 28
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

Pantry Items Needed
Juice
Canned Vegetables
Chicken & Vegetable Soups

Earth
Who put the earth on the exact orbit around the sun to guarantee livable seasons in the year? Man cannot do it! God did it!

Delbert Goins
In the second article on this subject, a study of how the church arrives at only five acts of worship was begun. In this third and final installment, the study concludes.

Paul commanded the church of Christ in Corinth to “give yourselves unto prayer” (1 Cor. 7:5—ASV). Luke records that the three thousand additions to the Lord’s church on the day of Pentecost, “continued steadfastly…in prayers” (Acts 2:41-42). Again notice that the act of praying is bound upon Christians. The how or posture is loosed. We dare not bind the posture lest we make a law where God made none.

Concerning the Lord’s supper, our Lord has bound certain acts. In Matthew 26:26-29, the authorization is found. The account of the action of the early church obeying this command is a pattern or example for the Lord’s church anywhere in the world. Acts 20:7 records the early church complying with Matthew 26:26-29. An apostle was present and participated in the observance of the Lord’s supper. Thereby we know that any time “the first day of the week” comes around, Christians are to partake of the Lord’s supper in the assembly (1 Cor. 11:20, 33). Christians must continue “steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine…in breaking of bread” (Acts 2:42).

Paul’s statement to the church in Philippians 3:17: “Brethren, be followers [imitators—ASV] together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample,” further establishes why the account of the church at Troas partaking of the Lord’s supper becomes a pattern for Christians to imitate.

Our Lord did not bind the container of the fruit of the vine any more than He bound the container of the bread, the posture in prayer or the how of taking up the collection. He commanded the drinking of “the cup” (KJV), “a cup” (ASV). Since one does not and cannot
drink the **container** of “this fruit of the vine” (Mat. 26:29), “the cup” must refer to the **contents** of the **container** and not the container itself. “And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it” (26:27).

There is only one cup authorized by Jesus. It is the fruit of the vine. The Lord bound the **cup** but loosed the **container**. If orange, lemon, grapefruit, apple, and grape juice were on the table that would be a “Multi-cup” situation, unauthorized by Christ in remembering His blood, shed for the remission of sins.

The Bible binds the kind of music God wants by specifying “sing” (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). There are only two kinds of music—

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**Gospel Meeting**

**with**

**Gene Hill**

**September 29 – October 4**

Basic Plan of Action ...............................................................Sunday 9 a.m.
Foundation ...........................................................................Sunday 10 a.m.
Sanctified and Meet for the Master’s Use:
How the Lost Are Saved and Stay That Way ...........Sunday 12:30 p.m.
The Need for the Church: The World Is Lost and
the Saved Need a Place to Stay .......................................Monday 7:30 p.m.
The Church’s Task: The World Is Lost and
the Saved Need to Keep Working ..............................Tuesday 7:30 p.m.
The Church’s Work: Glory and Honor to God ..........Wednesday 7:30 p.m.
The Church Worshiping God ......................................Thursday 7:30 p.m.
The Church on Earth: The Kingdom of Heaven ........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 Group 1 will provide the meal—Monday & Wednesday
Visitation Group 2 will provide the meal—Tuesday & Thursday
Visitors are invited to every meal.

Come and enjoy Gospel preaching and a good meal.
The Preachers and Preaching Needed

Benjamin Franklin

We want no mere excitement about a man, nor after a man, who, as Simon the sorcerer, induces the people to think that he is some great one. We want the clear, solid, and telling preaching of the Gospel, enlightening the people in reference to our Lord, the way to Him, and how to serve Him.

We want nothing sensational, no tricks, no comic performance; …no artifice to get round the people, come on them suddenly, and surprise them. Come directly to the people from the start, and let them know what you mean, and work directly to the one point—the enlightenment and salvation of men.

The man that can tell the story of the cross, and of a Savior’s love, in the most artless and unaffected manner, lose sight of and forget himself in his theme most completely, will accomplish the most in the Savior’s name. May we learn and tell the story of infinite compassion and love in all its fullness and completeness more successfully, with more faith and power than ever, and may we be enabled to bring souls to Christ more abundantly than ever.

Deceased
Sick

Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Harold Cozad
Dot Lambert  Nancy Travis
Rubye Bailey  Anthony Polnitz
Melvin Torrey  Ella Hammac
Horace Myrick  Marilyn Hall
Al Flesher  Fred Stancliff
Aleacia Godwin  Bobbie LaBryer
Robbie Gravey (The Haven)
Gabriel Stewart (Dallas & Karen Diamond’s nephew)
Tony Busch (Bill & Pam Busch’s son)
Wendell Harrison (Ashley Brower’s step-father)

Please Remember

September 8
Deacons’ meeting will be held at
5:30 pm, in room 5.

When Is One Backsliding?

When the sermon is too long or too strong.
When you murmur if called upon to give a little more.
When everyone is wrong but you.
When things have to go your way or you won’t cooperate.
When you won’t admit wrong—when you are.

Author Unknown
The Need for First Principles

Gene Hill

One of the things I find most fascinating about preaching is that after preaching a basic first principle sermon, the number of more mature Christians thank me and comment on how much such a lesson was needed. I have always wondered why those with the years of experience they possess would say such a thing. I have concluded that the answer is a very simple one. Their years of experience and maturity have led them to conclude that we need constant reminders we are “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people” (1 Pet. 2:9), that we once were “without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12), and that we, the faithful, “shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Th. 4:17).

In support of this premise let us consider three passages. The first was written by Paul, to the Roman church, a church that had apparently been in existence for a while. It had to have had sufficient time for its faith to be “spoken of throughout the whole world” (Rom. 1:8). Their obedience as well was apparently well-known (16:19). Paul had been familiar with them and had long desired to meet them (1:13; 15:23). Such being true then we find it a curious thing that he still wanted to preach the Gospel to them (1:15; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Col. 1:5). The need for the church to hear the Gospel preached to them on a regular basis is not diminished with the passage of time.

Paul’s next passage is 1 Timothy 3:15 in which his express purpose was to remind Timothy how to behave himself. Paul left Timothy behind in Ephesus with the intention of doing precisely the same thing for the Ephesian brethren, which he was desirous to do for the Roman church (1 Tim 1:3-7). It must be the case then that preachers also need reminding on occasion.
The last passage is from Revelation 2:1-5 and is Jesus admonishing the Ephesian church. The brethren apparently heeded well Timothy’s preaching regarding faithfulness (2:2-3). Their doctrinal and practical soundness had been such that Jesus commended them. The problem for which He chided them was a problem of the heart and not that of the head. They appear to have lost the fervor of their initial conversion that led to great strides for the Kingdom (Acts 19:8-10, 13-20, 23-27).

The need for First Principle sermons is established when we realize brethren are as afflicted by sins of the flesh as are our worldly neighbors. (1 Cor. 1:10-16; 3:1-3; 5:1-13). Spiritually mature brethren are not so beset by sins...
of the flesh (Heb. 5:12-14).

Just so we are clear on this point, are the following practices a demonstration of a lover for the Lord and His Body:

Consider attendance at various assemblies of the church and how much figures vary from Sunday morning Bible classes to the morning worship assembly to the Sunday evening worship assembly; the fluctuation of the contribution because of vacations (which deficit frequently is not made up); when Bible classes are put off or even ended for lack of teachers; when elderships cannot be maintained much less constituted because men cannot be bothered to qualify themselves to serve; when congregations and preachers refuse to allow an eldership to be formed because they do not want to be held accountable; and the list goes on.

Why is there an ongoing need for First Principle sermons? Because of brethren that are seeking spiritual growth, brethren that have stopped seeking spiritual growth, and stand in need of spiritual revival.

Indianola, MS

Fred Stancliff (1931–2013)

Fred Stancliff passed from this life on August 27, 2013, after a long and faithful life of service to the Lord. Our deepest sympathy is extended to Rheba and her family. Fred will be dearly missed.

Fred Stancliff was born in 1931 in Jackson, Michigan. He and his wife, Rheba, have four children, nine grandchildren, two step-grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. Fred had been a Bible class teacher, song leader, treasurer, deacon, full-time or fill-in preacher, and elder at various times and places. He graduated from the University of Florida in 1957 with a BSBA in Accounting. He worked as an auditor for the University of Florida for one year and for the state of Florida for eleven years. In 1969, he enrolled in the Sunset School of Preaching and graduated in 1971. Following graduation, they moved to Florence, South Carolina, to work with a congregation there for three years. In 1974, they moved to Orlando, Florida, where he returned to his former work as an auditor for the state of Florida and also preached full-time without pay for a struggling congregation in Lockhart, Florida. Fred’s work with the state brought them to Pensacola in 1977. Fred was put to work in the Bellview congregation as an adult Bible class teacher, a part-time teacher for the Bellview Preacher Training School, and as treasurer for the congregation. He served as an elder for the Bellview congregation from 1979 until he and Rheba moved to Singapore in 1991, where he served as an instructor in Four Seas College for two years. In 1993, Fred and Rheba returned to Pensacola where he received treatments for cancer most of that year. In 1994, Fred was reappointed to the eldership and continued to serve faithfully in that capacity till his death.
Sick

Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams    Harold Cozad
Dot Lambert    Nancy Travis
Ruby Bailey    Anthony Polnitz
Melvin Torrey    Ella Hammac
Horace Myrick    Marilyn Hall
Al Flesher    Ray Foshee
Bobbie LaBryer    Cary Parks
Nelda King
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)

Lovest Thou Me?

“I love thy church, O God,
Her walls before thee stand.”
But please excuse my absence, Lord,
This bed is simply grand.
“A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify.”
But, Lord, expect no cash from me,
Thy glory comes too high.
“Am I a soldier of the cross,
A follower of the Lamb?”
Yes, though I seldom pray,
I still insist I am.
“Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?”
No! Others, Lord, should do their part,
But please don’t count on me.
“Praise God from whom all blessings
flow;
Praise Him all creatures here below.”
Loud my hymns of praise I bring,
Because it doesn’t cost to sing.

Author Unknown
Learning and Believing

Gene Hill

Why do people believe what they believe? If it is as Paul says in Romans 10:17: “faith co-
meth by hearing, and hearing by the word of
God,” then it must follow that we believe any
given thing because of what we have heard
and learned from whatever source we have
encountered.

We may be ill informed or even lied to as
in the case of the sons of Jacob having lied to
their father about the supposed death of Jo-
seph by a wild animal (Gen. 37:18-36). Ja-
cob believed no less strongly about the alleged
death of his son Joseph than if he had seen his
son’s body for himself.

We may be zealous for a system of belief
that is outdated and superseded by another
system as was Saul of Tarsus. He could hon-
estly state he had acted in good conscience in
the dogged and murderous persecution and
assault on the church (Acts 7:58; 22:15; 23:1;
24:16; 26:9-11). It may even be the case that
we have distorted the belief system on our own
and are acting accordingly (John 5:36-39).

What then is the solution to this prob-
lem? The first step would be a willingness to
seek truth (Mat. 6:33; Acts 17:11). We must
be willing and honest in wanting to do right,
then when we find truth, we will make it ours
(Mat. 11:28-30; 13:8, 23, 44-46).

The next reasonable step would be a seri-
ous effort to verify that which we have learned
or of that which we have become aware (Acts
15:1-21; 17:11; Gal. 1:6-12). Our standard is
God’s Word taken in context (John 12:48).
Some subjects may more difficult than oth-
ers to discern the correct position in which to
believe, but believing God’s Word is know-
able and understandable ought to be motiva-
tion enough to seek answers (1 Cor. 1:10; Eph
1:1-7).

Third, it is the case that we can put what
we learn into action (Phi. 4:8; 1 Pet 1:13-16).
God has given us a law which can be known (John 8:31-32), obeyed (Heb. 5:8-9), and followed (1 Cor. 11:1; Phi. 3:17; Heb. 13:7). Simple belief, however, is insufficient (John 1:12; Mark 16:16). Humble, obedient action is what God requires (1 Pet 1:22; Acts 22:16).

Biblical belief is based upon factual knowledge and then sound reasoning. The right sort of action flows from a heart that humbles itself before the Lord (Mat. 12:33-37; Jam. 4:7, 17). When we have the right mind, our heart is under spiritual control (Rom. 8:1-2; 12-14; Col. 3:5ff).

Once I have the facts in hand, studied them in a satisfactory manner and drawn the correct conclusions, I will possess the correct beliefs to ensure my faithful walk in the light (1 Cor. 15:1-4; Col. 1:5; 2 Pet. 1:3-11).

Indianola, MS

Gene Hill

Carl E. "Gene" Hill, Jr., was born and raised in southwest Ohio, primarily in the Dayton area. He served four years in the US Navy and was honorably discharged in 1974. He met and married his wife Jerry Booker that same year and moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida. They were converted at the Andrews Avenue church in 1975. Gene attended the Florida School of Preaching under the Directorship of B.C. Carr, from 1976-1978. He began his first work with the Lauderdale Manors church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida in 1982. He has since served congregations in Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, and currently works with the Indianola church in Indianola, Mississippi.

Gene and Jerry have one son, Justin, a daughter-in-law, Shannon, and are grandparents of Connor James and Brenna Jo.

Free Bible Correspondence Course

If you would like to study the Bible with us, you can contact us at 850.455.7595 or you can enroll in our free Bible Correspondence Course by sending your request to 4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526. You can also enroll on our website at:

http://www.bellviewcoc.com/bbc.php

Name: _______________________________________________________________________________
Address: ______________________________________________________________________________
City: _____________________________________ State: ___________ Zip: _______________________
E-mail: _________________________________________ Phone: ________________________________
Gospel Meeting
with
Gene Hill
September 29 – October 4

Basic Plan of Action ................................................................. Sunday 9 a.m.
Foundation ............................................................................. Sunday 10 a.m.
Sanctified and Meet for the Master’s Use:
  How the Lost Are Saved and Stay That Way......... Sunday 12:30 p.m.
The Need for the Church: The World Is Lost and the Saved Need a Place to Stay .................. Monday 7:30 p.m.
The Church’s Task: The World Is Lost and the Saved Need to Keep Working .................. Tuesday 7:30 p.m.
The Church’s Work: Glory and Honor to God .......... Wednesday 7:30 p.m.
The Church Worshiping God ............................................ Thursday 7:30 p.m.
The Church on Earth: The Kingdom of Heaven........... Friday 7:30 p.m.

Covered-Dish Meal
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 Group 1 will provide the meal—Monday & Wednesday
  Visitation Group 2 will provide the meal—Tuesday & Thursday
Visitors are invited to every meal.
Come and enjoy Gospel preaching and a good meal.

How to find us...

Make plans now to attend the Gospel meeting!
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher        Marge Williams
Charles Williams    Harold Cozad
Dot Lambert         Nancy Travis
Ruby Bailey          Anthony Polnitz
Melvin Torrey        Ella Hammac
Horace Myrick        Marilyn Hall
Al Flesher           Ray Foshee
Bobbie LaBryer       Cary Parks
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Gabriel Stewart (Karen & Dallas Diamond’s nephew)

Please Remember
September 16
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.

What Happens When I Read My Bible?
1. The Word works effectually in me (1 Th. 2:18).
2. The Word teaches, reproves, corrects me (2 Tim. 3:16).
3. The Word cleanses me (Eph. 5:26).
5. The Word gives me faith (Rom. 10:17).
6. The Word gives me joy (Jer. 15:16).

Author Unknown
Why Have Gospel Meetings?

Dub McClish

Are Gospel meeting series still worth the time, money, and effort they require? Many point to the decline in attendance, when compared with such efforts thirty or forty years ago, and some congregations have discontinued them in favor of bringing in some specialist on this or that social problem. It cannot be gainsaid that they do not attract the crowds they did in a previous, slower-paced, less entertainment-oriented world.

However, I firmly believe Gospel meetings are still worthwhile and that many good reasons exist to continue having them.

1. They provide a period of concentrated teaching from God’s Word. Even in a four-day meeting, at least six Gospel sermons will be delivered. Those who attend all of them can gain much knowledge and spiritual strength in a brief span.

2. They provide members of the church with an excellent opportunity to bring their friends who are not Christians to hear the Gospel, perhaps for the first time. This should always be one of the purposes of a meeting.

3. They provide a time when non-Christians may be persuaded to attend, which they often cannot be on Sunday. The “I would have to miss my church” excuse is thus removed. Probably thousands who are now members of the Lord’s church first heard the Gospel during a Gospel meeting. Many of these were baptized into Christ during such meetings.

4. They provide more opportunities for fellowship with brethren. This applies to the local congregation. Members of a congregation need to get to know one another better than they can by merely seeing each at regular assemblies. Gospel meetings multiply such opportunities. This also applies to brethren in other congregations who will attend. We can thus meet new brethren and renew our acquaintance and enjoy fellowship with those...
Gospel Meetings Build Up the Church

The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation today just as it was in the first century. There are many ways of teaching the Gospel, but let us not forget that one of the most successful ways is the Gospel meeting. Churches that have ceased having Gospel meetings are not generally doing more, but less, to preach the Gospel to every creature.

There are other good reasons for having Gospel meetings, but these are more than enough for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (Mat. 5:6). Of course, if we choose not to attend, we lose all of the benefits of such a potentially powerful exercise.

1. Gospel meetings have played a very important part in establishing and building up local congregations since the day of Pentecost. They are no less necessary and useful in reaching the lost and building up the church today.

2. Preparation for the meeting builds up the church as it provides the opportunity to re-emphasize the importance of soul-saving. Every member should have a prospect list of his own. Nothing does more to quicken our own interest in the preaching of the Gospel than endeavoring to get others to hear and obey it.

3. Attending the services of a Gospel meeting strengthens members by providing the opportunity for indoctrination and spiritual development. In every church there are new members who need such instruction. Even the most mature Christian needs to hear the “first principles” again and again to become “Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith” (Col. 2:7). It adds power and strength to one’s spiritual life to listen to lessons on prayer, the Christian graces and themes that emphasize Christian duty. In these meetings, our vision is enlarged, our courage is increased, inspiration is received, and members are built up in the faith.

4. The meeting provides opportunity for contacting new prospects. If a careful record is made of those in attendance, many new names will be furnished for further visitation. Every individual

Whose Side Are You On?

In a certain village there lived a man who was deaf. Every Sunday morning and night he was seen going to the services of the church. One Sunday morning a neighbor stopped him, and by using sign language, asked him why he always attended church services when he couldn’t hear a word that was said. The man replied, “I want all my neighbors to know whose side I am on.”

Attending every service of the church is one way to show the world whose side you are on…Christ’s or Satan’s.

Author Unknown

Denton, TX
Gene Hill

Carl E. “Gene” Hill, Jr., was born and raised in southwest Ohio, primarily in the Dayton area. He served four years in the US Navy and was honorably discharged in 1974. He met and married his wife Jerry Booker that same year and moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida. They were converted at the Andrews Avenue church in 1975. Gene attended the Florida School of Preaching under the Directorship of B.C. Carr, from 1976-1978. He began his first work with the Lauderdale Manors church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida in 1982. He has since served congregations in Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, and currently works with the Indianola church in Indianola, Mississippi.

Gene and Jerry have one son, Justin, a daughter-in-law, Shannon, and are grandparents of Connor James and Brenna Jo.

Gospel Meeting

with

Gene Hill

September 29 – October 4

Basic Plan of Action ................................................................. Sunday 9 a.m.
Foundation ................................................................. Sunday 10 a.m.
Sanctified and Meet for the Master’s Use:
How the Lost Are Saved and Stay That Way .................. Sunday 12:30 p.m.
The Need for the Church: The World Is Lost and the Saved Need a Place to Stay .................. Monday 7:30 p.m.
The Church’s Task: The World Is Lost and the Saved Need to Keep Working .................. Tuesday 7:30 p.m.
The Church’s Work: Glory and Honor to God .......... Wednesday 7:30 p.m.
The Church Worshiping God ............................................ Thursday 7:30 p.m.
The Church on Earth: The Kingdom of Heaven ............. Friday 7:30 p.m.

who comes into the meeting house is a possible prospect. Too often, they are never gained because no record of their visit is made and further contact is impossible. It is tragic to neglect those who show interest to attend our services. Let us all provide a cheerful, friendly welcome to all who attend our Gospel meeting.

Author Unknown
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Harold Cozad
Dot Lambert    Nancy Travis
Ruby Bailey    Anthony Polnitz
Melvin Torrey  Cary Parks
Horace Myrick  Marilyn Hall
Al Flesher    Bobbie LaBryer
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Ella Hammac (West Florida Hospital)
Gabriel Stewart (Karen & Dallas Diamond’s nephew)

Please Remember

September 25
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

September 29–October 4
Gospel Meeting with Gene Hill.

September 29
Dinner on the Grounds after the morning service. The evening service will be at 12:30 pm.

Restored / Placed Membership
Willard “Butch” King was restored to Christ on September 15. He also placed membership with the Bellview congregation. Butch is the son of Nelda King. His address and phone number are: 2527 Hillcrest Avenue, Pensacola, FL 32526. Please keep him in your prayers and offer him encouragement.
The Importance of a Father’s Influence

Gene Hill

In reading various articles on the family, one item that stands out is the positive influence a strong male figure has. This is not to downplay the very obvious impact of a woman in a household, so much as it is to hold up that which has been suppressed by the Politically Correct crowd. Without an intact family, that is, having both a male and a female in the home, who are married to each other, a variety of things occur. Incomplete families, or one in which the adult male and female are not married to each other, are more likely to experience a higher incidence of poverty, violence, inferior education of the children, higher substance abuse, sexual promiscuity, and earlier occurrences of such for the children. While there are many reasons cited, the one reason cited most consistently as a root cause, is that the adult male figure is not the biological father and/or is not married to the adult female. There is something unique about a strong manly influence in the home that seeps out into society at large. We are not impugning the woman’s influence at all, merely focusing on the man’s.

There are some very basic things that I as a man am able to do that only I as husband and father can do. I demonstrate love and respect for God (Mark 12:29-30), for my wife and the mother of my children (Eph. 5:21-33), for my children (Eph. 6:4; 1 Tim 3:4), for my neighbor (Mark 12:31; Rom. 13:9), and for my country (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-2). As a Christian man, I demonstrate strength (1 Cor. 16:13), humility (Isa. 6:5), submission (Jam. 4:7; John 4:23-24), service (Mat. 25:31-39), and a willingness to prepare for and to assume leadership (1 Tim. 3:1-8), and demonstrating how it is done as an adult male.

My family learns by my words and through my actions, what male Christian character is all about. They learn purity of speech (Psa.
Little boys learn how to be real men, and little girls learn how to identify a true man when they see one in their Christian father. A true Christian man loves his God, his family, and his country, and is not shy about demonstrating it. The church needs real men to step forward and assume their proper place. Our country needs faithful Christian men to turn back the tide of darkness that threatens to engulf our land and carry us away. Our wives and families need such men to provide for and protect them. Of all the titles worn and awards won by man, truly Christian Father is the greatest and most rewarding.

Indianola, MS

Gene Hill

Carl E. “Gene” Hill, Jr., was born and raised in southwest Ohio, primarily in the Dayton area. He served four years in the US Navy and was honorably discharged in 1974. He met and married his wife Jerry Booker that same year and moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida. They were converted at the Andrews Avenue church in 1975. Gene attended the Florida School of Preaching under the Directorship of B.C. Carr, from 1976-1978. He began his first work with the Lauderdale Manors church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida in 1982. He has since served congregations in Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, and currently works with the Indianola church in Indianola, Mississippi.

Gene and Jerry have one son, Justin, a daughter-in-law, Shannon, and are grandparents of Connor James and Brenna Jo.

Free Bible Correspondence Course

If you would like to study the Bible with us, you can contact us at 850.455.7595 or you can enroll in our free Bible Correspondence Course by sending your request to 4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526. You can also enroll on our website at: http://www.bellviewcoc.com/bbc.php

Name: _______________________________________________________________________________
Address: ______________________________________________________________________________
City: _____________________________________ State: ___________ Zip: _______________________
E-mail: _________________________________________ Phone: ________________________________
Gospel Meeting
with
Gene Hill
September 29 – October 4

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The Church on Earth: The Kingdom of Heaven .......... Friday 7:30 p.m.

Covered-Dish Meal
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 Group 1 will provide the
meal—Monday & Wednesday
Visitation Group 2 will provide the
meal—Tuesday & Thursday
Visitors are invited to every meal.
Come and enjoy Gospel preaching
and a good meal.

How to find us...

Make plans now to attend the
Gospel meeting!
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher     Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Harold Cozad
Dot Lambert      Nancy Travis
Ruby Bailey       Anthony Polnitz
Melvin Torrey    Al Fleshar
Horace Myrick    Marilyn Hall
Bobbie LaBryer   Cary Parks
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Gabriel Stewart (Karen & Dallas Diamond’s nephew)

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family of Ella Hammac, who passed away on September 16, 2013. The Hammac family attended the first services of the Bellview congregation when it began in 1952. Please keep Lee and the rest of the family in your prayers.

Please Remember
September 25
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

September 29—October 4
Gospel Meeting with Gene Hill.

September 29
Dinner on the Grounds after the morning service. The evening service will be at 12:30 pm.

2 Corinthians 5:1
“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”
Doesn’t God Want Me to Be Happy?
(Proverbs 16:4; Revelation 4:11; Romans 11:36)

Gene Hill

While man is the pinnacle of creation (Gen. 2:5, 7), we are not, nor were we meant to be, the focal point as the texts for this lesson indicate. The Bible clearly states what the business of mankind is to be, as ordained by God (Mat. 5:16; Isa. 61:3; John 15:8; 1 Cor. 14:25; 2 Cor. 9:13; Gal. 1:24; 2 The. 1:10-12; 1 Pet. 2:12; 4:11, 14). It should be noted that since we are in God’s image (Gen. 1:26-27), that each of our characteristics must serve some purpose. Our emotional system must therefore serve some purpose intended to glorify God and to serve man in the process. Of what purpose is our emotional system in regards to the condition of happiness?

We must first understand God’s purposes to appreciate the role of joy and happiness. God’s creative ability was vividly demonstrated in the six days of creation: “And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day” (1:31). Creation was accomplished in a way that was more than merely adequate for man’s needs (1:27-2:25; 3:8-9); for his responsibility (1:28), sustenance (1:29), moral consideration (2:9, 16-17), creativity (2:19), socialization (2:20-25), etc. All things were created for His glory (Isa. 43:7, 21), even the evil will glorify God (Pro. 16:4; Rom. 11:36).

In the next place, how do I, as one created in God’s image, fulfill my obligation to glorify God? By accepting my responsibility of stewardship (1 Cor. 4:1-2; Tit. 1:7; 1 Pet. 4:10)! Jesus informs us in Luke 12:35-38, 42, that a faithful steward will be one that is anticipating their Lord’s return at any moment ready to spring into action (12:35-36) with such readiness indicating wisdom and faithfulness (12:42). A steward that is unfaithful is the one
that is wasteful and unjust in the handling of his master’s wealth (Luke 16:1-8).

As a faithful steward what are my obligations in all of this? The Lord provides insight into our responsibilities in the parable found in Luke 19:12-27. A certain nobleman was to go into a far place to receive a kingdom and then return. Prior to his departure he provides money to various servants and then commands them to occupy till he returns whereupon he will have an accounting. Only one of the ten servants did nothing, simply returning what he had been given. It is obvious that the command “Occupy” and the subsequent time of accounting meant that faithful servants will actually be accountable for even minimal activity (19:20-23). It would be profitable for us to note for further study the events related by Jesus in Matthew 25:31-46 and how stewardship relates to the command “Occupy.”

I will be a successful and faithful steward by ordering the very core of my being (Luke 6:45; Pro. 23:7) to align my whole life with the Word (Col. 3:17).

Now let us observe the practical effects of ordering our lives along the pathway of faithful stewardship. In carrying out my stewardship, I will have accepted the Lordship of Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:9; Phi. 2:10-11; Isa. 45:22-25; Heb. 5:9; Col. 3:24). I will next recognize that as a bond servant (John 12:26; Rom. 6:16-18; Eph. 1:7, 14), I have surrendered my whole self
Gene Hill

Carl E. “Gene” Hill, Jr., was born and raised in southwest Ohio, primarily in the Dayton area. He served four years in the US Navy. He and his wife Jerry (Booker) have one son and two grandchildren. They were converted at the Andrews Avenue church in 1975. Gene attended the Florida School of Preaching under the Directorship of B.C. Carr, from 1976-1978. Be began his first work with the Lauderdale Manors church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida in 1982. He has since served congregations in Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, and currently works with the Indianola church in Indianola, Mississippi.
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher        Marge Williams
Charles Williams    Harold Cozad
Dot Lambert         Nancy Travis
Rubye Bailey        Anthony Polnitz
Melvin Torrey       Horace Myrick
Marilyn Hall        Al Flesher
Bobbie LaBryer      Tina Foshee (Sacred Heart Hospital)
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)

Please Remember

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

Timely Advice
- If you are impatient, sit down quietly and read Job.
- If you are just a little strongheaded, go and read about Moses.
- If you are getting weak-kneed, take a good look at Elijah.
- If there is no song in your heart, listen to David.
- If you are a policy man, read Daniel.
- If you are getting sordid, spend a while with Isaiah.
- If your faith is below par, read Paul.
- If you are getting lazy, watch James.
- If you are losing sight of the future, climb up the stairs of Revelation and get a glimpse of the promised land.

Author Unknown
Wisdom
Brad Green

The Bible teaches that wisdom is “better than rubies; And all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it” (Pro. 8:11). While many seek fame and fortune, God prefers that we search for knowledge and understanding. "How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!” (16:16).

This congregation is blessed with wisdom. Many of our members have attained unto wisdom by way of a combination of age (or maturity), past experiences, and knowledge. Younger members should be ever grateful for the abundance of wisdom garnered by the older. Only a fool would allow such wisdom to go untapped. Our older members should be sought for advice because of their years of experiences and the knowledge they have acquired. We should learn to lean upon the knowledge and wisdom of those who have “been there and done that” so we are not “doomed” to repeat mistakes these individuals have been witness to in the past. Though NFL teams are looking to younger, faster, and stronger athletes to take the place of the superstars of yesteryear, these same teams also understand the need to make sure that there is veteran leadership in the locker room as well. These teams see the necessity of employing older players who are still athletic, but whose greatest asset may just be their knowledge and understanding of the game. The veteran who has already seen certain situations played out in the past can compensate what the younger athlete may lack in experience. For the young athlete to be great, he must learn from those who have preceded him. Young Christians can mature much quicker and see multiplied growth in aptitude by simply listening to older Christians who have “been around the block.”

We also have members who, through years of education, have specialized knowledge and
talents that should be taken advantage of and used to benefit the work of the church. God has blessed these individuals with their abilities and the opportunity to further hone their skills in colleges and universities. Therefore, their expertise should not only be of great value to them in the secular workforce, but should also be used to the furtherance of the Kingdom of Christ. Moses’ 40 years of training in the ways of the Egyptians and 40 years training in the wilderness of Madian (Acts 7:23, 29-30) made him more than qualified to lead the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage and through the wilderness wanderings. Jesus commanded Peter, Andrew, James, and John to use the knowledge of their trade to become “fishers of men” (Mat. 4:19). In like manner, we can call upon those with specialized training to put their abilities to work for God.

Wisdom is of great importance and to be desired. Wisdom, however, must be based in the truth. A conclusion based upon past experiences or years of experience that is contrary to the Word of God is not wisdom—it is foolish. For example, some have concluded, based upon their experience, that the only way for the church to compete with denominationalism is to play their game on their terms. “Children’s church,” church sponsored sports teams, and contemporary “worship” services have been added because individuals with years and years of experience concluded that it was the only way to call people to Christ. A young man with no experience can evince the wisdom that is sorely lacking in the previous example, with just a Bible in his hand. The Bible teaches that man is “called” by the Gospel (2 The. 2:14), the Gospel is God’s power to lead man unto salvation (Rom. 1:16-17), and practicing anything not authorized by the Gospel is a sin against God (Col. 3:17).

The Days of Creation

Johnny Oxendine

Brethren must be willing to stand for the Truth when confronted with ideas (and especially theories) that are totally incompatible with what the Bible teaches. This may put unwanted pressure on us to stand steadfastly for the defense of the Gospel, but we are commanded to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered” (Jude 3). This statement, along with other verses that imply the same (e.g., Phi. 1:17), means that we have no options regarding whether or not we are to defend the faith (either we will or will not) because God has commanded that we do so.

The area where this duty has caused tremendous difficulty for some is in the defense of creation as the Bible reveals it. Evolutionists have tried to mask (but still inject) a theory that would seemingly allow for a compromise on the part of the creationist camp without going whole hog for evolution. The fact of the
matter, however, is that this is unequivocally impossible.

We must seriously take time investigating and analyzing a theory that has caught on with many brethren because of its flexibility and many levels of tolerance. It is called the “Gap Theory,” and it is properly so-called, not for anything having to do with accuracy, but rather because this theory (like other evolution theories), as a figment of human imagination, has too many “gaps.” Be that as it may, both creationists and evolutionists agree on one specific fact: Evolution is impossible if the Earth/Universe is young—with an age measured in thousands, not billions of years.

Thomas Chalmers, a nineteenth-century Scottish theologian, is given credit for giving this theory its legs. It has gone through many transformations, and there are those who hold to various parts of those transformations that even argue among themselves. What we do know is that the “Gap” theorists take the unique position that God created the world. However, this creation, as they explain it, took place billions of years ago. Satan is said to have ruined this original creation as a result of his rebellion, which supposedly cast the world into darkness. Some of the theorists have this cataclysmic event altering certain stages of the geologic ages, requiring God to re-create the earth. On one thing they seem to agree: that the period between the first creation and the second (after Satan’s fall) represents the “Gap.” After the “Gap,” God re-created the world in the literal six-day time span.

To make a long story short, this alleged “Gap” takes place between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 (where the original creation takes place before Satan ruins everything), leaving the remainder of the story beginning with Genesis 1:3 to tell us the story of the re-creation. It has a nice appeal to it if you do not care what the Scriptures say, which is why we must oppose it. But how have the academics, the layman, and the uninitiated received this? In 1961, the chairman of the Bible Department at Abilene Christian University said that there was nothing that anyone could show to disprove this theory. This sad footnote in history is one of the reasons that Abilene cannot ever be trusted to handle aright the Word of Truth.

Shamefully, the influence that the liberal and compromising schools have had on so many young minds should cause us to reevaluate so much of what is called a “Christian education.” In closing, let me give the people at Abilene a little hint: “for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth” (Exo. 31:17). Now, was that so hard?

San Mateo, CA

Handle With Prayer
My gift was delivered at seven.
Just as I awoke where I lay,
A gift that was postmarked from
“Heaven”
My gift was this beautiful day,
One wonderful, shining good morning,
Entrusted by God to my care,
It came, bearing only the warning,
“Fragile, handle with prayer.”

Author Unknown
Sick

Remember in your prayers:

Bill Gallaher       Marge Williams
Charles Williams   Harold Cozad
Dot Lambert        Nancy Travis
Ruby Bailey        Anthony Polnitz
Melvin Torrey      Horace Myrick
Marilyn Hall       Al Flesher
Bobbie LaBryer     Tina Foshee
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)

Pantry Items Needed

Spam or Treat
Beef Stew
Canned Chicken Breast

It Bears Repeating

- Blowing out the light of another will make one’s own light shine no brighter.
- The trouble with doing nothing is that you can’t stop and rest.
- You can be content and happy if God’s will is more important than your wants.
- He who talks to you about others, will talk to others about you.
- God often digs wells of joy with spades of sorrow.
- Many people are in debt because they spread what their friends think they make.

Author Unknown
Real Unity

J. Noel Merideth

We all need to study the important theme of the unity of the church. It is of supreme importance to Christian people because it is demanded by the Lord. Division in the religious world at large and division in a congregation is condemned as contrary to the will of our Lord. Division is destructive to the church and the souls of men. Much heartache and pain results from division and people will lose their souls who cause or promote division. Unity must become the effort and prayer of every person who wishes to please the Lord. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psa. 133:1). One of the seven abominations is "he that soweth discord among brethren" (Pro. 6:16-19).

The Plea

Jesus prayed for the unity of His followers in the shadow of the cross.

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).

Notice an analysis of these statements. (1) The universal scope of the plea. Jesus said He did not pray just for the apostles but for them also which would believe through their preaching. So all believers are included in the scope of this prayer! (2) The object of the prayer was that His followers might be “one.” He prayed for unity. (3) The ultimate effect of this unity was: “that the world may believe.” (4) The implication of this prayer was that division and denominationalism produces infidelity, atheism, and skepticism.

When Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, he wrote against the division that existed in the church. He said that there should be no divisions among them. They should have uni-
ty of speech and all speak the same things; unity of organization with no divisions; and, unity of judgment, being of the same mind and judgment (1 Cor. 1:10-13).

The Basis
Believers must be united in Christ and his doctrine. Whatever unity might be affected outside of Christ is a failure. The seven ones in Ephesians 4:4-6 constitute the only basis upon which unity is possible. Paul says: (1) there is one body, unity in membership; (2) there is one Spirit, unity in guidance; (3) there is one hope, unity in desire; (4) there is one Lord, unity in authority; (5) there is one faith, unity in message; (6) there is one baptism, unity in salvation; and, (7) there is one God, unity in worship.

Denominationalism corrupts the Lord’s simple plan. Denominationalism says “one church is as good as another,” “they are just different roads leading to the same place,” “we are all trying to get to heaven,” and the like. These statements and slogans of the denominational world are deceptive, illogical, and in conflict with God’s plan. These different faiths cannot be right. Jesus said:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it (Mat. 7:13-14).

The Method
The method of achieving unity is the “seed principle.” We should sow the seed of the kingdom which is the Word of God and when people obey that then you have the New Testament church (Luke 8:11). When we obey the Gospel, we just become Christians and we have fellowship with other Christians because of our relationship with God. As long as we walk in the Light, then this fellowship continues (1 John 1:7). In sowing the seed of the kingdom, we are restoring New Testament Christianity. People have sought to restore Christianity through the years and here in the United States such men as Barton Stone, Walter Scott, Alexander Campbell, Tolbert Fanning, and others have presented this plea.

The plea is to sow the seed of the kingdom, restore New Testament Christianity, and proclaim the Gospel of Christ.

Deceased

Confessing Faults

G. K. Wallace

“Confess your faults [sins] one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed” (Jam. 5:16). Private wrongs should be corrected privately (Mat. 18:15). A Christian is doing himself an incalculable injury to try to hide a public sin. When a sin is known, one does not confess the sin, but his repentance of that sin. The wrongdoer needs to make known his or her repentance of that sin.

When a sin is well known, the sinner should publicly make known his or her purpose to quit the wrong. To fail to do so may cause others to do the same sin. He who tries to hide his sin is adding the sin of hypocrisy to the wrong committed. The prodigal son said, “I will arise and go to my father, and will say
unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight” (Luke 15:18—ASV).

Today, we not only have “backsliders,” we have “insiders.” Insiders are those who have publicly sinned so as to bring reproach upon the church, but instead of making a public confession and asking the forgiveness of the church, they just “slide into the congregation” and feel forgiven. A Christian who has done a public wrong is never humble enough to be forgiven until he is humble enough to take away the reproach he has publicly brought on the church.

Deceased

What about Halloween?
Jesse Whitlock

As we near the end of October, it is time for that annual question that is always of great concern to Christian parents, “What about Halloween?” What can we do, and what ought not to be done?

Samhain was an ancient Celtic New Year’s festival. This season involved both human and animal sacrifices offered to the “Lord of the Dead” (Samain). This ritual also involved worship to the “Sun god.” Originally it was celebrated on November 1. Around the 8th century it came to be called the “Eve of All Hallows Day,” or “All Saints Day.” Now, it is observed on October 31.

The association with witches, ghosts, and death can be traced back to the ancient pagan holiday. After a large feast was offered to the dead, villagers would don masks and costumes imitating the departed dead. They would form a procession toward the edge of town. This supposedly would lead the “ghosts” away. The Celts would pour oil or wine of the ground as their sacrifice. This would insure them many rewards for those gifts in the coming year. However, if they neglected to make such an offering, the wrath of those gods would be with them in the coming year! That is where we get the expression, “trick-or-treat.”

Now, the question arises, “Is it wrong to observe Halloween just because it is rooted in mythology/paganism?” Will you stop calling “Thursday” by its name since it is rooted in worship to a false god? Originally it was called “Thor’s Day.” Every day of the week derives its name from mythology, as do the names of the months. “Easter” and “Christmas” derive many of their customs and traditions from paganism as well.

New Testament Christians will not observe either Christmas or Easter as “religious holy days.” But, is it wrong to eat candy from a basket, hunt for eggs, enjoy a hayride, make (and eat) pumpkin pie; or give and exchange gifts? Of course, we should always consider the conscience of others (1 Cor. 8).

If you allow your son to dress up as an astronaut, or allow your daughter to dress up as a clown or a princess and accept candy from family and friends, let us be careful to do nothing that would glorify Satan (1 Cor. 10:20ff). Remember the “golden rule” when it comes to tricks played, especially if you should come to our house!
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher       Marge Williams
Charles Williams   Harold Cozad
Dot Lambert        Nancy Travis
Ruby Bailey        Anthony Polnitz
Melvin Torrey      Horace Myrick
Marilyn Hall       Al Flesher
Bobbie LaBryer     Karen Ayliffe
Robbie Cravy (The Haven)

Please Remember
October 21
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.

October 23
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

Pantry Items Needed
- Spam or Treat
- Beef Stew
- Canned Chicken Breast

Israel—Five Pictures of the Church
1. Abraham to Sinai—A Chosen People
2. The Exodus—A Redeemed People
3. The Levitical System—A Priestly People
4. The Prophets and Exile—A Warned but Rebellious People
5. The Return—A Saved and Glorified People

Author Unknown
The Rock and Bulwark
Charles Pogue

General Andrew Jackson, commander of the Battle of New Orleans and seventh President of the United States, was known as “Old Hickory” for his toughness. However, at 78 years of age and suffering from the illness that eventually led to his death, General Jackson showed the softness that respect for the Word of God stirs in the hearts of moral, though finite men. In the company of a friend, he pointed to the family Bible and said, “That book, sir, is the rock on which our republic rests. It is the bulwark of our free institutions.”

Why have our freedoms increasingly come under attack in recent years? Why is it with each passing year, the United States seems to be leaning farther and farther left, moving more and more toward socialism and communism? Why are we increasingly governed by a group of people who gravitate toward the no-rules—open-society of the Rules for Radicals

rabble-rouser, Saul Alinsky? Why is it that the change-for-change’s-sake protégés of Alinsky pursue with alacrity the activity of organizing for the purpose of changing the status quo, often just because it is the status quo, and end up violating the law with impunity?

Why has freedom of religion guaranteed by the First Amendment of our Constitution been reinterpreted by secularists to mean freedom from religion? Why has freedom with responsibility as foreseen by our founders deteriorated to mean freedom without restraint? Libertarianism in a depraved culture is as a weapon in the hands of the deranged!

Why have the civil institutions which once provided protection for the lives of all our citizens turned into halls of death for the unborn, the infirm, and the aged? Why have God and goodness been evicted and an affirmation for the alleged right to debauch with another of
one’s own sex replaced them in every station,
from the seat of power to the sidewalks of city
streets?

Is it not that the Book once held aloft in
the affection of all our citizens as the rock and
bulwark of our civil institutions has now been
relegated to a place of virtual irrelevance, even
as has the national Constitution to which said
Book gives life through the inspiration of gen-

erally pious men? Our nation has reached the
point at which many have attached themselves
to the assertion that their sophistication has
outgrown their need for God. They know as
well, if not better, what is good for them than
the almighty Creator who formed them from
the dust and breathed into their nostrils the
breath of life. Our barks, once guided by the
hand that holds the sparrow aloft and adorns
the lily beyond the artist’s brush facility to rep-
resent, are now adrift upon the waves with no
captain to navigate the swells of life’s stormy
seas.

Man without God and His revelation is
much like a ship without a rudder, destined to
wreck upon the craggy roughness of a stormy
shore. A nation whose God is not the Lord
is self-condemned and, in lieu of repentance,
destined to fall from the weight of its own de-

adence that incontrovertibly follows. Freedom
because of fear of Divine reprisal can only be
the companion of the destiny of destruction.

You and I must hold aloft the same Bible
that General Jackson so rightly extolled, the
pursuit to restore our nation to its love for
God and to the humble attitude of submis-
sion to the authority of His divinely breathed
Word is in your hands and mine. Let us go
forth with resolve, longsuffering, and above all
the Gospel of Jesus Christ and one person at a
time turn back the advances of the enemy who
from old would desire nothing more than to
extinguish the light which for two hundred
plus years has beamed in its radiance from
the shining city on the hill. Unless the Bible
is restored as the rock, the foundation, the
underpinning of our national soul, and once
again held up as the bulwark and fortification
against evil, we are destined to fall. And as the
Lord Himself said, “And great was the fall of
it” (Mat. 7:27).

Granby, MO

What Kind of Member Are You?

Gus Nichols

There are all kinds of members referred to
in the New Testament. Some had lost their
first love (Rev. 2:4-5). Others had become
only lukewarm (3:14-19). Some had forsaken
the assembling of themselves together (Heb.
10:25). Others had gone all the way back and
had fallen from grace (Gal. 5:1-4). Some nev-
er did return to the right way (John 6:66;
1 Pet. 2). There are many other classifications
of members in the New Testament. Then
there are some modern groups each of which
has quite a following. What kind of a mem-
ber are you?

Are you a “oncer”—one who attends
church services only once per week—on the
Lord’s day morning? Such members enjoy
good health, but they never come at night.
Had they been at Troas, they would not have
heard Paul preach until midnight, and would have missed the fine fellowship of the occasion, plus the witnessing of the miracle of raising a man from the dead there that night (Acts 20:7-14).

Some are church “tramps”—they go tramping from one congregation to another, worshiping here and there, so as to dodge any responsibility for doing anything in the church and having any part in any real program of work. They are often called “Church Drifters.” They never settle down so as to work and grow in the church (1 Cor. 16:13).

Others are simply “leaners”—they “lean” on the church in every time of illness, misfortune, and the like, but they never contribute to its work. They are out to “get” and not to “give.” They are like the Dead Sea which has no outlet. They have no life. They are like sponges—they take in all they can hold but you have to squeeze them to get anything out of them!

Some others are “specials”—they work for the church on some special occasions which happen to appeal to them. But the regular work of the Lord has no appeal unto them. The every-day matter of being Christians is to them a drab affair. When they are tuned up they work enthusiastically, but no one ever knows when they are going to get rubbed the wrong way about something. They are “supporters” of that part of the work of the church that they like, but they oppose the other good works being done by others.

But some are “pillars”—they are always dependable. Without them the church would be a laughingstock in the community. They stand ready at all times to do what they can for the glory of God. They are happy that they have been saved, and feel that if they had a thousand lives to live, they could not do all they would like to do for the wonderful Saviour who came, bled, and died, that they might be children of God and have the happiness which they enjoy in the Lord, every day, along the way.

What kind of member are you?—You need not try to deceive anyone by your answer, for the way you are living proclaims daily the kind of member you are! Maybe you need to change your ways, and move up in the church—up to higher ground of Christian living. Many have changed who found themselves in a failing group, doing little or nothing for the church.

Sons of God and Daughters of Men
Robertson L. Whiteside
Q. Please explain Genesis 6:1-2. Who were the sons of God and who were the daughters of men?
A. None but servants of God are called sons of God; at least that is general Bible usage. From the contrast in the verses referred to we would naturally conclude that the daughters of men were the daughters of men who did not serve God. Sons were born to these sons of God and daughters of men (6:4). It seems that the marriage of the righteous with the wicked resulted in great corruption.
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Harold Cozad
Dot Lambert  Nancy Travis
Rubyé Bailey  Anthony Polnitz
Karen Ayliffe  Horace Myrick
Marilyn Hall  Al Fleshér
Bobbie LaBryer  Dot Brantley
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Melvin Torrey (Gulf Breeze Hospital)

Restored
Butch King was restored to Christ on October 20. Please keep him in your prayers and offer him encouragement.

Please Remember
October 23
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

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

Pantry Items Needed
Spam or Treat
Beef Stew
Canned Chicken Breast

Decalogue
This Greek word is “the ten words” assigned for the ten commandments, first written on two stone slabs (Exo. 31:18), which were broken by Moses throwing them down on the ground (32:19). They were written by God a second time (34:1).

Delbert Goins
A Brotherhood Crisis
Jess Whitlock

The late brother Guy N. Woods wrote an editorial in the Gospel Advocate, April 14, 1984, called “A Brotherhood Crisis.” A Ms. Guiness from Collinsville, Oklahoma was awarded $390,000.00 in a sensational Oklahoma trial. The church had withdrawn fellowship from her due to the sin of adultery. Brother Woods certainly called this one as he wrote:

The action of this Oklahoma court materially affects us all. It establishes a precedent not only for court supervision of all disciplinary actions in the church it also paves the way for intrusion into the church’s affairs in every area. What is to restrain a homosexual from suing the church on the ground that his exclusion from membership because of his “lifestyle” causes him “emotional distress,” a feminist from similar action on the ground that refusal to allow her to preach and to pray publicly is “harassment,” and an interference with her “civil rights?” If this decision is allowed to become the law of the land, it is likely that a flurry of such suits will be filed, and elderships will be most reluctant to exercise any discipline in the churches. It is well within the realm of truth to say that not since the days of state persecution has the church faced the threat of civil interference this poses.

Several years ago the elders of the Evant Church of Christ asked me to pen a letter to a member of the Evant congregation who was living in adultery. A couple of years ago that letter was introduced into a court of law in an effort to persuade a judge to rule in her favor. I was put on the stand, and the name of the church was besmirched because it dared to obey the teachings of God (i.e., Mat. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; Gal. 6:1-2; 2 The. 3:14-15). However, the shyster’s trick backfired and did not have the desired result. Nonetheless, that
failed effort remains a public record for any to read. The devil will not relent!

According to a CNN news report: “Elders at Ridgedale Church of Christ told Lin-
da Cooper and two relatives that their public support for Kat Cooper, Linda Cooper’s ho-
mo sexual daughter, went against the church’s teachings.” Kat Cooper has a same-sex spouse,
Krista. The Ridgedale congregation withdrew fellowship from Kat’s mother, and an aunt
and uncle for their tacit approval of the lesbian lifestyle, which is opposed in God’s Word (i.e.,
Gen. 18-19; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:18-ff; 1 Cor. 6: 9-ff; 1 Tim. 1:9-10; 2 Pet. 2:6).

The majority of congregations bearing the name “church of Christ” on their signs already
do not obey the Lord’s teaching in the mat-
ter of church discipline. Many elderships to-
day simply do not have the backbone or Bibli-
cal knowledge to deal with “sin in the camp.”
Now, with adulterers, sodomites, and lesbians
suing the church that dares to stand where
God’s Word stands, I fear many more church-
es may cease to do the will of the Lord! Faith-
ful churches of the Lord are not going to come
under attack from the sodomites and the im-
moral, brethren we are already under attack!
The time is not coming—the time is here!
Thirteen states plus the District of Columbia
recognize homosexual marriage even now. We
have an immoral president and vice-president.
President Obama warned our entire nation be-
fore he was elected, that if elected as President,
he would make the office of the President a
“bully pulpit for homosexuality.” We have an
immoral Congress and Senate. The majority
of the so-called Supreme Court is immoral.
The faithful are going to be challenged on a
daily basis to “fight the good fight of the faith”
(1 Tim. 6:12a). Brethren, let us “take up the
whole armor of God, that ye [we] may be able
to withstand in the evil day” (Eph. 6:13). The
remnant of the faithful seems to be growing
dearer. Let us seek to obey Him and live in
such a way that one day we can all “lay hold
on the life eternal” (1 Tim. 6:12b).

God Is Supreme

Danny Douglas

God is Supreme and He is the Sovereign
Ruler of the Universe. Therefore, no man or
body of men may overrule His law. God in His
infinite wisdom has prescribed that which is
good and right for all of us in His holy Word,
the Bible. Regardless of the governmental de-
cisions of any nation, God will never condone
or approve of that which the Scriptures declare
sinful. God will not change His Word accord-
ing to popular human opinion. One day, we
will all be judged by the Word of Jesus Christ
(John 12:48).
Regardless of how many people may condone sin or call “evil good” and “good evil” (Isa. 5:20), God will never approve of that which His Word condemns. God will never recognize or approve of two people of the same gender getting married. Since God is Supreme and His law reigns supreme over man’s law, no group of men, be it the United States Supreme Court or the President himself, can change or strike down the law of God. Jesus declared that marriage is between male and female, and this goes all the way back to the beginning:

And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder (Mat. 19:4-6).

God never has and never will approve of homosexual behavior, as the Scripture declares: 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 (Rom. 1:26-27).

Our nation and other nations of the world would do well to take heed to the warning which God has given concerning the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19), as the inspired writer Jude declares: Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire (Jude 7).

Those destroyed in these ancient cities go down in history as an example and warning to “those that after should live ungodly” (2 Pet. 2:6).

Moreover, no person in a public position has the Scriptural or constitutional right to coerce students or anyone else to support that which is sinful in the eyes of God, or that which is a violation of their conscience: including homosexuality.

God loves all people, including those who are living in ungodliness. “But God commen-deth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). Yet, He will not tolerate those things which are in rebellion to His revealed will. Therefore, He desires for all people to repent and obey His Son, Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38; Heb. 5:8-9). We have all sinned (Rom. 3:23; 5:6-11), and are all in need of Christ and His cleansing blood (Rom. 5:9; Rev. 1:5; Acts 22:16). God is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). Thus, in His great love, Jesus invites all people to come to Him and find the rest and peace that only He can give: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mat. 11:28). Only in Christ can we find real meaning to life and the hope of eternal life (Rom. 6:23).
Sick

Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher       Marge Williams
Charles Williams   Harold Cozad
Dot Lambert        Nancy Travis
Rubye Bailey       Anthony Polnitz
Karen Ayliffe      Horace Myrick
Marilyn Hall       Al Flesher
Bobbie LaBryer     Dot Brantley
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Melvin Torrey (Gulf Breeze Hospital)
Margaret Bruce (Pam Busch’s friend)

Please Remember

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

November 4
Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.

Pantry Items Needed
- Canned Tomatoes
- Mixed Vegetables
- Pork & Beans

1 Timothy 6:11-12
“But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”
Those Troublesome Objective Facts

Terry Hightower

One day an actress tried to take her tiny white poodle through customs. She knew it was against the law, but because poor little dogs suffer away from their masters, she tried to smuggle him through, covering him up under her coat. Smiling her prettiest, the actress sailed up to the customs barrier. Everything went splendidly—until her coat barked! We laugh at people trying to fool fallible humans, but some try to fool the infallible God:

Then came the word of Jehovah unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king; for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments.... And Samuel came to Saul; and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of Jehovah: I have performed the commandment of Jehovah. And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? (1 Sam. 15:10-14).

God told Saul to smite the Amalekites, utterly destroying everything, both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass (15:3), but he thought that his way concerning religious instruction was better than or at least as good as the Almighty's way. Amazingly, Saul twice claims that he had obeyed the voice of God and had gone the way that the Lord had sent him (15:13, 20). But (instead of a dog barking) a sheep bleated and oxen lowed to call him a liar! Objective facts are hard for even a king to get around. No one ever gets so big or powerful that he or she can ignore “obeying the voice of Jehovah” (15:22).

When we reject God’s objective Word, He will in turn reject us (15:23).

Like the movie plots involving the so-called “perfect crime” where the perpetrator thinks he has planned every move and every “cover-up” so perfectly, we actually believe we can avoid a day of reckoning. On a vacation trip...
to the mountains a man and wife from Vermont met a quiet, pleasant couple from New York. All four of them had a great time together. Later, the gentleman from Vermont made up an album of snapshots he had taken of the other couple and mailed it to them in New York. The gift was never acknowledged, until one day a big-city lawyer appeared and asked the man if he had prepared the album. “Sure,” was his reply, “Did they get it?” “It was received all right,” said the lawyer, “And I’m representing the man’s wife in the divorce suit. You see, she wasn’t the woman in the album!”

Are you trying to fool the infinite God? Do you really think that you can hide personal sin from the One who formed you in your mother’s womb (Psa. 139:13) or from the One of Whom it is said that “there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:13)? Are you really irrational enough to believe, even for one moment, that the Bible is wrong when it declares a “day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ” (Rom. 2:16)?

If you know that the Bible requires belief (John 3:16), repentance (Luke 13:3), confession of Christ (Rom. 10:10), and baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), then why not do these things if you have not? If you know that you are an unfaithful Christian, why not come back today by repentance, confession of sins, and prayer (Acts 8:13-22)? “But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against Jehovah; and be sure your sin will find you out” (Num. 32:23).

Amarillo, TX

Return to Basic Bible Authority

Bill Jackson

In Matthew 21:25, in discussing the baptism of John, our Lord directed this question to the Jewish leaders: “The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?” This piercing question confounded these leaders in Judaism, and they were uncomfortable in being brought to the critical point of seeing that all religious matters boil down to this: either God authorized it, or it is a thing of man! We, today, need to recognize that there has been no change in this basic truth.

A generation or so ago, churches of Christ were known as those who demanded a “thus saith the Lord” for all religious practice. Many of those who were urged to forsake denominationalism and obey the truth were first impressed with the fact that the Bible was demanded for all things religious, and they were able to see this as the line separating sectarianism from the Lord’s body. We must recognize today that, in the church, there is not that same stress on the Word as the only authority, and in such a move away from God, we will not and cannot bear the fruit demanded of us. If there is a single cry that needs to be made, for all to hear, it would be this: “Let us return to the Bible as the basis of all of our actions in religion!” There is really no hope for us unless we do this.

Let us now list a few reasons why we must have a return to the Bible:

(1) Jesus tells us that His Word will be the
basis of judgment (John 12:48). He plainly says that the Word will judge us. If the Bible is to be the basis of our judgment, then it is surely vital that we abide by that volume.

(2) The Bible is inspired (God-breathed), and profitable for us. In 2 Timothy 3:16 Paul tells us that God breathed-out the Scriptures, and that for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, this is the volume giving us the help we need. That being so, then to refuse to be guided by the Bible is to refuse that which God has said is the profitable course. Man will rely on something, if just his own will and pleasure. In spurning the Bible as authority, whatever man turns to will be that which cannot profit nor deliver (1 Sam. 12:21).

(3) In the same context, 1 Timothy 3, the apostle continues and lets us know that the Bible furnishes a man completely unto all good works (3:17). The work of the Christ, in forming us as a people, was to develop a people for God’s own possession zealous of good works (Tit. 2:14). God’s children labor in the realm of doing that which is good, and behind that is the fact that God Himself has declared unto us that which is the good and right thing. To enable us to work in the area of good, and to remain only in that area, God has provided us with the Bible as the authoritative and infallible Guide. We are thus furnished unto every good work. I can thus know that any given work is not good if it is not authorized by the Bible.

(4) Finally, and certainly not the least in importance, is the fact that our Lord will condemn us if we refuse to abide by the Bible as our authority. The warning is given: “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God” (2 John 9). John continues and brands one a false teacher who does not so abide by this doctrine, and calls the works of such a one “evil deeds” (2 John 11). It is imperative, then, that the people of God remain with the Word of God, and they must if the blessings of God continue to rest upon them.

We have thus noticed that the Lord has made us in Himself, that we might be those who live right and do right, this is possible only if we abide by the right standard—the Bible! The present-day apostasy is characterized by a disdain for the Word of God, and by a non-caring attitude regarding Bible authority. The same departures from the Bible standard that we have long seen in sectarianism is now too often witnessed among our own people. Many individuals live their lives, and many congregations conduct their activities, with little regard for what the Bible says. In these lines, we have tried to call men back to basic Bible authority in all things, and herein is our only hope! Urging from the apostle Peter is appropriate here: “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11).

Deceased

Web Site
The site offers a vast amount of resources for your personal edification. Past issues of Defender and Beacon, written sermons presented by Michael Hatcher, as well as Ira Y. Rice’s Basic Bible course are available. Videos of lectureships and sermons can be viewed. Why not check it out at: http://www.bellviewcoc.com
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Harold Cozad
Dot Lambert  Nancy Travis
Ruby Bailey  Anthony Polnitz
Karen Ayliffe  Horace Myrick
Marilyn Hall  Al Flesher
Bobbie LaBryer
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Melvin Torrey (Gulf Breeze Hospital)
Paul Brantley (Baptist Hospital)
Margaret Bruce (Pam Busch’s friend)

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to Ray Foshee in the death of his brother-in-law, Donald Cockrell, on November 3. Please keep Ray and Tina and their family in your prayers.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Tomatoes
Mixed Vegetables
Pork & Beans

Philistine Religion
The main Philistine gods were Dagon, Ashtoreth and Baalzebub. These gods were all of Near Eastern origin, suggesting that the Philistines adapted their own religion to that of the Canaanites. The Philistines built temples at Gaza, Ashdod and Ekron, and offered sacrifices to the gods (*Nelson’s Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Bible* 59).
“Give Me The Bible” is a favorite song often sung during Sunday worship and Wednesday night class in many congregations. A knowledge of and obedience to the Bible is certainly essential for salvation, but it is not limited in its ability to help us with all aspects of this life. No matter what we might be doing (or thinking of doing for that matter) in this life, the Scriptures can and do inform us with regard to making the right decisions.

The Word of God is to be constantly before us (in our hearts and minds) as we move through each and every day. It is to be consulted frequently so that our paths might always be straight and acceptable to God. “Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15—ASV).

“Give Me The Bible” is also a uniquely sublime philosophical position or statement that maintains a belief in God as the Supreme Being who created the heavens and the earth (in six days). It maintains the supremacy of God and His ways to man and his ways (Isa. 55:9). By accepting the Scriptures as inspired by God (and we will not needlessly argue in this space the obvious merits found in 2 Tim. 3:16), a person recognizes that the commands found therein are meant by God as more than just an outline from which to improvise, but quite specific commands to which we are all expected to adhere.

“Give Me The Bible” establishes that a thoroughly reasoned and objective choice has been (and can still be) made regarding a “lifestyle” (Jos. 24:15). People who have obeyed the Gospel have “chosen life” over death.
This clarion call continues the response made by the apostles in Acts 4 when they rejected the “threat” to never speak the name or Gospel of Jesus Christ again.

“Give Me The Bible” should have for the Christian an even more heartfelt passion than the patriotic one that we are likely to feel when reminded of that famous American patriot who said, “Give me liberty, or give me death” (Patrick Henry), regarding the use of the Virginia militia for the defense of the colonies against England. Jude exhorts us to “contend” for our faith, and we will do this with the help of God’s Word—the Bible.

Recalling a question by Peter in John 6:68, if not in the Lord, where is salvation to be found? To retool a position advocated by Joshua (24:15), “Give Me The Bible!”

San Mateo, CA

Thanksgiving
Paul Vaughn

One of the happiness times of the year is Thanksgiving. It is the period of the year when many people usually take a full stop of their hectic life to thank God for all the blessings they have received. Even in a society that is seeking, extremely hard, to remove God from all facets of life, most are aware of the blessings they have on Thanksgiving Day. It is always appropriate to have an attitude of thankfulness and gratitude should manifest itself in one’s heart daily.

One of the greatest sins of most people is the failure to have an attitude of thankfulness on a daily basis. The Scriptures are abundant with words of guidance for thankfulness. It is written, “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Phi. 4:6). Again it is written, “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:20).

All we have to do is count our many blessings and it will be easily seen that we have many things for which to be thankful. The families we live in to watch over us, the jobs we have to support us, the friends we have to encourage us, and the health we enjoy to help us have the life that is great are all exceeding important blessings to be thankful. Yet, these
Publically or Privately?

Kenneth D. Cohn

In the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector recorded in Luke 18:9-14, we see the Pharisee pointing out the perceived deficiencies of the tax collector and then extolling his own perceived virtues. The Pharisee had not assessed the circumstances correctly, but his objective was to exalt himself, to make himself look good by comparison, ego aggrandizement, if you will. I know what the Lord thought of such action: “for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (18:14). In Matthew 23:23 Jesus said:

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

It is the case that there are some who use these public forums to do the exact same thing that the Pharisees of old attempted to do by their public prayers, i.e., to denigrate their own brethren to magnify their own perceived piety. True piety consists not in forms, but in substance, not in outward observances, but in justice, mercy, and faith.

Seven things were enumerated in Proverbs 6:16-19 that God hates. The very last thing is sowing discord among brethren. The God of love and peace hates the “one who sows discord among brethren,” for God delights in concord. If publicly proclaiming the perceived sins of another while ignoring the sins in one’s own life is not both pharisaical and sowing discord, then pray tell what else would one have to do for it to be so? The Lord also made clear that such conduct is hypocritical. In Matthew 7:3-5, the Lord said:

And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank is in your own eye! Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

Publicly proclaiming the perceived sins of another while ignoring the sins in one’s own life is oftentimes a case of one needing to look for the plank and not the speck. The accuser should beware! Is it not preferred for some matters to be handled privately rather than publicly? Would not the cause of Christ be better served if the advice given in James 1:19 were heeded: “So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath”? Why? “For the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God” (1:20).

Spring, TX
Sick 
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher       Marge Williams
Charles Williams   Harold Cozad
Dot Lambert        Nancy Travis
Rubye Bailey       Anthony Polnitz
Marilyn Hall       Al Flesher
Bobbie LaBryer
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Melvin Torrey (Gulf Breeze Hospital)
Paul Brantley (Baptist Hospital)
Horace Myrick (Sacred Heart Hospital)
Margaret Bruce (Pam Busch’s friend)
Anita Ware (Terri Myrick’s mother)

Please Remember 
November 18
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.

Pantry Items Needed
Canned Tomatoes
Mixed Vegetables
Pork & Beans

“Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little” (Edmund Burke). As a child I often imagined myself as a great athlete or law man or hero. As an adult, my reality is nowhere near my childish aspirations. I cannot do everything. I cannot do many great things. I am not a hero. But what I can do I will and I will do it to the best of my ability and to His glory. Join me please? God bless.

Tim Smith
Roelf L. Ruffner

Recently I was watching a documentary on television about the Holocaust. One survivor of a concentration camp related how he witnessed a man praying for Divine deliverance from impending death in a gas chamber. When his death seemed imminent the man concluded, “There is no God!” Another documentary on World War II interviewed a German veteran who surmised that, since both sides in the war prayed to the same God for victory over their enemies, there must be no God.

The unbelief of these two men is not unusual in the aftermath of disaster—war, natural disaster, suffering, and the tragic loss of a loved one. I can only imagine the horrors of war, plague, catastrophe, and human bondage. Yet, I should not (must not) give up in the face of horror and conclude that there is no God. Unbelief at its core is selfish and empty. It is an intellectual temper tantrum. The Bible tells us that God exists and His love for us, individually and collectively, is total (cf. John 3:16; 1 John 4:10).

We all need to realize that there is something far worse than human suffering and death—the Judgment of God: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10).

As a faithful Christian, I can be certain that God will rectify all injustice and punish all evil—if not in this life, surely in the next. We must look beyond our frail, finite vision and see the righteous avenging Lord: “Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Rev. 6:16-17). Eventually, the Allied Armies (Russia, Britain, and America) came and liberat-
ed the death camps. Nations were liberated from National Socialist tyranny. The Nazi war machine was destroyed. Trials were held and many were punished for their crimes. It was not complete justice by any means but a foretaste of The Judgment Day.

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works (Rev. 20:12).

God is not the source of evil in this world—Satan and men are. If men followed the will of God there would be no wars and much less human suffering (cf. Jam. 4:1-2). Instead we often follow the flesh and wage war, murder, and inflict injury:

Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword (Mat. 26:52).

To shake our fist at the heavens in the face of misery is to deny the obvious: God is in control and His will is being done, whatever we may imagine to the contrary; whatever the forces of Hell are against us. We have the free will to believe in God and obey Him or not.

Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, And put my life in mine hand? Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: But I will maintain mine own ways before him (Job 13:14-15).

“Salvation Has a Location”

J. D. Tant

From the time God called Abraham to go to a country that He would show him, with a promised blessing when this command was obeyed, God has always required certain people to go to certain places for safety or blessing. None whom God called could reach His blessing without doing what God told him to do.

We call to memory that when God brought a flood upon the earth, He placed salvation from the flood for Noah and his family in the ark and all had to go into the ark to be saved from death. Many good people in our time would argue that God has as much power out of the ark as in the ark. They would argue that going into the ark was unnecessary, and they would have been preaching salvation out of the ark.

Coming now to the New Testament, I call to your attention that Jesus purchased His church with His blood (Acts 20:28). Being purchased by the blood of Christ, it became a divine institution in which Jesus is said to be the head and that church is His body (Eph. 1:22-23). This church is built upon a divine foundation of which Jesus is the chief corner stone (2:20-22). All people who are reconciled to God must be reconciled in this one body or church (2:16). The God of heaven has located salvation from all past sins in, not out of His church. There is no promise of any man being saved outside the church of Christ and here is where the great battle comes between Truth and error—between the human churches and...
the church of Christ.
1. Some people argue that there are people who are just as good in one church as in another. That is true, but God does not save us on account of our goodness, but on account of our spirituality. Jesus teaches that we must be born again (John 3:3-5).
2. Some say we are saved outside the church, then join the church because we are saved. Paul said Christ purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). So if you are saved outside of the church you are saved outside of the purchased possession and you must claim salvation apart from the blood of Christ.
3. Some argue that it is God—not the church—who saves. That is true. But where does God save? Paul says we are reconciled in one body (Eph. 2:16) and that this one body is the church (Col. 1:18-24). Now, since God reconciles us in the church, if you were reconciled outside the church it was not God who did the reconciling.
4. Some will ask, “Won’t God save me out of the church?” Let Jesus answer. In Matthew 7 He argues that there are only two classes of builders—those who build on the rock and those who build on the sand. The structures of those who build on the sand will fall, but those on the rock will stand. When Peter confessed the Son of God, Jesus answered and said, “upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mat. 16:18). Since the church is built upon the rock, if you are building outside it, you are building upon the sand and Jesus said your building will fall.
5. We are reconciled to God in the church or one body (Eph. 2:16). Then if you are saved outside the church, you are saved outside of reconciliation to God. No one would want that kind of salvation for that is an impossibility.

Having now learned where I am reconciled to God, the next question to settle is this: “What must I do to come into the place of reconciliation?” Jesus answers by saying we must “hear” His sayings and “do” them to be like the wise builder (Mat. 7:24). In doing the sayings of Jesus, I must “believe” that He is the Son of God (John 20:31). After believing, I must “confess” of my sins (Luke 13:5). After repenting, I must “confess” Him before men (Mat. 10:32), and in the great commission Jesus not only taught that I should believe, but that I must be baptized to reach salvation (Mark 16:16). This agrees with Paul’s statement that “as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). So these five commands taught at different places in the New Testament teach me what I must do to be saved. If our entrance into the city of God depends upon our doing His commandments, no one can have a hope of salvation short of complying with the same. I should be willing to not only obey for my own salvation, but for those with whom I may associate along life’s pathway. As salvation is located in the only church Christ purchased with His own blood, and the way into that church is made so plain, the only reason one can offer for not being saved is that he simply does not want to do God’s will.

Deceased
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher       Marge Williams
Charles Williams   Harold Cozad
Dot Lambert        Nancy Travis
Rubye Bailey       Anthony Polnitz
Marilyn Hall       Al Fleshier
Bobbie LaBryer     Paul Brantley
Horace Myrick      Melvin Torrey
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Margaret Bruce (Pam Busch’s friend)
Anita Warr (Terri Myrick’s mother)

Please Remember
November 27
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in
the auditorium.

The Zealots
This was the group that kept alive the
spirit of Judas Maccabaeus—the guer-
rilla leader who had succeeded in over-
coming the forces of Antiochus IV in
the second century BC. They refused
to pay taxes to the Romans, and held
themselves ready for the war that would
bring in God’s kingdom. During the
New Testament period, they engineered
several revolts. One of these was ended
only by the Roman destruction of Jeru-
usalem in AD 70.

Nelson’s Illustrated Encyclopedia of
the Bible 169
Compelled to Blaspheme

Lee Moses

In speaking of his former sinful life prior to his conversion, the apostle Paul shamefully noted some of the atrocities which he, as a person of authority among the Jews, had committed against Christians (Acts 26:9-11). He had imprisoned them, he had participated in putting them to death, and he had punished them often in all the synagogues. These atrocities build up to something even worse: Paul had “compelled them to blaspheme” (26:11).

What was the exact nature of this blasphemy is uncertain. The meaning of “to blaspheme” is “to speak in a disrespectful way that demeans, denigrates, maligns” (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich 177-178). As Paul was seeking “to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth,” it was against Jesus Himself that he was compelling Christians to speak in this disrespectful, demeaning, denigrating, and malign manner. Whether Paul was successful in making any Christians blaspheme is uncertain. The language leaves room for the possibility that they all held “fast the profession of our faith without wavering” (Heb. 10:23). But the language also indicates that Paul used force in his efforts to compel them to blaspheme. This force obviously included the threat of death. Unfortunately, it oftentimes does not require much force at all to compel many professing Christians today to blaspheme the name of the Lord.

All have heard the vain and degrading ways that the name of the Lord has come to be used. “Oh, my God!” is no longer a distressed plea to the Father, but a mere expression of surprise in which the speaker has no thought of God whatsoever to cross his mind. Some claiming Christianity will attach the name of God to a curse word, thus linking to defilement the One who is “of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity” (Hab. 1:13). Many mock the holy names of
God the Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ by twisting them into such derisive appellations as “Lordy,” “Gosh,” and “Jeez.”

Some may attempt to justify such breaches of reverence on the basis that the speaker “does not mean anything by what he says.” This, dear reader, is the precise problem. To use the name of the Lord without meaning anything is impossible, because the name of the Lord means something. God told Moses:

Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations (Exo. 3:15).

It was by the Lord’s name that He was to be remembered and worshipped. It was not to be a meaningless word applicable to manifold uses. “That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth” (Psa. 83:18). The name of God belongs to God alone—it is not to be given to another person, nor to another person’s situational vocabulary. God Himself said, “I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another” (Isa. 42:8). Yet, some would endeavor to take from the Lord His name and His glory in one fell swoop.

The Lord has never taken such misuse of His name lightly. The third commandment stated, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain” (Exo. 20:7). And indeed under the old covenant such blasphemers were not held guiltless. The Lord commanded Moses:

And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the Lord, shall be put to death (Lev. 24:16).

Immediately after receiving this instruction, the Israelites carried out this very punishment against a blasphemer (24:11, 23).

Blasphemy did not suddenly become pleasing or acceptable to God under the new covenant. Blasphemy is one of the traits a person completely “puts off” when he “puts on” the new man of Christianity (Col. 3:8). The apostle Paul acknowledged that before his conversion he had been “injurious” and “chief of sinners” when he had been a blasphemer, and in need of mercy (1 Tim. 1:13-15). The book of Revelation does not portray blasphemy as a practice of Christians, but of a “beast” (Roman emperor—13:1, 5-6), of recipients of God’s severe wrath (16:9, 11, 21), and of “the great harlot” (Rome—17:3).

What is it that “compels” a professing Christian to blaspheme? It is not love of the Lord. It is not an understanding of His will conjoined with a strong desire to please Him. But these are the things which compel the true Christian to live the life that he does.

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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 (a free reader is available from www.adobe.com).
Ten Ways to Improve the Worship Service

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

While many early Christians were “compelled to blaspheme,” there was a stronger force compelling them not to blaspheme. Many resisted even the threat of death to avoid blasphemying the name of the Lord: “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death” (12:11). Instead of allowing the hot flame of temper or the rolling waves of emotion to compel him to blaspheme, the Christian will allow the worthy name of the Lord to compel him to see it held in the highest regard.

“Let them praise the name of the Lord: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven” (Psa. 148:13).

**Work Cited**


Mammoth Springs, AR

**Author Unknown**
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams Paul Brantley
Dot Lambert     Horace Myrick
Rubye Bailey    Anthony Polnitz
Marilyn Hall    Al Flesher
Bobbie LaBryer
Melvin Torrey (Rosewood Manor)
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Margaret Bruce (Pam Busch’s friend)
Anita Warr (Terri Myrick’s mother)

Please Remember
November 27
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in
the auditorium.

December 2
Visitation Group 1 will meet at 6:00
pm.

Sympathy
Our deepest sympathy is extended to
Tim Cozad in the death of his father,
Harold, on November 22. Harold and
his family placed membership with the
Bellview congregation in 1969. He was
an elder from October 1972–November
1986. He had been a member of Bell-
view since 2011. Harold was a man who
faithfully followed the Bible’s teachings.
Through the years he provided support
to men to enable them to attend preach-
er training schools. He will be missed!
Please keep Tim and the rest of the
family in your prayers.
The Christian and Christmas!

William C. Hatcher

Wednesday, December 25, will be Christmas day: the time set aside by so-called Christendom to pay special homage to the birth of the Son of God. Much commercial, as well as religious, interest surrounds this day, and, paradoxically, much of the commercial interest is manifested and controlled by the Jews who reject the Christ.

Our religious neighbors and friends often wonder why faithful members and congregations of the church do not celebrate this day, religiously, as do others. Thus, we ask, what is, or should be, the Christian’s attitude towards Christmas?

I. The Origin of Christmas.
   A. To the true Bible student it is readily apparent that the Scriptures are silent concerning Christmas, nor, do they in any way intimate that we should commemorate, or, religiously observe, the birth of the Savior of men.

   B. Actually, Christmas is nothing more than a combining of paganistic and Catholic practices.
      1. The pagan background: the Roman festival called “Saturnalia” was a feast dedicated to the rebirth of the sun.
         a. This pagan festival began about December 22 and continued till the end of the year, thus, coinciding with our Christmas season.
         b. There are many similarities between this pagan holiday and the celebration of Christmas.
         c. Another word for this heathen observance is “Solstice.”
      2. The Catholic background: seen first of all in the name given the day, Christmas, which means “Christ mass” or the “mass of Christ.”
         a. After the church established by our Lord went into apostasy and
the Catholic church came into being, the leaders of that apostate church in converting the pagans broke down the pagan's prejudices by “Christianizing” their heathen festivals.

b. Christmas was the adoption of the Roman pagan festival “Saturnalia.”

c. A.D. 254 Origin, an early outstanding church father, repudiated the idea of celebrating any day as the birthday of Christ.

d. The first mention of December 25 as Christ’s birthday was in A.D. 354, even then it was not celebrated in any special way.

e. The first observance of the birthday of Christ on December 25 dates from the 4th century A.D., and, the name “Christmas” was not attached to that day until the 11th century (A.D. 1038).

C. The following statements are taken from the Catholic Encyclopedia (III:724-728).

1. “Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the church. Iranaeus and Tertullian omit it from their lists of feasts; Origen...asserts that in the Scriptures sinners alone, not saints, celebrate their birthday.”

2. “But Lupi has shown...that there is no month in the year to which respectable authorities have not assigned Christ’s birth.”

3. “In 385, therefore, 25 December was not observed at Jerusalem.”

4. “The word for Christmas in late Old English is Cristes Maesse, the Mass of Christ, first found in 1038, and Cristes-messe, in 1131.”

5. “The well-known solar feast...celebrated on 25 December, has a strong claim on the responsibility for our December date. For the history of the solar cult...see...” (We noticed this under “The pagan background—WCH).”


1. “Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the church, and before the fifth century there was no general consensus of opinion as to where it should come in the calendar, whether on January 6, March 25, or December 25.”

2. “The exact day and year of Christ’s birth have never been satisfactorily settled, but when the fathers of the church in A.D. 440 decided upon a date to celebrate the event, they wisely chose the day of the winter solstice which was firmly fixed in the minds of the people and which was their most important festival...The transition from paganism to Christianity was gradual but became apparent after the fall of Rome A.D. 476 when the church was the one organization which had the strength and wisdom to withstand the disorganized centuries of the dark ages.... For several centuries Christmas was solely a church anniversary observed by religious services. But as Christianity spread among the people of pagan lands, many of the practic-
es of the winter solstice were blended with those of Christianity. Thus, Christmas became both religious and secular in its celebration, at times reverent, at others gay.”

E. Thus, Christmas was not a “Christian” observance until several centuries after Christ’s death and the establishment of the church. It came into being after the church had gone into apostasy, a falling away from the truth, and was the incorporating of a heathen festival into so-called Christianity.

II. What, therefore, should be the Christian’s attitude towards Christmas?

A. The members of the Lord’s church will not teach, nor practice, religiously, anything that is not specifically authorized in the New Testament either by direct statements, implications, or by example.

3. 1 Corinthians 4:6.
4. 2 Timothy 3:16-17. (Since the Scriptures are silent concerning Christmas, this day is not a part of “every good work.”)
5. 1 Peter 4:11.
6. 2 Peter 1:3. (The Lord has not given us the observance of Christmas so it is not a part of “life and godliness.”)
7. 2 John 9.

a. The sincere follower of Christ will desire to teach and practice only that for which there is a “thus saith the word of the Lord.”


B. Although Christmas cannot be respected as having any religious significance (as a religious holy day) the day can, nevertheless, be enjoyed as a national holiday.

1. If we can remember Saturday without worshiping Saturn or Sunday without worshiping the sun then we can remember December 25 as a purely secular holiday.
2. Yes, let us enjoy this season of the year, but, let us do it in a way in which our Lord would approve.

There are two contradictory spirits manifested during this time of year. One spirit is characterized by drunkenness, gluttony, revelries, and such like: a spirit that is out of place at any time of the year. The other spirit is characterized by giving, thankfulness, forgiveness, kindness, fellowship, love, and happiness—this is not so much the spirit of Christmas as it is the spirit of Christ and the Christian who is like Christ. It is this spirit that should characterize our lives at all seasons of the year that every day might be as joyous and rewarding as Christmas.
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher      Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Paul Brantley
Dot Lambert       Horace Myrick
Rubye Bailey      Anthony Polnitz
Marilyn Hall      Al Fliesher
Bobbie LaBryer    Melvin Torrey
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Margaret Bruce (Pam Busch’s friend)
Anita Warr (Terri Myrick’s mother)

2014 Directory Update
If you have any changes to the 2014 Members’ Directory please let the office know by December 20.

What Mystery of Christ?
Can we speak of Christ as the mystery of God? Yes, the work of God toward man was once just that (Eph. 3:1-3) and is now an exposed mystery, and Paul’s doxology is: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Rom. 11:33). The mystery is the all-authoritative purpose of Christ Himself, once hidden, but now revealed (Col. 1:27; 2:3). The all-authoritative Word of Christ must be read if one is to understand unto faithful obedience (2 Tim. 2:15).

Delbert Goins
Eating in the Church Building

Dub McClish

The apostolic church enjoyed common meals in their places of worship, and these meals were formally designated by the term, “love feasts” (or ἁγαπαίς in the Greek language). Jude 12 and 2 Peter 2:13 refer to these feasts. In describing them, one church historian has given to us the following account:

For when all the faithful met together and had heard the sermon and prayers, and received the communion, they did not immediately return home upon breaking up of the assembly, but the rich and wealthy brought meat and food from their own houses, and called the poor, and made a common table, a common dinner, a common banquet in the church [building]. And so from this fellowship in eating, and the reverence of the place, they were all strictly united in love one with another, and much pleasure and their benevolence both from those whom they fed and from God (The Antiquities of the Christian Church Bingham, Vol. 11, Book IV).

With the advance of Roman Catholicism and its borrowing of Old Testament and pagan concepts and practices, it embraced the idea of sacred sites, buildings, and temples. By A.D. 397 the sacred-site approach was fully integrated into the thinking of the Romanist hierarchy. In that year the Council of Laodicea, in its 28th cannon, forbade any to eat or spread tables “in the house of God,” meaning, of course, the church building. The law of Moses perished as God’s authority in religion with Jesus’ death on Calvary (Col. 2:14), and paganism is abominable idolatry.

Those today who oppose the use of the church building for basket dinners and fellowship meals usually think they are imitating the apostolic church. What they need to see is that in reality they are following the apostate church and its councils. Those who hold such
A view commit at least two faults:

1. They confuse the church with a building of brick and mortar, boards or nails where the church meets.
2. They make laws for others where God has not made them.

The first of these is likely a result of failure to comprehend what the church really is. The church is those persons who have been baptized for forgiveness of their sins, upon the confession of their faith in Jesus as the Christ and upon repentance of their sins (Acts 2:37-47). One might look upon it as God’s “depository” of those who are saved. Jesus purchased the church, not a church building, with His blood (20:28).

Jesus gave Himself up for the church, not for a church building (Eph. 5:25). To view the church building as a “holy place” consistently leads one to the decision of the Laodicean Council of 397.

The second fault results in a brazen attempt to usurp the dominion of the Lord by making a decree He has not made. It forbids that which He allows. Those who hold this view are governed by a human, rather than by a Divine law. Those who are determined to govern others by this position have only the authority of men for their dogma and their practice in doing so. This practice is a fine example of what Jesus condemned in principle when He said, “In vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.” (Mat. 15:9).

But why devote so much space to a matter that is really only an indifferent point anyway? Because ignorance of what the church really is and binding a tradition on brethren are both very serious matters. Can we not see that “the Most High dwelleth not in houses made with hands” (Acts 7:48-50)? To use the church building for a common meal is not going to desecrate it, since it is not God’s temple to begin with. The concept of “sacred” buildings is rooted in the defunct law of Moses and/or paganism rather than in the law of Christ. He demands consecrated minds, hearts, and bodies (Luke 10:27; Rom. 12:1-3). To misuse these, not eating in a church building, is to defile or destroy God’s temple (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20).

What are we to make of the language of 1 Corinthians 11:22 and 34? Do they not say that one should eat and drink in his house or eat “at home” if he is hungry? They indeed do. However, these cannot be fairly construed as a general condemnation of eating a meal in the same premises where worship is offered to God. We have already the historical description of the “love feast” of Jude 12 and 2 Peter 2:13, which was held immediately after worship in the same facility.

Further, one must consider the fact that brethren in various places used their homes for meeting places. Paul sent greeting to “Prisca and Aquila…and salute the church that is in their house” (Rom. 16:3-5). The church in Laodicea met in the home of Nymphas (Col. 4:15). Archippus’ house was where the church in Colossae met (Phm. 2). Surely the brethren who owned these houses also ate their meals in them.

Moreover, if we are going to ignore the true context of what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11, the passage would forbid one to ever eat anywhere else except in his own house. One
other point on this passage: Paul’s statement includes drinking as well as eating (11:22). Yet, we have never heard those who decry eating in the church building ever raise one word of opposition to the drinking fountain in each of their own church buildings. However, what applies to one applies to both in this passage.

What is the major thrust of 1 Corinthians 11? It is not the right or wrong use of a building, for there is no record of any first century church even owning a building. Rather, the apostle condemns the Corinthians’ profaning of the Lord’s supper, not of His building in this important chapter. They were combining the Lord’s supper with an ordinary meal. Additionally, those who had more were eating too much and not sharing it with those who had little and who then went away embarrassed and hungry (11:21-22). They could call this the “Lord’s supper,” but it was impossible for it to be so by the Lord’s reckoning (11:20). Paul then reminded them in very strong terms of the sacred, memorial purpose of the supper and the risk to their souls in failing to thus reverently observe it (11:23-29).

To duplicate the error of the Corinthian church described in this passage we would have to combine a fellowship meal with the observance of the Lord’s supper (which some liberal brethren have actually been promoting in recent years, incidentally). Then those who have more food would have to refuse to share their abundance with those who have much less. Paul does not address eating or not eating a physical meal in the church building in this passage. He addresses combining a fellowship meal with the Lord’s supper, thus corrupting the spiritual feast. Read verses 20 through 34 again and you cannot miss it.

[NOTE: I am indebted to Elvis Huffard for assembling some of the historical notes I have used in the foregoing article—DM.]

Denton, TX

Some years ago, a clergyman in Ireland took for his text one Sunday morning, “Search the Scriptures.” In the course of his sermon, he quoted a passage from John Wesley, to the effect that the Bible “sometimes had dust enough on its cover to write ‘damnation’ on it.” One of his hearers was struck by the remark, and on her return home repeated it. She was overheard by her brother, who had causelessly absent himself from church that day. The startling thought fixed itself in his heart like an arrow. He retired to his room, and took down his Bible. Looking at its dust-cover, and scarcely knowing what he did, he traced on it the appalling words of the preacher. He looked at them, read them again, and bursting into tears flung himself on his knees, and confessing his past sins, sought grace that he might prize it more in the future. The Bible became his companion, and to his dying hour he bore witness to its sustaining power, and his joy in the God it reveals.

See how much came from a seemingly random word, spoken eighty years before.

Author Unknown
(Firm Foundation, July 10, 1890)
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Paul Brantley
Dot Lambert    Horace Myrick
Ruby Bailey    Anthony Polnitz
Marilyn Hall    Al Flesher
Melvin Torrey
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Margaret Bruce (Pam Busch’s friend)
Anita Warr (Terri Myrick’s mother)

Please Remember
December 16
Visitation Group 2 will meet at 6:00 pm.

Directory Change
Tim Cozad’s new telephone number is: 390-1910. Please update your directory.

2014 Directory Update
If you have any changes to the 2014 Members’ Directory please let the office know by December 20.

Pantry Items Needed
Spaghetti & Spaghetti Sauce
Peanut Butter
Jelly

Psalm 14:1
“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.”
Jerusalem Hypocrites

David P. Brown

Ananias and Sapphira were active members of the early Jerusalem church (Acts 5). Please notice that I did not say that they were faithful, but that they were active (5:1-2). They were active hypocrites, and God killed them for their hypocrisy (5:5, 10). Yes, “God is love,” but He is also a just God (1 John 4:16; Rev. 15:3). I trust that some have not reached such a sinful frame of mind that they would accuse God of not having enough love in His dealing with this sinful pair. All would do well to remember Paul’s comment, “yea, let God be true, but every man a liar” (Rom. 3:4).

To be a hypocrite is to live a lie. The original word means an actor, i.e., one who acted out a part or pretended to be that which he was not. As hypocrisy relates to religion, Webster defines it as, “a feigning to be what one is not or to believe what one does not; esp: the false assumption of an appearance of virtue or religion” (Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, 1963).

Remember how that Ananias and Sapphira sold their land and gave some of what they received to the church for a worthy cause (Acts 4:32-37; 5:2). J. W. McGarvey, in his sermon on “The Jerusalem Church,” had these comments about Ananias and Sapphira’s contribution.

If the disciples at that age had been as demonstrative and irreverent in the Lord’s house as are some of our modern assemblies, I think there would have been general and very hearty clapping of hands at this deed (253).

McGarvey said this in the summer of 1893! It is, however, as fresh and applicable for today as if it had been uttered this morning! Both husband and wife wanted to be seen of men to be praised for their false generosity. This character flaw is typical of all hypocrites (Mat. 23:28). So it is that our Lord warned: “Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees,
which is hypocrisy” (Luke 12:1). Their lie to the God of glory brought about His swift and sure retribution (Acts 5:5, 10). McGarvey again comments:

What awful work this was; and how quickly done! No tears, no prayers, no delay. Nothing but solemnity and awe like that of the judgment day, and whose work was it? Not that of Peter; for he seems not to have known that Ananias was to fall dead; and although he knew that Sapphira would, he expressed no will of his own in the matter. It was the work of the great Head of the church, who thus exercised discipline in His church, so as to show those to whom it would afterward be entrusted, the promptness with which crying sins must be rebuked if the church would please Him. This is divine intimation on the subject of discipline. Shall we learn the lesson, or shall we continue, as so many churches have long been doing, to keep the ungodly in the church, under the vain delusion that we are exercising forbearance and mercy which heaven will approve, or under the idle impression that we have a better hope of saving a wicked man in the church, than if we cast him out? (254).

I am constantly made to marvel at how some things never change. You may be sure that if Ananias and Sapphira “agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord” before an inspired apostle (Acts 5:9), that in our age of worldly pride and “supposing that gain is godliness” (1 Tim. 6:5), the same sinfulness will run rampant in the church.

How many churches really want sermons preached that deal with the sins of the brethren? The present “positive preaching” concept would have us angry at God and Peter and cooing like doves over the poor unloved and mistreated Ananias and Sapphira. Beloved brethren, we must open our eyes to the sad state of affairs so many in the church have come to and set our hearts and lives to turn back to God. We must realize the importance in godly discipline and its place in the saving of souls (1 Cor. 5:4-5, 10-13; 2 Th. 3:6).

Work Cited


Spring, TX

We Come to Worship God!!!

Jess Whitlock

“The mighty Messiah speaks to a woman of Samaria in John 4. The woman was interested in the place of worship. The Jews worshipped only in Jerusalem (Deu. 12:5-11). The Samaritans worshipped “on this mountain” (John 4:20), i.e., Mount Gerizim. A tremendous change in worship is about to take place. The Son of God declares, “the hour is coming...” (John 4:23-24). Worship is a precious privilege for God’s child, and God’s children come together to worship Him!”

“We come to worship God!!!”

Jess Whitlock

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“We come to worship God!!!”

Jess Whitlock
and now is." Soon there would be a transition from the Old Law of Moses to the New Testament of Jesus Christ! The place would not be any designated building or structure. Where “true worshipers...worship the Father” results in true worship. True worshipers will worship only God the Father. We know there is true worship. Also, there is vain worship (Mat. 15:9; 2 John 9-11), and ignorant worship (Acts 17:23-31).

True worship is rendered to “the Father in spirit and truth.” The majority of worship in the religious world today is not offered in (1) spirit, or in (2) truth. For worship to be acceptable we must have the correct Object: God, the Father, and Creator (Gen. 1:1; Exo. 20:9-11). We must have the correct Attitude: in spirit, i.e., sincerely, the soul of man worships the Creator. Finally, we must have the correct Way: in Truth, i.e., in accordance with the Word of God (John 17:17; Col. 3:17). When we worship God as a “true” worshiper this will exclude human traditions, innovations, and the commandments of men! True worship is centered on God and not on man.

God still seeks true worshipers and those “who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” The true worshiper of God will worship Him from the very essence of his being (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7-ff; Isa. 45:18).

Let us worship God on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). We are to Sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), we are to Pray (Phi. 4:6), we are to partake of the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:20-ff), we are to give as prospered (16:1-2), and there will be the Teaching of His Word (Acts 2:42; 28:31). Let us worship God both in spirit and in truth!

Everybody needs a rule to work by, and here is a good one: The whole church, and the furtherance of Truth, is more important than one man, or a few, and more important than one congregation or a few. The Word is to be preached (2 Tim. 4:2), and all of it (Acts 20:27), and in a spirit of love of Truth (2 The. 2:10) and hatred for all false ways (Psa. 119:104, 128). To “let error pass” is to declare that one cares nothing for Truth, cares nothing for the souls of men, and cares not if souls are lost. No man calling himself a Gospel preacher can afford to be in that position. And, he cannot allow himself to be compromised in spirit and heart that some man or some men stand between him and the Truth! Our speaking and writing brethren, around the world, need to take this lesson most seriously!

Evant, TX

Bill Jackson (Deceased)
Sick
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher  Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Paul Brantley
Dot Lambert  Horace Myrick
Rubye Bailey  Anthony Polnitz
Marilyn Hall  Al Flesher
Melvin Torrey
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Margaret Bruce (Pam Busch’s friend)
Anita Warr (Terri Myrick’s mother)

Baptized
Heather Stark was baptized into Christ on December 15. Please keep her in your prayers and offer her encouragement.

Please Remember
December 25
Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

Directory Change
Al Flesher’s new telephone number is: 696-2247. Please update your directory.

2014 Directory Update
If you have any changes to the 2014 Members’ Directory please let the office know by December 20.

Pantry Items Needed
Spaghetti & Spaghetti Sauce
Peanut Butter
Jelly
What Ever Happened to Integrity?

Al Brown

What happened to the integrity which once characterized so many in this land? This is a question many people are asking who remember a time when deception and fraud were not as pervasive as they are today—a time when reverence for honesty and truth was the ideal, and a person’s word was as binding as any written contract.

Even signed contracts mean little today. Landlords are notorious for failing to live up to rental agreements, and tenants show the same cavalier attitude. Professional athletes, actors and singers, idolized and imitated by millions, show their contempt for integrity by signing a contract and then demanding to “renegotiate” it long before it terminates.

In making a decision about whether to be truthful or deceptive, fair or dishonest, just or unjust, men often consider the “trade-offs” involved. One without integrity will be honest if he feels it would be to his advantage, but he will as quickly, and without hesitation, decide to be dishonest if he thinks the price of honesty is too high. Such a person is obviously highly untrustworthy, unpredictable, and without moral scruples. He could never be expected to tell the truth unless he believed it was advantageous to him. As a result, no one can ever really be sure if he is telling the truth about anything.

Motivated by selfishness and grasping greed, vast numbers in casting off integrity have set themselves on a course of self-destruction. “The integrity of the upright shall guide them; But the perverseness of the treacherous shall destroy them” (Pro. 11:3). Who can measure the loss in self-esteem and mutual trust such attitudes have caused? How can the damage be calculated for those who trade their integrity for money or power or pleasure—whatever it may be that entices them to give up that which they know to be the best and strongest
Integrity has been defined as “soundness of moral principle and character, complete honesty and uprightness with no masking of intent.” Its opposite is hypocrisy, deceit, and fraud. If a person has integrity, he does not put on a false front or wear an artificial mask, as it were. He will be openly honest and worthy of complete trust in all that he says or does, as opposed to one who is deceptive or makes false claims. It obviously excludes lying, stealing, cheating, or any form of deception. David described a person of integrity in Psalm 15:1-4:

Jehovah, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, And speaketh truth in his heart; Nor doeth evil to his friend, Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor; In whose eyes a reprobate is despised, But who honoreth them that fear Jehovah; He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.

Would it not be wonderful if we lived in a world where people practiced integrity? Of course, men being what they are, this will never be a reality this side of eternity, but it can be better than it is—much better! You and I can practice integrity. We can have a high regard for honesty, and we can be scrupulously honest. We can be just, righteous, and fair in all our dealings with others and in all that we say. Your life, and mine, can be such that deception or subterfuge or hypocrisy will never stain our lives, and others will be able to trust us fully and completely.

In a word, we can live as our Savior did when He walked on this earth. He was transparently honest. He never tried to hide anything, for there was nothing in His life about which He was ashamed. Jesus never lied to anyone or cheated a single person. He not only never resorted to verbal gymnastics, or any other kind of deception, to mislead and confuse or to cover up what He meant, but He always clearly told the truth, regardless of the consequences. He was loving, fair, just, and righteous to all men, even though it brought on Him the hatred and scorn of those in positions of power who were devoid of such qualities.

In fact, if He had not been so determined to teach and practice those traits which are marks of integrity, He probably would not have gone to the cross. On the other hand, if He had stifled and compromised those principles, He would have never fulfilled His Father’s will as foretold in the prophets (cf. Isa. 11:1-5), and His own lack of integrity would have shattered the only perfect ideal men would ever have by which they could pattern their lives.

Integrity is always expensive. It cost the Son of God His life. It so aroused the envy and hatred of the hypocrites and deceivers around Him that they hung Him on a tree. Our Lord calls on us to follow His example and stand straight—walk straight—talk straight: “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, stand straight” (1 Cor. 16:13). The cost will be high for us too, but look at the reward: “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life” (Rev. 2:10).
Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: But thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: For thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back (Isa. 38:17).

King Hezekiah, upon his recovery from sickness and the point of death, wrote the above words. He stated that God had cast his sins behind His back. Setting forth the truth of God’s Word, that when God forgives, He forgets—that is He sees them no more.

Jeremiah, prophesying of the new covenant God would make with His people, stated: Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, That I will make a new covenant With the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers In the day that I took them by the hand To bring them out of the land of Egypt; Which my covenant they brake, Although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, And write it in their hearts; And will be their God, And they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: For they shall all know me, From the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: For I will forgive their iniquity, And I will remember their sin no more (Jer. 31:31-34).

Notice, that this is the new covenant; God would remember their sin “no more.”

The writer of Hebrews used this same passage in Hebrews 8:8-13. One difference between the Old and New covenants had to do with this very point—God forgiving and forgetting. To see this difference more clearly, we look at another passage in Hebrews. The writer wrote:

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year (Heb. 10:1-3).

Once “our” sins are cast behind the back of God, He remembers them no more. What a great blessing for us today. Beloved, if there is sin in your life—take care of it now. And, if you can, once taken care of, let it go yourself. Do not carry the guilt of it, because as far as God is concerned—it never happened.

Portsmouth, VA

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 (a free reader is available from www.adobe.com).
Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher    Marge Williams
Charles Williams Paul Brantley
Dot Lambert     Horace Myrick
Ruby Bailey     Anthony Polnitz
Marilyn Hall    Al Flesher
Melvin Torrey
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Lee Hammac (West Florida Hospital)
Margaret Bruce (Pam Busch’s friend)
Anita Warr (Terri Myrick’s mother)

Please Remember
Every Sunday
   Ladies’ Bible Class will meet at 5:00 pm, in the zone room.
December 25
   Sermons Video Series at 7:00 pm, in the auditorium.

Pantry Items Needed
Spaghetti & Spaghetti Sauce
  Peanut Butter
  Jelly

The Kingdom of Judah
In the south, the new kingdom of Judah comprised the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. It was a small kingdom, about 5,630 square km/3,500 square miles in area, one-third of the size of the kingdom of Israel. Rehoboam continued to rule the kingdom from its capital, Jerusalem (Nelson’s Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Bible 28).
Giving

Ken Chumbley

The giving of our means on the first day of the week is one of the five acts or avenues of worship. How does your giving show the sincerity of your worship?

When you give, do you just check your wallet or purse and see what is in there and then give a portion of that? When you give, do you give a portion of what you have left after you have taken care of your needs and wants? When you give, do you give a set amount that you determined years ago and that amount has not changes over the years even though your income has increased and the value of what you give has decreased because of inflation? When you give, have you previously determined the amount you are going to give based on what you have left after taxes, bill paying, and have some funds to use as you see fit? Or, when you give on the first day of the week, have you predetermined a proportionate amount, based on the total income (before taxes and bills), of what God has prospered you with?

Yet, all Christians have been given the same instructions in Scripture with respect to the giving of our means for the work of the Lord.

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).

Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; Praying us with much intreaty that
we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also. Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also (2 Cor. 8:1-7).

But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work (9:6-8).

We do not intend to police the giving of others, but as Christians we have an obligation to police our own giving. Further, we need to remember that God knows how we give. He knows whether or not we are giving as we have prospered and showing the sincerity of our love in this act or avenue of worship. We need to be honest with ourselves and if we have not been giving as we have been prospered we need to make the necessary changes in our giving now. Remember, we will have to answer to God at the judgment for our failure to do what He has commanded regarding our giving as well as in other matters.

Belvedere, SC

Placing Membership
Lee Moses

Sometimes questions arise as to whether it is Scripturally necessary, or even Scripturally permissible, to “place membership” with a congregation. A modern brother or sister may raise the objection: “I’m a member of the church of Christ, and that’s good enough for me.” What this person means is: “I am a member of the universal church of Christ, but I have no interest in serving in a local congregation.” Others seem to believe that placing membership is a denominational concept, rather than a Scriptural concept. However, the term simply means to identify oneself with a local congregation.

Please consider a few reasons why it is both Scripturally permissible and Scripturally necessary to place membership with a faithful church of Christ after leaving another.

1) In the New Testament, each first century Christian is understood to be a member of a particular congregation. The New Testament does speak of the universal church of Christ, into which the Lord adds the saved when they are baptized (Mat. 16:18; Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23). However, far and away the New Testament most often uses “church” to refer to the local congregation (Acts 14:27; 20:17; Rom. 16:1, 23a). Paul wrote “saints which are at Ephesus” (Eph. 1:1). Here it is expressed that he wrote to “saints,” or Christians—but were they not saints who were members of the local church at Ephesus? He wrote “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all
that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:2). “Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Th. 1:1). Whether Paul addressed “the saints at [whatever location]” or “the church at [whatever location],” he was addressing the same group.

(2) Members are responsible to function within the body (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4:16), and the body functions within each local congregation. There is no larger organizational structure of the church (compare with Phi. 1:1). If we do not function within a local church, we do not function within the church at all.

(3) Christians have the responsibility to submit to a local eldership (or men’s business meeting, where congregations do not have qualified men), while each eldership has the responsibility to oversee the flock they are among (Heb. 13:17; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2). If one never submits to an eldership, he never complies with his responsibility to submit to an eldership, and he hinders elders from performing their responsibility to oversee the flock.

(4) After Saul was converted and returned to Jerusalem, he knew he had to identify himself with the congregation there. This is why “he assayed to join himself to the disciples” there (Acts 9:26). There is no difference between this and what is sometimes called “placing membership.” If Saul saw the need to identify himself with a faithful congregation where he was living, why would we not have the same need? If one lives in an area where there are no faithful congregations, placing membership is obviously not an option. In such instances, one should again do what the first century Christians did, and establish congregations in those areas (compare with Acts 8:4ff; 11:19-21).

Otherwise, placing membership is both Scripturally permissible and Scripturally necessary.

Author Unknown
Sick

Remember in your prayers:
Bill Gallaher     Marge Williams
Charles Williams  Paul Brantley
Dot Lambert      Horace Myrick
Rubye Bailey     Anthony Polnitz
Marilyn Hall     Al Flesher
Melvin Torrey    Lee Hammac
Robbie Cravey (The Haven)
Margaret Bruce (Pam Busch’s friend)
Anita Warr (Terri Myrick’s mother)

Please Remember

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

January 6
Visititation Group 1 will meet at 6:00 pm.

Pantry Items Needed
Spaghetti & Spaghetti Sauce
Peanut Butter
Jelly

The Kingdom of Israel

Ten of the Israelite tribes set up a new kingdom, which they called the kingdom of Israel. Jeroboam I was appointed as king, and ruled from his capital of Shechem. He established new centres of worship at the cities of Dan and Bethel for this northern kingdom, which was now cut off from Jerusalem (Nelson’s Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Bible 28).