

Our purpose is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

"To continue speaking the truth in love," "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," "keeping the ordinances as delivered."

"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) "And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in." (Isa. 58:12).

VOL. LXVV

LEBANON, MISSOURI, JANUARY, 1996

NO. 1

KNOWING THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH AND THE SPIRIT OF ERROR

By Bennie Cryer

Several months ago congregations in the brotherhood received a letter from a congregation explaining their relationship with a certain brother who had conducted a meeting for them. Prior to their meeting they had questioned this brother regarding his relationship with brethren whom we commonly call "digressive". He apparently answered them to their satisfaction, so they "used" him in their meeting. However, later, upon learning additional information about this brother, they apologized for using him because he "was not totally honest" with them. Apparently the brother in question had withheld certain information about his erroneous beliefs that would have precluded their using him in their meeting. Unfortunately, they had not asked him the right questions. So, it would seem, the preacher willingly kept his counsel to himself and let this congregation use him in the work. They then, upon learning the truth, sent the letter mentioned above in which they explained that the preacher had not been "totally honest" with them. Recently, I also received a letter from this same brother that had seemed to be "not totally honest" with that congregation. In it he exhorted that we ought not to be suspicious of one another. To this I wholeheartedly agree. However, I would add the stipulation that we ought not to conduct ourselves in ways that foster suspicion. Love demands this spirit and action on our part. In the beginning of a chapter (I John 4) about love the "apostle of love" exhorts believers about matters and situations similar to the ones created by the brother in the above example. To those that loved and were loved he wrote:

BELIEVE NOT EVERY SPIRIT.

Whether we like it or not there is a spirit of truth, and a spirit of error (I John 4:6). If I willfully withheld information from a congregation about my beliefs in order to persuade them to use me in their work, I would be manifesting a spirit of error. Especially is this true if I knew that the information the congregation is seeking would preclude their use of me because their collective conscience would be violated. In I John 4:6 the disposition a teacher has represents

the teacher himself. It speaks of his disposition toward truth or toward error. A teacher might not practice what he really believes but this disposition must be brought out to protect "the beloved". So, the apostle of love continues verse one by instructing them to

TRY THE SPIRITS

The metallurgist will "try" the metal to see whether or not it is the real thing. He will "try" it to determine its purity. This was necessary because sometimes metals have the appearance of genuineness and purity when, in reality, they are spurious and alloyed. Some in the church seem to think we are not loving if we "try" them. Jesus, who is characterized by unlimited love, commended the church at Ephesus because they "tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars" (Revelation 2:2). The trying was done by one that had the gift of discerning the spirits (I Corinthians 12:10), or by instructions recognized as coming from an apostle (I John 4:6). Was the congregation in our example wrong in "trying" a brother and finding him not "totally honest" with them?

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

In Galatians 5:22-23 the characteristics of the fruit of the spirit are mentioned. One of these characteristics is faith. Faith is used here in the sense of trustworthiness. A brother who manifests the fruit of the spirit is one who can be trusted. A brother who conducts himself in a suspicious manner is not manifesting the right "fruit", and should not complain when

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PUBLICATION NOTICE

Since we will be out of the USA for a time we ask that you send all materials intended for publication to Ronny Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO, 65808 until after February 10, 1996 at which time you may resume sending to us in California as usual. My thanks to Ronny for his excellent work with the paper. Without him and the editors my task would be difficult indeed. --Don L. King.

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Editorial

AVOID THEM

By Homer L. King

Note: It is truly amazing how little discipline one encounters among us these days. In some places and among some brethren it seems that no matter what sin has been committed, fellowship will continue right on. This is shameful! God cannot be well-pleased when those who should be kept on the bench are not only called on but even allowed to occupy an honored position or be allowed to lead the church into further wrong. We need to remember that compromise on matters of faith is sin. We are told to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3) We must do this even if the church is divided. We cannot compromise where the Lord has spoken. The following article appeared in the September, 1936 Old Paths Advocate by Homer L. King. We believe it is still true today.-Don L. King

"Now I beseech you brethren, mark them who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:17,18). "And we beseech you brethren, to know them who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you" (1 Thessalonians 5:12). "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily (privately) shall bring in damnable heresies. And many shall follow in their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of"(2 Peter 2:1,2).

From the above and such like quotations, it is plain to be seen that the Lord foreknew the danger of unfaithful, disloyal, unsound teachers, hence gave us plenty of warning, that we might avoid many troubles and divisions. However, in the face of all these plain and solemn warnings-yea commands, many of the so-called loyal churches are continuing to encourage, sanction, receive and employ unsound and disloyal teachers and preachers. This has been and still is one of the greatest handicaps, with which the sound brethren have to contend, in restoring and maintaining the Apostolic Order in the work and worship of the church. If the so-called churches, especially the leaders and elders of those churches, would cooperate with the sound preachers as they should, much of the trouble could be eliminated. Thus making it possible for the evangelists to devote all their time to the noble work of restoring the Ancient Order and of sowing the "seed of the kingdom" into new fields.

One of the most discouraging and vexing experi-

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: Is Jesus Christ equal to God? If so, what does Mt. 28:18; I Cor. 15:24-28; John 14:28 and other passages that deal with Christ's submission to God the Father mean? (MO)

Answer: The fact that Christ was God (deity) and was in eternity the equal of God the Father, is affirmed by Paul in Phil. 2:5-8. The passage reads "Having this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men..." From this we learn that Christ was (1) originally in the form of God i.e. He possessed a divine nature. He was a deity; (2) He was equal with God; (3) He did not regard this equality with God as a "thing to be grasped," i.e. "held on to as an improper assumption," He was entitled to it as the equal of God; (4) He voluntarily surrendered His position and came to the earth that he might serve as our High Priest. This being the case, how do we explain such passages as Jno. 14:28 "Ye heard how I said to you, I go away, and I come unto you. If ye loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I go unto the Father: for the Father is greater than I." The teaching of this verse is that Jesus will soon leave this earth and return to His Father and the glory He enjoyed from eternity. His disciples should have rejoiced at this prospect, instead of being downcast about it. While on earth Christ had been in a subordinate position to the Father. This would end when he returned to His former glory. (Phil. 2:5-11) Those passages that state "...my Father is greater than I..." "I came not to do my own will but the will of my Father..." "I proceed from the Father and not the Father from me..." and the Father knew some things that He did not, all refer to His incarnate state in which He voluntarily accepted a subordinate role, and not, to His eternal state. The

passage in Matthew should be understood in the same way. All those who deny the equality of Christ with the Father and make Him to be nothing more than a created being are of the anti-Christ. (I Jno. 2:20-22) The suggested passage in I Cor. 15:28 reads as follows "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son himself be subject unto him, that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." The question here is, how can Christ be subject to the Father, and at the same time be equal with him. Barnes seems to have clarified the situation best when he remarked "Christ, the Son of God, in his divine nature, as God, shall never cease to reign. As Mediator, he may resign his commission and his peculiar office, having made an atonement, having recovered his people, having protected and guided them to heaven. Yet as one with the Father; as the "Father of the everlasting age" (Isa. 9:6), he shall never cease to reign." Barnes takes the position along with most other commentators that Christ will be subject to the Father in the sense of laying down his delegated authority and ceasing to exercise his mediatorial reign. There is no indication that the second person in the trinity will be subject to the first but that "the Incarnate Son, the Mediator, the man that was born and that was raised from the dead, and to whom this wide dominion had been given, should resign that dominion, and that the government should be re-assumed by the Divinity as God." The phrase "that God may be all in all" is understood by Whitby, Hammond and others to mean "the Godhead, the Divine nature, the Divinity, consisting of the three persons, without respect to any peculiar office or kingdom." Hence these passages actually affirm the equality of the Godhead in eternity, rather than teaching that one of the persons is inferior to the other. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808)

SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU

By Kevin W. Presley

The city of Corinth derives its name from its association with the sins of fornication and prostitution. They that made up the Corinthian congregation came from an immoral and godless background. We know this because one of the major thrusts of this first letter is to admonish these "babes in Christ," to keep themselves from pollutions of the flesh. In I Corinthians 6:9-11, Paul listed the works of the flesh and then reminded them, "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." The Word of God is so very plain about that things that will cause a man to be lost and the imperative nature of the removal of such things from the life

of a Christian. The Bible condemns such things as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, covetousness, lasciviousness, drunkenness and idolatry. All of these, as well as a number of other, the apostle identifies as works of the flesh. They are vices of the devil wherein he binds men to do his sinister will. No child of God should ever think he can participate in such conduct and go to Heaven. Not only is the Bible clear about the sinfulness of such, but is equally specific regarding their penalty. In Galatians 5:21, Paul said, "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Revelation 21:8 says, "But the fearful and unbelieving and the abominable and murderers and whoremongers and sorcerers and idolators and all li-

ars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." However, abstaining from sin can be easier said than done. Sin has an enticing effect upon those it preys upon. It is alluring and addictive. Solomon said in Proverbs 5:22, "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins." We are continually bombarded by temptations of evil. However, the Bible not only assures us that the child of God can overcome such temptation but reveals things that will aid us in living and pure and holy life.

CHANGE ATTITUDE TOWARD SIN

The scriptures plainly teach that the actions of man are determined by the condition of his heart. Solomon said in Proverbs 23:7, "For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he..." "For from within, out of the hearts of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride foolishness: all these evil things come from within and defile the man," Jesus said in Mark 7:21-23. As long as we compromise the stigma of sin within our minds, living a pure life will always be an uphill battle. When one surveys the present condition of our world, it becomes easy to see that men are caught up in sinful living to the highest (or lowest) degree. But we must affirm that men are not helpless. Men engage in habitual immoral conduct because they want to. It is an evil desire within the heart of man that drives him to succumb to sin's allurements. Jesus not only called it a desire, but a love for the works of unrighteousness. John 3:19 says, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." The word "loved" is the same Greek word as used in verse 16 to describe the compelling love that God had for man. Just as a love for the well-being of mankind drove, compelled and demanded that God send his Son to Earth, so that same love when directed toward evil is powerful. It blinds the mind of man to all of sin's danger and weakens his resistance to temptation. That is why it is absolutely essential that a child of God be such as have "crucified the flesh the the affections and lusts," Galatians 5:24. Paul said in Romans 6:6, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." That means much more than just making a list of "thou shalt nots," and trying to abstain from the things on our list. That is precisely why some never become successful at Christianity and over and over again deal with the same sins in their lives. Listen to Paul in Romans 12:2. "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." Bringing about a change in conduct begins with a TOTAL transformation of heart and mind. We must simply allow that love for evil things to be replaced by a hatred for such that is just as strong. At one time in his life, David

could not be the sweet singer of Israel. He allowed temptation to drive him to lust, adultery, murder and deceit. However, it was a victorious David who later wrote in Psalm 101:3, "I hate the work of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave unto me." Until we wipe the images of pleasure and wantonness away and allow the true picture of sin to be exposed, we will fail. Until we realize that sin is the fire that scorches the hand that tampers with it, that it is the ever-deceptive mirage in the desert of life that always brings disappointment, that it is the fountainhead of all bitterness, sickness, pain, death and despair, we will always be void of any real determination to crucify the flesh and its evil works.

AVOID EVIL ALLUREMENTS

Much could be said of those things that bring about temptation. Let me simply state that oftentimes compromise with evil begins before an overt work of the flesh takes place. We compromise with evil when we place ourselves in an environment where sin is bred. We have been told for years and years that Christians should not be found in dancehalls, honkytonks, pool halls, movie theaters and bars because they damage our influence. I certainly agree with that premise. However, the overriding issue to me ins the influence THEY have on us. A young person doesn't have to actually participate in dancing to make going to a school dance a compromise of his Christianity. More and more of our teenagers are being found in such compromising places as school proms, etc. More and more are going to the movies. I know some who go to parties where getting drunk is the whole idea, yet they claim they don't drink. Come on! Is it any wonder we are hearing so many reports as of late of fornication/illegitimacy and drinking parties even during church meetings? Another temptation presents itself when young people spend too much time alone in compromising places. Let me state for the record, point blank, that unmarried young men and women HAVE NO BUSINESS in one another's motel rooms all alone at "the big meetings." Being in one another's houses, apartments or cars all alone at every unspeakable hour is simply asking for trouble. 1 Peter 2:11 says, "Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." Paul warned in 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil."

WATCH WHAT GOES INTO YOUR MIND

Philippians 4:8 says, "Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things." Anymore, it is almost impossible to watch fifteen minutes of television, listen to most any type of secular lyric of pick up and read most any magazine without openly disobeying the command of Paul. We noted about that our actions are dominated by the content of our mind. It is equally true that the content of our mind is determined by what goes into our mind. Watch-

ing movies, TV sitcoms, soap operas and talk shows where every other word is vulgar and insinuating, where every type of immorality and perversion is not only insinuated but openly portrayed and applauded, is inimical to the state of our mind. The old adage is true: "Garbage in equals garbage out." Is it really possible to think on things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, virtuous and praiseworthy and be a fan of such lewd "art" as what is presented by the modern MTV culture? Country music is not much of a source for wholesome thought, either. We need to sit up and pay attention to the disastrous effects such modern media is having upon some in the Lord's body. David said in Psalm 101:3, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes." What wisdom we can glean from such words! In conclusion, it is high time we wage an

even greater war on sin. As time goes on, "evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse." As our society becomes even more desensitized by the power of sin, the resolve should grow within everyone of us within the Lord's kingdom, from the young to the old, to purge the church of her worldliness, compromise and immorality that he might "present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that is should be holy and without blemish." Once again, Paul said, "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. May we overcome sin, that the same might be said of us. P.O. Box 2398, Ada, OK 74820, (405)436-1331.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

By Billy D. Dickinson

There are occasions, I suppose, when all of us have either thought or uttered the following words: "Now that's interesting!" Let's face it, we live in an interesting world where man's capricious behavior and inconsistency is a constant source of amazement. That being the case, one does not have to look very far to find incidents, attitudes, and religious dogma that produces astonishment in thoughtful people. Even our Lord at times reacted that way toward what He saw in the lives of people, for Mark 6: 6 declares, "And he marveled because of their unbelief." In this article we will notice some items gleaned from several sources that everyone should find interesting. Please consider them carefully and see if they don't provoke in you thoughtful study and contemplation.

The first item appeared under the caption, "Armageddon date not set," in the Houston Chronicle on Nov. 19, 1995: "LONDON— Armageddon has been delayed and the end of the world is no longer nigh, say Jehovah's Witnesses. Charles Russell, founder of the movement that now boasts 5 million members, first forecast the world would end in 1914. Two more 'false alarms' occurred in 1925 and 1975 and now the movement has decided not to give any more exact forecasts on Judgment Day, when it believes only its followers will be saved. 'We do not need to know the exact timing of events,' senior church figures said in a decision reported by Independent Sunday newspaper." Now that's interesting! Perhaps the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society has finally decided that Jesus said what He meant and He meant what He said in Matt. 24:36, when He plainly declared that no man knows the day or the hour of His return— "not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." In fact, Christ said in Mark 13: 32 that He didn't even know the time of His second coming, for this is something the Father has reserved for Himself to know. In light of our Saviour's teaching on the subject, it's amazing that

men would claim to know what Jesus said He didn't know and wasn't privy to. Yet, there have always been men who were foolish enough to set a particular date for our Lord's return; one by one they have been exposed as false prophets.

I have a booklet in my possession entitled, "88 Reasons Why The Rapture Could Be In 1988." Think about it! How could a man come up with 88 reasons for something to occur and not one of them be right? In his very first "reason" why 1988 could be the year of the so-called "Rapture," the author argues that while we may not be able to see the day of our Lord's return approaching, he says "this does not preclude or prevent the faithful from knowing the year, the month, and the week of the Lord's return." To such an assertion I would like to pose an obvious question. If we're suppose to know the exact year, the month, and even the week of our Lord's return, why didn't this man know it? If the Bible is so specific on the exact time of the end of the world, why do these men keep embarrassing themselves by making one false prediction after another? The answer is obvious. Jesus said, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." That ought to settle it. In fact, it should have settled it for Jehovah's Witnesses a long time ago!

The second item comes from the pen of Juan Rodriquez, JR. Bro. Juan is one of our fine preachers in old Mexico; he has been a good friend of mine for many years. Juan attended the debate we hosted in April of 1995 on the issues of cups and classes which took place in West Monroe, LA. In a 1995 report on the work in Mexico, after expressing how much he enjoyed attending the discussion, Bro. Juan wrote the following: "One night, after one of the sessions, there were several digressive black women outside the building, complaining and telling me that there was prejudice in our congregations in the States. That the

'white brethren' would not participate of the same cup after them, because of the color. I told them that was not the case, that I have been worshiping with brethren in the States for many years and that I have never sensed that prejudice. In fact, I told them, I'm supposed to leave tomorrow for Dallas and will not worship in this congregation, but if you come and worship with us, I'll stay and we all will participate of one cup. After this, they kept quiet for a while and then they said, 'Well that's fine, but we wouldn't drink out of the same cup, because, see, there are a lot of germs and diseases here in this country.' After that, I told them, 'Yes, I know where the prejudice is. You are the ones who have the prejudice.'

The purpose of this item is not to show that black people are prejudice against white people, but to illustrate how we often come up with excuses to explain away the word of God and to get around what it teaches. Yes, we often say one thing while we really mean something else. Many are prejudiced against the use of one cup because they don't want to drink after someone else. However, when it's all said and done, the Bible still says in Matt. 26:27, "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it." Regardless of the fear, excuses, or human reasoning that drive men to set aside this Divine pattern, Matt. 26:27 will still read that way in

the day of judgment!

The final item comes from an article that appeared in The News-Star (Monroe, LA) on Sept. 5, 1995. The article was entitled, "Some hope, pray for merger of various Baptists groups." The article discussed how there is division among Baptist churches; some, for example, belong to the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc., and others belong to the National Baptist Convention of America, Inc. The article explained, "The conventions split in 1915 over a dispute that centered not on theology, but on ownership of the convention's publishing house." The item of interest is how one preacher is quoted as saying that he sees some advantages to having two groups: "Sometimes I think that God separates us so that we can have differences of opinion. There's a need for some competitive spirit. It makes us do better."

It's amazing how people can find ways to justify what the Bible specifically condemns. When God's people are divided, this is not a situation that is pleasing to God. It is contrary to what Paul commands in 1 Cor.1: 10; it is also in opposition to what Christ prayed for in John 17:20-21. Furthermore, the Lord doesn't want His people to be in competition one with another, but rather we should be "fellow-workers" (Col. 4:11) in His blessed kingdom.—215 Forest Hills Dr. West Monroe, LA. 71291.

KNOWING THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH AND THE SPIRIT OF ERROR

Continued from page 1

people try him. Furthermore, if a brother is manifesting the correct characteristics and has nothing to hide he will gladly show his trustworthiness by allowing

his brethren to know his true beliefs and practices.

I have written these words, used these examples and scriptures, in hopes of helping brethren in local congregations to avoid using anyone who might prove to be a spiritual embarrassment to them.—2340 Saguinetti Ln., Stockton, CA 95206

AVOID THEM

Continued from page 2

ences of my evangelistic work has been after I have warned the brethren of the danger of using and allowing unsound men to take an active part in the work and worship of the church, to be called upon to come to their rescue to, if possible, settle and straighten out the troubles, divisions, and difficulties as a result of allowing unsound men to teach in said church. "Experience is a dear teacher, but some will learn by no other," it seems. Surely, these words are in order here: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." (Hosea 4:6) "Where there is no vision the people perish; but he that keepeth the law, happy is he." (Proverbs 29:18) Are we "Ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth"? If there ever was a time that we need men to take the "oversight of the church" who have "vision" (foresight, judgment) and knowledge of God it is now. My heart has been sickened a number of times, when I have observed that the leaders of the church would allow or call upon just anyone, who may pose as a preacher or teacher, to teach the congregation or to serve at the

Lord's table. This, too, without any knowledge of whether the man was sound or unsound, clean or unclean.

So long as the brethren will take no more interest in the welfare of the congregation than to do as the above described, the congregations, over which they have the oversight (?) will never make much progress. For such practice will keep them always torn into contending factions and fighting among themselves. Do you want the congregation to become and to remain sound, brethren? Then remember that the stream does not rise above its source, nor the congregation above its teachers and leaders. As your leaders, teachers and preachers are, so will your congregation be.

"What shall I do," someone inquires, "when we have a preacher or teacher present, who is not quite sound?" Let him be a good listener until, if ever, he declares his loyalty. The same is true of those whom you do not know. "They will not say anything about our differences in their teaching," says one. How do you know? If not publicly, they will privately and besides you are not obeying the command given by Paul, viz., "mark them." (Romans 16:17,18) --OPA September 1936

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Do you need a silver plated communion cup with a matching lid and plate? These sets are made in the USA by a company that stands behind their workmanship. The sets come with a 24, 28 or 32 oz. cup. The company asked for a 3 month delivery. They will also resilver an older cup or set if any should desire that.

We can now supply along with the sets made in the USA, a set with similar appearance from Mexico for a much less price. They look beautiful but I am not sure how well they will endure. They may be just as good.

We have on hand one set with a 32 oz. cup from the USA, and two sets with 28 oz. cups from Mexico. If you need either of these you may call (706)882-1114 or write to Alton B. Bailey, 909 Truitt Ave., LaGrange, GA 30240.

100 YEARS AND STILL GOING

By the time your eyes fall upon this, we will be into 1996. Last year was a sort of landmark year for the church meeting in Burkhart, MO. They have been meeting for 100 years. It was indeed a time of celebration for the congregation, which speaks to all the need of faithfulness to Christ. There have been plenty of trials and set-backs, but by always pressing onward they have overcome. The fall meeting was determined to set in the minds of older and younger members the need of continuing to serve the Lord. It was decided that a little songs book be compiled containing songs of at least 100 years age, with a few things about the church, a list of present and those members that have been called on, a few pictures, a list of preachers who have been there over the years, and other things of interest. The title of the booklet was taken from a hymn known to all of us, FAITH OF OUR FATHERS. On Friday night November 24th a sermon was preached on this theme, and later around 10:30 we assembled again and sang and various brethren talked about the past, present and future of the church and the work which needed emphasis. The memories of the meeting will linger in the hearts of all present and without doubt will be pasted to another generation, who perhaps will be present at the meeting which will mark 200 years. --Barney Owens

THANK YOU

Thank you to all the congregations and everyone that have helped my son both financially and in prayers. Shelby Leroy is still in the hospital, but we think his condition has improved some. Please continue to pray for him.--Shelby Taulblee, Scottsville, KY.

OPPOSED TO CARNAL WARFARE

The men and women whose names are listed below wish their opposition to carnal warfare and participation in the military made public for future reference. They are convinced the Word of God forbids it and they are, therefore, conscientiously opposed. They have asked that their names be so listed. 1. Aaron N. Risener, 101 N. Greenville Ave C-81, Allen, TX 75002 2. Shawn D. Risener, P.O. Box 6032, Waco, TX 76706-6032 3. Michael Paul Pricer,

Lorena, TX 4. Patrick Steven Pricer, Lorena, TX 5. Kip Brandon Smith, 6466 Ridgecrest Rd #1022, Dallas, TX 75231 6. Andy Trent, 518 W. Beverly Dr., Clovis, CA 93612 7. Jason Spradley, 1222 W. 31st, Houston, TX 77018 8. Damon Wilson, 4514 W. Echo Ln, Glendale, AZ 85302 (Note: the following names were sent with no address but are all from the Joplin, MO area): 10. Bobby McNeill (11) Brandi Herman (12) Matt Howard (13) Stephen Middick (14) Tiffany Middick 15.--Brian G. Stone, 3901 Castlehill Ct., Arlington, TX 76016.

TENT WANTED

The Lebanon congregation in Mo. is interested in obtaining a tent with seating capacity of at least 35 people. If you know of any for sale or one that can be used for 1996, please contact Doug Hawkins, HCR 3 Box 203-C, Rocky Mount, MO 65072 (314)964-0013.

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

WILSON-HUNTER--On October 28, 1995 Chadwick Alan Wilson and Amanda Renee Hunter were united in marriage at the beautiful old building where the church at Harrodsburg, IN meets. Chad is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Wilson of Glendale, AZ. Amanda is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Hunter of Bedford, IN. The couple will reside and worship in Glendale, AZ. We trust that God's word will direct this new home. It was my honor to perform the ceremony.--Rod Wilson.

OUR DEPARTED

Townsley--Sister Annis Townsley was born March 4, 1916 in Langley, Arkansas and left this life August 28, 1995 at Tulsa, OK. She was a faithful member of the 11th St. congregation in Tulsa. Annis was a godly example in her life. Her daughter, Pearl Stevens, is a devoted christian. It was my privilege to baptize into Christ, Pearl's daughter, Brittany, a few years ago. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." Bro. Rylan Nichols and I attempted to speak words of comfort and hope to the good crowd of mourners.--James A. Hickey.

Stephens--Ora Edith Stephens was born December 2, 1902 to William and Ollie Hanna in Pine, Indian Territory. She passed away Thursday, November 2, 1995 at Purcell Municipal Hospital at the age of 92. She married Roy E. Stephens on May 12, 1928 at Lindsay, OK. Sister Stephens assisted her husband on their dairy southwest of Washington from 1946 until 1973 when they retired and moved to Washington. She was preceded in death by her husband Roy, two brothers, Charlie and Edra Hanna, and two sisters, Lera Wasson and Jo Wasson. She is survived by: four sons, R.D. and Ralph of Washington, Alex of Blanchard, and John of Lubbock, Texas; three sisters, Monita Odom, Alex Sorrell, Mary Wasson, all of New Mexico; ten grandchildren, twenty-one great grandchildren, and one great great granddaughter. Sister Stephens was a faithful member of the Church of Washington. It was an honor for me to speak a few words of comfort at the funeral service.--Carl M. Johnson.

Meents--Pearl Cleo Meents was born Dec. 27, 1908 in Vertigress, OK, a daughter of John Marion and Ora Ella King Triplett. Her soul took its heavenly flight before dawn on Thanksgiving morning, Nov. 23, 1995 in her home near Phillipsburg, MO. She is survived by her husband of sixty-seven years, Ralph, of the home; one son, Donnie; two daughters: Nadine Richardson and Brenda Gardner, all members at Lee's Summit and residing in the community; two brothers: Kenneth Triplett and her twin Earl Triplett of the same community; one sister, Ruby Ruebush of Springfield; seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Like Phebe (Rom. 16:1-2) she "hath been a succourer of many". Pearl and Ralph "kept all the preachers" who visited Lee's Summit for many years. They supplied bro. Stewart and bro. Gay with "fat hogs" through the lean winters. Pearl purchased the pews for the Harrison church building out of an inheritance she had received, and I only learned of this after the funeral. Her memorial services were held November 25th at Holman Funeral Home in Lebanon, MO, Mark Triplett led the beautiful singing and Ronny Wade assisted me in the services. Pearl obeyed the gospel around 1924 or 25, the church was the center of her life, she had a wonderful sense of cheer and humor, was loved by both young and old, kept her wits until the end, and died, being "old and full of days".--Jimmie C. Smith.

COOK--Leo Cook, 3218 Seymour Rd., of Wichita Falls, TX was born April 15, 1928 at Wichita Falls, and departed this life Nov. 23, 1995. He was married to Eva Nell Clements, Nov. 12, 1953. He is survived by his wife, of the home; one son, Kevin, Whitesboro, TX; 2 brothers, Clovis, Lebanon, MO, and Jirl, Wichita Falls; 5 sisters, Novelle Odom, Juanita Woodruff, Estelline Voyles, Johnnie Harmon, and Delle Kirtley, all of Wichita Falls; and 4 granddaughters. Memorial services were conducted at Lunn's Colonial Chapel in Wichita Falls with Wayne Fussell speaking and the writer assisting. Charles Goodgion led congregational singing. Leo was a member of the Garden's Edge congregation and was respected in his home city for his abiding interest in young people and was well-known over the brotherhood for his singing ability. A large crowd attended the services. Burial was at Highland Cemetery in Iowa Park.--Johnny Elmore.

Webster--Sister Irene Webster was born on February 6, 1909 at Pattonville, Texas and passed from this life November 8, 1995. She was married to Oliver Webster who, with seven of her brothers and sisters and her son Ricky Don, preceded her in death. She leaves to mourn her passing, her daughter Peggy Norris of Hugo, OK, one sister, two grandchildren and four great grandchildren. Baptized into Christ in her teens, Sister Webster was a member of the church at Paris, TX and had lived in the Paris and Hugo area all of her life. She had a great impact on those she came in contact with. She was a strong woman, no complainer, and when illness overtook her, she showed great strength and endurance, always concerned with the welfare of others. She was a concerned

mother, sister, and friend. She would often call her sisters, relatives and friends "just wanting to know about the folks ... are the folks all right?" She saw to it that flowers were sent when needed and visited the sick. She leaves a void, her place is empty, she will be missed. Members of the Paris and Arpelar congregations sang some of the songs she loved so well. At her request, it was this writers privilege to speak words of comfort from the God of all comfort's Holy Word, to offer words of warning to the disobedient and words of encouragement to the faithful. One day, and perhaps not so far away, we too will be brought low by the chilling hand of death, we too will be called to appear before God, and then the only thing that will matter will be whether or not we have been faithful. Sister Webster was laid to rest in the Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Hugo, Oklahoma.--William St. John.

Bray--Sister Pauline Ellie Bray was born on April 2, 1925 in what is now known as Broken Bow, Oklahoma. She passed from this life very early Lord's Day morning, July 23, 1995. Sister Bray had lived all her life in McCurtain County and was a faithful member of the church of Christ meeting at Golden, Oklahoma. A loving and devoted mother, she was preceded in death by her husband, Lloyd L. Bray. She was survived by her mother, three daughters, three sons, three brothers, three sisters, twelve grandchildren, and three great grandchildren. The record books of this world may never prominently record her name, they may never record her bravery, her heroic feats, her sacrifices, her dedication, her devotion, her love — but the books of heaven have surely recorded her life. Sister Bray was faithful, dependable, only a very serious ailment would keep her from the assembly. She always put her family first. Shortly before her passing she said, "Don't cry for me, be happy for me." — She felt sure that the end was nearing and she was concerned about her children's happiness. She always listened, she was always there, and she was always strong for her family. How often she sought to protect her children, to shield them from the pains that this life brings, to protect them from sorrow and sadness. She loved her family and often talked to them about the church and the importance of obedience. She loved the Book and was often seen reading it. Sometimes at night, when she was hurting and couldn't sleep, she would get up and read her Bible and pray. What a wonderful example she left. I am better for having known Sister Bray, and it was my privilege, at her request, to speak words of warning to the disobedient and words of comfort to the faithful. Congregational singing was led by John Tidmore and Mike Knox. Sister Bray was laid to rest in the Watkins Memorial Cemetery at Oak Hill, Oklahoma.--William St. John.

Watson--Onetia Marie Watson was born February 6, 1939 in Bennington, Oklahoma and died October 25, 1995 in Live Oak, California, near Yuba City. All of her family are faithful members of the church from nearby congregations. Onetia is survived by her mother Irene Mings of the Olivehurst congregation; 2 daughters: Linda

Perrin of the Placerville Congregation, Debbie Hayes of the Yuba City congregation, and one son Rodney Watson, of the Redding congregation. Also, three brothers: Sam, Steve, and Chuck DeWitt of the Yuba City congregation and four sisters: Pat Kido, Virginia DeWitt, and Karen Herota of the Yuba City Congregation and Sandy DeWitt of the Olivehurst congregation.

Her son, Rod, had me read this statement to the very large crowd at her funeral: "Our mother was diagnosed with cancer in 1981. Her doctor, using man's wisdom, gave her six months to live. What he failed to take into account were the hundreds of prayers many of you offered with us to God on her behalf. Because your prayers touched the graciousness of God, she lived for fourteen more years."

Onetia was not idle during these years. She was an Elder's wife up to the time of her husband's death in 1989. She worked hard to be a good example to the congregation in her consistent worship, manner of life and study habits. She was a student of the bible and often studied with others privately. She worked among the younger women as long as she was able helping them to be good wives and mothers. Onetia wrote a small pamphlet some years ago based on her experience as a wife and mother, "The Wise Woman." It is filled with much wisdom. She also was a poet, writing over 100 poems that will be published later. She selected a wonderful one to be read at her service.

Since their Dad's death in 1989 Rod, Linda, and Debbie have visited their mother every week they weren't providentially hindered. Monday night was their night to eat and visit with their mother. Onetia loved those visits, and I am sure her children will never regret the countless hours they spent together.

Onetia was a wonderful friend to my family and I treasured our visits. It is impossible in such a short report to convey what a wonderful woman she was. Suffice it to say, heaven is much dearer to me, knowing that such a wonderful friend will be there. To prepare the sermon for her funeral, I just selected a few things that were dear to her, and things that she valued. Her life made my task simple, it was like picking from an abundance of beautiful roses in a bountiful garden.--Gregory P. Gay.



Edward Williamson, 219 W. Hwy B, Raymondville, MO 65555, (417) 457-6374, November 25, 1995-- Greetings to all those in Christ. Please make note of my new address, (same location, 911 address). At the Bendavis, MO congregation we have been blessed recently with two very good meetings. Here at Bendavis, we have had two baptisms in November. We thank God for the increase. Recently, I have been able to hear Terry Baze at Houston. May the peace of Christ be upon all.

Alton Bailey, 909 Truitt Ave, LaGrange, GA 30240 (706)882-1114. Dec. 10, 1995--By the time this report appears in the OPA 1995 will have already passed into history. It was a good year for which we are thankful. My meetings last year through out the country was encouraging to me, to see good crowds and good interest almost everywhere. It was exciting to see favorable results along the way with both baptisms and restorations. The church here in LaGrange continues to do well. We went through a period of a lot of sickness in the congregation; however, they are all much better now. Florence and I look forward to the preacher's study in Arlington, TX the last part of December. My meetings begin in 1996 in Arpelar, OK Jan 17-21, Donnellon, FL Feb. 16-18, Baton Rough, LA March 15-17, Texarkana, TX March 20-24, Broken Bow, OK April 21-28. Should you be in these areas, it would be good to have you present at these services. We solicit your prayers.

Kevin W. Presley, P.O. Box 2398, Ada, OK 74820 (405)436-1331. November 9--In the beginning of November, it was my pleasure to hold a meeting at West Monroe, LA. This was my first meeting in this area. I enjoyed being with the brethren there at West Monroe so very much. They are conservatively minded and love to hear the truth preached. Such congregations are becoming fewer in these times in which we live. I made my home with Royce and Mary Garman. I have learned to love and appreciate them greatly. It was also good to be associated with the Billy Dickenson family, and to become better acquainted with them. It was a pleasure to preach at home recently. It will be the last time I have such an opportunity for a few months. Toward the last of November, I preached a five day meeting at McGregor, TX. I was made to feel at home with hospitality of Wayne and Jean McKamie. Getting to visit with them was a real treat. I so much appreciate these brethren's long-time love for the preaching of gospel, and their stand for truth, which they have openly demonstrated in recent months. The meeting closed with two confessions and a restoration. It was a pleasure to have Bro. Lynwood Smith come over and spend the Lord's Day with us at McGregor. He happened to be in the area, and we were honored to have him with us for the close of the meeting. Speaking of Lynwood, I enjoyed taking in a few nights of New Salem's Thanksgiving meeting in MS Micheal Fox did the preaching and it was a pleasure to hear him and see many friends while there. This past weekend, I held a meeting in Marion, IA. These brethren were very hospitable and demonstrated a fine spirit throughout the meeting with three confessions of fault. I look forward to being back there in the future. At present, I am engaged in a work with the Blue Springs congregation in KY. Lord willing, I will be there through February. My temporary address and phone number are as follows: P.O. Box 341, Brodhead, KY, 40409, (606) 758-9043. Pray for the work, and may God bless the faithful everywhere.

Joe Hisle, Rt. 4, Box 188, Ada, OK, 74820--We are home after a full schedule of meetings. As always it is good to be with the home congregation there in Ada. I appreciate them more every year for their continued support without which I could not work at holding meetings full time. Our schedule was productive and we trust much good was accomplished. Following is a brief summary of some of the places we worked with since last reporting: Bakersfield, CA (Brundage Rd.), this was the first time I had been to this congregation and I enjoyed it very much. While there I took advantage of the hospitality of the Doyle

Elliot's. They could not have treated me any better. The meeting was well attended by surrounding congregations. Next was the commentary study at Irving, TX, where I had a marathon session delivering five chapters on the book of Acts on May 23. This is always a well planned and well executed effort due to the works of the brethren at Irving and the slave driving of Allen Bailey! Just kidding Allen, this is one of the best efforts that I have been involved in and this set of commentaries is long over due. On Wed., May 24, I flew to Jacksonville, FL to hold their memorial day meeting. The meeting was a pleasure to be part of. The brethren had gone all out to organize the meeting. I commend them for their efforts. It was good to stay with Bro. Todd Long and his family while I was there. Next was Blue Springs, KY where you will always have a good meeting. These brethren like preaching! I cannot say enough about the efforts of Bro. Zade McClure in this area. I know of no brother who is more highly respected in the community in which he lives than Bro. Zade. While I was in Kentucky the brethren at Bedford, IN called and said since I was already in the area why didn't I just come on up to Indiana and begin their meeting on Wed. instead of waiting until Sun., so that is what I did. I always enjoy the brethren in the Bedford area. Duncanville, TX was the next on the schedule. The meeting went really well. We had several from the "big" digressive church in Duncanville who came almost every night. They were concerned about the modern trends in their congregation which included movement toward women preachers and instrumental music. Brethren when you let the gate down, the sky is the limit. These brethren should be concerned, the liberal branches of the Churches of Christ already have both the innovations mentioned. The meeting closed with two baptisms. Lone Rock, AR was next. This was my first time here. This is a small congregation but the crowds were good. A special thanks to the congregation at Mt. Home for their help. From Arkansas to W. VA, we worked once again with the congregation at Bunner Ridge. The meeting is always good at Bunner Ridge. I made my home with Roger and Jim Williams as I have done over the years. It was a special treat to be with them again. While there I had the opportunity to be with Bro. Richard Bunner whom I greatly appreciate for his good works. Back to OK to Wynnewood where it was good to be with Bro. Bruce Roebuck and the congregation there. The congregation was enthusiastic and active in the meeting.

Bruce is doing good work in this area. I was scheduled to begin in Neosho, MO on Oct. 1 but somewhere I contracted the worst case of flu, sinus infection, etc. (what I had reads like the label on Nyquil), I was not able to go so the good brethren there allowed me to put the meeting off for a week. I guess I should not complain much, in thirty years of holding meetings this was the first time I've not been able to make it. When I did get to Neosho I stayed with Frank and Yvonne Green who allowed me to turn their house into an infirmary where I convalesced by day and preached by night. The meeting went well in spite of it all. We had full house crowds and one young man was baptized. From Neosho I went to Cable Ridge, MO to hold the seventeenth meeting I have held there. We are truly old friends at Cable Ridge. By all rights this little rural congregation should have died out, but such is not the case. The congregation is in better shape than ever due to the young people raised in this congregation. Instead of leaving for the city to make a living, they went to the city and got an education, then they come back home to find good jobs and remain with their home church. I stayed with Hugh and Juanita Bentch. We had a week of good

times together. We laughed about the fact that we were all getting older and lamented the fact that we would like to reminisce about past times but we couldn't remember anything to reminisce about! The meeting was well attended by both congregations in the area as well as the community. At the close of the meeting, with a sack of Hugh's now world famous popcorn on the front seat, I headed for home. It had been a busy year in the Lord's work. I look forward to 1996, and request your prayers.

Barney Owens, 8782 Meadowview Dr., W. Chester, OH 45069--It has been my pleasure to be with the church at Burkhart, MO for their annual fall meeting. This year happened to mark their 100 year anniversary and I am happy that it fell my lot to be with them at this special time. Without worldly fanfare, we joyfully proclaimed the ancient gospel, which seemed to have a feeling of closeness and a desire to be present for the 101st anniversary. I've also been with the church on Hwy. H in Springfield, MO. Things here are well and it is always nice to return home. For those who have inquired in the past, I now have some time available this spring because of a mix-up in dates. Pray for us.

Bennie Cryer, 2340 Sanguinetti Ln. #93, Stockton, CA 95205, Dec. 7--The work here in Stockton continues and it has been a good year for the congregation with its elders and deacons. Seventeen precious souls have been baptized here in 1995. One of the events for 1996 we are looking forward to is the Labor Day which we are hosting for the first time in several years. We hope you will put attending this meeting on your schedule and make it one of the best of such meetings. Duane Permenter will conduct a week end meeting here February 16-18. If you can possibly attend this meeting plan to do so. You will be blessed by his preaching. I worked with the Escalon congregation in a meeting November 11-19. We had good attendance from the area. It was a pleasure to work with Bro. Homer Sallee again and to enjoy the hospitality of his & Juel's home. There was one restoration in the meeting. We pray God's blessings upon all of you during this new year.

Johnny Elnore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, Dec. 6--My grandson, Clay Harrison, and I went to Harrison, AR for a short gospel meeting Oct. 4-8. We enjoyed visiting with brethren while staying with Jimmie Smith, and appreciated the presence of preachers Miles King and Brett Hickey and his family. I spoke at Ft. Smith, AR Nov. 5, then Tony Denton and I left for a study at Red Boiling Springs, TN, sponsored by a preacher of cups and class persuasion. Enroute, we stopped at Little Rock, AR where Tony preached. During the study, Mark Bailey presented our objections to Sunday school and I presented our views on the cup. We had a good deal of interest shown in these views. Tony and I then went to Florence, SC, where we met with brethren from Jones Rd. congregation on Thursday evening. These brethren use one cup and one loaf and do not have classes, but do some things differently than we have been used to. They were very helpful and kind when we had car trouble. I look forward to the study at Arlington, and the New Year's meeting.

P. Duane Permenter, P. O. Box 1223, Riverbank, CA, 95367, Dec 6th.--One of the brethren here at home recently baptized a young lady who had been attending services off and on for some time. She decided to obey the gospel during our meeting with different preachers from the area, Nov. 17th. through the 19th.

Brother Greg Gay, Don King and Glen Osburn were the preachers, and they did a fine job in presenting the gospel. The theme of the meeting was the home, and the presentations were beneficial to the work. We have recently come in contact with a new family, (Myrns Brownfield and her family who once lived in the Fresno area) but they were away from the church for many years. Due to a death in the family they have begun their return to the Lord. Our prayer is that they will come back to the Lord in faithful service. The church in Oakdale continues to work and move along. It was my privilege to preach there the 4th. Lord's day in November. The crowd was good as usual. Dec. 15th. through the 17th. I am to be at Midland, Tx. It will be an honor then to go on to the study in Arlington, Tx. and the New Year's meeting in Oklahoma City. Since Don King is taking Patsy on the trip to the Philippines, I will not be traveling with him this year. Please remember them and the work in prayer. Feb. 16th. through the 18th. I will be at Stockton, Ca. May God bless all His people in every land.

James A. Hickey, 7700 S. Maple, Broken Arrow, OK 74011. 11-26-95--I am happy to report that two souls were baptized at home, 129th St. I also speak at Muskogee and Council Hill every month. The Council Hill congregation is supporting our Short Wave broadcast over WWCR Radio in Nashville. We have received letters from Pennsylvania and Moscow, Russia. This week we received a request for study materials from a Christian in England. At present the program is broadcast from 10 to 10:15 every Sat. at 15.685 on the Short Wave dial. It is supposed to reach Africa and some of the Middle East as well as all of Europe. We hope that brethren in distant areas will let us know if they are receiving the program. We hope that in the future we can broadcast every day of the week. My work last summer in Mexicali, Mexico went well. Bro. Juan Pedro Castillo Padilla and his family took their stand with us. He had been a member of the liberal Church in Baja California. He is making a fine worker in the Church. He gave his first sermon the last Lord's Day that I was there and did an excellent job. He is 21 years old and is a Law student at the University. His mother is very happy to be with us, though her health is not good. We feel that his younger brother, Israel, will be a worker in the church in the future. We are thankful to the brethren who helped us in this work. Bro. Bob Keese and I are hoping to work in Mexicali next June. Pray for the work of the Lord.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, December 11- Pat and I enjoyed a Saturday night and Lord's Day meeting with the Yuba City, CA congregation recently. Interest seemed very good. We also enjoyed preaching one sermon at the 64th St congregation during a three day meeting they hosted with various speakers. It was good to work with Duane Permenter again as always. While we are at home for most of December we are enjoying the home church. We have a few outsiders attending presently. We are making ready to leave for the Philippines on the 26th. I have made this trip now for a number of years and have learned to really enjoy the work over there. I am taking my wife, Pat, (at our own expense) this year so that she may see the work and meet the brethren who have long asked that she come with me. We pray for a good trip and that much good will be done. I will make a complete report after our return. Meanwhile, send all materials to be published to Ronny Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo, 65808 until after Feb. 10, 1996 at which time you may resume sending materials to us in California. Since my wife (who does

all the subscription lists on our computer) will be gone also, please be patient if your subscription is not updated as quickly as it normally would be. She will try to get it caught up as soon as we return in mid January. Please, brethren, send a subscription for a friend when you renew. A whole year of monthly contact with Spiritual things for only \$7. Surely, a friend is worth that much. Pray for us.

John R. Scott, 903 Peterson Rd., Neosho, MO 64850--Many of our brethren and sisters are aware by now, the Burkhart congregation has observed a notable occasion this year with our two Gospel Meetings, being with brother Don McCord and Barney Owens. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the congregation. With our meeting in November, with brother Barney Owens and with his encouragement, we printed a commemorative song book, entitled "FAITH OF OUR FATHERS," (which was the theme song for our meeting) with the old songs that were written in the 1800's and 1700's, of which the old congregation would have sung in it's early existence. Also, there are pictures and other historical items of interest in the book. What a great and wonderful "little" meeting it was. On Friday night we gathered back at the "old meeting house," with various brethren making reminiscent talks of by-gone days and their fondest memories in their life with the congregation, and singing from the little book. "What a joy," and in the words of the late brother Harold Burkhart, "what a treat." Special thanks is to be given to the following brethren; Don McCord, Barney Owens, David Griffin, Ron Alexander, John Anderson, Don Gorham, J.R. Gilstrap, Dale Wellman, Roger Owens, Gene Hopkins, Dennis Smith, Johnny Elmore, Edwin Morris, Taylor Joyce, and Wayne McKamie. It would be impossible to know the number of songs, prayers, and sermons that have been uttered over the years from the old congregation, but we know they are many. Starting with my great grandfather and ending with my grandchildren, accounts for six generations in my family to attend the Burkhart congregation. It is my prayer, that the future generations, can look back, as I have, and be thankful for the faith of their fathers, as I am. My Christian heritage means more to me than silver and gold.

Wyn R. Baker, 25520 S. State, Rt. K, Harrisonville, MO 64701 (816)869-3620--Since last reporting to the OPA, the work in Harrisonville, MO, is growing and is drawing good steady response from the community. At the present our work is focused much on the influence of our membership, and teaching heavily the necessity of personal responsibility in the kingdom of God. On the dates of Oct. 18-22, we conducted a gospel meeting, in which I did the preaching. Six new visitors from the community came, two of which enrolled in our Bible correspondence course, and some came more than one night. From these results we were very encouraged, and we have continued to communicate with those who have shown viable interest in learning and obeying the truth. Overall, I think the congregation here is doing well, and prospering in the will of the Lord. We have much to do and much to improve, but for the most part the future looks very bright for this congregation of like precious faith. In the late summer, Michelle and I, made a three week trip that went from West Virginia to the lower southern states. From Aug. 23-27, we were involved in a meeting at London KY, that resulted in several from the community visiting and many from neighboring congregations. From the time we arrived to the time we left, we thoroughly enjoyed the fellowship we had with these

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brethren, and believe me there was not a dull moment! From there we preached Sunday night the 27th at Walnut Grove; the next week at the Labor Day meeting in Chapel Grove TN; on Wednesday night the 6th at Earlytown, Al.; and ending on Sunday the 10th of September at Hillcrest near Brookhaven, MS. During this trip we made so many new friends and we want to express our sincere appreciation for the hospitality and support that was extended to us by you all as you opened your homes to us, we look forward to visiting these areas of the brotherhood again in the future. One final note in conclusion, on Sunday, November 12, it was our privilege to preach for the first time at the congregation in Eldon, MO since our departure in April, and a most wonderful day it was. We assisted three in obedience to the gospel in baptism, their names are Kenny Wood, Steve Henderson and Kelly Henderson. Our prayer is for the Lord's blessing to be upon their life and upon the wonderful congregation to which they attend! May the Lord bless all of the faithful!

Joe Norton, 1712 Wanda Way, Arlington, TX 76017. December 2--The year 1995 has been both productive and busy in the Lord's in this country as well as in Africa. Besides preaching for several congregations in Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana, I was privileged to conduct a gospel meeting at LaGrange, GA, my first time to work with that congregation. I was happy to assist one young man in his obedience to the gospel. It was a pleasure to be associated with Bro. and Sister Alton Bailey as well as with the other brethren in that congregation. Another meeting in Baton Rouge, LA, before I left on a summer trip for Africa, was especially inspiring to me. I found the brethren there especially receptive to God's Word and open and concerned about the growth of the Cause of Christ in that area. I look forward to helping them further in their efforts. In the fall, it was a mountain-top experience to return to El Cajon, CA to conduct a third gospel meeting there. As always, those brethren were active, interested and aggressive in their fervor for the Lord. It is an inspiration to worship and work with all of the brethren there, and I especially enjoyed the hospitality of longtime friends, Larry and Laura Lay and their fine sons once again. During the summer, Bro. Billy Orten and I went to Africa. First we went to Zambia, where my family and I lived during the 1980's. To renew acquaintances with African friends there was a special treat to me, and Billy and I really enjoyed getting to be with James and June Orten, who are conducting the work there now. After a brief visit with the church in Zimbabwe, we went to Ghana, the focus of our trip.

We conducted Bible and leadership studies in each of the main regions, where there are churches, and visited many of the congregations. Although Bill had been there before, this was my first opportunity to work in Ghana. I found the churches blessed with good leadership and several good preachers. The Lord has blessed this work with continuing growth. The Fairview, LA congregation should be commended for the serious outlook they have over this work in Ghana. Their commitment and support of the work are examples for other congregations to follow. I have a very special appreciation for them and with Billy in this work. May the Lord continue to bless all efforts for the spreading of the gospel in that country. By the time this report is published, the annual Preachers' Study will be

over; and I will be back in Ghana, Lord willing. I appreciate my home congregation that meets on Green Oaks in Arlington, TX, for asking me to coordinate the study, and it has been a pleasure to work with Bro. Mark Bailey in that effort. Accompanying me to Ghana on this trip will be a young man of faith, Bro. Mark Elliott, Jr., a member of the Fairview congregation. Mark came forward and expressed an interest in seeing this mission field. I appreciate him for his willingness to go and to live through the inconveniences of such an effort, because he cares about the work there. I believe, too, that it will have a special impact on our Ghanaian brethren to know that someone from a sponsoring congregation cares that much. The Lord has blessed US all so much, and may He continue his blessings as the new year begins.

Jimmie C. Smith, Rt. 6, Box 199A, Harrison, Ark. 72601, Dec. 4.--To my shame, it has been six months since I reported to the paper. During that time brethren Jerry Dickinson and Johnny Elmore have held meetings at Harrison. It was Jerry's first and I think Johnny's fourth. Both gave us a boost with some fine preaching. I was glad to be with both, Jerry because I hadn't been around him for over twenty years and to hear his solid preaching and enjoy his talents for narrating the OT stories and pulling applicable truths therefrom; and Johnny because of the mentor he has been to me and force for the cause. We had a good meeting in Columbus, Ga. in June with much help from the Lizella area. We enjoyed being a part of the annual Lebanon, MO. meeting, then we were with the Pearlhaven congregation in Brookhaven, Miss. The meeting was "most enjoyable", The cooperation and good-will among brethren was such as I had not known during my lifetime. Ronny and Alfreda Wade drove several hundred miles out of their way to be there one night, Lynwood was there for most of the meeting. There were two confessions of faults. In August we were with the good brethren at Houston Mo. for a weekend. We participated in a well planned and executed Labor day meeting at Neosho, Mo. In Oct. we enjoyed our annual weekend meeting (basket lunch etc.) at Lee's Summit who has supported me for nineteen years. The first of Nov. I was with the loving and generous brethren at Longwood, Fla. where one young man, Steve Bumbalough obeyed the gospel. The brethren blanketed the area with 5,000 personalized invitations and had some measured success. To know the brethren at Longwood is to love them. I was happy to be the opening speaker in the Fieldstone, Mo. Thanksgiving meeting. Fieldstone is growing in manhood and bro. Don Pruitt is doing a good work in the Houston/Fieldstone area. I'm to teach a singing school the last of next week at Mtn. Home, Ark. and Brett Hickey and I are to swap pulpits on a Sunday. In October we heard Lynwood at his best in a week-end meeting there. By the time you read this the Alabama New Year's meeting at Earlytown will be history. It will be my third time to be asked to conduct it. We recently have had another family of digressives start worshipping with us and believe that they will soon take their stand for the truth. Due to members moving off, I now must import someone in to teach for the congregation when I'm away in meetings which adds a pressure that I had not known for several years. May God Abundantly bless His People!

Our purpose is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

"To continue speaking the truth in love," "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," "keeping the ordinances as delivered."

"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) "And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in." (Isa. 58:12).

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NO. 2

TROJAN HORSE IN THE CHURCH

By Carl M. Johnson

The thirteenth century Trojan War was an effort by a large Greek expedition to rescue King Menelaus' wife from the Trojans. The Greeks waged a ten-year battle against the city of Troy, but they could not overcome its fortifications. The war was brought to an end when the Greeks built a large wooden horse, known as the Trojan horse, and placed it outside the walls of Troy. Ulysses and some other warriors hid inside the horse while the rest of the Greek army pretended to sail away. Simon, a Greek prisoner persuaded the Trojans that the horse was sacred and would bring the protection of the gods. The Trojans then pulled the horse into Troy. That night when the Trojans fell asleep after celebrating their apparent victory, Ulysses and his companions slipped from inside of the wooden horse and opened the city gates for the rest of their warriors who had returned from a nearby island. The Greek army entered, defeated the Trojans, and destroyed the city. What the Greeks could not accomplish by frontal attack, they eventually won by cunning, craftiness and skill.

Twenty-five years ago, Dr. James Bales, a professor at Harding College and a preacher for the "cups-and-classes" churches of Christ, published a book entitled *Trojan Horse In The Church*. Brother Bales' book is an expose' of the ravages of modernism within churches of Christ, and the insidious methods used to spread the movement.

Modernism is a theological movement that began over one hundred years ago, and whose primary objectives were to bring about religious unity among Christians and to make the Church more practically relevant to modern times.

On the surface these two goals certainly seem worthy. The perimeters modernists have used in reaching these goals, however, have had a devastating effect on true Christianity. Their primary tactic has been to downplay, or discard completely, doctrine. They believe doctrine is inherently divisive and a fragmented, or divided church would become irrelevant in the modern age. Doctrine, they believed, should be fluid and adaptable—certainly not something over which Christians should fight and divide.

As modernism swept throughout the denominational

world it also infiltrated many churches of Christ, as is documented in Brother Bales' book.

In the 1960s and early 1970s such men as Karl Ketcherside began conducting "unity" forums and meetings throughout the United States. Ketcherside and others followed the trail of earlier modernists by passionately pleading for religious unity based on a de-emphasis of doctrine. In fact, Ketcherside argued that there are no doctrines other than the teachings concerning the person of Christ (that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah) that are serious enough to justify a break in fellowship among believers.

The Apostle John warns, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9). In an effort to harmonize his own position with John's words, Ketcherside argued that the expression "doctrine of Christ" does not refer to all that Jesus taught personally and through His apostles, but it refers to teaching about the nature, or the deity of Christ only. By limiting the meaning of "doctrine of Christ" in 2 John to teaching about the deity of Christ, Ketcherside and his supporters could extend open fellowship to all "sincere believers" regardless of their doctrine and practices.

Scholars of the Greek language including W.E. Vine, M.R. Vincent, Alfred Plummer, A.T. Robertson, and J.H. Thayer unanimously agree, however, that the expression "doctrine of Christ" in 2 John 9 refers not to the teaching concerning Christ, but to all the teachings of Christ Himself and His apostles (Cf. Acts 2:42; 13:12; Matthew 7:28).

A parallel passage which supports the above conclusion about 2 John 9 is found 1 Timothy 6:3-5:

If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness...from such withdraw thyself.

A comparison of the two passages show five parallel parts to the two statements. "If any man" is identical with "whosoever." The second pair "teach otherwise" and "transgresseth," must mean the same. The

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Editorial

A "HANDY" RELIGION

by Johnny Elmore

Historically, human beings have sought convenience. In the U.S.A. people have achieved a degree of convenience that the ancients could not even have anticipated. In most places, there are convenience stores around the corner with sliced bread, and meat, frozen vegetables, tv dinners, warm-and-serve rolls, etc. The list is too long to mention, but you get the idea. One of the greatest factors in the economic survival of a business is the convenience factor. Is it any surprise that people also want a convenient religion? In our time, people might drive a hundred miles without complaint to shop, to see a ball game, or to attend a program, but a place to worship must be convenient.

CONVENIENCE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The convenience factor influenced Israel's departure into idolatry. Jereboam, who led the revolt of the ten tribes, forming the Northern Kingdom, was astute enough to know that if the tribes continued to worship in the way God ordained and go to Jerusalem, as they had always done, he would lose power and influence over them. To combat the hold that true religion had on the people of God, Jereboam established centers of worship at Dan and Bethel and erected golden calves, saying, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (1 Kings 12:28). Wasn't that handy and convenient? Yes, it was that, but it was also condemned and God sent his prophet to cry out against such a departure. It was an "innovation"—a new thing!

CONVENIENCE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Lack of convenience was given as an excuse for Felix's failure to obey the gospel. His conscience was so awakened by Paul's preaching of "righteousness, temperance and judgment to come" that he trembled but said, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25). Alas! That very moment was the most convenient one he ever had.

CONVENIENCE IN OUR TIME

We may wonder at the folly of men like Jereboam and Felix, but do we demand a religion that is "convenient" and "handy"? Now comes an article the Daily Oklahoman (8-12-95), with the caption "Communion Gets Handy." The writer, Adelle M. Banks, describes what she calls "this latest innovation" in communion as "Holy Communion—grape juice and a wafer—for Protestant churchgoers loath to drink from a common cup or who want to take Communion away from their house of worship." Since their name is

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: Why don't we have pastors (ministers) in churches who stay for long periods of time and serve the congregation? (OK)

Answer: The above question alludes to the practice, common among most denominational churches and some churches of Christ, of hiring a man to do the preaching for a church and serve in other capacities such as visiting the sick, doing personal work etc. The roots of the above mentioned system, go all the way back to the apostasy spoken of by Paul in 2 Thess.2. By A.D. 200 teachers in some churches were calling themselves "priests," having been elevated above the rest of the church. Other members of the congregation were little more than onlookers. Such a system gradually led to the unscriptural priesthood of that day, and ultimately the Roman pope. For a long period, the apostate church was powerful enough to suppress opposition to its teachings and practices. During the fifteenth century, however, men like Luther and Zwingi sought to return the scriptures to the people, by wresting them from the hands of "the clergy." These men stressed the priesthood of all believers i.e. every man had the right to join in a study of the scriptures and participate in the worship of God. They were definitely on the right road. However, they failed to learn the valuable lessons that history can teach. In time they were practicing the very thing they had originally opposed. In many churches men who were perceived to have special talent were selected to assume the responsibility of feeding the flock. This man came to be known as "the pastor." The system that we commonly refer to as "the pastor system" developed from this type of situation. Some churches of Christ have borrowed from the denominations a practice similar in nature. Today it is common to find men who call themselves "the minister" of a church. Generally their role is to preach for the congregation, visit the sick, do personal work etc. In 1229 the Council of Toulouse prohibited the laity's possessing or reading the Bible in order to "prevent private interpretation." Such a dogma was the logical conclusion to the idea that ordinary men could not edify the church, hence a special class of men were needed. Many today make the same argument in an attempt to justify the "one man pastor system." Such statements as "we need a man who can hold the attention of the audience," or "our local talent is just not good enough," are offered as reasons why the practice is adopted. There are a number of reasons why the above described system is wrong. First of all the scriptures teach that every Christian is a priest. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation..." 1 Pet. 2:9 Each priest had his work to do. We all know that not everyone possesses the ability to publicly teach the word of God. However, when the church came together for

edification, each priest who was capable, and who so desired, exercised his God-given talent in harmony with the rules laid down by God. In 1 Cor.14:26 we read "How is it then brethren? When ye come together, everyone of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying." Note verse 29 "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge." Then in verse 31 "For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted." And I myself also am persuaded of you my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge able also to admonish one another Rom. 15:14. "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do." 1 Thess. 5:11 The above scriptures represent the God-given system for the edification of the church. It would be foolish for me to suggest that there is another system superior to the one God gave us. If I can scripturally hire someone to do my teaching for me, I could as easily hire someone to sing for me or pray for me or commune for me. Since the Holy Spirit would not allow one man to do all the teaching in a congregation where others had the ability to teach, (1 Cor. 14) I dare not presume such a prerogative. Secondly, the modern one man pastor system denies the congregation the benefits of mutual edification. Regarding this Brother J.W. McGarvey wrote in the Apostolic Times (1873) "There is no doubt, that in the ordinary Lord's Day meeting of the apostolic churches, quite a number of brethren took part in the speaking and praying. This is clear to any one who will read carefully the fourteenth chapter of First Corinthians. It is true that the instructions contained in that chapter are mostly given to persons possessed of spiritual gifts, but if, when men possessed of such gifts were in the church, it was not best that any one of them should ordinarily occupy the entire time, why should we think it best to reverse the rule in the absence of such gifts? Surely we have no right to make such a change unless there be something in the absence of spiritual gifts which demands it....a proposition that will hardly be affirmed. In the beginning of the Reformation the Scripture precedent just mentioned was recognized, and brethren very generally undertook to restore it to practice." In view of this, would it be wrong for a preacher to locate with a church? Of course not. Timothy located at Ephesus for a time 1 Tim.1:3-4. Paul spent varying lengths of time at different places. A preacher has to live somewhere. May a preacher do the work of an evangelist, while working with a congregation? Obviously he can or else we would be forced to say both Paul and Timothy were unscriptural in their work. However such work does not include unscriptural practices such as doing all the teaching for a church

and failing to allow others to exercise their talents. In fact one of the duties of the preacher would be to develop faithful teachers so that he could eventually move on to other fields of labor or endeavor. Thirdly, it should be noted that the term "pastor" when applied to a preacher is actually an unscriptural expression. In the New Testament pastors were "elders" or "bish-

ops". (Eph.4:11) There is no scriptural justification for calling the preacher "the pastor." Just as there is no scriptural justification for allowing the preacher to take over the pulpit and do all the teaching in a congregation, when others are or could be capable of participating. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811 Springfield, MO. 65808)

UNQUENCHABLE FIRE

By Stanley R. Owens

In (Mt. 3:11-12) John the Baptist says: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." There is a danger, among those that step into the pulpit, of failing to carry out one of their duties as preachers and teachers. I'm speaking of the subject of Hell. This is a theme rarely heard, and when it is, it's taught in such a way that the "unquenchable fire" is nothing but a smoldering pile of ashes. The big thing these days is "love". We want to be meek and gentle and tell everyone how much love God and Christ had for us all and how grand and wonderful everything is and how much love we need for everyone no matter what is practiced by some Christians. There are congregations in the brotherhood that wish teaching be done only this way. Rest assured, a falling away is not too far behind this idea.

Love is a beautiful thing, but we must remember the same Christ who loved us so much, hated sin to the same degree. The same God that gave his "only-begotten Son" as a sacrifice, destroyed the earth with

water due to the wickedness of man (Gen.6,7,8). Shortly after making this statement (Mt.3:11-12) John was cast into prison and eventually beheaded for condemning sin. It's time that we put the brimstone back in our fiery sermons. Let's step on some toes and open some hearts. Let's "reprove and rebuke" (II Tim. 4:2). Let's again put the fear of Hell into our friends, neighbors, and ourselves. Let's remind them of the separation that will take place at the judgment. Make everyone understand, if they are on the left hand they will hear the words "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels", (Mt. 25:41). On down in (Vs. 46) it reads: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

Just as Heaven is eternal bliss, Hell is eternal damnation. It is a raging inferno of destruction. Lk.16:19-31 speaks of the torment of the rich man and of his inability to escape. Rev.20:14 calls it a "lake of fire" and a "second death". Though it may anger some of our "love" brethren, we should ever keep these thoughts aflame. It matters not that the fire in the pulpit has died, because the fires of Hell remain unquenchable. -8432 Cox Rd.

FLEE FORNICATION (PART 2)

By Irvin Barnes

In the past 30 years I have seen mountains of grief, sorrow, guilt, and regret caused by fornication. Since, in my limited circulation this is true, it seems impossible to comprehend all the sorrow that exists in the world because of this sin. The following guidelines are intended to encourage all Christians every where to flee fornication.

One way for single Christians to avoid the sin of fornication is to observe some rules when dating. Vulnerability increases under certain circumstances. The following recommendations will help avoid situations that encourage temptation and sin.

1. Know something about the person you go out with. Is he or she a Christian? Does this person share your convictions about morality. Dating a Christian

is no guarantee against temptation. However, when you date a non-Christian you run the risk of keeping company with an individual who feels that the ultimate purpose of dating is to commit fornication. Don't be naive. The social attitudes of our time are so warped that many have come to regard dating as a mere game. The main object of the game is to see how soon in a relationship the sin of fornication can be committed.

2. Date in the presence of other people. Dare to be different on this point. It is time to do away with the notion that couples must spend hours and hours of time together somewhere off to themselves in order to get properly acquainted. The opposite is true. In a private situation, the very best of one's character and personality will be revealed. It is when a couple is in

the company of his or her parents, in the presence of other couples or in a peer group that bad personality traits will surface. If one has a tendency toward jealousy, if one has a poor relationship with his siblings, or if one is disrespectful to parents, this will become obvious in the presence of those mentioned. Such problems are not likely to surface if the only time a couple is together is when they are alone.

Please examine your attitude. Can you see yourself dating without being alone with your boy friend or girl friend? Do you consider kissing, necking and petting an integral part of dating? Does it seem "totally weird" to think of dating only in the presence of others? I submit that to date only in the presence of others is the best possible way to learn the most about the individual you are interested in and in so doing will prove to be a deterrent to temptation.

This does not mean that couples can never have a personal conversation without others hearing. A stroll in a public park out of hearing distance of others will give you time to share your likes and dislikes, to learn about each other in a more personal way. The old fashioned porch swing, sitting on the stoop of the veranda, or on the love seat in the living room with others coming and going are good places for couples to visit, share their thoughts and still not be in a situation that lends itself to temptation.

4. Use the automobile properly. Lascivious activity in a parked car was popularized and to some extent was made socially acceptable when America received a daily dose of the television show HAPPY DAYS. "The Fonz" along with other teens were cast time and again in courtship episodes. Henry Winkler was portrayed as the dream of every girl and the envy of every young man. The ultimate date for all the characters of dating age was a parking session at Inspiration Point.

Children develop attitudes about dating from a constant diet of television. Parents send the wrong signal by watching programs that are filled with lascivious behavior and improper conversation. It must seem to the children that their parents approve since they enjoy watching this kind of thing on TV.

4. Avoid going to motel rooms, apartments, or private homes when no one else is there. If you live in a home or apartment by yourself avoid having your boy friend or girl friend visit unless others are present. The same rule should prevail when parents are away from home. Couples with the best of intentions can allow things to go too far when the circumstances are favorable and offer such convenience. It is much easier to observe some simple dating rules and by so doing "flee fornication" than to suffer the awful consequences that can result from giving in to the lust of the flesh.

5. Know when it is time to leave! If couples would see each other only in the presence of others the following recommendation would be unnecessary. However, in the event that you should find yourself in a

place or situation where fornication becomes a possibility, it is essential to know the obvious signs of improper advances. When these signs appear, it is time to leave immediately. Remember the words of the apostle to "flee" fornication.

6. Avoid improper conversation. It is not necessary for couples to have intimate conversations before marriage regarding the physical union. Sex is for husband and wife to discuss and learn about together. If you have questions, choose some older person in the church that you have confidence in and ask them for information. Young men should talk with older men and young women should talk with older women. Never should boy friend and girl friend discuss sexual desire. If your date insists on discussing such matters then it is time to interrupt your relationship. A good rule here is to never say anything to each other about sex when the two of you are alone that you would not say with third person present.

7. Agree to keep kissing to a scriptural minimum. The Bible commands Christians to greet one another with a holy kiss (Rom. 16:16). The command implies that there is such a thing as an unholy kiss. The kiss of Romans 16 is a kiss of greeting and bears no resemblance to repeated and prolonged kissing which stirs the passion and fogs one's judgment of right and wrong. It is harmless to greet each other with a kiss, a brief hug of affection, a parting kiss etc. Long lasting kisses which heighten the desire should be reserved for married couples and constitute lasciviousness when practiced by those who are not married.

One young man claimed that he could win the love of most any girl if she would but let him kiss her. He must have thought himself quite skilled in this area. Get real! How much technique is there in a kiss? Isn't personality, character, and general demeanor the things that cause you to like a person in a special way? Surely a relationship is built on more than long episodes of kissing.

8. Limit bodily contact. In the physical union, husband and wife become one. In this way ultimate body contact is achieved. Please allow a paraphrase of the apostle's words, "Let every one of you learn to control his own body." Holding hands is a far cry from fornication. Who can condemn it? Yet, there are areas of your body that you should not allow anyone to touch in the context of passion. One should also possess his own body to the point that he dare not place his hands on the forbidden areas of another person's body. If your date cannot seem to keep his or her hands away from your body then it is time to part company.

8. Go ahead and marry. Many young women nowadays leave high school and go to college to pursue a career. She may feel that she should put off marriage and delay starting her family until she completes her education and settles into her new job. This is strictly contrary to the recommendations of scripture. Do we really believe the Bible on this point? Are we ready to accept what the scriptures teach on the subject? The

following passage presents a real challenge for our time.

I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully (1st. Tim. 5:14). The Bible no where commands marriage for man or woman. Paul suggests that under some circumstances it would be better if Christians do not marry (1st. Cor. 7:25-26).

First Timothy 5:14, must then be taken in the context of the person who is tempted, who is not steadfast in heart, and finds it difficult to control the will. Please see First Corinthians 7:35-38. For the individual just described, early marriage is recommended, or as Paul states, "to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband," (1st. Cor. 7:2).

With the right kind of faith in God and with proper resolve, young couples can enjoy a successful marriage. Mothers should not leave the care of their children to others while she holds down a job away from home. Early marriages will mean a sacrifice in life style and in the amount of material things the couple may own at first. The young husband may find it necessary to work nights so he can finish college or take night courses after working all day on his job.

While early marriages may not fit the present social standards and while it is not easy, it is far better for young couples to make a few sacrifices in lifestyle than to suffer the horrible consequences fornication has to offer. Paul's words are not meaningless when he said, "to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and every wife her own husband."

FORGIVENESS

For those who have committed fornication, all is not lost. If the fornicator will repent and comply with

God's will, God will forgive. Non-Christians must obey the plan of salvation and be saved. All past sins will then be "sent away" as one writer defines forgiveness. Please see the following scripture references for the plan of salvation,

(Heb. 11:6, Luke 13:3, Matt. 10:32-33, Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16). Christians who sin must repent of the sin, confess that sin and pray to God for forgiveness, (1st. John 1:7-9, Acts 8:22, James 5:16). In the case of an alien sinner who obeys the gospel or the erring Christian who repents, confesses and prays, the blood of Jesus avails for the forgiveness of the sin of fornication. In forgiveness the sin is gone. It is taken out of the way. It passes into oblivion as though it never occurred.

Fornication does not obligate you to marry the person with whom the sin was committed. If the other party also repents, then fornication is no reason NOT to marry the person with whom the sin was committed.

Once forgiveness is obtained, those who have sinned should forgive each other and each person forgive himself. Once forgiven, life should be lived as though the sin is gone and was never committed. In God's sight the sin is gone. Why should any person hold anything against himself that God no longer recognizes?

CONCLUSION

For Christians to completely remove themselves from the company of every person who might commit fornication, it would be necessary to "go out of the world." While one can expect to hear of fornication in the world, God forbid that we should ever have fornication committed by those who are members of the Lord's church. Let us, as Christians, be a people, of whom it can be said, that the sin of fornication "is not once named among you!"

EDITORIAL

Continued from page 2

Legion who fit both categories, this should appeal to many.

Banks continues: "Each Remembrance vessel is shaped like an individual dairy creamer, but there is an additional layer on top. Unseal the first layer to reach the communion wafer. Snap and peel off the second seal and—voila!—the grape juice is ready to drink. The product requires no refrigeration and has a one-year shelf life." How convenient and handy!

But there is more! The manager of the marketing firm for this "innovation" is quoted: "It makes communion available for outdoor worship services, for homebound ministry, prison ministry, youth mission trips, a variety of locations and occasions where a traditional service just wouldn't be possible."

About thirty years ago, I heard an individual cups advocate dressing down his congregation for going to the lake or visiting or to the golf course on Sunday morning and then running in on Sunday night to "take communion." He predicted then that they would soon

be running a "drive-in window" so that the "emblems" could be picked up on the way to the lake or wherever so that no time would be lost. It appears that his prediction has now become a reality. Shame on those who are so obsessed with convenience that the true way of worship means nothing. When convenience takes precedence over the commands of Jesus, we wonder in the words of the ruler of old, "Why troublest thou the Master any further?" Why bother with any religion, if convenience and handiness are such a priorities?

If there is anything taught more clearly in the New Testament than the use of one cup and one loaf, I don't know what it is. Note that Jesus, in instituting communion, "took bread" or "a loaf" (footnote on Matt. 26:26 in ASV), "and gave to the disciples." The breaking of that loaf was something that all the disciples did (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:16). No individual loaves there, the convenience factor notwithstanding. He also "took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it" (Matt. 26:27, ASV). They had no trouble understand-

ing the command for Mark 14:23 states that "they all drank of it."

There is no biblical precedent for stopping in a motel or in a camper by the wayside to "eat the commun-

ion" because it is inconvenient to assemble with the disciples to break bread as the early disciples did. Beware of the convenience factor in religion!

TROJAN HORSE IN THE CHURCH

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third pair "consent not" and "abide not," mean the same thing. The fourth pair "to the words of Christ" and "in the doctrine of Christ," are parallel. And the fifth pair "hath not God" and "withdraw thyself" are related because we must withdraw ourselves from all who have not God. When God breaks fellowship with a person, we are obligated to break fellowship with him or suffer our fellowship with God to be broken. When someone "transgresseth," "the doctrine of Christ," they "have not God" and are not in the fellowship. They teach a different doctrine, "consent not" to the sound "words of our Lord" and the "doctrine according to godliness," and we must "withdraw" ourselves from them (1 Timothy 6:5).

In spite of the Bible's clear teaching that "doctrine" is a basis for religious unity, some Christians have been deceived by the sirens of modernism and have left our "narrowminded group." There are many more, however, who have withstood the assault and have been strengthened spiritually by the battle.

The frightening thing about movements such as modernism is that they begin within the Church. There have been many frontal assaults on Christianity through the years, but the most subtle and deadly attacks, just as in the case of the Trojan Horse, have come from within.

Paul warns the elders of Ephesus that they can expect false teachers who would arise from within their own ranks, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after their own selves. Paul refers to these false teachers as "grievous wolves" entering in among you, "not sparing the flock" (Acts 20:29-30).

Jesus warns of false prophets "which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15). Paul speaks of those who "by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:18). Peter clearly labeled the fabricated arguments of false teachers as "feigned words," by which they sought to make merchandise of the disciples and to exploit them for their own purposes (2 Peter 2:1-3).

In view of the above warnings we should beware when we hear our own brethren question the importance of how we observe the communion, assemble for public teaching, sing without instruments of music, and consign public teaching to men only.

I realize there are sincere Christians, especially those who are spiritually immature, who will need to question honestly our distinctive, doctrinal beliefs and practices. We must be patient with and helpful to them. But if mature Christians, including preachers

and congregational leaders, pose the same questions in a systematic effort to raise doubts in the minds of others, we should be alarmed.

Another symptom of potential danger from within the church is the development of a negative and an antagonistic attitude toward the brethren. Some severe critics view almost the entire brotherhood as being "ignorant, backward sectarians." While these harsh critics find nothing but fault with our own brethren, they can always find something good to say about those in religious error. - "When preachers begin to vilify their own brethren and praise the sectarians to the sky; when they extol the piety and learning of the modernists, and defame the ignorance and 'legalism' of their own brethren, it is time to watch out. Moses E. Lard saw it in his day, and trembled. With this attitude the departure into modernism begins" (Bales 105-106).

We should also be concerned when brethren militantly claim the right to exercise their "Christian liberties." Christ did not selfishly cling to His own prerogatives as God's equal, but He voluntarily emptied Himself of all His liberties for the sake of the whole of mankind (Philippians 2:5-11). The Apostle Paul voluntarily made himself a servant claiming no personal liberties, nor rights, in order to save others (1 Corinthians 9:19-23). Yet there are some who ignore the examples of Jesus and Paul and fiercely demand of the brethren their "rights." They are not going to be bound by what they view as "hide-bound" brethren. Further, in spite of what the above two passages teach about humility and selflessness, there are some who are so jealously concerned about "self" and pre-eminence, they are willing to force themselves upon the church even at the cost of congregational unity.

We should also be cautious when brethren call for "broadmindedness and tolerance." "After all," someone says, "We don't possess all the truth, so we can't afford to be judgmental of others." Certainly, we must be broadminded enough to accept truth regardless of who calls it to our attention, and we must be tolerant enough not only to live and let live, but also to help others live right. We must understand, however, that truth has narrow limits and a straitened way (Matthew 7:13). We cannot become so broadminded and tolerant that we ignore the authority of God's word and the need to be confined to it.

History shows that the champions of "broadmindedness and tolerance" are usually not as broad as they sound when they are seeking to subvert a movement. As the Lutheran News put it: "It has frequently been said that when theological liberals first begin to take over a denomination they only request that the church tolerate their views; then they de-

mand equal rights for their anti-scriptural notions; and finally they only allow the public expression of their position. Eventually they may even discipline or excommunicate those who still insist on publicly affirming the doctrines of historic Christianity" (Bales 109).

R.C.H. Lenski says that in the beginning error is meek and asks only to be tolerated. It pleads for broadmindedness. Once it is entrenched, however, it becomes inflated, and accusingly asks the truth: "What are you doing here?"

The above are just a few of the symptoms that indicate potential danger from within the church.

In the last days of our Savior's earthly ministry, Jesus passionately warned His disciples of the importance of vigilance. Using such expressions as "take

heed," "beware," and "watch ye therefore," Jesus hammered home the critical importance of being on guard against false teachers and deceivers. The apostles give us the same charge. Paul says he ceased not to warn the elders of Ephesus for three years, "night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31). In view of these charges, I am hopeful that we understand the sober responsibility we have today of watching over the course and spirit of the Church. Not everyone who demonstrates the above symptoms is a part of a contrived effort to undermine the Lord's Church. If we fail to take seriously our responsibility of vigilance, however, we could one day awaken from our spiritual slumber only to find the Trojan Horse already within the Church.
1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE CHURCH DIRECTORY

The 1996 Church Directory is currently being assembled. Please notify me as soon as possible about any changes in your current listing. With the onset of 911 emergency listings in many areas, addresses have been changed. I need to hear from you regarding this as well as any area code changes made by the phone companies. If names need to be deleted and/or added please advise. One other area of consideration is time of meeting. Many churches have changed the time of Sunday night services especially. Should you need to make changes here, please send them as soon as possible to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808.

COBB-WADE DEBATE TAPES

I have a very few of these tapes left. There are four tapes in all. The price for the entire set is \$6.00 postpaid. If you have not ordered yet, do so before the supply is exhausted. Send orders to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808. This two night discussion covered the cup/cups question. Harry Cobb was a very able representative of the cups position.

DO YOU HAVE THIS BOOK?

The Sun Will Shine Again Someday is a historical account of the struggle over the Sunday School and individual cups issues that troubled churches at the turn of the century. In addition the book is a background study of the group that opposed both of these innovations. It is filled with pictures of old time places and faces. If you have not ordered your copy do so today. Only a few remain the price is \$8.00 postpaid. Send all orders to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808

TIME CHANGE

The church at Pansy, Al. has changed the time of Sunday night services to 2:30 p.m. Please mark your directories accordingly.

OUR DEPARTED

Reynolds--After a year of battling an aggressive colon cancer, Sister Joanna Lea Hensley Reynolds

departed this life on November 19, 1995. Joanna was born on December 13, 1967 in West Plains, MO to Donna and Clifford Hensley. She was a member of the Mountain Home congregation in Arkansas. Joanna's faith and courage amidst great suffering gave strength to her brothers and sisters. She was untiring in warning her unbelieving friends and family to prepare for that great day. Honoring her example of Christian dedication were dozens of floral arrangements from numerous congregations and individuals and a funeral service crowded with an estimated 300 people and only standing room available. Beautiful a capella singing was provided by the Ninth Hour Quartet. Joanna leaves behind her husband, Monty, and two sons, Layne (6) and Brock (5). Also surviving are her mother, Donna Hensley; two sisters, Carilla Hensley and Samantha Pierce, Samantha's husband, Mike, and their children, Angie, Robbie and Louie—all from the West Plains area. She also precedes in death her grandparents, Redmon and Lorene Hensley of Dora, MO.

It was an honor to give words of comfort on Joanna's behalf and to encourage the lost and erring to make their lives right with God. --Brett Hickey

Henry--Hamilton Albert Henry was born in Madera, California June 23, 1908 to Isaac Hamilton and Lillian (McKee) Hamilton. He passed from us November 21, 1995 at the age of 87. Al was a Christian that met with the Manteca congregation from its beginning. Al met and married Bessie, his beloved wife, during World War II. He and Bessie never had children, but seemed to love all the brethren children. Al was living in a retirement center in Modesto, California until he was not able to care for himself, then was moved for a very short time to a convalescent home where he passed. I first remember him when I was a young teen-ager and drove to Earlimart, California to conduct the worship service. He and Bessie were an encouragement to me and to all. Bessie preceded him in death 14 years ago, and his love for her and the memory of her never diminished. Al requested that I preach his funeral long ago, which I was willing

to do. He was given the best of care by his niece and nephew, Bill and Ruth Martin. They are to be commended for it. Al leaves at his passing, brothers Lawrence and Ray Hamilton, and a sister, Hazel Cowie. He is buried in beautiful Lakewood Cemetery in Hughson, California. Our brethren sang some beautiful songs, and I thank brethren Melvin Lee, Jack Brumley, Allen Bonifay for their assistance in the service. --Richard DeGough

Smith--Barbara Jean Smith was born October 26, 1938 in Colorado. At an early age, she moved with her parents to the El Reno, Oklahoma area where she lived the rest of her life. She died on August 21, 1995 at the Oklahoma City Hospital. Barbara was a thoughtful person who made friends easily. This was made obvious by the large audience that assembled to pay their last respects. Barbara was baptized many years ago and was a faithful member of the El Reno Church of Christ at the time of her death. She is survived by four children, Lonnie Ayres, Kelley Ayres, Leslie Barnes and Tracy Hernandez. All of them live in the Oklahoma City area. Barbara raised her children in the church and was able to develop spiritual values in them that will continue long after she is gone. All of her children are faithful and active members of the church. What a wonderful legacy to leave behind. This writer and Jimmy Shaw spoke at her memorial service, which was conducted at the El Reno church building. Beautiful singing was provided by Harmonies of the Home quartet. --Bill H. Davis

Phillips--Bessie (Bray) Phillips was born at Healdton, Indian Territory on February 28, 1900. She passed away from this life on November 18, 1995 at the age of 95. Bessie was married on April 21, 1917 to Walter Bray. To this union three sons and one daughter was born. The daughter died in infancy. Also her husband, Walter, was killed in an oil field accident in 1936. Bessie is survived by her three sons, Raymond Bray of Healdton, OK., Glenn Bray of Oklahoma City, OK., and Don Bray of Mena, AR. She is also survived by one sister, fifteen grandchildren and twenty eight great grandchildren and four great great grandchildren. Bessie was married to Ransom Phillips in 1958. He preceded her in death in 1959. Bessie possessed a "gentle and quite spirit" which the Apostle Peter says, "in the sight of God is of great worth", I Pet.3:4. She didn't have a lot to say, but when she did speak it was "with wisdom and in her tongue was the law of kindness", Prov.31:26. She was a quiet, dignified lady that was loved and respected by all who knew her. She was also a lady who had a great faith. She was baptized in 1925 by H.C. Harper and continued faithful until death. All of her children, most of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren are members of the church. One's faith and character are often reflected in the lives of their offspring. I think this was especially true of Bessie.

Some of the best people I know are members of her family. She lived long on the earth and she was ready to go home. C.A. Smith and I, spoke words at her memorial service where a very large crowd gathered at the Healdton Church of Christ. Johnny Elmore led congregational singing which was beautiful. --Bill H. Davis

Stephens--Roy E. Stephens was a long time resident of Washington, Oklahoma. He was born on January 1, 1907 at Dalburg in Indian Territory to John and Ada Stephens. He passed away on September 12, 1995 in Purcell, Oklahoma. Roy was a dairyman and farmer. He loved his occupation and was successful at it. On May 12, 1928, he was married to Ora Hanna who was his devoted wife for over 67 years. They were blessed with four sons. R.D., Alex, and Ralph all of Washington. Their other son, John, lives in Lubbock, Texas. Roy had been a member of the Washington Church of Christ since 1949 when he was baptized by Joe Howard. I knew Roy for some 40 years. He was outgoing and personable, and possessed a wonderful outlook on life. Until the end, he had a great sense of humor. He loved to be with friends and loved ones and to banter with them. He was always a delight to be around. He was highly respected in the Washington community and was a faithful member of the church. He will be greatly missed by all. I considered it a privilege to conduct his funeral service. --Bill H. Davis

Scott--Gladys Irene Scott was born September 1, 1907 in Harmony County, Oklahoma to Willie and Ellen Scott. She passed away in Modesto, California on October 27, 1995. She leaves two nephews and three nieces, and many brethren. Gladys was a member of the Modesto congregation for many years. She took a stand for the Bible way of worship during Paul Nichol's work in Modesto. She loved Paul very much and expressed it to me often. Gladys never married, but was content to have the church as her family. She lived a long life of 88 years. Special mention is in order of brother Rod Wilson and his wife, Muriel. They cared for Gladys as they would their own mother, and many more who were in the church at Modesto. This is a true example of Christianity at work and served as a source of encouragement to all. The Lord will not forget them and they certainly ask for no praise. Gladys loved sound gospel preaching as well as good singing. In her declining years, she suffered from ill health, but not from loving care. She is missed. I conducted a graveside service in beautiful Lakewood Cemetery at Hughson, California. Brother Rod Wilson was away and could not conduct it, so we willingly carried on. The beautiful singing was done by Christians from several congregations nearby. --Richard DeGough

Dhyne--Edmond Dhyne was born December 22, 1917, died November 9, 1995 of cardiac complications at the age of 77, in Longmont, Colorado. He leaves behind two sons, one daughter, 16 grandkids, one greatgrandson. A genuine gentleman from the old school and the epitome of Jesus' teachings about those who would be great among you, would be your servant! His love for his wife and for the church are beyond description. He will be missed by those who knew him! Contentment is something most people will exhaust their lives in search of, yet few will ever find. Edmond found it! --Rod Martin

Jones--Daniel Lynn Jones, son of Jimmy Lee and Darlene (Flippo) Jones, was born on June 10, 1953 at Kennett, MO and departed this life on December 11, 1995 in Springfield, MO following a long illness with cancer. He was 42 years, 6 months, and 1 day of age. The remarkable fact is that on November 25, 1995, Dan was baptized into Christ, at the eleventh hour, not quite three weeks before he passed away. He married Susan McGinnis on Sept. 3, 1982 and they made their home at Lynchburg, MO. Dan was a member of the Bendavis Church of Christ. He was an air-conditioning and refrigeration technician and a dairy farmer. He is survived by his wife of the home; his mother, Darlene Cheney of Mtn. Grove, MO; and a sister, Gail Brayman of Lee Hall, VA. A large crowd attended his funeral on Dec. 15, 1995 with burial in Dutch Chapel Cemetery, Embree, MO. The writer was honored to speak words of comfort to the family and friends.--Edward Williamson

Smith--Another soldier has left the ranks, and has gone to his reward— October 23, 1995, Bro. Earl Smith, of the Piney View congregation near Beckley, West Virginia. He and his wife obeyed the gospel and were added to the church 46 years ago. He leaves his wife, Lessie, and one son, and four daughters. Bro. Smith's health had been failing for some time, and often prevented his from attending worship services. The funeral was at the church, and I spoke words of comfort, and also warning, to the family. He will be missed at the small congregation there, and in the community, as well. His wife composed this poem, which was read at the cemetery.—Lawrence Lore, St. Albans, WV--WORK'S DONE

I now am old and feeble My work on earth is done.
I'll be gone to be with Jesus At the setting of the sun.

So don't weep for me, my children For I am now at rest.
And my faith will no longer Be put to test.

Through the years I've lived for Jesus There were trials on every hand.
But now I live with Jesus And sing in His angel band.

Up yonder there will be no heartaches And no more sad goodbyes.
For I'll be gone to be with Jesus To my home beyond the skies.

So won't you meet me up yonder Life here is but a test.
And if we pass it We can live with all the bless't.

Trot in The Fields

Kevin W. Presley, P.O. Box 2398, Ada, Oklahoma, 74821, (405) 436-1331, January 6, 1996--As I reported last month, I am presently engaged in a three month work with the Blue Springs congregation near Mt. Vernon, Kentucky. The work is progressing well. It is really a pleasure to work with Bro. Zade McClure. On Tuesday evenings and Thursday evenings, we are meeting to give instruction in the rudiments of music and in public speaking skills. Several have a desire to become teachers and song leaders. They are taking a real interest which makes my job a whole lot easier. Lord willing, I will remain here until the end of February. The "New Year's Meeting" in Oklahoma City was a great spiritual lift. There seemed to be a lot of preaching calling us back to the "old time way." We need more of that type of preaching, and even more importantly as the theme of the meeting suggested, we need to just "be strong and do it." Lynwood always makes the meeting an enjoyable experience. As usual, he did a great job. I haven't gotten the dates all arranged yet for my '96 meeting schedule, but the following is how it looks for this spring: Hilltop, KY, March 13-17; Jasper, TN, March 20-24; Olivehurst, CA, May 11-19. May God bless the faithful everywhere. Pray for the work.

Kenneth R. Middick, P.O. Box 269, Seneca, MO, 64865--We have enjoyed another good year in the Lord. 1995 was good for us and the church here in Seneca. We ended the year in West Virginia at the New Year's meeting in Huntington. The Huntington, Spring Valley, and Garretts Creek brethren put on a wonderful meeting. The association and fellowship with the brethren in West Virginia is unsurpassed on earth. There were two confessions during that meeting and we pray that the promotion of the Lord's Word will continue with all that came and took part in the meeting. There were brethren from many areas of West Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Oklahoma, Missouri and possibly others. Our work in Seneca continues to go well and the spiritual growth is obvious. We have weekly studies and occasionally I have the opportunity to preach at other places nearby. Pray for us.

Brian Burns, A.P. 20026 Comayagueta D.C. Honduras Central America 011-504-21-8905. Dec. 25, 1995--It is hard to believe that the year of 1995 is behind us already. My family and I have been in Tegucigalpa Honduras since Aug. of 1993. We had the privilege to begin our work here with the Tony Melton family. Tony and Norma were very good to take us into their home and help us to get settled into the country and the work. Tony is a tireless and conscientious worker for the Lord and he has helped me

tremendously in the work here. You never have to wonder where Tony stands on an issue or why, because he will tell you and give his reasons from the scripture.

Three new congregations have been started in the past two and one half years. Literally hundreds of people have heard the gospel for the first time in home studies and gospel meetings. Personal work and the home study is where the Lord gives the increase in this work so that is where we focus the effort. The church in Honduras has five local men in the work full time. How true are the words of our Lord that the "laborers are few." Another man is provided with partial support from a local congregation and he gives practically full time effort to evangelism. There is yet another young man being supported locally that is studying and developing to preach full time as well. Still a large part of the country goes without the truth because there are not enough men to go.

We also have two faithful congregations in the country of El Salvador. The church has just recently been registered and recognized by the government. These congregations are just outside of the capital city of San Salvador. Brother Jose Molina and his family, of Honduras, moved there almost one year ago and have been working very hard in this area. There is now a local preacher helping him in this fruitful work. Jose hopes to focus on the capital itself toward the end of 1996.

As blessed as we are here in our efforts, we are not without opposition from Satan. There are many good things here but it is not all good fruit and pleasure. Whenever we work with people we will find problems. Brethren have turned back to the work, some have isolated themselves and stopped meeting, there has been needed discipline to preserve the Body of Christ, sickness, and the ever present poverty. We can read many reports of nothing but roses and good times but that is far different from most of the work of the apostles and that described by Jesus. But, our Lord is ever true to His promise to bless us as we live by His word and do our very best for His cause.

Our present plans are to continue to work here until the summer of 1997. We then hope to have found a place to return to and continue to work in the states. If there is a congregation that has a work in mind, we may be able to meet together during our visit next summer (1996) and talk about the work. May the Lord bless the faithful everywhere.

Carl M. Johnson 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820 Jan. 13--We enjoyed the New Year's Meeting and Preacher's Study very much, and benefited from them both. It really is good to be home for a while; the church here seems to be doing very well. My meetings schedule for the next few months includes: Tulsa, OK (Feb. 3-4); Nashville, TN (Mar. 20-24); Bridgeport, TX (Mar. 28-31); Healdton, OK (Homecoming Meeting Apr. 5-7); Kansas City, KS—36th

and Everett (Apr. 10-14); Joplin, MO (Apr. 17-21); Hartwell, AR (Apr. 28-May 5); Jacksonville, FL (May 22-26); Cable Ridge, MO (June 1-9); Hamilton, OH (June 16-23); San Angelo, TX (June 21-28); Bunner Ridge, WV (Aug. 4-11); Piedmont, AL (Aug. 18-25); and London, KY (Sept. 15-22). I shall list the rest of my 1996 schedule later. Please continue to pray in our behalf.

Brett Hickey, P.O. Box 68, Mtn. Home, AR 72653. December 15, 1995--The congregation here was stunned by the sudden death of Joanna Reynolds, age 27, from colon cancer. Her faith amazed those who watched the cancer run its course. In the past few months we have had area meetings by Johnny Elmore, Carl Johnson, Irvin Barnes, Bill Davis and Doug Hawkins. Lynwood Smith held our fall meeting and did an excellent job. The closest thing to a complaint was that Lynwood did not bring enough of his recently released sermon books to go around. As at all times, Jimmie Smith and family provided excellent backing. It was an honor to preach at Ventura, Harrison, Broken Arrow, Lone Rock and Pottsville; we were able to do considerable field work. At Pottsville, Brother Cantrell assisted in canvassing Pottsville and part of Russellville. From that effort we produced several studies as well as significant outsider attendance. Brother Cantrell was equipped with the basics of personal evangelism and has leads and studies to follow up on. We look forward to our meeting there next summer. At Broken Arrow, our time was divided up into field work and preparing those interested in doing personal evangelism. We hope and trust that both efforts will bring forth spiritual and numerical growth. We enjoyed our visit with the Ventura brethren immensely. It was exciting to welcome Bro. Robert Brancato home. His Bible knowledge and teaching ability will be a great asset to the congregation. While in Ventura, we were able to go to a study with Raymond Fox with some Spanish speaking leads in the area. The work Raymond does is impressive. The local work provides continual excitement. A generous and scriptural attitude toward evangelizing with the Lord's money has enabled us to reach the community in Mountain Home by newspaper, radio and television. Most of our media success has been through weekly newspaper articles, generating many studies and several visitors from the community. We seized the opportunity to preach in the local jail and have had numerous studies with inmates. It looks like at least one of them will obey the gospel. Besides these efforts, we have been able to sustain studies with about twenty people each month. Most of these are weekly or bi-weekly. Eight of these individuals are non-members. We appreciate the Leawood Village congregation in Joplin for making our local efforts possible. We thrill to hear that the Lord is blessing congregations with numerical growth in the states as well as in foreign lands. May we all rejoice with them that rejoice!

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE (USPS 407-560)

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LITTLE MATTERS

By Benjamin Franklin

It may seem strange that a human body, weighing one hundred and fifty pounds, would be disturbed by a little thorn in it, not an eighth of an inch long! But, strange as it may appear, it is a fact. And you can not accustom the body to it by piercing the thorn in deeper and deeper, till the body will become easy and comfortable; but you can in that way produce irritation, then inflammation, then mortification, and then death. Death has been produced in this way many times. He is no friend to the body who continues to push the thorn in deeper and deeper, nor is he who would excuse him in so doing, or encourage him in it. There is but one remedy, and that is to remove the thorn. Even if you have to make the would much larger than it is, the thorn must be removed, or the end will be death.

There are cases in which a thorn might be pierced into the flesh and inch, and produce no pain or irritation; but they are cases where there is no life in the flesh. A thorn pierced into a dead body will produce no pain or irritation. A dead body has no power to resist it, and will make no effort. This is the reason precisely that a thorn produces no irritation or pain when pierced into certain bodies. They are dead bodies. It is no indication that the body is not alive and in healthy condition, to find it resisting foreign matter, and making an effort to remove obstructions, but when it can not do this, the body must die. It can not live and the obstruction remain, at least, only for a short time. But who will permit even a little thorn to remain in his flesh? We care not how little it may be; it is foreign, it is irritating, and, unless removed, will produce death.

It was a little thing for Eve to partake of the forbidden fruit. Thomas Paine inquired, "What harm was there in eating an apple?" This is the watchword with all the unlawful things that people desire to do. "What harm is it?" When we worship according to Scripture we never inquire, "What harm is it?" It is not in doubt, and call out no such inquiry. It is not under any suspicion. To worship according to Scripture is manifestly right. Why should be lag in anything in doubt, under suspicion, and repulsive to any portion of the body, when we have a divinely-prescribed worship held in no doubt?

It was a little thing for Achan to take a Babylonish garment, some silver, and a wedge of gold, and secrete them in his tent; but when he came to confess; it was not a little matter.

He said: "I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel." On account of this little matter, three thousand men were defeated, and Israel disgraced. "Joshua said, Why has thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones." Here is a fine sample

of little matters, and of troubling the people of God with little matters. See Joshua vii. 19-26.

It was a little matter for Uzza to "put forth his band to hold the ark;" but he fell dead on account of it. See I Chron. xiii. 9. He appeared to have been friendly to the ark, sincere, etc., but his touching the ark brought death. What harm was there in touching the ark? It did not injure it. It may be that he saved it from falling. But he violated the law of God. He incurred the anger of God.

What became of them who offered strange fire on God's altar? See Lev. x.: "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord." That was a little matter; only slightly tampering with the worship; simply introducing a new element, which the Lord commanded them not, or did not command them. It is a fearful thing to tamper with the worship.

In one word: "If every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward," in God's dealings with men in former ages, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? If God allowed no departures in the typical worship, why should we assume that he will permit it in the worship typified? If everything had to be done according to the patterns given to Moses in the typical dispensation, how can any man infer that we may depart from the substance? We had better take heed now. We may not add any thing, nor take away from what the Lord gave. We may not preach any other gospel, or even pervert the gospel of Christ.

It was a little matter to charge that Jesus had "an unclean spirit," but those who did it sinned against the Holy Spirit, and are in danger of "eternal damnation."

It was a little matter of Ananias and Sapphira to lie about the price of their possessions, but it was soon followed by a judgment from the Lord.

It was a little matter for the Corinthians to get up a feast when they met to worship, but on account of it many were sickly, weakly, and some had died.

Some of the little matters now among us will be found sufficient to stop the ark of God, and cause more than three thousand to be defeated. If Moses were to address some of our men, he would say to them, as he did to Aaron, "What hath this people done to thee that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?" or as Joshua said to Achan: "Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day." Let us hear and live.

from A Book of Gems.

Our purpose is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

"To continue speaking the truth in love," "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," "keeping the ordinances as delivered."

"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) 'And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in.'" (Isa. 58:12).

VOL. LXVV

LEBANON, MISSOURI, March, 1996

NO. 3

CHOOSING CHURCH LEADERS

by James D. Orten

Some decisions have far-reaching consequences. No decision of a church is more fateful than the choice of its leaders. If leaders are faithful and effective, the congregation will grow and remain true to God's word. If they are unfaithful or ineffective, the church is almost certainly doomed to failure.

The Israelite people were held responsible for their sins, but their prophets and priests were also condemned for causing them to stray. "My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains..." (Jer. 50:6). "Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee: and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity" (Lam. 2:14). These are examples of dozens of similar passages. Will churches with poor or wicked leaders fare better than Israel?

I believe most Christians want to choose church leaders Scripturally and well, but we have often not known how. Sometimes there is no deliberate choice at all; those who are the most zealous, and perhaps most vocal, simply assume the role. The problem with this method, aside from the fact that it appears unscriptural, is that there is no assurance that good men will lead. Many noble men have taken the leadership of churches where no one else was willing. But others have assumed it because they, like Diotrephes (III Jno. 9), loved "the preeminence."

In the following paragraphs, I will explain four principles that can serve as guidelines in choosing leaders. In several respects, they also may serve to guide the functions of the leaders in their offices. "Leaders" refers to those who fill church offices named in the Scriptures, such as elders, deacons, evangelists, and teachers. Additionally, the term implies the functions of the offices such as teaching in the pulpit, participating in decision-making, and so forth.

I. Offices in the church, and the functions that attend to them, are privileges, not rights.

Based on our actions, one might think we are obligated to give a brother any role he wishes, unless he can be charged with grievous sin. For example, how often have we seen morally good men, but poor teach-

ers occupy pulpits because they wanted to and because church leaders believed they had no right to deny them.

This principle is clearly described in Paul's teaching about inspired tongue-speakers in I Corinthians 14:1-33. Those who had this coveted gift appear to have demanded the right to speak in the church, even when no interpreter was present. Paul said "no". If there is no interpreter, their teaching will confuse, not edify, and "all things" in the church must "be done unto edifying" (v. 26). But what must a good and spiritually-gifted man do when there is no interpreter? "Let him keep silence in the church" (v. 28). For how long? As long as there is no interpreter. Do you mean, Paul, that this faithful brother can not exercise his talent? Of course not, he can do it in a private capacity; "let him speak to himself and to God" (v. 28). A brother who resents exercising his talents in private should take a lesson from our sisters, who do so all of the time. The rule is, if it will not edify, it must not be done in the church.

There are many reasons that might make one's presence in a pulpit unedifying either temporarily or in the long term. When visiting foreign churches, I believe I have been excluded from pulpits because brethren thought my accent and strangeness would detract from the worship until the church got acquainted with me. It was the right decision, whether or not I liked it at the time. When a brother sins, he should be restored to fellowship as soon as he repents. If his reputation has been seriously compromised, it may not be advisable to return him immediately to the pulpit.

Church leaders have the right to decide who will edify the church from the pulpit. As with all rights, they have the responsibility to be sure that their judgments are made for the benefit of the church, not from personal and impure motives. Church members who complain about those who occupy the pulpit are under the same charge. With rights always go responsibilities.

II. Choosing leaders is a cooperative task between the Lord, the church, and the men.

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THE BIBLE ONLY

By Ronny F. Wade

Is the Bible a safe guide in matters religious? I suppose that practically every person who claims to be religious would answer that question in the affirmative. And yet, the vast majority of people don't believe that it is necessary that we follow the Bible only. Many claim that one's conscience is a safe guide. As long as they do not violate their conscience they think everything is all right. While they freely admit that the Bible should be used they feel in addition that one should have the right to do what ever he feels is good, even though the Bible may not teach certain things. Still others believe in following their feelings. Their reason for believing they are saved, is that they "feel it." They too will agree that we should follow the Bible, but in certain instances if you "feel you are saved" nothing else matters. Then we are reminded by some of the value of church creeds, disciplines, confessions of faith, etc. They argue that these are necessary to a proper understanding of the Bible. They also claim that they help pronounce and define certain Bible doctrines that are rather obscure. Of course they don't completely object to or reject the Bible, but they definitely feel that these additional helps are necessary. At the extreme end of this position are those who claim that other books such as the Book of Mormon, The Koran, and the writings of Mrs. Ellen White are inspired like the Bible and are to be taken with equal weight and consideration. However, in view of all the facts, we are constrained to stand opposed to all the foregoing reasoning. We believe that the Bible only should be accepted and followed by man. Anything else constitutes an addition or a change in that which has been given and approved by God. We believe that: **THE BIBLE COMPLETELY FURNISHED US TO EVERY GOOD WORK.** 2 Peter 1:3, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." If in the Bible we have been given all things, then there is no need for additional creeds or books. Notice 2 Tim. 3:16-17, "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." If the Bible furnishes us to all good works, what need is there for further revelation? What can a church creed or discipline do for us that the Bible cannot? Such questions in the face of such scriptures make readily visible the uselessness of human works. Another objection that

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: Does a brother forfeit his right to participate in the services of the church if he is divorced because his wife committed adultery? (MS) Answer: The implications of the above question are far-reaching. For that reason, I would like to notice some background information of a general nature that is pertinent to the discussion. First of all, it should be noted that any sin can be forgiven. To the alien, Peter said said, "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38). Thus, if we truly repent, all sins are forgiven. As children of God, we are assured by John that "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. This simply means that when people commit murder, adultery, theft or whatever, and they repent and obey God, they are forgiven. Since we have all sinned, it would be impossible for a church to use anyone who has not been guilty of some sin in the past. Secondly, it should be noted that in a divorce for adultery (Matthew 19:9), the innocent party has committed no sin. It is the guilty that has transgressed the law of God. Should someone say, "Well, I think both parties are to blame when a divorce hap-

pens," therefore, "there is no such thing as an innocent party." Such reasoning is false. In the Old Testament, God believed that there were innocent parties (Numbers 5:12-31). Moses also believed there were innocent parties, because he killed the guilty and set the innocent free. Since the innocent party in a divorce for adultery has committed no sin, for what reason would he be required to keep his seat and not participate in the services of the church? Thirdly, there is no scripture in the New Testament that states or implies that scripturally divorced people lose their rights or status as children of God. How then can we make a rule that excludes them from full service and fellowship? What line of reasoning allows us to assume that one is automatically cut off from participation in the services of the church, simply because he has had the sad misfortune of being the innocent victim of a marriage adulterated by the guilty party? For these reasons, I must conclude that the innocent party does not forfeit his rights when he is divorced for adultery. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808.)

THE VOICE OF STRANGERS

By Bruce Roebuck

John 10:1-5 records one of the most comforting parables taught by Jesus. In it he describes the relationship of the shepherd to his sheep. This story is indicative of Christ, the Good Shepherd, and his disciples. The two most outstanding points of this story are care and leadership. We see Christ's care for his sheep or disciples in the fact that the shepherd goes before to lead them. Thus he would see and know all dangers and can warn his disciples. Another indication is the fact that the sheep trust him. They know his voice and follow. We see his leadership in that he leads, not herds the flock. Jesus is our leader. We follow him because we know his voice. We know the voice of Christ by knowing his word, the Bible. By his word he gently leads us to heaven. But, as in the parable, there are voices that call to us today. They call to distract us from our leader and would lead us astray. Let us note what some of these voices are teaching us.

QUESTION THE SCRIPTURES

These voices that call question the very book upon which our faith is based. They tell us that it is "just a book" and "it is not inspired". Yet hear what Paul said, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost

teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." I Corinthians 2:12-13. This makes it abundantly clear that these writers were inspired. The Lord had revealed to them the truth and inspired them by means of the Holy Spirit. II Timothy 3:16 states emphatically that all scripture is inspired of God.

These voices encourage us to question scriptural authority. They say, "where the scripture is silent we are at liberty". Yet, though the Bible is silent on certain matters, we must not let our liberty violate other principles found in the Book. The silence of God has never given license to frivolous change. II John 9 reads, "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". Again Paul speaks on this matter in Colossians 3:17, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him". Men need to understand that the Bible is inspired and prescribes the life that God would have us lead.

QUESTION OUR WORSHIP

Voices call to us encouraging us to rethink the way we view our worship services. They ask, "Is it really necessary to be present?" When the inspired writer addressed this topic he said, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some

is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Hebrews 10:25. Please notice he did not say it suggested that you be there or it is wise for you to be there. He said be there. Not only that, but we are to encourage others to be in the assembly. Indeed God expects us to come together at the appropriate time to worship. He wants us to be there so much that commanded us to be at the assembly of the saints.

These voices tell us, "we do not have to have scriptural authority for what we do in worship services". In debate one man said the Bible gives no instructions for corporate worship. But indeed the Bible does address this issue. John 4:23-24 states, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth". From this we surely see that our worship must be guided by the Truth. Jesus said that Truth is the word of God in John 17:17. A careful study of the New Testament reveals that authority.

QUESTION OUR FELLOWSHIP

Voices call to us telling us we should not limit our fellowship. They tell us we are too strict, that the action outlined in I Corinthians 5:11 was just for that day. "You can't treat people like that today", they tell us. As with all the commands of God in the New Tes-

tament it is not subject to change or being outdated. Please note what the Bible says, "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat". The harm that those sins do to the church is as severe as it was in the first century. This command is designed to keep the church pure. In I Corinthians 5:5 we find the paramount reason, salvation. It reads, "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus".

Voices call to us asking why we cannot fellowship those who worship in error. They tell us it is a "minor disagreement". Perverting worship and dividing brethren is not a "minor disagreement," it is sin. Ephesians 5:11 says, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them". Unscriptural worship is a "work of darkness". Romans 16:17 reads, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them". Dividing brethren, as was and is done by the innovators, is sin. To yield to this idea is to rob the church of her distinctiveness.

May we ever remember to whom we belong. Let us ignore the strange voices and follow the Good Shepherd. — P.O. Box 184, Wynnewood, OK, 73098.

SPECIAL MUSIC

C.A. Smith

As a reader of the Old Paths Advocate you might well be shocked to even think that there might be a need to write on the subject of "Special Music." In the not too far distant past, I would have thought so myself. But I am not so sure about it now! I do not make a practice of crying "Wolf!" about everything, and I hope that I never shall, for I know that we have some liberties in our "Expressions of Worship", even when it comes to singing. Respecting this as I do then, I will not attempt to bind upon you that you sing out of a certain book, sing soprano, alto, tenor, or bass, nor will I tell you how many songs you must sing in any given worship service. Neither will I bind upon you certain facial expressions and etc., as long as they are not distasteful and distracting, since we are to be sure that we, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (I Cor. 14:40).

Of course we are not at all surprised that our aggressive brethren are troubled by the craze for "Special Music" in their worship assemblies. Many of their leading preachers already have made bold statements as: "We should let individuals and congregations use the musical format they like without judging them." And, as has been the case with every innovation, this one is sweeping through their congregations like wild-

fire and will fan the fires for succeeding departures from the Bible Pattern. These brethren have come to the point where they believe that "Worship" is to please the worshiper. Which of course makes worship center around people instead of around God. When you have such a mind-set as this, you have lost sight of what real worship is all about. Worship is for the express purpose of pleasing God and be it known, that He accepts in worship, only that which He authorizes. Let us never even think about swapping that which is authorized for that which is not authorized!

I hope and pray that we will not follow in their foot-steps. I hope and pray that we will always be known as a people that respects the teaching of the Bible and want to do things just like the Bible teaches us to do them. I hope and pray that we will fully understand how terrible it is to depart from the teaching of the Scriptures.

At this point and time, I do not know of any instance where any congregation in our brotherhood uses "Special Music" (i.e., solos, quartets, choruses etc.), and I hope and pray that I never shall. But, I am afraid that we are seeing how close we can get to that without actually doing it. With my own eyes I saw, and with my own ears I heard, in one of the brotherhood

meeting house on a Sunday afternoon, brethren and sisters in Christ put on a concert (for the lack of a better word), the likes of which you might see if you went to see the Stamps Quartet, Statesman Quartet, Imperials and etc., with showmanship, rousing applause, hollering and other gestures. I was actually stunned and found it very difficult to keep my seat. I wonder what the young people of the church thinks about this? I wonder what some denominational person would think about us carrying on like that? I know all the arguments that the promoters of this kind of stuff will use. It wasn't a Worship Service! The church building is not sacred!, and etc. But wait a minute! If you can use the church buildings for such carryings on, what would be wrong in our using our buildings for a "Ladies Lectureship," "A Style Show,"

or "A Political Rally?" Too, I believe that when we sing "Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs" that they should be sung in our hearts to the Lord, don't you? If not, why not?

Unless someone shows me I am wrong. I cannot bid "God speed" to such for I would be guilty of endorsing that which I believe is a dangerous practice. (11 John 9-11), and that would make me a partaker in their evil deeds. As I have heard brother Lynwood Smith say, several times: "I am Church of Christ to the core, and I hope that it shows in every area of my walk for the Lord." Nobody likes good singing better than I do, but let us please respect God's Word, the church, our brethren and ourselves and use it to glorify and praise God. — 810 NW 6th St., Andrews, TX 79714

THE LORD'S DAY

By Irvin Barnes

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day (Revelation 1:10). The term Lord's is translated from the Greek word Kuriakos. Vine defines the word as "pertaining to a lord or master." Thayer says, "of or belonging to the Lord." Thayer also states that in Revelation 1:10, the Lord's day is, "the day devoted to the Lord, sacred to the memory of Christ's resurrection." The same term is used in 1 Corinthians 11:20, regarding the Lord's supper or communion. The church at Corinth had defiled the Lord's supper to the point that Paul in so many words says, "You should be coming together to eat the Lord's supper, but because you have defiled it, what you are doing when you come together cannot even be called the Lord's supper." Most Christians have a clear understanding of the relationship between Christ and the Lord's supper. To separate Christ from the supper would render the supper void and useless. The connection or attachment between Christ and the communion cannot be overstated. According to the statement made by the apostle John (Rev. 1:10), there is also an inseparable union between Christ and one of the days of the week, for it is called the Lord's day. Lord's day, Lord's supper—they are equal as far as relationship to Christ is concerned. Just as the supper pertains and belongs to the Lord, so does the Lord's day pertain to and belong to the Lord.

THE SABBATH IS GONE

When John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, could it be that he was in the Spirit on the seventh day of the week, which was the Jewish Sabbath? The answer is no! The Sabbath is gone according to the scriptures. There is no Sabbath. There is no seventh day Sabbath, no first day Sabbath, no Sabbath at all! "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? And the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat" (Amos 8:5). At the time of this writing by Amos the

prophet, Israel had a mind for rebellion and disobedience. They desired to "buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes." They wanted to cheat in the weights and measures for selling grain and other produce. They hoped for a time when they would not be restricted against selling or doing business on the monthly feast days and on the Sabbath. So, they asked, "When will the Sabbath and the new moon be gone?" Amos tells them that the land shall tremble or this evil. He warns that great destruction will come upon the people as penalty for their sins. However, he also answers the question, "When will the Sabbath be gone." "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day" (Amos 8:9). When will the Sabbath be gone? When the sun goes down at noon and the earth is darkened on a clear day. Did this ever happen, and if so, when? The words of the prophet were fulfilled at the crucifixion of Christ. "Now from the sixth hour, there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour" (Matthew 27:45).

The sixth hour, Jewish time, corresponds with our noon. This ninth hour corresponds with our 3 p.m. Therefore, when Jesus was on the cross, the sun went down at noon and the earth was darkened on a clear day. From that moment forward, the Sabbath was no longer binding on God's people, for Jesus took it out of the way and nailed it, along with the rest of the law of Moses, to his cross. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Colossians 2:14).

THE SABBATH WILL CEASE

The prophet Hosea also foretold the end of the Sabbath. "I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her Sabbaths, and all

her solemn feasts" (Hosea 2:11). Feast days refers to yearly festivals such as the passover, Pentecost, feast of atonement, feast of tabernacles and of the trumpets (Leviticus 23). New moons refers to the monthly observances, and Sabbaths refers to the weekly Sabbaths. All these the writer says, will "cease." After Paul in Colossians 2:14 explains how that Christ took the ordinances of the law of Moses out of the way and nailed them to his cross, he went on to say: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days" (Colossians 2:16). Meat and drink refers to daily sacrifices, holy day refers to the yearly feasts, new moon to the monthly feasts, and the Sabbath days to the seventh day observance. Hosea said all these observances would cease. Paul says since Christ died on the cross, they have ceased. Since Christ nailed these ordinances to his cross, no man has a right to judge a Christian because he no longer observes these old Jewish holidays.

WHAT IS THE LORD'S DAY?

Since the Sabbath is gone, the Lord's day spoken of by John in Revelation 1:10 cannot be the seventh day Sabbath. The only other day of the week upon which importance is placed in the scripture is the first day of the week. The first day of the week has a unique relationship to Christ as set forth in the following points of scripture. Jesus resurrected on the First Day of the Week. The first day belongs to and pertains to the Lord because he was resurrected on the first day of the week. The importance of the resurrection of Christ cannot be overstated. The resurrection of Christ is called, "the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe," Ephesians 1:19. "When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons" (Mark 16:9 NIV). This passage should settle the question as to what day Jesus was raised from the dead. However, since the KJV says, "Now when Jesus was risen," some who desire to keep the seventh day claim that Jesus was already risen when the women came to the tomb and therefore, they say, he was raised from the dead on the seventh day of the week. Luke 24 offers absolute proof that Jesus was raised on the first day. Jesus himself stated that he would be raised on the third day following his crucifixion (Luke 24:26). While walking on the road to Emmaus, Cleopas told Christ, "today is the third day," since Jesus was delivered, condemned to death, and crucified (Luke 24:13-21). Verse 13 declares that the journey to Emmaus was on the same day the women went to the tomb. So, Jesus was raised the day the women went to the tomb, the same day Cleopas went to Emmaus, which was the third day since Jesus had died. What day was it? Luke 24:1 says the women went to the tomb on the first day of the week. The women did not go to the tomb on the Sabbath day, nor was the Sabbath the third day following the death of Jesus. Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the

week.

THE CHURCH STARTED ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

According to Acts 2:1-4, the baptism of the Holy Ghost came upon the twelve apostles. This was on the first Pentecost day after the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus had promised that the Holy Ghost would come to the apostles (Acts 1:2-9). The Holy Ghost could have been dispatched from heaven on any day. It is significant that Christ saw fit to send the Holy Ghost to the Apostles on the first day of the week. When the Jews heard the preaching of Peter and the other apostles on the day of Pentecost, 3000 responded in repentance and baptism, and the Lord added to the church such as should be saved (Acts 2:36-47). This is the first time in the New Testament that the word "church" is used in the existing sense. Previous to this time, you will find the word church mentioned in the future tense, such as: "upon this rock, I will build my church," Matthew 16:18. Upon the obedience of the penitent Jews, the church was thus started. Pentecost was one of the five Jewish celebrations commanded in Leviticus 23. Beginning at a specific Sabbath, the Jews were to number seven Sabbaths complete. Seven times seven equal 49 days. The day following the seventh Sabbath was the fiftieth day, which is the exact meaning of the word, "Pentecost." Since Pentecost, or the 50th day, followed a Sabbath, or seventh day, the day of Pentecost always fell on the first day of the week. The church, then, had its beginning on the first day of the week.

FIRST DAY WORSHIP

The first day of the week is also distinguished from the other days of the week inasmuch as Christians are taught to assemble for the communion on the first day of the week (Hebrews 10:25, Acts 20:7). It should be remembered that as the Lord's supper pertains to the Lord, the Lord's day also pertains to and belongs to the Lord. Paul commanded a collection to be taken on the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:1-3). Those who practice Sabbathkeeping claim this was a special collection that would not be continued after Paul came to take it to Jerusalem. Please note the passage does not say, "that there be no more collection ever again after I come," but says simply that they were to take a collection each first day so the funds would be ready when Paul or others arrived. Nothing is said to prove that they would not continue the first day collection every first day of the week after Paul departed Corinth for Jerusalem. The first day is distinguished by this act of giving in the assembly on each first day of the week.

CONCLUSION

It is my sincere hope that this short publication will renew in those who read it a greater appreciation for the first day of the week. Let us as Christians put the Lord back into the Lord's day. Let us see the first day of the week for worship, reflection, thanksgiving,

Bible study and visiting. "This is the day which the Lord hath made: we will rejoice and be glad in it,"

Psalm 118:24

CHOOSING CHURCH LEADERS

from page 1

The Lord gives the qualifications for the office. The church, knowing the lives of its members, chooses the ones who fit the qualifications. The men commit themselves to serve.

The church selects men according to God's qualifications. The apostles told the Christians in Jerusalem (Acts 6:3) "look ye out among you seven men." They then gave the qualifications the men should possess. A selection process is implied. When selecting a replacement for Judas (Acts 1), Peter explained to disciples the qualifications and they put forward two men. Only one was needed so the apostles prayed and cast lots, an appropriate procedure in this situation. Solomon said casting lots prevents strife (Prov. 18:18).

Acts 14:23 implies that Paul and Barnabus conducted elections in the churches to select elders. The word in the KJV is "appointed," but as Thayer (p. 668) and Ellicott (p. 92) point out, the original meaning is "to vote by stretching forth the hand." Its specific meaning here is "elect, create, or appoint." The same word is used in II Corinthians 8:19 where the KJV renders it "chosen" and Thayer gives its meaning as "appoint by vote." For these reasons, the NIV gives an alternative reading for Acts 14:23 as "had elders elected." We should point out that these "elections" bore little resemblance to the political circuses we call by the same name. They were not popularity contests. Probably the names of prospective officers were put forward, then Christians gave serious judgments regarding the men's fitness. The apostles seem to have guided the process.

Prospective church officers are not required to have lived sinless lives, no one has, nor to have no room for growth. But there is a clear theme in Scripture that they must have proved themselves before being put in office. An elder must not be a new convert (I Tim. 3:6); deacons must "first be proved" (I Tim. 3:10); and no brother is to be appointed hastily (I Tim. 5:22).

The men chosen must commit themselves to serve. Paul said, "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work" (I Tim. 3:1). "Desire" here means more than we commonly attribute to it. It means to seek after or stretch oneself to obtain, which probably implies preparing one's self for the job.

The installation of a leader is a three-way covenant between the man, who commits himself to serve, the people, who commit themselves to accept and support him, and God who watches over the office. Jehoiada, the priest (II Kings 11), led a revolt that removed a usurper from Judah's throne. When the rightful descendant of David had been made King,

"Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people, that they should be the Lord's people" (v. 17). If such covenants are broken, God says, you "have transgressed my covenant" (Jer. 34:8-18).

III. The ordination ceremony is a public commitment by the leaders and the church to work together.

The nearest comparison to ordination is a marriage ceremony. A marriage is a covenant between spouses to live together for the benefit of both, and the ordination of a leader is a covenant between leader and church to work together for the spiritual benefit of the Lord's cause. God promises to be a witness to a marriage and to hold spouses accountable for their behavior regarding it (Mal. 2:14). As noted above, He does the same for the covenant between His people and their leaders.

There is a form for the installation of leaders that was used in the Old Testament and continued with little modification in the New (see Num. 8:9-11 and 27:18-20). It consists of fasting, prayer, and laying on of hands. In Acts 13, God chose Paul and Barnabus for a work, but he still wanted them sent out by the church. Thus, "when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away" (v. 3).

Fasting was a means of showing humility before God and thus empowering one's prayers (Dan. 9:3). The prayers were, no doubt, for the men and the success of their work. Laying on of hands was a symbol that the church gave the man its authority and blessings to do the work. Some people assume that this action was for the purpose of imparting a special spiritual gift. It was, when an apostle, who had the power to bestow such gifts, used it for that purpose (Acts 8:18-19). But this symbol was used as described here long before the days of New Testament spiritual gifts, and even during those days, it was used for other purposes than imparting gifts. Timothy apparently had the hands of Paul and the elders of the church laid on him at his ordination as an evangelist (I Tim. 4:14 and II Tim. 1:6). Paul probably gave him a gift at that time, but the elders had no such power.

The symbolism of laying hands in an ordination is similar to that of the preacher who lays his hand on the clasped hands of the couple and pronounces them husband and wife. An evangelist is acting as an agent of God, the man, and the woman in performing a marriage; and he is acting as an agent of God, the church, and the leader in conducting an ordination.

IV. If leaders go astray, they can be removed.

Some leaders sinned in ancient times, as Scriptures used in the introduction show. Paul said it will happen in the church. Speaking to the elders of Ephesus he said, "of your own selves shall men arise, speaking

perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30). What is to be done when leaders sin? God does not accept sin in any one, so sinful leaders are to be treated much like other Christians. But the Bible does recognize two types of sins by leaders, one of which likely would not be the same for those who held no position of leadership.

One type could be described as being overtaken in a fault, as anyone could be and as Peter and Barnabas were at Antioch (Gal. 2:11-14). There is reason to believe that these men, through Paul's rebuke, realized and corrected their sins immediately. The church suffered no permanent damage and, apparently, neither did their reputations. All of the group continued their work for the Lord.

But what about leaders who do as Paul predicted, go far astray and even lead disciples after them. This is pretty much a sin of leaders, for those who were not, probably could carry disciples away with them. The church is hurt and souls are lost. We must love the souls of such leaders, want their return to the Lord, and receive them when they do. True reconciliation is difficult because the rupture was deep, but the principles discussed above offer guidance.

First, as noted under Principle I, church leaders who remain must make sure that their actions are truly based on Scripture and objective judgments about what is good for the church, not personal feelings. The later is a clear possibility. Few things hurt more than to watch a trusted leader go. That hurt can easily turn to anger that causes the erring one's road back to be filled with hurdles.

Second, the errant leader must understand the hurt and feelings of betrayal he caused. He must know that hurt people are naturally wary, and he must begin to rebuild trust by completely open and honest discussion of his beliefs, motives, and intentions. Perhaps most important of all, he must realize that as he proved himself the first time (see Principle II), he must now do it again.

There is a case in the book of Ezekiel (44:10-16) that seems relevant here. The prophet discusses the priests who went astray and served as priests to idols when the Northern Kingdom of Israel broke away from Judah. God said, "the Levites who went far from me when Israel went astray and who wandered from me after their idols must bear the consequences of their sin" (NIV). These men were received back when the Israelites were restored from captivity. They were even allowed to perform what Ellicott calls (p. 333) "the menial offices of the priesthood," but they were not allowed to serve at the altar. This was reserved for the "sons of Zadok" who had remained faithful. I do not want to force this application in ways that may not be appropriate. But I sincerely believe that one who has hurt the Lord's church should be willing to prove himself before he is placed a second time in leadership roles.

May all Christians respect the leaders of the Lord's church and pray regularly for their guidance. May all leaders, and those who aspire to become such, be as Ezra (7:10) who "prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments."

THE BIBLE ONLY

from page 3

we have to human creeds is the fact that they: **CHANGE EVERY FEW YEARS.** Since this is true one never knows from year to year what he will believe about a certain thing. Recently a leading denomination that for years had held to the idea that infants were born totally depraved, and thus needed to be sprinkled, had a meeting of the church council and completely changed their view. Now all the people who subscribe to the doctrines of this denomination will be forced to change their views. Can we afford to anchor our soul and hope of heaven on anything so unstable? So as a result of this: **HUMAN CREEDS CANNOT BE DEFENDED.** A human creed is objectionable if it contains more than the Bible. A hu-

man creed is objectionable if it contains less than the Bible. A human creed is objectionable if it differs from the Bible. And if a human creed is the same as the Bible, it would be useless since it would contain the same thing that the Bible contains. Upon what grounds then can we defend and insist upon the use of human creeds? The answer is none. They cannot be defended under any circumstances. **HUMAN CREEDS CAUSE DIVISION.** Human creeds are responsible for much of the division in the religious world today. They have erected walls and barriers that include all who agree with their teachings, and exclude all who disagree. Not only do they cause division, but they also perpetuate it. If all these human documents could be removed, a great stride in the direction of unity will have been made. — P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO LEO COOK

Leo was born the eighth child of ten, to Huey and Lavada Cook. Growing up in the Church under sound and able teachers and leaders, he was baptized by his oldest brother Clovis, at an early age. Reared in a singing family, he made music his life long pleasure, and was blessed with a beautiful tenor voice that was

unequaled. Leo was part of the Cook Brothers quartet, who sang on the t.v. program, "Let The Bible Speak" for many years. It was said of him, "the weather never got bad enough, or the road too long for him to drive to Missouri to make the tapes". He would go as long as he was able, anywhere to hear good gospel singing.

Leo suffered three major strokes in the last seven years, each one leaving him somewhat disabled. Each

time he fought back as best he could, but on the morning of November 23rd, about 6:30 a.m., his soul took flight to Paradise there to await our Lord's return.

Leo was quiet and undemanding, but a very deep thinker and a profound teacher of the scriptures. Most of his daily hours were spent in searching the scriptures for a deeper understanding. His happiest times were spent in discussing the word. When he walked into your house, you might as well put the coffee pot on and reach for the Bible.

The loss of his presence in our services and fellowship is deeply felt. That beautiful tenor voice has been silenced here on earth. We can only read his sermons that bring sweet memories. We can't see him struggle to the pulpit, or hear him pray, but God be thanked for the years this family had him.

His compassion for others was unequalled. He firmly believed that Christian people do not have the right to be unkind. His and Eva Nell's home was always open to the preachers and their families, regardless of their circumstances. He was a natural unassuming leader. Due to his efforts, the Preachers Study was made a reality again in 1973, and still continues.

The Memorial service for Leo at Lunn's Colonial Home in Wichita Falls, Texas was beautiful yet with the simplicity that he desired. Glorious singing and one of the largest crowds the funeral home had handled. A tribute to Leo Cook.

Our grief is only made bearable by knowing that God granted him his wish. He never wanted to live trapped in a useless body, deprived of his speech, sight, and many natural functions. God was merciful to him that morning, as the sun was rising on a day, the world calls Thanksgiving.

We have every assurance that he is safe in the arms of God, free from all pain, strife, tears, and heartaches.

MAY HIS MEMORY REST WITH US ALWAYS.

The Cook Family

PASSING IT ON

We continue to hear favorable comments about the book of sermons by brother M. Lynwood Smith with the caption above. Numerous people have said, "I couldn't put it down until I had read every word." This beautiful book, honoring Lynwood's fifty-two years in the preaching field is blue with gold stamping, and is printed on an excellent grade of paper. The pictures and short biography add to its value. They make excellent gifts and why not buy one to loan to friends to read? The price is \$19.95 per copy, plus \$2.05 for postage and handling. OK residents add \$1.44 for sales tax. Order from: Pathway Books and Bibles, P.O. Box 1183, Ardmore, OK 73402.—Johnny Elmore

ANNUAL SPRING MEETING

The Eleventh Street Acres Congregation of the Church of Christ will be hosting the 21st Annual

Gospel Meeting, March 15-17, 1996. The meeting will be conducted at our regular meeting place, on the corner of East 11th Street and S. 141st E. Ave., Tulsa, OK.

Bro. Aaron Risener will be directing the meeting. We have four other speakers also, which are as follows:

Friday night, Jimmy Cating and David Griffin. Time 7:30 p.m.

Saturday night, Kip B. Smith and Randal Baker. Time 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, Lord's Day, Aaron Risener for both services. Time: 10 a.m. (and for this meeting only) 3 p.m.

Please come and enjoy this spiritual feast with us, if possible.

SPRING MEETING

You are invited to the Spring meeting at the Crescent Ridge Church of Christ at Birmingham, Alabama. William St. John of Paris, Texas will be our speaker. It will be from Wednesday, April 3rd to Sunday, April 7th. Week night services will be 7:30 p.m.

Saturday 6:00 p.m. - Sunday 10:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Everyone welcome. Please make your plans to be with us. If you need directions or a place to stay please call (205) 956-2886 or (205) 640-3320.

FIELDER ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST

Jonesboro, GA

The dates of the meeting, Saturday, March 30th through Lord's Day, April 7th.

Conducting the meeting: Bro. Bill Davis

Times of services: 7:30 p.m. nightly. First Lord's Day, 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.. 2nd Saturday, April 6th, 10:30 a.m. visiting speakers. Last Lord's Day at 11:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

SPRING MEETING

Liberty, KY March 13- 17 Kevin Presley 7:30 nightly

Sunday, 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

OUR DEPARTED

WHITE--Melvin Odell White, 76, of Gridley, died Nov. 9, 1995 at Biggs-Gridley Memorial Hospital. Born in Addison, Ala., he was a Butte County resident for one year. Survivors include his wife of 57 years, Jewel A. White of Gridley; a son, Melvin Hobert White of Sacramento; five daughters, Patricia Louise White of Alabama, Camellia Domenigoni of Gridley, Sharon Joyce Mueller of Lindsey and Elizabeth Elaine Moore and Robin Rae Young, both of Sacramento. Services were conducted at the Church of Christ, Yuba City, Ca. with Michael Fox officiating. Michael Fox works with the church at Auburn, Ca.

MINSON--Robert Wayne Minson was born to Garrett and Daisy Minson, at Duncan, Ok., Feb. 10

1945. He passed away Jan 10, 1996. Wayne was baptized at the age of 11 years, at Duncan, Ok., and was very dedicated to the cause of Christ. Wayne had a brain tumor when in the eighth grade, fell down stairs at school, and was unable to attend school any more, but that did not keep him from reading almost constantly always reading the bible, and copying down many scriptures. Wayne was able to lead songs for sometime, but his affliction wore on and he became unable to do so. The bible, and The Church were his most important subjects of conversation. After he became unable to attend the services, many times he expressed his desire to return to the worship. Even though Wayne was severely handicapped, he most always seemed happy. He was born, lived, died, and was buried in Duncan, Ok., He is survived by his mother, Daisy Minson, two brothers, and two sisters. I was privileged to speak at his funeral. Vance Ayers

SAINT JOHN-Joseph Edward Saint John was born at Neffs, Ohio on September 18, 1918. On the 25th of January 1947 he was married to Dorothy Davenport. He died January 14, 1996 at Paris, Texas. He worked as a youth in a coal mine, later in the "CCC" then spent 4 years in the U.S. Army and over 22 years in the U.S. Air Force, from which he retired in 1967. He was a member of the church, worshipping last at Paris. He was preceded in death by brothers: Lemuel and James, and sisters, Pearl Howell and Vera Campbell. He is survived by his wife, Dorothy; a daughter, Dr.

Violet King; sons, William, Kenneth, Michael, and James. There are 5 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren. Brothers who survive are, Harold, David and Marcus; and two sisters, Ruth Castillo and Marie Medford. It was a privilege for this writer to have known Brother Joe, and to be a deep friend of the family. Sister Dorothy is known among the preachers for her faithfulness and William, a son, himself a distinguished preacher. Brother Joe was attended to in every way by the family during his illness. His place cannot be filled by another. Our hearts are with the family in this days of trial and it is hoped the words from our Savior will draw all present at the "memorial service" to a closer walk with God.

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

SHAW-TIDMORE—On the evening of Dec. 23, 1995, it was my good pleasure to say the words which united Thomas Bart Shaw and Jessica Marie Tidmore in marriage. Ivan and Gina Costa sang and a large company of well-wishers attended the ceremony which was conducted in the meeting house on Green Oaks in Arlington, TX. Bart is the son of Betty Shaw, of Springfield, MO and the late Thomas L. (Tommy) Shaw. Jessica is the daughter of Randy and Cynthia Tidmore, of El Paso, TX. The wedding was a beautiful occasion and we wish for them all the happiness life has to offer. They will live in Columbia, MO.—Johnny Elmore

From The Fields

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, Feb. 6 — I spoke at Weatherford, TX Dec. 17 and at Washington, OK Dec. 31. I hope to be Washington next year in a meeting. We enjoyed the New Year meeting, as always. The singing and preaching were good. We attended the 4th Sunday singing at Healdton last month and look for it to be here this month. I am to speak at Capitol Hill Feb. 18.

Joe Hisle, Rt. 4, Box 188, Ada, OK. 74820: I have enjoyed being home for awhile this winter, but it is time to think about my meeting schedule for 1996. Following is a copy of my schedule, if you are in the area of any of these meeting I would like to extend a personal invitation for you to come and be a part of the meeting. March 10-17, Piedmont, AL.; March 24-31, Oakdale, CA.; May 3-12, Spring Valley, W.V.; May 17-19, Blue, OK.; May 20-23, Irving, TX.; May 24-26, Healdton, OK.; June 2-9, Harrison, AR.; June 16-23, Columbus, GA.; July 7-14, Odom, Mo.; July 21-28, Pansey, AL.; August 2-11, Wayne, W.V.; Au-

gust 18-25, Mt. Home, MO.; September 8-15, Brumley, MO.; September 22-29, Bakersfield, CA.; October 5-13, Sharonville, OH. We are thankful for the continuing support of the congregation here at Ada and of the brotherhood in general. May God richly bless the efforts of the Lord's church in 1996. Please pray for me and my family.

Kevin W. Presley, P.O. Box 2398 Ada, OK, 74820, (405) 436-1331--The work is going well here at Blue Springs, KY. I am scheduled to be here through the end February. At that time I will return to Ada, Lord willing, and get ready to begin in gospel meetings for this year. I am indebted to the Ada brethren for allowing me this time to spend with the brethren here in Kentucky. Over the past few weekends, six have come confessing faults, one desiring to be restored, and four have been baptized. There are still several others who attend here that need to obey the gospel or be restored. I am enjoying the association of Bro. Zade McClure, as always. I have had to switch some things around in my schedule, so here is a revised version for the first half of this year: Hilltop, KY, March 13-17; Jasper, TN, March 20-24; Bloomfield, IA, May 5-12; Springfield, MO, April 3-7; Olivehurst, CA, June 1-9; Beatyville, KY June 15-23 and Earlytown, AL, July 5-14. If you can be with us in any of these efforts, we

would love to see you. May God bless the brotherhood!

Miles King, Rt. 1 Box 115, Scotland, AR 72141-- At Scotland we are looking forward to our Spring meeting with Bruce Roebuck March 22-24 and our Summer meeting with Terry Baze June 16th thru 23rd. The church at Lamar, AR is now meeting in their new church building and look forward to a gospel meeting with Bro. Jerry Richardson in May. I'm looking forward to holding meetings this Spring at Mozier, Ill. (March 10-17) and Slocomb, Al. (April 3-7th). This past Lord's day I was with the Dean Solomon Road church in Fayetteville, Arkansas where one precious soul returned to Jesus Christ.

Doug Hawkins, HCR Box 203-C, Rocky Mount, MO 65072, Feb. 14, 1995 was certainly a busy year for us in the kingdom, holding several gospel meetings and working locally in the area where we are now living. We immensely enjoyed every one of our meetings last year and we hope and pray the congregations were benefited by our cooperative effort. With good size crowds gathering at every service, our meeting last fall in Chestnut Ridge, Ky. was very delightful. The five day meeting closed with one confession of fault. Based on what several told me during the meeting, it's my understanding that this congregation has come a long way in the last few years with the help and leadership of brother Ovie Baker. From Kentucky, we returned home to assist brother Rox Alexander in a mission meeting in the community of Brumley, MO. Largely due to the influence of Ron's T.V. program out of Jefferson City, we were successful in starting a new congregation at the conclusion of our week long effort. Over the course of the summer and early fall months, five families from one of the digressive churches near Brumley took their stand for the truth. Presently, we have approximately 25 people meeting every Sunday in Brumley for worship and we hope to win more in the future. The mission meeting was held at the community pavillion in a picturesque setting and was attended by approximately 30 different outsiders from the area, not to mention the support of churches and preachers from various places. We anxiously await next September when Joe Hisle will conduct the second meeting there in the pavillion. Lord willing, his plain straight forward gospel preaching will have a great impact upon our community. Since the T.V. programs started several years ago with bro. Johnny Elmore, two congregations have been established, several have been converted from digression, and a number of contacts have been made. (This illustrates what we can do with a little vision and hard work brethren!! Our problem is that too many churches are afraid to shoulder this kind of responsibility and spend the money on such a concerted effort.) In October, we were with the congregation at Oakdale, Ca. and enjoyed the hospitality of Phillip

Permenter. The meeting was well attended by many dear friends from the area, and we also enjoyed the company of a number of gospel preachers. It was good to be with Richard DeGough, Duane Permenter, Benny Cryer, Ron Jordan, and Frank Harris. (Allen Bonifay was no where to be found). His lovely wife, Tonya, can several nights of the meeting, but he skipped the country and I do mean "skipped the country". I'm beginning to take it personal. In the last few years, I've been to California several times and every time Allen conveniently disappears. It's one thing to dislike a man and entirely something else to leave the state whenever he comes around. Just kidding!) From there, we enjoyed good meetings at Holyoke, Co. and Imperial, Ne. We enjoyed the home of Pete and Helen Knight at Holyoke, and Roger and Florence Parker at Imperial. There is a nostalgia for me in these places because I made my home in that area for several months during the winter of '92. It's always good to be with the brethren there. If possible, when traveling or vacationing, plan to stop and worship with these brethren. You will enjoy getting to know them. Finally, we conducted a five day meeting in Chapel Grove, Tn. It was wonderful to be with our folks and the many dear friends in that congregation. The meeting ended with one confession of fault. We have a good schedule of meetings in '96. If you can, come by and be with us at any of the following places: Tyler, Tx. Feb. 21-25; Buffalo, Mo. Feb. 26-Mar. 3; Aurora, Mo. Apr. 5-7; Pocahontus, Ark. Apr. 8-14; Auburn, Ca. May 3-12; Covina, Ca. May 13-19; Mt. Home, Ark. June 9-16; Harrodsburg, In. July 20-28; Orange, Ca. Aug. 9-18; Blue Springs, Ky. Sep. 28-Oct. 6; Bakerfield (Brundage), Ca. Oct. 13-20; Please pray for all the work and may the good Lord bless us all!!! Doug Hawkins, HCR 3 Box 203-C, Rocky Mount, Mo. 65072 (573) 964-0013.

Gary D. Weaver, P.O. Box 1974, Rolla, MO 65402 Feb. 6--Last fall, Bobby Pepper and I went to work with the church in Michurinsk, in Russia. We made contacts through the English classes we were teaching and conducted many studies. The people there are intelligent enough that once they see the truth, they are willing to accept it wholeheartedly. Bobby and I were allowed to go into the public schools and present the Bible! We were the very first Americans to come to their schools. The people were very kind to us and appreciated us being there. We found it interesting that when communism was first signed into effect for that area, it took place in the very room where the church is now meeting! The brethren should encourage the effort in Michurinsk, as it seems very promising. We appreciate the church at Corsicana, TX and Jimmy Vannoy for backing this work. When I returned from Russia, we had two families leave the cups and class persuasion and start meeting with us at Rolla. Also, over the last three weeks, two have been baptized; the grown daughter of one of our new families,

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and my son, Micah. It has been very cold here and we do not have a baptistry. We had to break the ice to get to the water where we baptize outside, yet it was a joyous time for all. To God be the glory. Lord willing, I will be speaking at the study in Miami, OK in March. Please pray for us.

Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808, Feb. 20-From Jan. 20-Feb 4, Bro. Richard DeGough and this writer worked with the church in Waipahu HI. These people have made great strides

under the capable leadership of Bro. Felipe Bayani. We engaged in a number of studies, which we trust were of benefit to all concerned. Our thanks to the churches at Planz Rd. and Brundage in Bakersfield, and Atwater, Ca. for their support. The Lord willing we will be at Fossil Creek, in Ft. Worth, Tx. Feb. 23-Mar. 3, North Hwy. H Springfield, Mo. Mar. 6-10, Wayne (Garretts Creek) WV., March 23-31 and Chestnut Ridge near Mt. Vernon, Ky. Apr. 3-7. We look forward to all these meetings. May God bless His people everywhere.

HAIR

By H.C. Harper

A writer in the Christian Worker (June 6, 1935) says: "Some say that her hair should be as long as nature would let it grow. The Book does not say that."

The Book does say that. It says: "The hair is given to her instead of a veil" (1 Cor. 11:15).

Here we have koma, hair--natural, uncut hair. Anti, instead of. And peribolain, veil. Who gave it to her. God, in creation. If I give a man a rake instead of a hoe, he has a rake by my will. And woman has hair--natural, uncut hair, by the will of God; and he gives it to her instead of a veil. And if she does not wear it so, she would as well be shaved or shorn--have it shaved off or cut close to the head. Xurao, to shave; keiro, to shear. (v. 6). But "since it is shameful to a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be veiled" (v. 6). And her natural hair is given to her instead of the veil. And this requires her to let it be "as long as nature would let it grow," for it is koma (hair, natural hair) that God has given her "instead of a veil." It is her token. God-given, of her feminine sphere. Hence, "if a woman have koma (hair, natural, uncut hair), it is glory to her" (v. 15), for thereby she displays obedience to God and respect for man. She honors her "head" man. There is no "hat, cap, or bonnet" in it. Neither is there any--just greater length than her husband's that satisfies the requirement of God.

But the writer in Christian Worker caps the climax of absurdity in his "no such custom as being contentious about such things, "no such custom as being contentious about such things," as though it is all right to disregard this divine law. Bless you, no; Paul cuts loose the man-made regulation of wearing a veil, but he binds what God has given; "hair (natural, uncut) as given to her (of God) instead of (anti) a veil" And Christian Worker in making "saved" (1 Tim. 2:15) physical "saved" (not to die then), is wide of the truth.

It is "saved" in doing her work in the home sphere (Titus 2:2-6 and Tim. 5:14, 15, for example), eternally saved, as men are in their sphere, God-given.

VIEWS AND REVIEWS

By H.C. Harper

"We all partake of the loaf and thereby become qualitatively, as it were, a part of it, as it is of us; and even thus we become of Christ's one body which it represents."--MacGarvey on 1 Cor. 10:17.

These standing monuments, as it were, "one loaf" and "a cup," as set forth in the New Testament, are witnesses against all division. And any church that uses loaves or sections of a loaf perverts the witness of God.

"The cup of blessing which we bless. Not the cup which brings blessing (though it does that), but the cup over which blessing is spoken, the cup consecrated by benediction." His comment on v. 16.

Yes, "it," cup, not cups; a witness of God. And how dare you use the cups and thus pervert the witness of God? It is presumptuous, a sin of the worst kind. There is but "one faith (Eph. 4:4) or covenant, as there is "one body" (v. 4). And to this God's monumental witnesses bear testimony, just as Thayer's lexicon (p. 15) notes it: "This cup containing wine, an emblem of blood, token or witness, of the new covenant? "this cup containing wine," "the cup over which blessing is spoken." What is the emblem of the blood? "Wine," "the fruit of the vine" which was in the cup, as set forth in Mt. 26:28, 29. And how can any church "hold fast" the instructions, or ordinances, "as delivered" (1 Cor. 11:2) and pervert God's witnesses by using loaves or sections of a loaf or cups? Who can tell us?

Our purpose is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

"To continue speaking the truth in love," "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," "keeping the ordinances as delivered."

"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) "And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in." (Isa. 58:12).

VOL. LXX

LEBANON, MISSOURI, April, 1996

NO. 4

GUESS WHAT? 1 COR. 14: 34-35 APPLIES TODAY !

By Billy D. Dickinson

The January 1996 issue of *The Spiritual Sword*, a journal published quarterly by a liberal congregation in Memphis, TN, contained several articles devoted to the following theme: "A Review Of Feminist Theology." The authors of each article are identified with those who have digressed from the truth in several areas pertaining to the work and the worship of the church; one unscriptural practice is the Bible class arrangement for teaching with women teachers. That's why I read with interest the articles dealing with the role of women in the church, especially with reference to what was written about 1 Cor. 14: 34-35. Guess what? It seems that one preacher after another among these brethren are lining up behind the contention that Cor. 14: 34-35 applies today, regardless of all the claims to the contrary that many of their brethren have made in the past!

In the articles written by Alan E. Highers, Editor of the publication, he urges a re-examination of the position that 1 Cor. 14: 34-35 does not apply in this day and age. Hear him: "Among our brethren, it has been vigorously argued that these passages belong with the miraculous age and that they should not be cited pertaining to the role of women today. It has been said that the woman's role should be defined only by Paul's instructions in 1 Timothy 2:11,12, without regard to his statements in 1 Corinthians 14: 34, 35. In this issue of *The Spiritual Sword*, we urge a re-examination of this position." While I can appreciate how Bro. Highers and others are seeking to get all of their brethren to accept the teaching of 1 Cor. 14: 34-35, it must be pointed out that necessity is driving them to be so vocal about it.

You see, it was necessity that drove many of their debating brethren to argue that 1 Cor. 14:34-35 passed away with the miraculous age, and it is also necessity that is now pushing them to "urge a re-examination of this position." In fact, Bro. Highers made an admission that I found to be both remarkable and refreshing. Hear him. "They believe that women's role in the church is restricted by 1 Timothy 2:11,12, but that 1 Corinthians 14:34,35 has no reference to the church today... The foregoing view apparently grew

out of debates and controversies with the anti-class faction, especially during the 1940's and 1950's." Yes, here's when, how, and why such a position was taken in the first place; many found it necessary to throw out Paul's instructions in order to justify women teachers in Bible classes! That fact, and admission, speaks volumes, because something is wrong with a practice when men must misapply a passage of Scripture in order to justify it.

Think about it! Based upon the line of argumentation that 1 Cor. 14: 34-35 has no application today, brethren were led to believe that women teachers in classes violate no principle of truth in God's word. However, we are now being told that such argumentation was wrong, it apparently grew out of an attempt to justify women teachers in classes, and it's time to give the argument up. I agree that we need a "re-examination" of this argument, but I also insist that if brethren reached conclusions with reference to women teachers that were based upon false assumptions to begin with, surely there is a need to re-examine the whole issue! Are we to believe that brethren reached scriptural conclusions about women teachers in Bible classes based upon a line of argumentation that was totally unscriptural? Also, if classes do not constitute some kind of assembly, why did those debaters in the 1940's and 1950's find it necessary, as well as convenient, to toss out 1 Cor. 14:34-35? The truth is that brethren were misled in regard to Bible classes; classes never have been parallel to teaching that takes place in a private, individual capacity; they are the church come together into a congregational capacity. That's why, when push came to shove, debaters in the 1940's and 1950's found it necessary to misapply 1 Cor. 14:34-35.

Also, in a footnote, Bro. Highers made this startling observation:

"Many current readers might be surprised to discover that serious issues once existed over whether congregations could conduct Bible classes and whether women could teach the Bible to children and to other women." Bro. Highers seems to think that

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Editorial

UNITY

By Don L. King

In the September, 1995 issue we wrote some things dealing with fellowship, etc. Basic matters such as the Lord's Supper, Bible Classes, etc. The Word of God is plain about how we are to commune. Anyone can read one cup! The point is: we can absolutely know what the Lord's will is in the communion. It is too plain to miss. I mentioned that we believe people will be lost for using more than one cup. Later, I received a letter from a fellow who says I am too judgmental. Let's try again: If I know what is right in any spiritual matter, (i.e. I can plainly read it) do I have the option of saying that for the sake of unity I can disobey God? James said: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:17) Is it really judgmental to say what the Book says? Is it judgmental to insist that all follow the plain command, statement, etc.? Is it judgmental to insist that if I am to fellowship you, we must both follow the plainly stated directions? Surely not! It seems to me that the condemnation falls upon him who is willing, even anxious, to disobey for the sake of unity and fellowship. (James 4:17) I have noticed that we are more likely to have criticisms when we quote it right out of the Book and stand up for the Bible way in the face of those who would much rather have unity than to be Biblically right. So, if what we said was judgmental, we plead guilty. During his first year as publisher of OPA, Homer L. King wrote the following about unity:

...A sincere endeavor to bring about unity of God's people is commendable, no matter who attempts it and as for me, I feel just as David who said, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity." What a blessing if this could be accomplished according to the will of the Lord! But, unless this could be accomplished on the New Testament basis- by all bringing their wills into subjection to the will of the Lord, it would tend to make matters worse, by corrupting those who are now in favor of God. If we must sacrifice truth- matters of faith in order to have unity, we are the losers. A human basis for unity, if accepted, would make all who accepted it wrong. Union without unity must be avoided. The Bible teaches "UNITY," or oneness; not union.

It would be a difficult task to itemize all the things over which we may disagree, hence, I will not attempt it. First of all, there must be a love for truth, Christ, the brethren and unity, in the hearts of Christian people before we can have that "unity" for which the Savior prayed. (John 17) Let the people's hearts be filled

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: Please define "predestination" as it is used in the Scriptures. (FL.)

Answer: Historically speaking, one of the most wide-spread denominational doctrines has been the Calvinistic theory that God unchangeably and unconditionally predestinated certain people to be saved, and certain people to be lost. Some aspects of the theory are still taught, however, the Presbyterian Church of America formally repudiated the doctrine in 1903, and now holds that men are responsible for their treatment of God's offer of salvation. Calvin's original theory consisted of five main points: predestination or foreordination, limited atonement (Christ's death was only for a few), hereditary total depravity, the irresistibility of God's grace, and the perseverance of the saints (the impossibility of apostasy). All these points are taught in the Westminster Confession of Faith which was adopted in 1646 and sanctioned by law in 1649. The idea for the denominational concept that certain people are predestinated to life or death come before birth two passages in the new testament. The first is Romans 8:28-30 "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. In considering the context of this passage, it should be noted that there are those who have been called. This calling was by or through the gospel. (2 Thess. 2:14) Those who are called "according to his purpose" are identified as "those who love God". We know from I Jno.5:3 that those who love God are the ones who keep his commandments. Thus the called of this passage are people who have obeyed the gospel and lovingly follow the commandments of God. The individuals who do so have the assurance that whatever happens, it will work out to their advantage for no power can defeat the plan of God. Why? Because those he foreknew (recognized as his own) he predestinated (determined) that they should conform (their life and actions) "to the image of his son." The entire plan to which Paul refers is built upon God's divine purpose. After the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, God determined to provide a plan by which man could be redeemed. This plan found its fruition in the atonement, the ultimate effects of which, however, we will not fully realize until man is glorified in the age to

come. Very simply stated then, this passage teaches that God had determined from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8) that Christ would come into the world and die for the sins of all mankind. Further, those who accepted his sacrifice and obeyed the gospel would be saved from their sins and by submitting to His commands would be "conformed to the image of his son." Nothing is here said or in anyway implied that certain individuals have been predestinated to eternal life or death before they were born into this world. To the contrary, the entire tenor of scripture is that man is a free moral agent who can choose between right and wrong, and is continually encouraged by God to choose life. (See Jno.5:40; Mt.23:37, Tit. 2:11, Deut. 30:19, Acts 10:37, 2 Pet. 1:5-10 etc) The second scripture often relied upon to prove this unscriptural man-made doctrine is Eph. 1:4-5 "Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love. Having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." Here again Paul affirms that in eternity God conceived a plan for the salvation of man. The death of Christ was a part of this plan. (1Pet. 1:20 "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.") God knew that all men would sin and be lost unless he made provisions for their redemption. Thus he predestined that one man, his son, should pay the penalty of sin for all men, and that those who responded in faith and obedience would be saved. This is the only predestination that the bible teaches. Our salvation is determined by our obedience to the law of God, our destruction by our disobedience or failure to obey. No one is saved or lost as an individual because God predestined that fact at or before birth. J. W. Shepherd correctly observed: "God foreordained the provisions of salvation, the characters that should be saved, and the conditions and tests by which they would be saved. He left every man free to choose or reject the terms and provisions of salvation and in so doing to refuse to form the character God has foreordained to be his children and so predestined to everlasting life." The following poem captures the idea:

Some ships sail east, and some sail west, By the selfsame winds that blow.

It's the set of the sails and not the gales That determines the way they go.

(Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808)

THE MORAL LAW WITHIN THE HEART - PART ONE

By George Battey

We have all heard people quarreling and you will hear arguments like this: "That's my seat; I was there

first," or "It's my turn to ride in the front seat," or "You got more than I did; it's not fair," or "It's your turn to take out the trash," or "You promised you would help me," or "Let me borrow your crayons because I let you borrow my markers." Kids are not the only ones who argue like this. Adults argue with each other in similar ways. All people in all places throughout all history have quarrels with each other like this—both educated and uneducated, sophisticated and unsophisticated, refined and unrefined. The interesting thing about these quarrels is that everyone is appealing to some sort of standard of behavior which they expect everyone else to understand and to follow. Very rarely does the other person say: "Phooey on your standard!" Instead, what usually happens is that each person begins to explain why he really hasn't broken the standard. They pretend that in their particular case the one with the seat first should not keep it, or even though I got more than you did, there is a good reason for it, or even though you took the trash out the last time, there is a good reason why you should still have to do so. Both parties are appealing to the same rule or law of fair play as if they both agree they are under the same standards, or rules, or laws. In other words, the controversy is not over whether there is some universal standard of right conduct. Everyone seems to agree there is. The controversy is did this person really violate the standard? And if he did, was there a good reason for it? If we did not share this sense of right conduct, we would end up fighting like animals, but we cannot argue in the true sense of the word. Arguing means trying to show that the other man is wrong. You cannot argue with someone unless there is some sort of disagreement of what is right and wrong—some standard by which to measure conduct. This phenomenon is something that evolution cannot explain. If we all arrived here by mere chance of evolution, how is it that we all have this unspoken sense of fair play—this unspoken sense of right and wrong? This unspoken code of conduct which everyone appeals to, has often been called the "Law of nature." This is a rather confusing expression and misleading too because nowadays when people speak of the "laws of nature" they're speaking of things like gravity, magnetism, electricity, chemistry, biology, and so forth. But the "law of nature" we are considering here—this unspoken code of conduct—is perhaps more accurately called the "law of human nature," or the "moral law within the heart." Below is a chart demonstrating two major differences between the "law of nature" and the "law of human nature."

The Law of Nature - Applies to every object in all the world. There is no choice of whether to obey or disobey.

The Law of Human Nature - Applies only to Human beings. There exists a choice of whether to obey or not.

In other words, every man is subject to several laws at all times, but there is only one law he is free to

disobey. For example, if left unsupported in mid-air, a human being will fall just the same as a rock which is left unsupported in midair. Neither the man, nor the rock, have any choice to make. The same law of gravity applies equally to both. But the "law of human nature" is unique to mankind and it is the only law that offers a choice of either obedience or disobedience. C.S. Lewis wrote of this law: "This law was called the Law of Nature because people thought that everyone knew it by nature and did not need to be taught it. They did not mean, of course, that you might not find an odd individual here and there who did not know it, just as you find a few people who are color-blind or have no ear for a tune. But taking the race as a whole, they thought that the human idea of decent behavior was obvious to everyone. And I believe they were right."

ALL NATIONS AND ALL CULTURES

This "law of human nature" is universal. All nations and all cultures for all times have shared this same standard of right and wrong. There have been, of course, disagreements over how and when to apply these laws, but there is no disagreement over the fact that everyone shares the same code of conduct. For example, people may disagree over who you should be unselfish towards—family members only, neighbors, fellow countrymen, or all men. But everyone agrees you should not put yourself first. Again, men disagree over whether it's right to have just one wife or four, but everyone agrees you may not have just any woman you want. On occasions, there are people who claim there is no universal moral law permeating all men and that there is no real standard of right and wrong. But the moment they make this argument, you will discover they are ready to go back on it an instant later. For example, a man breaks his promise to you—no problem because he argues there is no real standard of right and wrong. But you break a promise to him and he cries, "It's not fair." When he screams about fairness, he immediately demonstrates that he recognizes a "law of human nature" — a universal, unspoken code of conduct — and he himself is appealing to it and insisting that you abide by it.

THE MORAL LAW WITHIN THE HEART

This "law of nature" is called the "law of the heart" in the Scriptures. Paul wrote, "For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them" (Romans 2:14-15). The Gentiles, according to this passage, did not have a written law like the Jews. Neither did they have an oral law passed down from generation to generation that set absolute standards of right and wrong.

If such an oral law existed, Paul would have appealed to it in order to demonstrate that Gentiles were

sinner in need of a Savior. Instead, Paul appealed to a law that was "written in their hearts." This refers to the "law of human nature" or the "universal moral law" to which kids and adults alike appeal to in order to prove their point in an argument. This universal moral law, this unspoken code of ethics, was given by God. It is an instinctive law that does not have to be taught orally. It does not have to be committed to writing. This law taught Adam and Eve that it was shameful for them to be naked in the presence of God (Genesis 3:10). Robert Bowman, in debate with atheists on moral law, pointed out that the Bible was not so much written that we might learn moral law, but

rather to remind us that we are not keeping the moral law we already knew to begin with. In the days of Moses, God added to this moral law which already existed—which was written on man's conscience. "What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Galatians 3:19). In order to "add" there must be something present first. So there was a natural, universal, moral law written on man's conscience from the time of Adam and to that moral law was added more ordinances in the days of Moses. (2710 Somerton Dr., Morrow, GA 30260)

THE WORK IN THE PHILIPPINES

By Don L. King

In late December, 1995 my wife and I had the opportunity to travel to the Philippines. The purpose of the trip was to encourage the brethren there to continue their good work. Since the work began in March of 1981, I have made yearly visits along with various preachers. However, this was the first time my wife, Pat, had ever visited. The Filipino brethren had long ago requested her to come but domestic things had hindered. She enjoyed seeing how a Filipino wife keeps house, cooks and raises her children. Though we paid her travel fare at our own personal expense, her presence was a real boost to the work. I am grateful she could accompany me.

The work itself is growing. Congregations seem to have more members than ever before. The preachers show growth in Bible knowledge and spiritual maturity. I don't mean to indicate there have been no problems, there certainly have been. Just as preachers in America have sometimes proven disloyal and left the faith, so it has been in the Philippines. In fact, many of the same situations we have dealt with here have shown themselves there. Division came a few years ago through the efforts of no exception brethren in America. This, in spite of laws prohibiting divorce in the Philippines. Yet, the work has survived and grown. Digression has also claimed some just as it has here. Satan never gives up anywhere in the world.

The work originally began in a rural community called Roxas. Bro. Danao has lived there for a number of years. When he and a few more were converted from digression they began meeting as the Bible directs. They began with about 25 members, as I recall. That group has grown to approximately 100 members and they now have elders and deacons. They have also managed to start a number of congregations elsewhere. Today there are 65 to 70 congregations on the Island of Luzon. The native preachers have been baptizing about 200 every year. A number of radio programs are in existence also which has proven very helpful. Lest, I forget, there were 43

baptisms this year during our stay.

AREAS OF NEED

People in the Philippines are very poor. In areas where farm labor is the main source of income it is not uncommon for the weekly collection to be barely enough to buy the grape juice for the service. We have insisted that the local brethren do as much as possible to furnish their own meeting house. In nearly every case they have done so. Brethren often begin worshipping in a private home and move to a meeting house as conditions demand.

They usually build a small bamboo house with grass roof and dirt floor to start. Later they may improve it as they can afford. In a few cases, our help was called for and given as needed. However, as we have expanded into some larger areas, we have noticed that it is difficult to get people to attend a service held in a private home or rented place. Property in Manila, for example, is very expensive by Philippine standards. The church needs a lot with a meeting house on it and a wall around it to keep unwanted squatters from taking over. The church there is growing. Their place of worship is a private home which is badly overcrowded. It appears that our help is going to be needed in a much bigger way in that city if the brethren are to have a chance to grow. Baguio City is another large city where the same problem has appeared. Brethren, if you have suggestions to help in this problem, let us hear from you immediately. We are convinced the church will grow in the large cities if a permanent place of worship can be arranged. What shall we do?

Several have asked if the methods we have utilized in the Philippines will work elsewhere. No American has ever lived among our brethren there. They have done their own work, settled their own problems, disciplined their unruly, etc. We were able to help this work grow by making yearly visits to encourage them. We travel among the churches preaching one or more days as the need demands, much as preachers do in America. Others have also gone there and done the same. However, it is important to keep in mind that

from the beginning there were able preachers already living there who had been converted from error. In our absence, the work continued. Had it not been that way, someone would have had to move there until a stable base was established. It would have been a waste of time and money to have merely made the visits and then left the babes in Christ to fend for them-

selves. Each new mission field presents its own obstacles. Careful planning is called for in each case.

If you are interested in supporting a Filipino preacher, let us hear from you! You can send your support directly to him. We'll be happy to supply all the details. Your money can't be better spent anywhere. D.L.K.

GUESS WHAT? COR. 14:34-35 APPLIES TODAY!

from page 1

the issue of Bible classes with women teachers is a thing of the past and has been settled. However, like his "current readers," perhaps he might be surprised to discover that there are thousands in the Lord's church who have rightly applied 1 Cor. 14: 34-35 all along and who still consider this to be a "serious" issue. In a roundabout way, what Bro. Highers is saying is this: "Bible classes with women teachers was once a serious issue in the church, and that's why our debating brethren were driven to take a false position on 1 Cor. 14:34-35. But now that the issue has been settled, we can all relax and go back to arguing that 1 Cor. 14: 34-35 applies today." When you boil it all down, that seems to be what he is saying

Let me emphasize again that it is necessity that is driving Bro. Highers and others to deny that the woman's role should be defined only by 1 Tim. 2:11-12, without any regard for 1 Cor. 14:34-35. They know that their interpretation of 1 Tim. 2:11-12 will not keep a woman from addressing an assembly of the church, if she does it in a meek and submissive way! These brethren, for example, will not allow a woman to be "the teacher" (the one in charge) of a class of men and women, but they will permit her to speak up in that class, as long as she does so in a meek and submissive way. If a woman can speak up (ask a question, answer a question, or read a Bible verse) in a class of men and women without violating 1 Tim. 2:11-12, why can't she speak up in an assembly of the church under the same circumstances without violating 1 Tim. 2:11-12? Yes, it would be a violation of 1 Cor. 14:34-35, but remember, many of these brethren want to toss those verses out. That's why

they are seeking to repudiate this false position. They've seen the handwriting on the wall; their false interpretations of both 1 Cor. 14:34-35 and 1 Tim. 2:11-12 have opened the door for feminists among them to try to occupy the pulpit. That's the dilemma you find yourself in when you start throwing out passages you don't want to accept.

We agree with these brethren; it's time for a "re-examination" of their position on 1 Cor. 14:34-35. In fact, it's time for a "re-examination" on the whole issue of women teachers in Bible classes! What Bro. Highers has written is a good place to begin, for he exposes the quibbles and false assertions that have often been advanced on this issue. Near him: "Paul says twice that it is not permitted for women 'to speak' (vs 34,35). The meaning in this context is to address the assembly, to speak publicly. It has just been used in that manner in verse 29: 'Let the prophets speak two or three, and the others judge.' The idea here, then, is public speaking, and that is what women are forbidden to do. It has no connection to singing, confessing Christ, or any other form of speech permitted to women in the assembly; rather, it is a prohibition against women speaking publicly in the assembly. As for sigao ('keep silence'), the meaning is restricted to the subject under consideration. Women are to keep silence in the assemblies; that is, they are to refrain from public discourse. That is the matter under consideration with respect to the role of women." Brethren, we have been vindicated! Our position was the correct one! All of the arguments that were advanced to obscure the real issue, like women singing and confessing Christ before baptism, are now admitted to be nothing more than quibbles that ignored the context of Paul's statement—"It is a shame for women to speak in the church." 215 Forest Hills Dr., West Monroe, LA. 71291.

EDITORIAL

From Page 2

with a sincere desire to please the Lord- let them say,"Not my will but thine be done." "Lord, speak thy servant heareth; command, and I will obey." Let them ask, how may I please God that I may finally reach Heaven? With these motives in view and self and the desire to be popular, and may I add, the love of money out of the way; the things that are standing in the way of unity will vanish like a cloud. We can then have that unity taught by Paul"no divisions among

you, perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment."(1 Cor. 1:10)

Brethren, how much do you want unity? Are you willing to pay the price? It would be far better to pay the price of unity than shoulder the responsibility of division. Let it be remembered that someone will have to compromise in order to bring about that much talked of unity. On what then may we compromise? Not on matters of faith, for we are exhorted to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints."(Jude 3) There is nothing to do but to contend for matters of faith, even if it should divide the church.

Hence, there can be no compromise where the Lord has spoken. There is only one thing to do with any passage of Scripture, and that is to believe it with all the power that we have, and should it be a command or example, do our utmost (Abrahamic like) to obey it. Seeing we cannot compromise on matters of faith we must look elsewhere, and that is to things which are matters of opinion; things that are matters of indifference, or permissible. On these we can and must be willing to compromise or sacrifice.

To illustrate the difference between things of faith and things of opinion, I give the following: In John 3:2 it is said that Nicodemus came to Jesus by night. That he came by night, is a matter of faith because the Bible so states. But why did he come by night? The why is a matter of opinion or indifference. We are commanded to sing (matter of faith), but the selections or number of selections are matters of permission. On the latter we must be willing to compromise. On the former we must contend! On the things which are matters of permission, we must let 1 Cor. 8:13 and Romans 14:19-23 govern. Are you willing to do that? The conscience of others must be respected if we are to have and maintain unity. I am sorry to state that the disposition of brethren who have introduced innovations into the church, has been contrary to that commanded by Paul. Generally, they have said, or implied, "we want it, and we are going to have it. If you don't like it, you can get out." How sad!

There is but one solution to this vital question, as I see it, and that is to get back to the New Testament order of work and worship. Let us go back to the first century while the church was still under direction of the Holy Spirit and there ascertain how the early church carried on the work and worship. Certainly that will please every lover of truth. Those who are not willing to pattern after the primitive order to have

unity certainly do not have the uppermost desire to please the Master. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." (1 Peter 4:11) If all would bind themselves by this rule, would it not solve the problem?

Is it not a fact that we are pretty well agreed on the things taught in the New Testament, but divided over the things not taught therein? Where in the New Testament do we read about the Bible college, instrumental music in the worship, the Sunday school with its human literature, division into classes and women teachers over those classes? Where do we read of the modern pastorate, the multiplied societies to do the work of the church, and a plurality of drinking cups for each congregation? Are not these the major things over which we are divided? Did the church in the first century have these things? Was there ever a period of time in the history of the church, that greater progress was made? The following quotation from the pen of that gifted writer, Gilbert O. Nations, in C.L. for September 6 is in order just here:

"The New Testament knows no ladies aid, no Sunday school, no Bible colleges to educate parish priests, no missionary societies, no 'self-supporting' churches, no ministry as a class, no financial program except to care for the poor, no church suppers, no bazaars or other world traps to catch money for a venal priesthood." Again, "We must truly return to Jerusalem. We must restore the simple congregational life. We must abandon unauthorized congregational practices for the carrying on of which a trained parish priest is required."

Yes, "Abandon" the "unauthorized" things and our Savior's prayer can be answered right now. Brethren, do you love the "unauthorized" things better than you do this unity? Why not give them up that we may be one? OPA, December, 1932.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Last call for changes in the new 1996 Church Directory. If you have changes of any kind and have not notified me, please do so soon. I am especially interested in getting changes relating to addresses in areas where the 911 emergency system has been introduced. Also changes in telephone area codes, times of meeting etc. Several have suggested that we include a **PREACHER LISTING** in the back of the directory. We plan to do so this time. If you would like to be included in that list, get me the information soon. Send all information to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808

A WORD OF THANKS

The Travis Cook family wishes to extend their heartfelt thanks to all who prayed, visited, sent cards or

extended any kindness whatever during the illness and lengthy recovery of Travis. He underwent open heart surgery lasting for a number of hours during which his life hung by a thread. By the grace of God and the great skill of his surgeons, he lived and is slowly regaining his strength. He has been able to attend church services again and the future looks much more promising now. Thank you all for everything and continue to pray for us. -The Cook Family

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

GREGORY-OREAR--Mat Gregory and Veronica Orear were united in holy bonds of matrimony at the church building in Ada, Oklahoma on Saturday afternoon, February 10, 1996. A huge gathering of friends, relatives, brothers and sisters in Christ witnessed the exchange of vows. Mat and Veronica have a strong faith in the Lord and will be an asset to the church at Ada where they plan to make their home.

We wish for them a prosperous and happy life in their new Christian home they have established. It was my honor and privilege to officiate. -Bob Orear

OUR DEPARTED

ROTH--Mildred D. Roth was born February 13, 1926 at Garfield, Arkansas. She quietly passed from us on March 1, 1996 in Fremont, California. She is survived by her husband of 45 years, Donald P. Roth; her mother, Grace Staniford; one sister, Jean Jackson; her daughter, Patricia J. King; two grandchildren, Kris Baker and Lance King; also two great grandchildren, Landon Baker and Colton King. Mildred had obeyed the gospel at an early age and we thank the Lord for the eagerness with which we anticipate the resurrection and heaven together. She was always busy with her hands and created beautiful things in crocheting, needlework and ceramics. Too, she was an excellent cook and dinner at her house was always a real treat. She was a devoted wife, mother and grandmother. Her passing has created a void in the lives of all who knew and loved her. She was my mother-in-law too, and quite a lady indeed. -Don L. King

BELATED DEATH NOTICE:

My apologies to the family members for not having gotten this notice into this paper in a more timely fashion. There may be some friends or acquaintances who have not yet been made aware of Brother Amos Hellum's death. Amos Hellums, 76, of Nampa, Idaho, died Wednesday, January 18, 1995. I had the honor of being in charge of the service. Amos was born July 27, 1918, at Larkin, Ark. He was the son of Walter and Lillie D. Porterfield Hellums. He grew up and attended school in Arkansas. Amos had worked as a farmer for most of his active life. He married Glenna Fay Wiles Sept. 1, 1945, at Sage Ark. They made their home there until 1947, when they moved to the Northwest. They moved to Nampa, Ida. in 1992. His survivors include his wife, Fay, of Nampa; four sons, David, Henry, Larry, and Dean; two brothers, Alfred and Troy; three sisters, Ora Wiles, Irene Moody and Lula Riggs; and nine grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, a son, Paul and two brothers and two sisters. Dennis Wilsey

LINDSEY--Sister Sufrona Caldona "Dona" was born June 1, 1897 at Overbrook, Oklahoma and she departed this life on January 7, 1996. She was married to Emmitt E. Lindsey July 17, 1916 at Wilson, Oklahoma. Sister Lindsey was baptized into Christ near the old Bit Shop (Sullivan's corner) by Homer A. Gay in the late 1930's. She was a longtime faithful member of the Lord's church which meets on east Texas street in Healdton, Oklahoma. She was the mother of ten children, four of whom have preceded her in death. The children surviving her are Millard E. Lindsey of Baltimore Maryland, Clayton U.

Lindsey of Lindsay, Oklahoma, J.W. Lindsey of Lindsay, Oklahoma, Cordella Melton of Healdton, Oklahoma, Veneta Briscoe of Healdton, Oklahoma, Mary Steele of Midwest City, Oklahoma. Sister Lindsey was an inspiration to all who knew her. Even at the age of 98 years, she faithfully attended the services of the church. Even though she was an easy-going and very gentle woman, she was also very plain spoken. Sometimes she would say things that people did not like to hear, but needed to hear. She never tried to hurt anyone, but would say to people's face what others would be saying behind their back. She was not afraid to talk to people about their souls either. She use to call her friends and neighbors and ask them to go to church, and she would tell them about the importance of making preparations for the hereafter. Of all the things I will remember the most about my grandmother Lindsey was one of her often used sayings: "Now, there ain't no need to worry about it." I use to tell her about, what seemed to me, a serious problem in the church and she would say, "Now, there ain't no need to worry about it." Her attitude was an expression of her great faith. We had excellent singing by a few members of the church directed by brother Johnny Elmore. I assisted brother Carl Johnson who spoke some encouraging words to the family and friend. Sister Dona Lindsey was laid to rest at the Dixie Cemetery near Ringling, Oklahoma. — Anthony Melton

MARTIN--Jeanette Martin was born Oct. 10, 1966 in Louisiana, Mo. and departed this life on Nov. 16, 1995 in Pittsfield, Ill. She was married to Darrel G. Martin on June 27, 1986. Jeanette was a member of the Mosier, Ill. Church of Christ. She is survived by her husband, Darrel, one son, Joshua Martin, her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Dale Hagen, two brothers, Shawn and Donnie Hagen of Clarksville, Mo., two sisters, Debbie Winchell of Pleasant Hill, Ill. and Cindy Church of Clarksville, Mo. Jeanette had suffered with cancer the last few months of her life. Death is especially sad when a young wife and mother is called home. We are thankful that Jeanette had obeyed the gospel and made preparation for eternity. Our hope in Christ comforts our broken hearts and encourages us in our christian life. May God bless and comfort Darrel, Joshua and their family in their loss. The writer offered words of comfort. Ron Alexander

MACKEY--Carol Algene Mackey was born Aug. 13, 1932 at Arvin, Ca., the daughter of Jack and Flora Stalcup, and departed this life on Feb. 4, 1996 at the age of 63, in Burbank, Ca. Carol was the wife of Paul Mackey, who preceded her in death on July 23, 1967. To this union four sons were born, David, Mark, Mike and John. She was preceded in death by her husband, Paul and her father, Jack. Carol is survived by her mother, Flora, four sons, David, Mark, Mike and John all of Burbank, Ca., eight grandchildren, one sister, Lindall Rowland of North Hollywood, Ca., and one

brother, Tommy Stalcup of Modesto, Ca. When Paul passed away, Carol was confronted with the responsibility of raising four little boys. Her world revolved around her family and the church. Her influence touched many of our lives. About 350 attended her funeral and the school district where she worked set up a scholarship fund in her memory. Many of our lives are the better for having known her. Michael Fox, Richard DeGough and the writer offered words of encouragement. Richard wrote a touching poem in her memory. At the cemetery, Lynwood Smith spoke very beautifully of the after glow of Carol's life. May God bless Carol's family and may they continue to follow her example. Ron Alexander

"A PRECIOUS SOUL THROUGH THE YEARS"

As I look back to childhood days, my heart with fondness glows: What precious memories I recall that only love can know.

A precious one so kind and gentle, with smiling face aglow: gave love, courage, and happiness, to every present soul.

Her love reached out to all of us, and cheered us with her laughter, She warmed our hearts with true devotion, always remembered hereafter.

In her youth she made the choice to serve her precious Lord; continuing on, oft heavy hearted, She walked in sweet accord.

With many trials that cross life's path, spreading over her as a pall; She faltered not, nor doubted God, She simply would not fall.

With love abounding as a mother, her children can attest; though taken from us for a season, forever with God to rest.

Richard De Gough (In memory of my cousin, Carol Algene Mackey)

BEARD--Flossie I. Beard, daughter of Charles B. "Jack" and Susie Richardson, was born August 25, 1913, near Long Lane, Mo. She departed this life Feb. 16, 1996, in Lebanon, Mo. at the age of 82. On July 7, 1934, she was united in marriage to Virgil Don Beard and to this union one daughter was born. She was preceded in death by her parents and her husband, Virgil. Flossie is survived by a daughter and son-in-law, Betty and Burl Snook, three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, all of Lebanon, Mo. Virgil and Flossie were long time members of the Claxton Church of Christ. At the time of her death, Flossie had attended the Hayes St. and Springfield Rd. Church of Christ in Lebanon for the past 20 years. Flossie was baptized in 1926 and been a member of the church for about 70 years. Flossie was a good cook and she and Virgil had entertained many preachers and their families over the years. Our hearts go out to Betty Sue and her family. May God bless them. Flossie was my wife's aunt and I was honored to be

asked to speak words of comfort Ron Alexander

SNOW--Elmer Snow, 88, of Bloomington, Indiana, died Feb. 1, 1996 at Jonesboro, GA. He is survived by his wife Pauline, one son Don Snow of Lake City, GA, one grandson, Dwayne Snow of GA and one granddaughter, Terri Grant of GA and two great grandsons. Although raised in the Baptist faith, and went to different denominations as a young man, Elmer, when it came time for him to come to God in his life, had a deep desire to just obey "the blessed, holy, word of the Lord" (as he often called it). In his seeking for the truth, Elmer and Pauline both obeyed the gospel at the Church of Christ at Harrodsburg, Ind., when in his early 30's. However, in later years attended the Bloomington Church of Christ. Services were conducted at the Day Mortuary, Bloomington, Indiana with Dennis Smith and Floyd Harris, Jr. Singing was done by several of the church members in the area.

YOU

Life is slowly ebbing away The only thing that I can say Is prepare for your life hereafter If you hope to meet the Lord and Master.

You've had a long time on earth to do All the things He left in His Word for you So ask him now to watch over you Until you are with Him and your loved ones too. A.A. Grote



Bennie T. Cryer, 2340 Sanguinetti Ln #93, Stockton, CA 95205, March 7. The congregation in Stockton continues to do well. Two have been added to the number since the first of the year and we have prospects for more. Bro Duane Permenter held a weekend meeting here in February. It was one of the best attended meetings we have had. Duane did a fine work during the meeting. I have been preaching at Stockton and surrounding congregations and working some with the Santa Rosa congregation. God bless all.

Jimmie C. Smith, Rt. 6, Box 199A, Harrison, Ark. 72601—Feb. 3—We enjoyed the Alabama New Year meeting tremendously. It was the third time that I've been privileged to conduct the meeting and I believe we had the most preachers and largest crowds in attendance than in any previous meetings. Earlytown could not host such a meeting without the help of the members from the surrounding congregations. As in the other New Year Meetings in the brotherhood, the young men's sermons are the highlight! Enroute we were able to visit mother and relatives in Mississippi,

only to arrive home on Jan. 2nd to a 14" snowfall. On the third Sunday of January, Brett Hickey and I exchanged pulpits, which was a real treat. I can hardly say enough good about Brett's work in Mountain Home. We've had our share of sickness and deaths of late.

Bob Johnson, 8078 Whitewing Dr., Frisco, TX 75034, Jan. 22, 1996—We are happy to report that all is well on the home front with the Lord's church here in Frisco, TX. My good friend and fellow preacher brother Tony Melton and I have been assisting each other some in door knocking. This has been the most effective means since my work began here in setting up new studies and reaching the lost. In recent weeks, a mother and her son, formerly of the digressive persuasion took their stand for the truth. We welcome them to the brotherhood. The mother is elderly and bedridden, but the son is able to attend services for which we are thankful. Another local woman lacks only one lesson in completing the Doug Jones fifteen lesson Bible course. I will hand deliver her a new Bible in hopes of setting up a home study. This was a result from the door hangers we put out when no one is home. One particular outstanding event for me in the previous year was being able to attend the Dickinson-Thrasher and Bailey-Donahue debate. These digressive brethren were utterly defeated, the truth of God's Word having prevailed in a most glorious way! Another highlight for me was our meeting here with brother Billy Dickinson last October. He had held us a weekend meeting previous to that, so we knew what to expect. His lessons were stirring and edifying to the body. I enjoyed having Billy in my home and getting better acquainted with him. The following month I was called upon to conduct a five day meeting in Davis, Ok. These brethren are most hospitable and liberal in their support of gospel preachers. Crowds were good each evening with several of our preaching brethren attending one or more nights. I commend brother Tim Nichols of the congregation there for his enthusiasm and great zeal for the spread of the gospel. His love for the truth and dedication to the Lord's work will cause him to go far in the Lord's vineyard. Keep up the good work Tim! The brethren at Davis have expressed to me how thrilled they are to have Tim among their ranks, and I know his faithful Christian wife will aid and encourage his progress in the faith in the months ahead. Now into the new year, we are most optimistic that more fruit will abound for the glory of Him who died for us. Please keep us and the work here in your prayers.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA., 94539, March 12- Since returning from the Philippines we have been pretty close to home. As soon as we walked in the door from overseas, we learned that Pat's mother was terminally ill and was on the way to stay with us. It was a sad shock, to say

the least. She lived only about six weeks and passed away on March 1. During that time, we felt the need to stay home. We appreciate those brethren who understood when we asked to be excused from preaching appointments. Of late, in addition to the home church, we have preached at the Auburn, CA congregation twice to good crowds. We look forward to being at Manteca, CA. next weekend. April 3-7, Lord willing, we are to be with the brethren at the Hillcrest congregation near Brookhaven, MS and at Atwater, CA April 20-28. We look forward to all the above.

Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808 March 9- The meeting at Fossil Creek in Ft. Worth closed with one baptism and two confessions of fault. We had very good crowds throughout. Prior to the meeting we had three sessions on Leadership, in an effort to identify the desirable qualities that every leader should have. We also studied how to resolve conflict and gain consensus among brethren when disagreements arise. Presently we are in a good meeting at the N. Hwy. H. congregation here in Springfield, Mo. Next we go, Lord willing to McAlister, Ok. Mar. 15-17, Wayne, WV. March 23-31, Chestnut Ridge, Ky. Apr. 3-7, May 5-12 Fremont, Ca., May 12-19 Manteca, CA., and May 20-26 Bakersfield, Ca., (Planz Rd.) We look forward to all these meetings, and trust God for His blessings on our efforts. May God bless you all.

P. Duane Permenter, P.O. Box 1223, Riverbank, CA, 95367, March 7- The meeting we held in Stockton on "Christian Morality" was certainly a great encouragement to me. The crowds were outstanding. It was truly an honor to be asked to preach and enjoy Christian association during this meeting. The work in Sacramento continues to move along. It is my privilege to be involved in several Bible studies each week. Of late, we have had some new interest from the community. Three different men have been attending the services regularly and seem to be very interested. One of them has been attending a study on a regular basis for several weeks. Our attendance at the services has dropped some due to sickness. Since last reporting, some have confessed faults and in addition to the confessions we have baptized one into Christ. Also, the crowds in Oakdale continue to be very good at the Sunday services. The brethren have been successful to win a young man back who had fallen away. Please continue to pray for us in the work. May God bless the faithful everywhere.

Ron Alexander, 117 E. Hillsboro, Marshfield, MO 65706, A new church began meeting at Brumley, Mo. on Sept. 17, 1995. This work is a direct result of the TV program which airs on channel 13 in Jefferson City, Mo. each Sunday morning at 7:30. The church at Lebanon, Mo. started this program about 8 years ago with Johnny Elmore doing the preaching. The

church at Eldon, Mo. was also started primarily from the TV program about seven years ago.

In July, the church at Lebanon asked Doug Hawkins to move to the area and help run TV leads and some personal contacts in the Brumley and Iberia area. Most of the TV leads had been destroyed in a fire a couple of years ago. We did have names and addresses but no other information. While running some of the leads, Doug and I were looking for a young lady who (we found out later) had taken the correspondence course about 5 years ago. The girl wasn't home but her mother, Joyce, indicated she believed in using one cup in communion as we do. She could remember when in the 1960's individual cups were brought into some of the churches in that area. She made a statement I'll never forget when she said, "I pray every Sunday when I go to church that the Lord will forgive me one more time for using more than one cup." She and her sister, Gloria, indicated there would be a lot of interest in a mission meeting.

The following Thursday evening, David Griffin and I (Doug had to leave for a meeting) went back to Joyce's for a study. When we arrived about 7:00, there were 13 adults, parts of eight families, sitting in a circle under a shade tree waiting to study. After the study on communion, David and I felt there were about 6 people who were in agreement with us. During the study, one older brother kept asking questions about classes and women teachers. As we explained our position, some started defending our position on classes which amazed us, since they had not been exposed to non-class brethren. The following Lord's day, 5 from the study, drove to Eldon for services and never went back where they had been attending services.

David and Doug continued visiting and working in the area while we were making arrangements for a mission meeting. From Sept. 11 through 16 we held a meeting in an outdoor pavilion in the Brumley city park, with Doug and I preaching night about. Sixty-three different adults from the community attended during those six days. No less than 18 visitors attended any given service with as many as 36 local people on two or three nights. In fact, we were disappointed if we had less than 30 visitors. The morning after the meeting, the church at Brumley started meeting. Brother George Windes and his family live in the Brumley area and are able to provide immediate leadership. Presently there are about 29 people meeting at Brumley on a regular basis. Two men have been baptized since they started meeting. Brother Doug Hawkins and his wife, Lori, have moved to the Brumley area to work with the church at Brumley and to help some at Eldon. Good interest continues in the area, one church has challenged us to debate the cup question and another the class question. Some wine brethren have also agreed to study with us.

The church at Eldon also is doing well. They lost some people to the Brumley work, but only those who

lived in the Brumley area. Three have been baptized at Eldon in the past month. During this same time frame, we have enjoyed more results from the TV work. One couple is meeting in their home at New Haven, Mo. once they realized they had been worshipping in error and are making arrangements to move close to a church. Their daughter and son-in-law are meeting with the church at Rolla, Mo.

In closing, the church at Brumley is off to a great start. We request your prayers.

JESUS IS THE WAY SEEK GOD'S HELP

I got up early one morning
And wishing night into the day
I had so much to accomplish
That I didn't take time to pray

Problems just tumbled about me
And heavier came each task
Why doesn't God help-I wondered
He answered-you didn't ask

I tried to come into God's presense
I used all my keys at the lock
God gently and loving said
Why child, didn't you knock?

I wanted to see joy and beauty
But the day toiled on grey and bleak
I wondered why God didn't show me
He said "But you didn't seek"

I woke up early this morning
And paused before entering the day
I had so much to accomplish
That I had to take time to pray

Why didn't we quit praying?
Why do we quit seeking?
Why do we quit knocking?
I didn't put my whole heart into it.

Is failure what you want?
Certainly not.

Then plan for success instead of failure
Believe and you shall receive

Remember spend a few minutes of prayer each day.
Remember you are the only one in control of your life.

The fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

--Submitted by Bobby Reeves

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE (USPS 407-560)

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PAINLESS GIVING

By John Allan McKaig

When I was in business, I also served as President of the Boys' Club of Carlsbad. The club was very poor. We adopted a program of Endowment Giving that literally saved the Boys' Club.

I copied that idea when I made out my will, leaving the top 10% of my modest estate to the Church of Christ, to help five or six small congregations realize a church building of their own.

I also served the Church of Christ as treasurer for 23 years after my father, James H. McKaig, passed away, and came to understand that this need of the small congregations will always be here with us.

To contribute means to give. To endow is to give or assign a portion of your assets/wealth after your death to someone or some entity.

My children understand this and enthusiastically agree. It wouldn't matter if they didn't. This is not a punitive move or an effort to buy my way anywhere.

After your death, your will/wishes are obeyed to the letter, and the gift (endowment) is made compli-

ant to your wishes.

I call this "Painless Giving." Now one might argue with me claiming that someone else is being made to give a portion of their new found wealth i.e. your "old wealth." But the wording of the will sets the sequence of giving in its order.

One must not fall into the trap of thinking, "Fine, I will do this type of giving then I don't have to give anything on Sundays." This is very risky thinking, very! Endowment giving has nothing to do whatsoever with your regular Sunday contribution.

I think this idea is viable for the entire brotherhood and the sisters also.

How about making out a will, or adding a codicil to your existing will, leaving 10% to the Church of Christ when you pass on. It will help to propagate His word.

That small amount will not hurt your heirs. Your wife can get by on 90%--San Marcos, CA

PASSING IT ON

We continue to hear favorable comments about the book of sermons by brother M. Lynwood Smith with the caption above. Numerous people have said, "I couldn't put it down until I had read every word." This beautiful book, honoring Lynwood's fifty-two years in the preaching field is blue with gold stamping, and is printed on an excellent grade of paper. The pictures and short biography add to its value. They make excellent gifts and why not buy one to loan to friends to read? The price is \$19.95 per copy, plus \$2.05 for postage and handling. OK residents add \$1.44 for sales tax. Order from: Pathway Books and Bibles, P.O. Box 1183, Ardmore, OK 73402.--Johnny Elmore

NEW SONG BOOK

The song book "Blessed Fountain" should be available May 1. The price is the same, \$2.75 each. Please give me orders so they can be sent from the company--M. Lynwood Smith, 2789 Loyd Star Lane, N.W., Wesson, MS 39191.

Our purpose is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

"To continue speaking the truth in love," "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," "keeping the ordinances as delivered."

"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) "And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in." (Isa. 58:12).

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LEBANON, MISSOURI, May, 1996

NO. 5

WHEN SHALL THESE THINGS BE?

By James D. Orten

In Matthew Chapter 24, Jesus' disciples called His attention to the beautiful buildings of the temple. Without specifying that He was referring to the destruction of Jerusalem that would occur some 30 years later, Jesus commented that all those buildings would be destroyed. "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

This dramatic language so fascinated the disciples that they asked for an explanation at the first opportunity. "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24:3). The Lord responded to their questions with a lengthy discourse that is fully as dramatic as His original comment. It has been a source of debate among scholars, probably since the church began.

Obviously aware that some would pervert His message, Jesus began His explanation with a warning. "Take heed that no man deceive you." That warning was appropriate for the four disciples who questioned Him, but no more so than for Christians now. Difficult passages attract those who want to seem wise; and they are the special workshop of false teachers. Ignoring a basic rule of Bible study, to interpret difficult passages in light of plain ones, they build their theories on hard to understand scriptures and then distort clear passages to fit their doctrines.

Perhaps no Chapter in the Bible has had more false doctrines built upon it than Matthew 24 and companion chapters, Mark 13 and Luke 21. One such theory, of recent origin and propagated by a preacher from Ohio, has troubled several churches of Christ. Without concerning ourselves with specific errors, let us try to understand the true meaning of these passages.

DISCIPLES' QUESTIONS-JESUS' ANSWERS

The disciples asked three questions: 1) When shall these things be? The "things" here are the destruction of the temple buildings, and relate to Jesus' original comment that had sparked their interest. 2) What shall be the sign of thy coming? And, 3) The end of the world? Since they did not yet understand the coming destruction of Jerusalem, the disciples may have thought that all of these events would occur at the same time. But Jesus answered what they asked, be-

cause disciples of all ages would need the information, whether or not these understood the implications of their questions. Here is a brief outline of the Lord's teaching.

Verses 5-23 discuss the impending destruction of Jerusalem, the complete dissolution of the Jewish state that was God's ultimate punishment for the people's sins. This was done by Titus and his army in A.D. 70. Historians say he ordered the temple and the city "dug up." The Lord's words were literally fulfilled. The prophecy was intended as a warning for Christians and most commentators agree that it was heeded. Many disciples fled the city, before Titus tightened the noose, and were saved.

Verses 24-28 are a warning to disciples, then and now, not to believe that Jesus personally was coming, or came, back during that period. "Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not." Verse 27 suggests that when Christ does come back, all will see Him and there will be no doubt about who He is. This teaching is "prophetic" in more than one way, for several false doctrines are based on the fancy that Jesus personally returned in A.D. 70. Some argue that will be His only return to earth; that there will be no general resurrection and judgment. They thus deny a biblical theme that inspired writers began in the Old Testament (See Daniel 7:9-11; 12:1-2; & Psalms 102:25-27) and continued more prominently in the New Testament.

Scores of scriptures refer to a personal coming of Jesus, the end of the world, and a general judgment (see for example, John 5:29, Acts 17:31, Romans 2:5-6, I Corinthians 15:12-56, II Corinthians 5:10, and II Peter 3:3-13). Those who deny the plain assertions of these scriptures, generally do so because they do not distinguish between personal and symbolic comings of Christ.

In Old and New Testaments, signal demonstrations of God's power or vengeance frequently are described as the "coming of the Lord." New Testament writers comforted persecuted Christians with promises such as "the end of all things is at hand" (I Peter 4:7), "the

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Editorial

ELDERS

By Don L. King

Few things arouse our attention quicker than the subject of money. The Scriptures have quite a lot to say concerning it and a great deal of it is bad. As Paul wrote the qualifications for elders the Spirit of inspiration brought this to his mind. In 1 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7 he said: "...not greedy of filthy lucre...." In 1996 this seems a little strange. The world is always consumed with a mad dash for money; all it can make, cheat someone out of, or outright steal. But Paul is not speaking of just anyone. The men he is writing of are to be special and different than the "run of the mill" or "garden variety." These men are more interested in spiritual matters. Their great love is Christ and His church. These men are not greedy for money! Notice that Paul didn't say an elder can't have any. He may or may not have. However, he certainly may not live his life for it. An elder is a man who has succeeded in setting his affections on things above rather than on the earth. There is a vast difference in wanting enough for a reasonable amount of comfort as opposed to one who is grasping for money and in love with the very idea of making it. We have all known men such as that. But they can't be elders and, frankly, they make poor church members too. Money often gets in the way of living right and caring what the Bible says. It too easily becomes our god and we become its slaves. It is easy for a rich man to delude himself into thinking that his money gives him special privileges in the church. Oh, he knows it really doesn't, but still....

Greed for money has brought about all manner of crime and evil deeds. Money has no partiality. It affects all of humanity. The rich will lie and cheat to get more. The lazy will rob even the poor widow for it. The wicked will kill for it, etc. All of us are subject to the weakness for money, and it takes a great deal of self control to resist. The Bible teaches us that no Christian should covet riches above and beyond righteousness and warns those who are wealthy to be very careful! (Matthew 6:33; 1 Timothy 6:7)

I understand that the Greek in Paul's writing means: "Not, by no means, never at any time...eager for base gain; sordid." The idea appears to be that one must not be so obsessed with money that he is willing to obtain it in a wicked or sinful manner. He also must not be selfish and greedy after the wealth of this world. Again, Paul does not say that an elder must be entirely destitute of money. It is his attitude toward it, and behavior with it, that seems to concern the Lord.

The various English versions render 1 Timothy 3:3

Continued on page seven

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: Please give an explanation of the elect lady in 1 John 1. Is this an individual and her children or a congregation and its members? (OK)

Answer: There are differing views over the identity of this "elect lady." Some contend that a specific named person is under consideration, while others believe the reference is figuratively to the church under the allegory of a woman. Support for the first view comes from an interpretation of the two greek words *eklekte* (elect) *kuria* (lady). It is pointed out that one or the other of these terms should be regarded as a proper name. If so, the woman's name would be either Eclecte or Cyria. Cyria is the English spelling of the Greek *kuria*, and means lady. Should the former be considered a proper name, it would need to be translated "the lady Eclecte." Given these two choices, most commentators seem to agree that the latter "the elect Cyria" is the preferred choice because the word "lady" is never used with reference to women in the New Testament. We do, however, have an instance where an elect sister is mentioned in 1 Pet. 5:13, an obvious reference to an individual. The American Standard Version, in a footnote, supports the view that the sister addressed by the apostle was named Cyria.

The second view held by some is that the "elect lady" is a figureative reference to the church. This interpretation, however, seems very unlikely. Such a conclusion advances the idea that "lady" means "church" and that "children" refer to "members of the church." Only in highly figurative portions of the bible is the church ever referred to as a woman. There is nothing in this short book to indicate that such was the intent of the writer. Even if we grant that the "elect lady" refers to the church, another problem arises i.e. who are the children of this lady? Since the church does not exist apart from its membership, we must accept the fact that the members themselves are the church, hence if the lady is the church her children could not be represented as members of the Church. In addition to this, if this lady is the church, who is her sister in verse 13? What do she and her children represent? It seems to this writer that when one considers all the facts of the situation the only plausible conclusion is that some faithful sister known to John is the one addressed, and that she may have been named

Cyria. To assume more than this is to go beyond what is written.

Question: In a situation where both a man and woman engage in illicit sex before the divorce, who is guilty and what is their status in remarrying? (CA)

Answer: The one exception of Mt. 19:9 is provided by our Lord to the innocent individual whose spouse has committed adultery. This is the only person allowed to divorce and remarry without sinning. That being the case, the guilty party can claim no such right. If the guilty party is allowed to remarry, it would follow that the one exception named by Jesus is not the one exception. Some argue that the exception phrase should be understood as applying in the last part of the Matthew text i.e. "he that marrieth her which is put away, except for fornication, doth commit adultery. But as Hugo McCord points out "in no Greek manuscript does the exceptive phrase appear in the second clause...the omission of the definite Greek article from the second clause forbids grammatically carrying over the exceptive phrase to the second clause. This is true because the second clause in omitting the definite article cannot refer to any specific woman, but to any put away woman. A marriage with any put away woman, Jesus asserted, is adultery." The real issue before us is whether God grants the guilty party the right to remarry. The issue is not whether the marriage is broken. Not whether the man and woman become free from each other. Not whether the innocent party may remarry, but whether God gives the same right of remarriage to the one whose fornication caused the break of a union which God had ordained should last for a lifetime. We do not believe He does. It should be pointed out that one who is divorced for reasons less than fornication does not have a right to remarry, by what token of logic and fairness, then, can it be assumed that one who is divorced for fornication will have the right to remarry? Regarding the question above: Since Jesus did not grant one guilty of fornication the right to divorce their mate, and since both parties in the above question are guilty of fornication, it is the opinion of this writer, that neither has the right to obtain a divorce or to remarry. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808)

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

By Clovis T. Cook

Having been asked by several concerned and conscientious brethren to give an account of the meeting, that Bill Harmon and I had with the Fifteenth Street congregation, in Temple, Texas, on Dec. 26, 1995. To the best of our ability we now attempt to do so.

On Tuesday morning early, Bro. Harmon and I left

Wichita Falls, Texas, to meet with the brethren at Temple, Texas, for a meeting which had been set up and agreed to the day before. We proceeded to go by Plano, Texas and pick up Bro. Ervin Waters.

We arrived in Temple, on time at which time Bro. Waters, immediately began to set up plans for the

meeting that evening. All went well and the time was set.

No one can understand what a joy I felt in my heart, in anticipation of seeing and meeting with these brethren, some like Glen Jones, and Ervin Waters, whom I have known for almost sixty two years, and maybe others I have known for a long time.

We went first to a rest home where one of Ervin's sisters was confined. Though it had been many years since I had seen her she remembered me well.

These brethren provided a very nice place for the meeting. A place they used for their gatherings, etc. Some of the Temple brethren, that could not be there for the beginning of the meeting were able to come later, after work and sat in on the meeting.

After having a prayer, the meeting began. We presented what we believed to be a foundational basis for unity and fellowship. These brethren assured us that they had never used in their worship services, and never intended to do so, wine, cups, classes, etc. However, the problem was not over this matter, but rather, whether we could scripturally use those who do. Our plan was not to ask them to surrender their opinion, but only their practice, if such they had. We reasoned that Rom. 14:22, teaches us that if we have an opinion, to keep it between ourselves and God. (NIV). In this case only God will be the judge, and peace and unity can be preserved. If we do not teach that we can use those with whom we differ on these matters, and do not use them for what ever reason we choose to divulge, we stand on safe ground. We were led to believe that these brethren had no such policy as was reported in a letter dated Sept. 28, 1995. In this letter the question was asked, "Has the church at Temple...changed its longstanding position that worshipping with cups and classes or fermented wine is not sinful?" I do not know that these brethren ever held that position. I do know that if they do, it has not always been so, because Bro. J.E. Jones, one of the original leaders in that congregation, a man who gave me great encouragement as a young preacher, wrote a letter dated Nov. 13, 1944 in which he stated, quote: "...While differing slightly on what might be permissible, we can be, and should be, and are of 'the same mind' on what should be done for the sake of unity and safety." There was nothing that came out of this meeting that led us to believe these brethren believed worshipping with cups and classes or fermented wine was not sinful. I think that I can safely say, they have always believed that and it is, likely they believe that now.

Their opinion seemed to be, as long as one could worship with them and not raise an issue over the way they believed and conducted the items of worship they could use such a person. The reason being, they did not want to offend anyone. They seemed to think that because of congregational independence and church autonomy they should be permitted to exercise this practice without incurring opposition from other con-

gregations. We pointed out that "church autonomy" did not give us a license to call on those who have digressed from the truth in the work and worship of the church. To avoid offense to one or a few by calling on them in your worship while offending many others by doing so is: "Doing evil that good may come." We reasoned that such was unwise. (Rom.3:8).

After considerable time had been spent, one of their brethren spoke up and said, "Bro. Cook we do not want you and Bro. Harmon, to leave here being deceived into believing that we do not call on cups and class brethren because we do. " "Well," I said, "you brethren are doing something that Bro. Waters said he does not do." There was a time when the brethren at Temple opposed Ervin, during the time that he would have called on such people, and so we pointed out that they were now doing what they once opposed Ervin for doing. Ervin objected to this line of reasoning for he thought perhaps that we were trying to show that they were divided among themselves, while the congregation at Temple, said they did call on cups and class brethren, and Bro. Waters said, "he did not." We were only pointing out that the situation had reversed itself.

Since we have approximately five hundred congregations in the United States, it is our firm belief that the most of the congregations would not agree that they could use cups and class or wine brethren in their public worship services. It creates a stumbling block on our way to full unity and fellowship in the Body of Christ. This only were we striving to bring about.

I think that it goes without saying, that the confession and statement that has been made by Bro. Waters should be accepted. The fact that he has included in his confession anything "oral" (spoken) or "written" should negate anything which created offense that he preached or wrote more than fifteen years ago, of which some still hold against him. However, in the meeting at Temple, and during his visit in my home, what the problem was that stood in his way to full acceptance among those of our persuasion, was made clear. His practice of fellowshiping and "bidding God-speed" to a few congregations who have stepped across the line and have definitely become a "congregation on the other side" who exist because of division, or who retain in their fellowship a person or persons who are living in defiance of God's moral law, or who maintain a very loose and lax control over them that labor among us. We have asked our dear brother to cease this practice, clearing the way for full fellowship, peace, unity and harmony, as we had in yesteryear.

On May 1st, 1940, Bro. Waters preached a sermon titled "The Man On The Other Side." Clayton Fancher heard this sermon and took notes which he still has in his possession. He said, quote: "There are some points upon which the Christian may be on the right side, but sees fit to step aside, and when he steps aside he becomes definitely the man on the other side."

What a simple, irrefutable, line of reasoning!

Words fail us in trying to express our gratitude to these brethren for arranging such a meeting. The dialogue lasted for three and one half hours, during which time all were free to express their opinion. It was an orderly meeting with much brotherly love manifested and displayed, with a promise by some of the young men that they would seriously study the matter. May God's blessings rest upon this effort and upon all who were involved—may there be more like it.

I appreciate Bill Harmon, for the valuable service he rendered in this effort. He was well received. Clovis Cook and Bill Harmon.

Editor's note: A few weeks ago, I called Brother

Cook and asked him if he would write a report of the meeting he and Brother Harmon had with the brethren at Temple, Texas and also Brother Ervin Waters. We appreciate Clovis for writing the report, and agree with him that the problem standing between Brother Waters and the brotherhood in general is a failure on his part to clarify his present position and practice regarding fellowship. He can do so by making a simple statement. Brother Waters, are you willing to do that? The brethren need to know. We would be happy to publish such a statement for you in the next issue of the paper. This matter can then be put to rest once and for all. May the Lord help you make this decision is our prayer. Don L. King and Ronny Wade

THE MORAL LAW WITHIN THE HEART (PART 2)

By George Battey

HOW WERE MEN SAVED IN OT DAYS?

Several questions arise when we argue for a universal moral law within man: (1) Were men in pre-Mosaic days able to be saved while living under this moral law? (2) When Mosaic Law "added" ordinances to the moral law, were Jews able to be saved under that law? (3) Did gentiles continue to live under the moral law without the "added" ordinances of Mosaic Law? (4) When Mosaic Law was "nailed to the cross" was the universal moral law also brought to an end, or did it survive the cross? Hopefully all of these questions will be answered in the course of this study. We will begin by asking simply: How were men saved during Old Testament times? The answer is that they were saved just like you and I are saved today. They were saved "by grace, through faith!"

The Jews were living under Mosaic law that had been added to the natural, moral law. They were, so to speak, living under the natural moral law plus the "added" ordinances given through Moses. But the natural moral law and the "added" ordinances blended together and now formed one new law. The Jews could be saved while living under this law, but they could not be saved by this law — and there is a huge difference between those two statements. To illustrate, we today can be saved while living under the laws of the United States, but we cannot be saved by the laws of the United States. Again, Russians can be saved while living under Russian law, but they cannot be saved by Russian law. Likewise, the Jews could be saved while living under Mosaic law, but they could not be saved by Mosaic law. "Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law [of Moses]" (Gal. 3:21). If there was ever to be a law that could have saved mankind, it would have been the Mosaic law! But the Mosaic law could not save anyone. Since it could not save anyone, no lesser law (e.g. the universal and natural moral law) could have done any better. "Now there-

fore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they" (Acts 15:10-11). "Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38-39). From all of these passages notice carefully that men could not be saved by the Law of Moses. Every man that goes to heaven, no matter when he lived, will be there because he was saved "by grace, through faith" (Eph. 2:8-9). There is a great difference between being saved while living under the Law of Moses and being saved by that law!

The Jews who lived under this law had two choices: (1) Obey what the law said and trust in God's grace (this is salvation "by grace, through faith"), or (2) Obey what the law said and trust in their own works to save them (this is salvation by works). Unfortunately, this second option is the route chosen by many Israelites then, and many people today. "What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone" (Rom. 9:30-32). "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:1-3).

Israel, like many people today, trusted in their works rather than in God's grace. They did not believe they were really that bad and certainly not bad enough to

be lost in hell! So it is with many today: "I don't believe God will send anyone to hell just because they weren't baptized, or just because they weren't members of the "church of Christ!" Arguments like this are endless and they all have one common denominator — men are trusting that their works are not that bad and certainly not bad enough to send them to hell. What men forget is that works must be perfect — flawless — in order to save. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith." Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them" (Gal. 3:10-12). The Mosaic Law, like any law, cannot save a man from sin. If a man could keep Mosaic Law perfectly, he would go to heaven and God would owe him eternal life, not as a gift, but as a debt (Rom. 3:27-28). Such a man could boast and brag that he earned his way to heaven by perfectly keeping the law and by never making a mistake. We know, of course, that such is impossible, but this is the requirement of anyone who would be saved by the law.

Some Jews were saved during the OT dispensation. These were saved while living under the law, but they were not saved by that law! King David was saved. He lived under the Mosaic Law, but he was not saved by that law. He was saved by grace — God was gracious to David in spite of the evil he had committed (Rom. 4:6-8). He was saved through faith (Rom. 3:28). Any man that will ever go to heaven will be there, not because he kept some law flawlessly, but because God was gracious and because of his faith.

In summary, Jews living under Mosaic Law could be saved, but not by that law. They were as much dependent upon the blood of Jesus as we are today (Rom. 3:24-25).

The gentiles, during the OT dispensation, were living under the natural moral law. It required less than Mosaic Law which "added" requirements (Gal. 3:19). These gentiles could be saved while living under this law, but they could not be saved by this law. Just as with the Jew, so with the gentile: If a gentile could have kept this law flawlessly, he would go to heaven, but he would not be there because of any graciousness on God's part. He would be there out of debt on God's part — God would owe him wages. He could boast and brag that he was present in heaven because he was a flawless soul.

He never, during his life on Earth, made a single mistake that needed atonement. But to gentiles Paul wrote the following: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). Listen to this passage. This passage clearly envisions two options: (1) grace-faith salvation and (2) works. But the "works" mentioned here are not "works" of Mosaic Law because the Ephesians were never under Mosaic Law. The "works" spoken of here clearly refer to the natural moral law under which all men have lived.

We know that some gentiles were saved during the OT dispensation. Rahab was saved because of her faith while she lived under the moral law, and before she ever began living among the Israelites (Heb. 11:31). She was saved while living under moral law, but she was not saved by that law. She was saved because of God's grace and because of her faith.

WHEN SHALL THESE THINGS BE?

Continued from page 1

coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5:7-9), "it is the last time" (I John 2:18), and "yet a little while and he that shall come will come" (Hebrews 10:37). These all referred to a symbolic coming of Christ in the destruction of Jerusalem. They were comforting to persecuted Christians because the Jewish state would be destroyed and the Jews' power to harm them broken.

To deny the personal coming of Jesus at the end of the world belies the Scriptures and the very definition of words and grammatical constructions on which our understanding of the Bible rests. Because of space limitations, let me give a sample of only one verse, I John 2:28. Thayer (p. 490) says that "coming" in this verse refers to "the future visible return from heaven of Jesus, to raise the dead and hold the last judgment." MacKnight (p. 659) points out that "appear" is the same word used of Jesus' first coming (I John 1:2) and means that in His second coming the Lord will be the object of men's senses, as He was in the first. How

much plainer can language be?

Verse 29 through the rest of Chapter 24 and all of Chapter 25 speak to the disciples' second and third questions and indicate the second coming of Jesus and the end of the world will occur at the same time. Historically, most preachers of the church of Christ have believed the answers to these questions begin in verse 36. The main reasons for starting with verse 36 are difficulties with verses 29 and 34. Verse 29 says, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days..." meaning after the affliction caused by the siege of Jerusalem. Since the Lord's second coming did not take place "immediately," that seemed to pose a difficulty. The second difficulty is in verse 34: "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." But verses 30 and 31 seem certain to speak of the final judgment. And if verses 29 and 34 are understood correctly, they do not pose problems.

The Greek word translated "be fulfilled" in verse 34 is complicated, with various shades of meanings, but one of its definitions is "begin to be" (Thayer, p. 115). Thus, Ellicott is quite right in suggesting that

this verse implies only "the commencement of a process." Jesus meant that generation would not pass away until this prophetic process began to unfold. He did not imply that everything discussed in the chapter would be completed in that generation. This is similar to language often used about God's work, in which the beginning is stated as the conclusion, because nothing can stop God's doings. For example in I Kings 6:2, it is said that Solomon "began to build the house of the Lord" in the 480th year after the Israelites came out of Egypt. But the KJV margin shows that an alternative reading is "he built the house of the Lord."

In my judgment, the word "immediately" in verse 29 means simply that Jesus' second coming is the next event in the prophetic process. To argue that Jesus taught He would return at the destruction of Jerusalem is to accuse Him of lying when He said He did not know when His return would be. Christians were directed to begin their watch for the Lord's advent immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem because no one, even Jesus, knew then it would be (verse 36), and the only way disciples of all ages could be safe was to begin to look for Him immediately. One of the jobs of the church of all ages is to keep a constant vigil on the Eastern skies.

DON'T BE DISCOURAGED BY DELAY

While the disciples were told to begin looking for Jesus' return after the destruction of Jerusalem, the Master also took care to teach them not to be discouraged if His coming were delayed. Verse 42 says, "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this..." "know this" means understand the warning He was about to give against going astray if the Lord delayed. Verse 48 says an unfaithful servant might conclude "my Lord delayeth His coming," and be led by his discouragement to fall into greed. Some translations say, "My Lord is staying away a long time."

The following chapter (Matthew 25) continues the same thought in two well-known parables. The parable of the wise and foolish virgins teaches against

becoming complacent. Verse 5 says, "While the bridegroom tarried..." "Tarried" suggests a long delay; one translations says, "The bridegroom was a long time in coming." The bridegroom, as in other places such as Mark 2:18-20, is Jesus.

The parable of the talents, which begins in verse 14, discusses a householder going on a journey to a far country and entrusting his property to his servants while he is gone. Verse 19 says, "After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them." The remainder of Chapter 25 discusses Jesus' coming and the judgment in clear, unmistakable terms.

Can anyone read these passages with an open mind and believe that Jesus was promising to come back (except in a symbolic sense) at the destruction of Jerusalem? Can we read them and not know that the Lord was preparing disciples of all ages for the possibility that He might "tarry long" in that heavenly country before coming to judge the earth? Jesus made it plain (Matthew 24:36) that, at the time, He did not know the date of His second coming. He had accepted this limitation on His infinite knowledge (Paul called it "emptying Himself" in Philippians 2:7) while He was in the form of a man. Still, He taught the truth as His Father intended and that Christians of all ages need.

THREE TYPES OF SINS

Interestingly, Jesus' parables predict three types of sins that may be committed by those who do not understand the delay in His coming. The first is greed and violence because they no longer fear the Lord's judgment. These are the scoffers of II Peter 3:3-4, who say, "Where is the promise of His coming?" Legions make the statement today. The second is complacency, to which even "virgin" disciples are susceptible if they become "foolish." The third sin is error and misunderstanding of the Lord, exemplified by the one-talented man, who thoroughly mistook his Lord and what He wanted. This is the source of false doctrines about the Lord's second coming.

ELDERS

Continued from page 2

and Titus 1:7 as: "Not desirous of filthy gain;" "No lover of money;" "Not avaricious;" "Not addicted to dishonest gain;" "Not greedy for dishonest money." etc.

Some writers understand this to mean that the man must not use any base or evil methods in making money, while others see it as meaning that the man must not have a strong or extreme desire for money. It seems to me that the passage includes both ideas. The excessive desire to make money will often lead one to sinful methods of obtaining it.

Allow me to say again that we do not understand that a wealthy man may not be an elder simply because he happens to have wealth. Wealth, as such, is

nowhere condemned in God's Word. But the love and greed for it certainly is. Abraham was a very wealthy man, but he did not allow his wealth to control him. He controlled it and was righteous with it. Not many are able to do as he did.

Money, though the main object under consideration, is not the limit of the greed. Surely we can agree that the Biblical principle includes anything considered as wealth, such as property and power, etc. The whole point seems to be that the man (men) for the eldership must be a lover of the church and spiritual things. That is his life. That is where his affections lie. He loves the souls of men!

Obviously, this principle applies to every member of the Lord's church. None of us are to be given to filthy lucre. We are all commanded to "seek ye first

the kingdom of God, and His righteousness..”(Matthew 6:33) “For the love of money is the root of all evil” (1 Timothy 6:10). Anyone who is a devout Christian should have this quali-

fication, and certainly, no one may use base methods of obtaining money and be qualified as an elder of the Lord’s church. DLK

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

Allen - Smith - On March 9, 1996 at 2 p.m. in Ada, Ok., Nathan Smith of Allen, Oklahoma was united in marriage to Melinda Smith of Galey, Oklahoma before a gathering of friends and loved ones. The ceremony was very memorable for the young couple and inspiring for those of us who witnessed the occasion. Greg Pruitt sang the wedding selections very beautifully, despite his sore throat. The newly wedded couple plans to make their home around the Ada area and attend the Galey congregation. Nathan was recently converted to Christ and has proved to be a wonderful asset to this rural congregation. They are wished the Lord’s blessings and the best of life together by friends, family, and myself. Doug Hawkins

Couch - Burton - On the afternoon of February 24th, at the Leawood Village, Church of Christ, in Joplin, Missouri, Rickey Couch and Brandi Burton were united in marriage before a large crowd. It was an exquisite setting, arranged and planned by the members of that congregation. The singing was done in a very beautiful manner by members of the church. The church went all out to make their wedding something to be remembered. Rickey had previously entered into a study of the scriptures concerning the church, with the elders and others, Brandi included. He soon saw the truth and obeyed the gospel shortly before their wedding. We hope their life together will be extensive and happy. Brandi has, from the day she obeyed the gospel, been a very committed young person. Her family came from far and near to take part in the wedding. May God richly bless them is our prayer. Though at times, it was a little emotional for me, yet I was glad to have been asked to say the ceremony. Brandi is our granddaughter and has been a joy in our lives. Clovis T. Cook

Pfeil - Neff - Larry Pfeil and Mandy Neff were united in matrimony at one o’clock in the afternoon on the ninth of March in a beautiful setting at the Oklahoma Heritage Center in Oklahoma City. Family and friends from several states gathered to witness Larry and Mandy exchange vows of lifelong love and fidelity. It was an honor for me to officiate the ceremony, and I wish Larry and Mandy God’s richest blessings as they continue to serve Him as husband and wife. Carl M. Johnson

OUR DEPARTED

Magee - Kenneth F. “Red” Magee of Brookhaven

,Ms was born March 21, 1911 and passed from this life on April 4, 1996 at his home. He was 85. He had been a member of the Hillcrest Church of Christ near Brookhaven, Ms for many years. He is survived by his good wife Mildred; one son, Reggie; one daughter, Janice McKee; three step daughters; two step sons; two brothers; one sister, two grandchildren; 12 step grandchildren and 7 step great grandchildren. Brother Magee was a kind and gentle man, well liked by all who knew him. He was faithful to the Lord and His church and his empty seat will be a constant reminder of his passing. Our prayers are with his family. We did our best to speak words of comfort to the large crowd at his funeral service. Don L. King

Holt - Odess Ransom Holt, of the Mountian Grove congregation, was born May 12, 1909, on the family farm in Wright County, Missouri, and departed this life on Jan. 3, 1996 in Mountian Grove, Missouri. He was married to Thelma Louella Minnick on Oct. 19, 1930, who preceded him in death in 1968. In June 1969 he was married to Maudie Ridenour. He is survived by his wife Maudie, a son Melvin Holt; a daughter Irma Jean Moore; a son, Duane Holt; 6 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Brother Holt assembled for worship until physical affliction made it impossible. Services were conducted at Craig-Hurtt-Bradley Funeral Home, Mountian Grove with burial in Clariton Cemetery, Clariton, Iowa. I had known Odess for several years and was honored to conduct the service. Dan Wissinger

Taylor - Geneva Taylor of Ada, Oklahoma, was born on July 19, 1916. She departed this life on March 4, 1996. She is survived by: two daughters, Sue Worrell and Rilla Webb; one sister, Irene Wolf; three brothers, Harold Deatherage, Alfred Deatherage and J.H. Long; along with numerous grand and great grandchildren. The congregation here at Ada will sorely miss the good cheer and kindly influence of Sister Geneva. She was one those that you weren’t afraid to ask “how are you” because she was always, “just fine” in spite of her ailments. Sister Taylor was living a life of preparation to meet her Lord therefore “we sorrow not as those who have no hope.” This writer spoke a few words of warning to the large crowd that assembled to pay their respects. Joe Hisle

Daniel - Mary Daniel was born on June 14, 1905. She departed this life on January 28, 1996 in Kenai, Alaska. She was 90 years of age. Sister Daniel is survived by two sons: Kenneth and Keith Daniel both

of Kenai along with 9 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren and 9 great-great grandchildren. Sister Daniel was one of those great pioneer spirited women that are a vanishing breed. She had extraordinary determination and dedication for the work of Jesus Christ. After a meeting in Kenai in 1994 I told Sister Daniel that "I knew the church at Kenai was in good hands as long as she was there to keep everyone straight!" Sister Daniel was returned to a sunny, wind swept little country cemetery near Silverton, Texas to be laid to rest beside her husband. Floyd, who had preceded her in death in 1974. I would like to thank Brother Richard Frizzell for assistance in the service as well as Brother Ed Daniel who led the closing prayer in his grandmother's service. Joe Hisle

Jones - Leonard A. Jones, Jr. was born August 22, 1924 to Leonard A. and Louise Kay Jones at Wagoner, Oklahoma. He departed this life March 16, 1996 in his home at Broken Arrow, Oklahoma of cirrhosis of the liver. At the time of his passing he was 71 years, six months, and 22 days old. Leonard was married to Loretta Howard, September 8, 1959 near Dora, MO in the home of her parents, Elisha and Iola Howard. To this union were born three children, one girl and two boys. The daughter, Marlena, died in infancy. The two sons, Marcus of Broken Arrow and his wife, and Michael of Tulsa, as well as, Loretta, his wife, survive Leonard's passing. He is also survived by a daughter by a previous marriage, Patty and her husband, Doug, and their three children of Springdale, Arkansas and a brother, Alec Jones and his family of Sand Springs, Oklahoma. His parents preceded him in death. Leonard was a member of the Church of Christ, having obeyed the Gospel many years ago. He and his family worshiped with the 11th Street Acres congregation in Tulsa. He was a personal friend of mine for over 25 years and he and his family traveled many miles from time to time to attend services where I would be in gospel meetings. It was always good to see them. The last time I preached at Tulsa, Leonard was so sick, but came to worship anyway. As he passed by me before the service began, he simply touched my hand to let me know he was there, but said nothing. However, he was too uncomfortable to remain and his son took him home before the service began. Brother Jimmy Smith and I conducted the funeral and I was honored to be asked to participate. Interment was at Broken Bow. Paul O. Nichols

SPANISH RADIO BROADCAST 3/27/96

The church in Council Hill, OK has the opportunity to start a Shortwave Radio broadcast in Spanish that will reach all of Mexico, Central America, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and parts of South America. The cost is only about \$50.00 per 15 minute broadcast. Three weeks ago we started a second English program over WWCR in Nashville—at 12.160 MHZ to add to our first one at 15.685 MHZ. We have already received a

written response from upstate New York. Are you interested in helping us reach Latin America with the Gospel? If you can help in this effort or if you would like more information, please write: The Church of Christ, c/o Robert Hill, Rt. 1, Box 75 B, Morris, OK 7444 5 James A. Hickey 7700 S. Maple Broken Arrow, OK 74011

LITTLE ROCK, AR

Please change meeting time to 10:30 AM Sunday morning, 2:30 PM Sunday afternoon and 7:00 PM Wednesday evening.

LEBANON MEETING

The annual 4th of July meeting will be June 26-July 3, 1996. The meeting will begin with the evening service on the 26th. The services will be at the same location as in the past at the Nelson Community Center. The building was damaged by a tornado, but has been rebuilt. There is a new Hampton Inn motel scheduled to open on June 15, 1996 with 68 rooms. There is also a new motel at Bennett Springs. Ron Courter and Edwin Morris will conduct the meeting under the direction of the Lee's Summit congregation.

OUR THANKS

The Oyster Bay congregation in Crawfordville, Florida, (Tallahassee) would like to take this opportunity to thank the Earlytown, Alabama, congregation for all their years of dedication and hard work in hosting the Southern New Year's Gospel Meeting. After hosting this meeting for more than thirty years, the brethren in Earlytown have decided to allow the Oyster Bay congregation to conduct it. We will certainly be pleased and privileged to carry on this fine tradition.

The dates for the meeting this year will be December 27th through the 31st. We will be providing more information as the meeting approaches. Robert Kornegay Chuck Sears Michael Atkinson

DO YOU HAVE ANY OF THESE SONG BOOKS?

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Gregory Paul Jordan, 2633 West State Road 340, Brazil, Indiana 47834, April 1, - I recently moved here to Brazil, Indiana to work with the Harrison and Blaine congregation and the Pleasant Grove congregation. This is my first work and I humbly asked the

prayers of the church that I might faithfully attend my duties to the congregations here. I have been here three months and so far the work is progressing at a steady rate. The congregations have recently started an ad in the paper for correspondence courses in the Brazil area. At the present, we have been receiving on average two responses a week. We feel that this shows good promise and hope that it continues to grow. The congregations here are also involved, and have been for some time, in sending correspondence courses overseas. That work continues to grow by leaps and bounds. Please pray for these works that they may continue to bring forth fruit. The Pleasant Grove congregation recently had a meeting with Bro. Wayne McKamie. It was very profitable to the Lord's church. Wayne baptized three during the meeting and I baptized one as a direct result of the meeting. We were all very thankful for that. Please pray for the work here. May God bless you all.

Bruce Roebuck, P.O. Box 184, Wynnewood, OK 73098, April 10 - Presently we are preparing for a meeting with Wayne McKamie. We have looked forward to it for some time and expect a great meeting. The past few months have been enjoyable. In March we were involved in a meeting in Scotland, AR. We had a number of visitors from the community as well as neighboring congregations. It was a pleasure to stay with Miles and Johnette. Their country home and demeanor made us feel like we belonged. Two Sundays ago we had a restoration here at home. This young man and his family are a welcome addition. We continue a number of studies each week in hopes of strengthening the church and saving the lost. We look forward to meetings in the following places: Bedford, IN May 6 - 12, Beatyville, KY June 15 - 23 (with Kevin Presley), Walnut Grove, KY July 7 - 14. Please remember us when you pray.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr, Fremont, CA 94539, April 10 - We just returned from an enjoyable meeting at the Hillcrest congregation near Brookhaven, MS. As always, we were treated with the hospitality we have come to expect from people in the South. Crowds were hindered some by sickness, weather and the passing of one of their members. However, cooperation from sister congregations was good, especially the New Salem church which is nearby. We appreciated it all very much. We recently enjoyed preaching at Yuba City, CA where a wealth of young people are. Our prayers are that they will be kept for the Lord. Our next is at Atwater, CA toward the end of April for a week. We have preached there quite a lot over the years and held a number of meetings too. We look forward to the effort. Don't forget us when you pray.

Carl M. Johnson 1400 Northcrest Dr. Ada, OK 74820, April 8 - We enjoyed the annual Homecom-

ing Meeting at Healdton, OK this past weekend. It was a pleasure for me to share the pulpit with Johnny Elmore Friday night and to hear the good sermons given by the other speakers. March has been a busy month for us. We had our annual March meeting the first weekend here in Ada, and we may have had our largest crowds ever in the twenty year history of the meeting. The preaching of the seven young speakers was exceptionally good and timely. Our meeting in Nashville was also exceptionally good. It is always a genuine pleasure to work with the brethren there. We had many visitors from the area and from other states as well, including preachers Johnny Fisher, Rick Martin, and Terry Studdard. My next meeting was in Bridgeport, TX. This was my first time to preach in Bridgeport, and I enjoyed it very much. James Vannoy and the other brethren worked hard in preparation for the meeting and we had numerous visitors from surrounding congregations and from the community and trust some good was done. Lord willing, my next meetings are: Kansas City, KS (Apr.10-14), Joplin, MO (Apr.17-21), Hartwell, AR (Apr.28-May 5), Jacksonville, FL (May 22-26), Cable Ridge, MO (June 1-9), and Hamilton, OH (June 16-23). At this point in our schedule, we plan to attend the fourth of July meeting in Sulphur, OK. Please remember us in your prayers.

Reggie Kinser, 4407 Georgetown Dr. Columbia MO. 65203, (573) 446-5934 - Please take note of our new address and telephone number. After much toiling and several trips to and from Indiana, it is good to finally get settled into our home here in Columbia. Since moving here last fall we have made many new friends in Missouri. The brethren here have been very thoughtful and encouraging toward us. Since we began the work here in September we have had three baptisms, two restorations, and several confessions of faults. All three conversions came after a series of home studies with people from Baptist and Catholic backgrounds. One is a lady of 86 years who lives in a rest home, one is a female college student, and the other a middle-age gentleman. Although we are still in the preparatory stages of our evangelistic effort here, we do have several ongoing home studies. One in particular looks very promising. We hope to have things situated very soon so that we can be in full swing before the close of winter. Since we have been in Missouri I have been privileged to speak at several meetings and visit with brethren from various congregations around the state. So far, I have found the brethren here to be honest, sincere, and dedicated to the cause of Christ. I am genuinely thankful to live in a country and an area where I can enjoy the influence and association of so many wonderful brethren. We are looking forward with great anticipation to doing the Lord's work in this state. I pray that the influence of myself and my family will serve to further the cause of Christ

both near and far. God bless all the faithful!

Keith Thomson, 5 Carringal Place, Armadale, WA, 6112 Australia, March 11, 1996 - I just recently returned from Russia and I would like to share with you some of the things that happened on the trip.

The trip from Perth, Western Australia to Penza, Russia was a very long one, about forty hours traveling, plus long lay overs. I'm sure you can appreciate how glad I was to see Jerry and Pat Cutter waiting for me on the platform at Penza railway station. I spent most of my time in Penza, where the church there is strong and faithful. It was good to see young Christians so fervent for the Lord.

Jerry and Pat had been in Penza about a month and a half when I arrived. On this trip they spent three months there, having to return home on business. They have just returned there for a further three months. Jerry has been holding private studies with a large number of the brethren three times a week where they have shown great love for the Lord and His word by their intelligent questions. Unfortunately, what is lacking in the church there are teachers. There are a number of very mature women in the church but not men. There are, however, a couple of young men that, in time, could be good teachers.

I had the privilege of witnessing the baptism of two young people a couple of weeks after I arrived there. On New Year's eve these two people, Vladimire and Ludmila expressed their desire to obey the gospel and at the public bath house Jerry baptized them into the church. As you can imagine there was great excitement in the church with this event.

The people in the church there are truly wonderful people. It certainly is not easy being a Christian there, with threat of real persecution hanging over them all the time, yet they live their lives with great joy. They travel to the private studies and the worship services for half an hour or more on unheated busses in temperatures well below freezing. They proved to be an inspiration to me.

During my stay in Russia, I was also able to visit and work with the congregation in Saransk. Saransk is about 140 km north of Penza and in that distance a great many changes take place. First of all the city itself is quite different in appearance. It is only about half the size of Penza, but more than that every thing seems to be even more worn out. Saransk is in the republic of Mordovia which I think does not do the people any great favors. I got the impression that the people of Mordovia were treated as somewhat second class citizens compared to the Russians.

It was the differences in the churches that really struck me though. Don't get me wrong, there are good and strong Christians in Saransk that I came to admire and love very much, but they seem with out direction. There is a young man there called Vladimire, who is doing his best with the church, but he feels he lacks any real training. The church there has not been

as fortunate as in Penza in that they have not had the almost constant presence of an experienced evangelist.

I was able to spend three weeks in Saransk, making two trips in that time. During my last stay I was asked if I would be able to come back for an extended period and work with them. I told them, if the Lord was willing I would be happy to come back and bring my family and stay for at least six months. I asked the brethren to pray for this proposed trip.

Just after I returned to Penza from Saransk, Jerry and Pat had to go home to the U.S. I have to say that I greatly missed their company, but the brethren there did everything to make me feel as comfortable as they could. I had the opportunity to study with lots of people and shared many good times with them.

I feel very fortunate that the Lord permitted me to travel to Russia. There are great opportunities for spreading the gospel there, and I pray that it will be possible for me and my family to travel to Saransk and help them further. I am planning to be going early in the month of May, Lord willing. There are a great many things to be worked out, but they seem to be all falling into place.

While I was away in Russia everything was continuing well with the Armadale congregation. There is a very capable young man here, Jim Howard, who did the majority of the teaching, and as I am told, did a wonderful job of it. Jim has the desire to work full time preaching, and I think that he certainly has the capabilities given the opportunity.

While I was away we started to have a number of visitors who have been returning, which seems rather promising. Also, we welcome back a young family who were over in England for the last year. Their presence has been good for everyone.

I thank all the brethren for their continued interest in my work in the Lord, and I pray that the Lord bless you all.

Douglas T. Hawkins, HCR 3, Box 203-C, Rocky Mount, MO 65072 - In recent months we have witnessed several good things in the Kingdom of God. Our work in central Missouri is going well. The television programs have produced a number of leads in our area. Tuesday, March 19, at 12:30 a.m. we baptized a middle age couple into Christ that had been viewing the program for several years. They first watched Johnny Elmore about four years ago when Johnny did a series on "great questions of the gospel age." Since then they have watched Ron Alexander and Ronny Wade. It is a wonderful example of how one plants, another waters, but God gives the increase. May we always remember that we are "laborers together" in the moral vineyard of the Lord. At the end of February we closed a delightful meeting in Tyler, TX. The interest, enthusiasm and crowds were very encouraging throughout the meeting. We stayed with Randy and Kathy Ballard for a few days and Terry

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and Becky Baze for the rest of the time. Both of these families are very dear to our hearts. Terry and I have labored together in Russia and as a result have become true friends. He and Glen Ballard have done a wonderful job in that area. We enjoyed the presence of several gospel preachers during the meeting. Aaron Risener, Wayne Fussell, and Jimmy Vannoy were all present one or more services. From Tyler, we went to Buffalo, Mo for a meeting that began the Monday after the meeting closed in Tyler. We enjoyed the association of Smith Bibens and company. Smith is doing a great work there in Buffalo. I appreciate him and Mitzy so very much. The meeting closed with two baptisms. It was a wonderful occasion for the congregation. Lord willing, I am to begin a weekend meeting April 5 at Aurora, MO. We are truly looking forward to this meeting and then Monday, April 8, we begin in Pocahontas, Ar. In May we look forward to meetings in Auburn, Ca. (May 12-19) and Covina, Ca. (May 20-26). If you are able, come by and be with us. The Lord bless the faithful!

P. Duane Permenter, P.O. Box 1223, Riverbank, CA 95367-April 8th - Our meeting at 64th Street in Sacramento was a success. Fourteen young men did the teaching around the theme of "Be Thou An Example." Brother Frank Harris was in charge of the services and preached on Lord's Day. He did an excellent job during the whole weekend and the congregation was very pleased with his work and preaching during the meeting. Oakdale's meeting with Joe Hisle was well attended by visitors from the community. The brethren did a good job in advertising the meeting and are to be commended for their work in this regard. Joe's preaching was certainly appropriate and timely, meeting the needs for the occasion. Many are already aware that in June my family and I are moving to Midland, TX for an extended work. We are anticipating a great work with the elders and brethren in that place. The Lord willing, I will hold a meeting in Midland July 14th through 21st. Also, before leaving Calif. I will be preaching at Oakdale May 31st through June 2nd. Brother Greg Gay is to continue to work in Sacramento after my departure and I ask you to continue praying for the work in Sacramento and Oakdale. Please pray for our work in Midland was well. May Almighty God bless you is my continued petition.

Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808 April 17 - Since last reporting we have en-

joyed meetings at Blue near McAlester, Ok., Wayne, WV, and Chestnut Ridge, Ky. We were blessed with good crowds and interest at each place. The Lord willing we look forward to working with these congregations in the near future: May 5-12 Fremont, Ca., May 13-19 Manteca, Ca., June 9-16 Greenville, S.C., and June 17-23 London, Ky. Our T.V. program out of Springfield, Mo. has resulted in four baptisms and two coming from digression in the past few weeks. May the Lord bless the work everywhere.

ADVICE FOR THE YOUNG CHRISTIAN:

What do you do
 When you want to fit in?
 The world calls it fun,
 But the Bible describes it as sin!
 "Everyone else is doing it,"
 They say, "Don't be a Nerd!"
 But to reveal you are a Christian,
 To the world is absurd.
 But temporal pleasures fade,
 This earthly life will cease;
 So consider what's more important.
 Like the eternal life of peace.
 The way to stronger faith
 Is to learn more of the truth,
 So remember thy Creator now,
 In the days of thy youth.
 Love not the world,
 Let your light so shine:
 There's more to life than following the crowd
 And what they consider a good time.
 Temptations arise,
 But an escape God will provide.
 So follow the strait and narrow,
 Don't follow the road that's wide.
 The Lord will never fail you,
 If discouraged you may be;
 He's only a prayer away,
 His strength will set you free.
 Early foundations of faith are important.
 It's not something you can put off until you are old.
 Now is the time to prepare for the end;
 Who knows what even tomorrow will hold?

Our purpose is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

"To continue speaking the truth in love," "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," "keeping the ordinances as delivered."

"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) 'And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in.'" (Isa. 58:12).

VOL. LXX

LEBANON, MISSOURI, June, 1996

NO. 6

THE REIGN OF GRACE

By Bennie T. Cryer

Grace has always been so powerful. This power caused the ancients to invent their mythical goddesses they called Graces. Graces was made up of three sisters who, it was said, had control over pleasure, charm, and beauty in human life and in nature. They were named Aglaia, who the Greeks thought controlled the characteristics of brilliance and dignity; Euphrosyne, thought to be over joyfulness and liberality; and Thalia controlled blooming and flourishing. This part of the ancients religion manifested an error in their beliefs about the source of their favors and gifts and how they were dispensed to them. James 1:16-17 describes this type of wandering from the truth.

The power of grace reached its perfection in power in Jesus Christ our Lord through whom we have received so many spiritual benefits and are still receiving them. The idea of grace is favor or benevolence that is active in bestowing benefits upon its objects. Its many and varied usages in the New Testament attests to the facts of its power and how each of our lives are affected by it. Each believer should understand this grand subject in order to properly and surely procure God's blessing. Each would-be recipient should also study "grace" in order to avoid the pitfalls the ancients fell into when they invented something new because they did not understand where the blessings came from and how they were bestowed upon them. I fear we have some brethren who are striving to invent something "new" about the grace of God as revealed in the New Testament.

The Holy Spirit used the word generally translated "grace" in various ways.

GRACE USED FOR THE BLESSING RECEIVED

John 1:16 tells of those who had received "grace for grace." In the new system called "grace and truth" Jesus, in this context, who is full of grace, bestows blessings in such abundance they are represented as being piled one upon another. The blessings are called "grace." Acts 11:23; 1 Corinthians 1:4; and 2 Corinthians 9:8 are also examples of where this word is used for the blessing or gift given.

GRACE USED FOR THE ENTIRE NEW TESTAMENT SYSTEM

John 1:17 is an example of this. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." In Acts 13:43 many of the Jews and religious proselytes were persuaded "to continue in the grace of God." In Romans 6:14 Paul wrote, "for ye are not under the law, but under grace." In these examples grace is put in contrast with the law of Moses and is used to mean the entire Christian system. In this sense the grace of God has appeared to all men and is capable of teaching them the kind of life they were expected to live, Titus 2:11-12. When a person heeded the teaching of true grace they were then described as standing in it, 1 Peter 5:12. Because of this usage "gospel" and "grace" are sometimes used to mean the same thing. Compare Romans 5:2 with 1 Corinthians 15:1.

GRACE IS USED TO SIGNIFY A WORK OR OFFICE

In Romans 12:3 "grace" is used by Paul to mean his apostolic work and authority. It is used in a similar manner in verse 6 to describe the work each one has in the church along with the enabling gifts bestowed upon them, 1 Corinthians 12:4. Paul recognized he was an apostle by the grace of God in 1 Corinthians 15:10. He worked hard so this grace would not have been bestowed upon him in vain.

GRACE IS USED FOR MONEY COLLECTED FOR THE POOR, FOR WAGES, ETC.

1 Corinthians 1:3 is an example of how the word generally translated "grace" is used in this sense. In the KJV it is rendered "liberality." In others "gift." In 2 Corinthians 8:4 it is rendered as "gift."

GRACE IS USED FOR THAT WHICH HAS POWER TO INFLUENCE

"Let your speech be always with grace," Colossians 4:6. When we speak to others our words should kind and favorable.

There are some other ways this word translated "grace" is used in the New Testament, but these will help us learn a few things about the grace of God in

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Editorial

QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS

By Don L. King

In 1 Timothy 3:3, Paul said, "Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;"

Patience is a much needed quality in every member of the church. Too many are like the fellow who is said to have prayed, "Lord give me patience, and give it to me right now!" If you are prone to be impatient you know what a job it is to become patient. The Revised Version has "gentle" in the place of patient. So, we are looking for this quality in the men who would be elders. Patience is one of the steps mentioned by Peter in 2 Peter 1:6. It is plain that we all need to be working toward this goal as we mature spiritually. However, an elder is one who has attained it and demonstrated it by his attitudes in life. If you approach him with a problem he won't explode and make us feel worse than before we asked for his help. Too, if he is really a patient, gentle man, we won't be afraid that he might do that.

I understand that the word in Greek means, "Fitting, suitable, fair, reasonable, kind, mild, equitable and gentle." All of these terms certainly describe a gentle and patient man. That sort of person will always be found in a leading role in the church or business.

The main point appears to be that an elder has to be a very kind and meek sort in his relations and dealings with others. He must not be-can not be a bitter, unkind, stern and disagreeable man. God simply will not have such a man as an elder. In fact, such a man makes a poor church member of any kind! Paul does not mean (and he didn't say) that an elder can be loose, weak or liberal regarding sin. An elder has the same obligation to "...earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints," (Jude 3) as any other Christian. We all must do that!

However, he must be spiritually mature to the point that he can not be easily provoked into anger and outbursts. Obviously, when patience or kindness do not reign in our lives, neither can gravity.

An impatient person can tear up just about anything. He will likely disrupt and disorganize the love and purity of the church in short order. How many of us, if possible, would like to go back in time and redo some of the bad situations that our impatience brought about? Only the Lord knows how much hurt and lasting damage has been done to the church by otherwise well-meaning folks who were simply impatient, stubborn and angry. It is said, that no one is rich

Continued on page eight

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: Is it a sin for a Christian to have a tattoo? (OK)

Answer: In Leviticus 19:28 we read "Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the Lord." Again in Chapter 21:5-6 "They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard, nor make any cuttings in their flesh. They shall be holy unto their God and not profane the name of their God: for the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and the bread of their God they do offer: therefore they shall be holy." Deut. 14:1 is a repeat of the same prohibition. In these passages the writer deals with the behavior of the priest and the people when mourning for the dead. It was the custom of some (especially in the East) to make cuts and incisions in their bodies while in a state of mourning. Ellicott comments regarding the making of marks on the body: "This, according to the ancient authorities, was effected by making punctures in the skin to impress certain figures or words, and then filling the cut places with stibium, ink, or some other color. The practice of tattooing prevailed among all nations of antiquity, both among savages and civilized nations." Such a practice, however, was forbidden among the Israelites because their body was created by God, and it was believed that because of this nothing should be done to disfigure that which bore the image of God. (Ellicott) One thing is certain, God wanted them to be holy and different. He did not want them participating in the practices of pagan and unbelieving peoples in this regard. Clarke points out that "it was a very ancient and very general custom to carry marks on the body in honour of the object of their worship." He continues: "Most of the barbarous nations lately discovered have their faces, arms, breasts, etc. curiously carved or tattooed, probably for superstitious purposes." The Pulpit Commentary adds: "to print any marks upon you, that is, tattoo themselves in memory of the dead. All these customs were unbecoming the dignity of God's people, and had been connected with idolatrous practices." To summarize: God did not want his people indulging in the practice of pagans. Some of the practices included cutting, shaving, and tattooing themselves. The reasons for the prohibition included (1) they were the people of God, they were holy, (2) they were not to disfigure the body, which was created by

God, and (3) they were to be different from the nations about them. The New Testament does not directly address the subject of our discussion. There is no scripture that says "thou shalt not get a tattoo," or, "thou shalt tattoo thy body". In the opinion of this writer no one can make a blanket statement that "to get a tattoo is to sin." That does not mean, however, that such a practice is good, warranted, or always right. The question is much broader than that and must be considered in the light of sound judgment guided and regulated by principles revealed in the Bible. To this end, we offer the following considerations: (1) Our body was created and given us by God. For this reason we need to be careful how we treat it and use it. To place upon it marks or messages that are unbecoming a child of God would be wrong. (2) Tattooing is the "in" thing to do today. The movie stars, sports figures etc. who participate in this practice often do so by tattooing unmentionable parts of their bodies, and then invariably mention them by displaying their marks for all to see. For a Christian to be influenced by such a practice is unfortunate to say the least. Some of the messages and figures I see tattooed on bodies today are shameful and no child of the King would ever wear or display such marks. (3) Every Christian should continually be aware of what and who is influencing them. Young people should ask themselves: "Am I following the world, or Christ, am I being influenced by principles of right or by the popular worldly people of this generation?" (4) I am a Christian. I am different. Just as the Israelites were the "holy people of God" so are we today, His "holy nation", "peculiar people", "chosen generation", if we look like, dress like, and behave like everyone in the world,—where is the difference? (5) Another consideration for young and old alike is that once you get a tattoo, it is likely to be there for life. Success in removing one is not very good. Do you want to make a mark on your body that you cannot remove? Are you willing to go through life, bearing that particular word or picture? Something to think about. (6) Finally, parents should teach their children that as God's people we are not of this world (James 4:4; 1 Jno.2:15-17; Rom. 12:1-2) hence, we should do nothing that would prostitute our holy calling for some symbol of a sinful and changing world. (Send all questions to: Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808)

THE MORAL LAW WITHIN THE HEART (PART 3)

by George Battey

MOSES' LAW WAS NAILED TO THE CROSS

Moses' law was eventually "nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14), because it had fulfilled its purpose. It was "taken

out of the way." In other words, the "additions" to the universal, natural moral law were taken away. Remember, Moses' Law were those portions that were

“added” (Gal. 3:19) to the natural moral law. Only those “handwritten ordinances” (Col. 2:14) were “nailed to the cross.” That is, only the part that had been added was now being taken away. This necessarily infers that the natural moral law remained intact.

Why were the “added” portions of Moses’ Law removed? They were removed because God no longer needed them. They were not necessary for salvation (Acts 15:10-11) and could therefore be removed without jeopardizing anyone. Rather than saving men, the law was given to prepare men for the coming of Christ (Gal. 3:24-25 and to emphasize man’s sinfulness and need for salvation (Gal. 3:19). It was not “nailed to the cross” in the sense that men could no longer be saved by it, because it was never given to save men from sin. If men could have been saved from sin by a law, then Jesus died in vain (Gal. 2:21; Mt. 26:39).

GOD STILL NEEDS MORAL LAW

Unlike the Mosaic Law, the moral law was not “nailed to the cross” because the moral law serves a different purpose than the Mosaic Law served. The natural moral law was not given to prepare men for Christ. Since it serves a different purpose, and since that purpose has not been fulfilled, it continues functioning even to this very day.

One oft repeated question is this: If the moral law is still in existence, can men who live under that law be saved? The answer to this is, of course, YES — men living under that law can be saved, but they cannot be saved by that law. Even during the OT dispensation, when beyond doubt the moral law existed for gentiles, Rahab and others were saved while living under that law, but they were not saved by that law. Neither Mosaic Law, nor natural moral law were ever the basis of anyone’s salvation.

If the natural moral law written on the heart survived the cross, what then is its purpose? There are several purposes that can be given.

(1) Moral law was given to reflect the character of God. “What may be known of God is manifest in them” (i.e. in men) (Rom. 1:18). How does God manifest His character to men? He did and continues to do this through the physical creation itself (Rom. 1:19) which includes moral law that was written on the heart (Rom. 2:14-15). Lying, for example, is wrong because God is truth (Rom. 3:4). In other words, telling the truth is not just something God does. Truth is what God is; this is His character. Unfaithfulness is wrong because God is faithful (2 Tim. 2:13). Again, faithfulness is not just something God does, it’s what He is! Faithfulness is part of His character. Love is right and hatefulness is wrong because God is love (1 Jn. 4:8). Love is not just an activity of God; it’s part of who He is! Love is part of His character.

This is why some things have always been right and other things have always been wrong for all people, throughout all ages, and in every culture. The current and prevalent idea that “times have changed”

and therefore “some things that used to be considered wrong (e.g. fornication) aren’t really wrong anymore,” is false. What used to be wrong is still wrong because of who God is.³

(2) Moral law was given to provide order and decency. Without moral law there would be complete anarchy and chaos. In the days of Noah men had suppressed the moral law for so long and to such an extent that anarchy and chaos did exist. When the world had reached such a depraved state there was no longer any need for it to continue and God brought the flood. Yes, the natural moral law can be ignored and suppressed, but see what happens without it. The moral law brings about order and decency. This purpose of the moral law was not fulfilled at the cross. It is a need that will continue till the end of time.

(3) Moral law was given to provide a common ground of reasoning. No matter what culture we may travel to, we may preach to people and appeal to them upon a common ground of what is right and wrong. If there were no universal moral code of ethics, it would be impossible to preach, converse with, or relate to people of other cultures.

Paul appealed to the Athenians’ sense of right and wrong when he preached to them (Acts 17:22-31). He did not appeal to them by quoting either OT scriptures, nor NT scriptures because these Athenians did not know or believe any of those scriptures. However, Paul could appeal to their natural sense of right and wrong. Because this is one purpose of moral law, it is still needed today.⁴

(4) Moral law was given to “justify” certain NT laws. In I Cor. 11:14-15 Paul appeals to what “nature” teaches us about men and women with long hair. By doing this, he’s appealing to a natural sense of right and wrong which every man possesses. He’s “justifying” the need for men to get their hair cut by appealing to natural, moral law. In this chapter Paul had already appealed to scripture (verses 8-9). But in addition to scripture, Paul appeals to man’s moral sense. The natural, moral law is what gives the gospel of Christ its beauty. In other words, men should desire the gospel of Christ and it should appeal to them because it is in accord and in harmony with our natural sense of right and wrong. If the gospel were contrary to moral law no one would desire it — and rightly so. But because the gospel harmonizes perfectly with every sense of justice, and reasonableness, and truthfulness, the gospel is believable and appealing.

In summary, God’s character will need to be reflected in the world until the end of time. Order and decency will always be needed. There must be some common ground of reasoning between men of different cultures until the end of time There will always be

³ This is the basis of Josh McDowell’s new book, *Right From Wrong*. Word Publishing, 1994.

⁴ C.S. Lewis appeals to this reasoning in the first five chapters of his book *Mere Christianity*.

a need for moral law to "justify" the gospel of Christ. The church and the gospel are founded upon moral law and thus moral law is needed till the end of time (cf. Ps. 89:14).

The idea that the natural, moral law ended at the cross is wrong for at least two reasons: (1) There is no scripture that so teaches and (2) The purpose of this law has not ended.⁵ (2710 Somerton Dr., Morrow,

GA 30260)

⁵Cf. Homer Hailey, *The Divorced and Remarried Who Would Come to God*, Nevada Publications, 1991, chapter 3 and especially p. 37, James Bales, *The Law in the Heart*, Gospel Teachers Publications, Inc., 1981; James Bales, *Not Under Bondage*, published by the author, 1979, James Bales, *The Scope of the Covenants*, published by the author, 1982.

CONGREGATION SEVERS TIES WITH CHURCH OF CHRIST

By Kevin W. Presley

"A once-prestigious south Tulsa church has voted to renounce the Church of Christ doctrine, which, among other things, bans instrumental music in worship and limits church offices to men." So Carol Jenkins, World Religion Editor, reported in the Saturday, July 22, 1995 issue of the "Tulsa World" newspaper. The reason for such a brazen course of action on the part of these "brethren" became obvious as I eagerly read the abovementioned article. "Founded in 1978, Southern Hills Church of Christ, 5150 E. 101st St., at one time counted as members many prominent and affluent Tulsans, who left as newer members began advocating controversial changes in traditional church doctrine. The membership dwindled to about 200 from 450 a few years ago. Last Sunday, the remaining members voted to sever ties with the Church of Christ theology..." Several observations could be made regarding the unscriptural concept of "Church of Christ theology." First of all, it must be noted that the "faith once delivered" did not originate with the church, but was rather delivered unto the church. Any attempt to disassociate oneself from the truth is a manifestation of evil rebellion, not merely against the church, but against the Lord who gave the truth and instituted the "Church of Christ" (Jude 3, Matthew 16:18, Acts 20:28, Romans 16:16). The church of the Lord is to act as a good steward of the truth. When congregations fail to do such, they shirk their primary God-given responsibility. When a church becomes more concerned about things other than the preservation and propagation of the truth, they have departed from the faith!

WHY NOT?

The course of action taken by these "newer members" is the logical end to the road upon which the digressive churches have been traveling for quite some time. Simply put, the liberals have had a field day among many of the "churches of Christ." Not to mention the unscriptural practices that have divided them from the faithful throughout this century (multiple cups, Sunday School, women teachers, institutions), the "conservative" digressives have had an uphill battle to fight in keeping promoters of modernism from undermining basic doctrines. Doctrines that encompass the plan of salvation and church organization. Plainly,

some of these people are beginning to realize that if the Bible pattern isn't necessary in one respect, it isn't necessary in any respect. They have simply followed their hermeneutics to their logical end. In the article, several observations were made that are indicative of an attitude that is prevalent among the digressive churches today. For example, "Because of the shrinking membership and greatly reduced contributions, the congregation must make changes to survive, said Earl Edwards, a member of the transition team." Another spokesman for the group said, "Some felt the ties with the Church of Christ were too confining. It was tying some down and keeping others out. Now the body is wanting even more freedom in worship, women's roles—things of that nature." Their preacher, Steve Bell, stated, "this is one of the most exciting events that I have ever seen transpire in the life of a church." He likened it to a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. He then went on to say, "Yes, there are risks, but the potential for good far outweighs the potential for danger."

These brethren are obviously more concerned about the praise of men, than they are the praise of God. It is the same old inferiority complex that even has some of our own calling for changes amongst our ranks. "If we would not be so strict and just let folks have a little more freedom," or "If we would just try to blend in with the denominations a little better, why look at how many more would be attracted to the church," they tell us. It is readily conceded that upon giving up a few things, we would come up a notch or two in the religious world's estimation. Think about the folks that would no longer be offended if we just gave up one cup in the Lord's supper. How about providing Bible classes for the young and maybe even a divorce recovery program and singles group? Why, the possibilities are endless! If we would maybe loosen up a little bit on moral issues. Harping on those old issues like "the hair," women wearing slacks, staying out of bars and dance halls are just keeping people out! We could even do as these "brethren" did, and call for change in our method of singing and the roles of women in church. How about if we stopped spending our money on mission work, gospel meeting, etc...and invest in building the finest meeting house in town.

We could throw in a fellowship hall and a basketball court! We might even start a church league softball team? There is no doubt, on the part of this scribe, that such changes will allow the "Southern Hill's Church" to enjoy a larger audience and a greater treasury. The same would work for the congregation where I worship, I'm sure! However, a large audience and an overflowing bank account are not what the Lord is looking for in a congregation. He's not concerned that we "get along" with our religious neighbors. The Almighty isn't impressed by fine meeting houses, banquet halls, and church kitchens. And it certainly is not within His will that we employ innovations in our worship unto him. Thus, in brethren's pursuit for the vain glory of this world, they give up fellowship with God's people and, most importantly, communion with God! 2 John 9 says, "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."

TAKE IT AS A WARNING

We have been warned brethren! Whether we like to admit it or not, the winds of change are attempting to sweep through the churches of Christ. The digressives have already begun to reap what has been sown. The seeds of further digression and apostasy from God have been planted in the hearts of many among their number. We, too, should be concerned about talk heard among some in our ranks of broadening our fellowship, preaching less about doctrine and more get-happy, feel-goodism. Some are admonishing us not to be so critical of others' beliefs. We can mark it down. If the Lord allows us to embark upon the twenty-first century, the faithful will once again have to fight the battle against digression and liberalism. Let us take on the whole armor of God, march confidently into the battle, and contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints, lest we pick up the newspaper and read one of our own "severing ties" with the Lord and his church! P.O. Box 2398, Ada, OK 74821.

HINDERING THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

By Larry McElroy

Today, as at no other time, we as members of the Church have NO EXCUSE for not sending the saving Gospel of Christ into all the world. It is the responsibility of every congregation, great or small, to accept its part in seeing that Gospel is not hindered. The churches of Macedonia, though in deep poverty, heard the cry of need from their brethren and "abounded unto the riches of their liberality" (2 Corinthians 8:2). Their strength was not within themselves, for scripture says, "beyond their power they were willing," and "they FIRST gave their own selves to the Lord" (2 Corinthians 8:3,5). What a great example of zeal brought about by their deep and abiding trust and faith in God. Today, there exists a condition of poverty, both of the necessities of life and hearing the Word of God. We can close our eyes and ears to their need, and I believe, thereby, hinder the Gospel of Christ from reaching them; or we can open our eyes to their need and become supporters of those who need assistance in this great work. GOD has blessed and answered our prayers that doors might be opened, and that He would send laborers into the harvest. GOD has done his part, and it is now in our hands to see that His blessings are not given in vain.

My main area of understanding lies with the Philippine effort, where, at this very time, there are several preachers who need our support. They are dedicated to preach the word, and they are in need. This last January, during the time that Bro. Don King was there, 43 souls were baptized into Christ. You see, there are still those who hunger and thirst after God's wonderful words of hope and of promise. On the other hand, we sometimes have difficulty getting friends and family—even those in our own household—to listen

to the words of life. It seems that, here in the affluent land, people are hindered by their own selfish interests and, like the rich young ruler, they place possessions and personal lusts above the salvation of their souls.

Brethren, today is the day for action, as the scriptures say, "What doth hinder us?" Why do we hesitate when the need is so great? Have we become so hardened that our ears are deaf to their cries and our eyes are so blinded that we will not see? Brethren, I do not believe that we don't see or hear, but rather, we are hindered by something that should never be a stumblingblock to our involvement...the lust for power and control. There are those who see the need, get involved, and pray to God that their efforts will always be blessed. Then we have some who are fearful. I've heard some over the years say, "We can't because we might need what we have in our treasury someday." The only purpose of the treasury is to do the work that needs to be done, then trust in God who blesses abundantly our every need. The question is, "Do we really believe that God is ABLE?" You know, God blesses us as members of the Church "exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20). He has always blessed His Church and will never turn his back upon her: and because of His blessings, there should never be a work of the Church, anywhere, that goes without the necessary funding whereby the Gospel of Christ is preached. The treasury is the tool which allows the Church to accomplish that part of God's great plan, "GO ye therefore, and TEACH ALL NATIONS, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things,

whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20) The command is to GO, and I fully realize that most of us cannot travel to these distant places, but we can send those who will GO. Tell me, are we prepared to spend money that God's word might be taken and preached where it is needed? It is our DUTY, yes our RESPONSIBILITY to see that the Gospel is sent wherever is needed. When GOD gave the stewardship into the hands of men, there was also given the grave responsibility to carry out GOD's will. There are several reasons given answering the question of why the children of God should freely give into the treasury, but none of them ever even hint at the idea, "Hang onto it, because we might have need for it someday." Do you recall what James 4:13-14 says? "Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what [shall be] on the morrow. For what [is] your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for little time, and vanisheth away." It isn't necessarily that our intentions are bad, but remember, the roadway to hell is paved with good intentions. We are called into the vineyard to work today. We don't know what will be on the morrow, or even if tomorrow will be ours to behold. We do know that the gospel is needed today. We do know that without the gospel, many will be lost, and GOD's will is that the gospel be taken to the lost. The salvation of souls was so important that scripture allows us to understand that the contribution is, among other things, for giving assistance to the poor saints, for caring for those who are widows indeed, and for the spreading of the gospel, both in this country and around the world. How can we as members of the LORD's CHURCH turn our hearts and our resources away from those for whom our giving is intended? Do we somehow believe that the LORD will bless our misuse of HIS treasury? Brethren, the responsibility of sending the gospel to the lost has been placed in our hands and the ability to carry it out given through the contribution. When we say, "We can't," we are turning aside from a GOD-given responsibility, and I ask, Do we dare stand in God's presence and make the excuse, "Lord, we were going to use it someday"? God does not need nor does he want the money that we give into the contribution each Lord's Day, but there is a purpose... God has given us the opportunity and the responsibility to USE IT in such ways that God may receive the glory. As the song says, "INTO OUR HANDS THE GOSPEL IS GIVEN." How will we use the blessings that He has given? God has given to every person abilities and talents, and he expects us as individuals to USE THEM; and as church leaders to USE THEM; and as the CHURCH as a whole to USE THEM: exercise well our God-given talents.

We have often read the parable of the talents, and have sorrowed over the servant who, having received the ONE TALENT, took it and buried it, that he might

give back to the Lord that we he had received. The error that condemns this servant was his failure to put to proper use the talent that he had received. The misunderstanding of his duty led his servant to take and bury the Lord's blessing, as the servant said in Matthew 25:25, "I was afraid." The problem with this line of reasoning rings out from Matthew 25:15, which says that the Lord gave "to every man according to his several ability." We shall never be asked to do more than we are able, but let us never forget, we will not be guiltless when we shun our duty or when we set out to mock God. "We are laborers together with GOD" (1 Corinthians 3:9). Ours is to continue to work and never give up, for the reward is to those who continue faithful to the end. To the weary and burdened laborer, Jesus said, "Come unto me...and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28-30). Do what I ask. Go where I lead. Jesus said, "I will never leave you," and brethren, He never will. It seems needless to say, but the Lord knows our abilities. He KNOWS when we give all, and He KNOWS when we hold back, as was the case with Ananiás and his wife Sapphira, who "lied unto God" (Acts 5:4). Could it be that in the parable of the talents, the Lord allows us to see ourselves as individuals and as congregations as we fail to put to proper use the Lord's treasury? It no longer is ours. It is not our treasury, but GOD's. Robbing God by failing to give as we ought certainly is sin, but have we not also sinned when we allow the treasury to continue to grow while the labors of the Church in spreading the Gospel is hindered by our slothfulness. Our numbers may be small and our ability may seem feeble, but when we trust in God and use His blessings as His word directs, our efforts shall be blessed abundantly. There is no effort of spreading the Gospel so great that it can be hindered if we will but trust in God and then go about doing the work which we are able to do...doing His will. May we all awaken to God's work, and then work with all our might. Jesus said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work" (John 9:4). The night of death will soon overtake each of us and our earthly labors shall cease, and eternity will stretch before us. Then, how have we used God's talents? Shall we stand before GOD guilty of HINDERING THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST because we have buried the contribution, wasting it, so that we can return it to GOD, unused? What will our answer be? 1700 N. Tully Rd., Apt. E128, Turlock, CA 95380-2249. Tel: (209) 667-0213.

THE REIGN OF GRACE

from page 1

our lives.

WHAT THE GRACE OF GOD IS NOT

Enjoying the grace of blessings of God does not mean that God will wink at your sins, our brother's sins, or my sins. The cross of Christ provided a way

of forgiveness of sins. It also tells us of the enormity of sin in God's sight. If I am in error in my personal life or my worship and service to God I need to know this from someone. God is not going to automatically forgive me of my sins and put me in fellowship with Him or my brethren. "Grace" means favor. The grace of God means God has favored me with something. When I sin I look to God for His favor and ask, "What has He favored me with in this situation?" I see that, first of all He has favored me with Jesus and His shed blood, Revelations 1:5. Secondly, God favored me with a plan of action. His giving that plan is a gift to us. It is His grace. It is not legalism. 1 John 1:9 describes that plan. I, as His child, must confess my sins in order to have forgiveness and cleansing. Until I do this I am unforgiven. I am still defiled. John was not preaching legalism. He was preaching the gospel, the grace of God when he wrote "confess our sins." When I confess my sins I must quit those sins. If I continue to practice the sins God will not forgive me. Nor can I confess one sin and have other sins in my life and expect forgiveness for these other sins. A brother came forward and confessed wrong doing before a congregation near here. He quit doing one thing that was wrong in his life but continued to do something else that was wrong. When approached about this and reminded that he had confessed his wrongs

he stated that this thing he continued to do was not included in his confession. Did the grace of God cover that sin? Of course not. That brother does not stand in the grace of God, 1 Peter 5:12

MISTREATED GRACE

What we have seen under the last heading is a mistreatment of the grace of God. If I will not confess my sins as an erring child of God I have "failed" of the grace of God. If I insist on practicing error in the form of innovations I have fallen from grace, Galatians 5:5. I am not standing in the grace of God. If I insist on being a member of another kind of religious organization with another kind of plan for salvation I am frustrating the grace of God, Galatians 2:21. These verses teach that, though God's grace has tremendous power we may nullify it by our actions and beliefs. If one can fail of the grace of God, fall from it, or frustrate these wonderful provisions surely we cannot expect God to wink at and overlook sin in our lives. Romans 5:21 teaches that grace reigns through righteousness. 1 John 3:7 teaches "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." Righteousness is having the right relationship with God through the forgiveness of sins and maintaining that relationship by doing what is right. The grace of God reigns in such people. 2340 Sanguinetti Ln #93, Stockton, CA 95205

EDITORIAL

from page 2

enough to buy back his past. Once we say those angry words, they are nearly impossible to erase. It is never the same as if we hadn't said them. The Spirit inspired Paul to say that the Lord will not have such men as elders. May God hasten the day when we have many men "at the helm" who are really qualified to be elders. God give us men who are relentless in their fight against wrong, but genuinely patient and kind.

Haven't you noticed men who are "hot headed"? If we are disposed to be such, we need to hang our heads in shame. Such a person can drive away more visitors and weak (new) members than nearly any other weakness he may have. If one is that way, he can not become an elder until he has managed to overcome the fault. How unlike Christ is the fault of impatience. If the Lord were that impatient no one would ever be saved. Thank God for the blessed knowledge furnished us by 2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God does not condone or approve of our sins, but He is patient and longsuffering with us and has made every effort that we might be led away from sin. This spiritual maturity must be present in any man who is a qualified elder.

You know, really, a kind and gentle man can usually solve nearly any problem he comes up against in

the church. People will often approach such a fellow for help because they know he will do his best to help them. He will be kind to them. Oh, he may very well have to tell them they have sinned, but he will do so in a kind and gentle manner. His patience will often "save the day." We need this kind of men as elders all over our brotherhood.

It disturbs me greatly that as I ask young men what they aspire to be, few ever say, "I want to be an elder." Anymore, few say they want to preach or be anything of substance in the church. They may tell you of some worldly position they look toward but often the church is forgotten or overlooked as one sets his goals in life. Much of the blame surely rests upon we who show them by our own lives that the church is of little value to us! We hear of those who discourage their sons from preaching because the monetary rewards are often less than the parents wish for their children. Shame on us! We have lost our grasp of what is really important in life. I would rather my children and grandchildren love the Lord and His church than to become famous and wealthy. We pray for them to be successful as Christians. Brother, don't teach your son or daughter to go out into life and make a million dollars. Teach them to go to heaven! They will be as successful as they need to be in this life if the spiritual is elevated over the material. Think on these things. DLK

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THANK YOU

We wish to thank everyone who has helped us to

get a new start after losing everything in the fire that destroyed our home. We hope we have not overlooked anyone in sending out thank you cards; but if so, we pray this thanks through the OPA will suffice. —Don and Claudine Sloan, Laura Johnson and children

CALIFORNIA LABOR DAY MEETING

The Labor Day meeting for 1996 will be hosted by the Stockton, CA congregation. It will begin Friday, August 30 and continue through Sunday evening September 1. The meeting will be held in the Scottish Rite Temple Auditorium, 33 W. Alpine. Various gospel preachers will be used. For more information you may contact Dennis Mahurin, 1949 Cheyenne Way, Stockton, CA 95209, telephone 1-209-957-3262 or Bennie Cryer, 2340 Sanguinetti Ln. #93, Stockton, CA 95205, telephone 1-209-937-9727.

SULPHUR, OK. ANNUAL CAMP MEETING

The 1996 Oklahoma Camp Meeting will start June 24th and continue through noon, July 4th. Mark Bailey and Doug Edwards will be the preachers in charge of each service this year. The Sulphur Congregation will be in charge of the meeting as usual. We look forward to the meeting each year! This is a great spiritual feast with fellowship enjoyed by all ages. We invite you to attend the meeting and become a part of the inspiration. The crowds grow as the brethren began to arrive from various states. The preachers and missionaries arrive, ready to preach powerful sermons. There are Motels, RV Parks and Camping In The Park, in Sulphur - also good motels between Davis and the Turner Falls Area, Pauls Valley, Ada and Ardmore. These towns are within 30 miles of the Tabernacle. The largest RV Park is on the western edge of Sulphur (Hwy 7) - "The Arbuckle resort" 1-405-622-2424. The Resort Area continues to grow. Make plans to attend this Great Meeting. Good preaching, praying and singing will be enjoyed by all who attend. For further information: Bob Shepherd 1-405-622-3950; Don Stehr 1-405-622-5556; George Hill 1-405-622-2779. The Sulphur Brethren Note: Received too late for May issue. DLK

LEBANON MEETING

The annual 4th of July meeting will be June 26-July 3, 1996. The meeting will begin with the evening service on the 26th. The services will be at the same location as in the past at the Nelson Community Center. The building was damaged by a tornado but has been rebuilt. There is a new Hampton Inn motel scheduled to open on June 15, 1996 with 68 rooms. There is also a new motel at Bennett Springs. Ron Courter and Edwin Morris will conduct the meeting under the direction of the Lee's Summit congregation.

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

Scott-Turney - February 2nd, 1996 marked the beginning of a new home, where we all trust that God

will be daily honored. Christopher Joe Turney took the hand of Anna Beth Scott, vowing together to love one another all the days they both shall live. The weather was cold and snowy, yet the crowd gathering to wish them well was warm and cheerful, as Anna adorned for her husband, walked down the aisle to forever stand by the side of Chris. Anna is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John R. Scott, Cris the son of Mrs. and Mrs. Michael J. Turney, all of Neosho, Mo. Cris, I have known only a few months, Anna has been a friend all her life. They were married in the building where they shall worship together, Burkhart, MO. May their love for one another and for God increase as they serve through Christ, our Savior. Barney Owens

OUR DEPARTED

Blankenship - Nelta Blankenship of the Weatherford, TX congregation died suddenly, but peacefully in her sleep March 12 of this year at the age of 76. A host of loved ones, brothers and sisters in Christ, friends and neighbors gathered for her memorial service. Bro. Wayne McKamie delivered a thoughtful message that touched all of us and made our loss easier to bear. The family, especially Elvah Jones and Molly Baldwin, Nelta's daughters, wish to thank all who came and all who have sent cards and letters and other messages of sympathy. We will miss her. Nelta was my sister and we loved her dearly. Bennie Cryer

Gabbard - Edgar Gabbard, was born September 28, 1925 in Hazard, KY. He died April 22, 1996 at Deltona, FL. He was the son of John and Adella Gabbard. He was married to Peggy Williams in 1948, who preceded him in death in 1992. He married Lucille Reynolds in 1994, who survives him. He also leaves six daughters: Mrya Weist, Marilyn Snodgrass, Kathy Smith, Susan Gabbard, Donna Datson, and Jennifer Gray. One sister Norma Cornett, and 14 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, 3 brothers and one sister. This writer spoke words of comfort and warning to those assembled in remembrance of him. We laid his body to await the Lord's coming in the Butler County Memorial Park. Barney Owens

Boman - Laveta was born March 27, 1918 in Newton County, Missouri to Alonza Lankford and Julia Anderson Lankford. She entered into rest April 8, 1996 after a short illness. Her age was 78 years, 12 days. She married Willis E. Boman on August 13, 1934; he survives. She was preceded in death by a son, Duane and two grandchildren. Other survivors include 2 sons, Delbert Boman, Joplin, Mo. Derald Boman, Goodman, Mo. Three daughters: Julia Johnson, Neosho, Mo. Brenda Selk, Keystone, Iowa. Cathy Letts, Neosho, Mo. One sister Juanita Reed, Seneca, Mo. 26 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren. With over 61 years

of married life together Willis and Laveta have set a good example for us to follow. All of my life they have set a good example in attending meetings and supporting the truth. Nelson Nichols and I conducted the service at the Neosho Church building with an overflow crowd. Our sympathy is extended to the family. John W. Anderson

Howard - Pete Howard was born September 8, 1901 near Dora, MO and departed this life April 12, 1996 in the Marshfield Care Center at the age of 94. He was united in marriage to Della E. Smith Dec. 7, 1919 and they would have celebrated their 77th anniversary this year. He is survived by his wife, Della; three sons, Dallas, of Seymour, Raymond, of Marshfield, and Harvey, of Springfield; four daughters, Lora Eslinger, of Niangua, Emogene Cornell, of Raleigh, NC, Opal Laney, of Rogersville, and Flo Ming, of Linden, CA; one brother, Elisha Howard, of West Plains; 23 grandchildren, 33 great-grandchildren and 9 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral services were conducted April 15 at the Ball Cemetery near Dora, MO. Bro. Howard was chiefly responsible for the congregation at Seymour, MO and devoted much of his life to it. He loved the cause of Christ and defended it against all foes. No one had to wonder where he stood on biblical teaching. His word could be depended upon, as attested by almost 77 years of commitment to his wife. Time and space would fail me to tell of this colorful and unusual man. I was honored to be able to fulfill his long-standing request to conduct his funeral. Johnny Elmore



Bennie T. Cryer, 2340 Sanguinetti Ln. #93, Stockton, CA 95205. The work in Stockton continues to go forward. Last Sunday, May 5, the elders ordained P. Duane Permenter to the work of an evangelist. The congregation had been praying and fasting. A large crowd was present to encourage Duane in his work. We broke our fast with a large pot-luck luncheon. This congregation, along with Duane's home congregation at Oakdale, can certainly recommend him to the brotherhood. He has proven his sincerity and abilities over the years. We have heard a number of gospel preachers in meetings around this area and look forward to more in the coming weeks.

Barney Owens 8782 Meadowview Ln. W. Chester, OH 45069 - We have just closed our yearly Spring Gospel Meeting here at Sharonville. Brother Wm.

St. John preached for us. Although the meeting was short, the preaching was good and we are satisfied that the Word went forth in a way acceptable to the Lord. Interest from "Outsiders" was not as it has been in the past, but that responsibility must be laid at our feet. During April it was my privilege to be with the congregation at McAlester, OK. It was a joy to be with them and assist in the meeting. Visible results were manifest, including interest from the community, joyful attitudes for the spoken word, and some making correction in their lives. By the time you read this, I will be with the brethren at Golden, OK June 8-16; Council Hill, OK June 23-30. It would be a joy to see you at these to help us, if such can be worked into your plans.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, May 13 April 19-28 we enjoyed holding another meeting for the Atwater, CA congregation. I have preached there quite a lot over the years and it was good to go back. We appreciate the hospitality of Johnnie and Diane Broughton who opened their home to us. Our prayer is that good was accomplished. Yesterday, (the 12th) Ronny Wade closed a good meeting for us at Fremont. One was baptized, one was restored and at least two made confessions of wrong. I especially appreciated the good preaching Ronny did. We are all the better for his coming our way. There were several outsiders who attended one or more times which is always encouraging. Help from other congregations was good but was perhaps hindered some by the high price of gas in California. Brethren, if you are asking one of our preachers to come your way this year, please, remember it may well cost him considerably more now to make the trip. As good stewards, we need to take his expenses into consideration. May the Lord bless the faithful.

Jerry Dickinson, 13803 Crosshaven, Houston, TX 77015--We just returned home from the Young Speaker's Meeting in Tyler, Texas where my son, Jason, was speaking, along with a number of other young men. All of the young preachers I had the chance to hear did outstanding jobs. I appreciate the way they all emphasized the scriptures and exhorted their young hearers (as well as we older folks in the audience) to stick to the pattern found in the Word of God. That's the kind of preaching we need! I notice, if I may say so, that these younger men preach a little plainer and a little a harder than some of us older preachers do sometimes. And the young folks seem to like to hear plain and hard preaching, too! We need to make it plain, simple and pointed these days. If we don't we are going to lose our young people. Preach it preachers! I am looking forward to my summer meetings (I can hardly believe that summer is already here) at the following churches. May 29 - June 2 McAlester (Blue), OK; June 9 -12, West Monroe, LA; June 23 - 26, Lone Rock AR; June 27 - 30, Iuka AR; July 7 -14,

Leawood (Joplin), MO; July 21 - 28, Tyler, TX. I am praying that God will bless all of us who preach the Word with our most fruitful season ever! Amen!

Kenneth R. Middick, P.O. 269, Seneca, Mo. 64865 --We have recently closed a meeting at the Harrisonville congregation in Missouri. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet with and become acquainted with the Lord's people in that area. They seem to have a great deal of potential to be a stronghold in the Lord's work for years to come. We enjoyed our stay with Larry and Barbara Bradford and the girls as usual. It was also good to be with Wyn and Michelle Baker during this meeting and our prayer is that they will have success in the endeavors at Harrisonville. Gospel preachers that supported the meeting one or more nights were: Paul Nichols, Mike Criswell, Roy Lee Criswell, Reggie Kinser, and John Brewer. The work at Seneca continues to go well. We have purchased ground and are currently working toward a building. The building will be located on highway 60, southwest of Seneca. We appreciate all of those that help us in the work here at Seneca and feel a debt of gratitude to each and everyone. May the Lord bless the faithful everywhere.

P. Duane Permenter, P.O. Box 1223, Riverbank, CA, 95367, May 8--Recently, we had two people obey the gospel in Sacramento. The church continues to prosper in other ways as well. Brother Greg Gay will be working part time with the church in Sacramento after my family and I move to Midland, Texas. Our commitment in Sacramento will be completed, and we will be moving to Texas the 1st part of June. Please remember me and my family in this new effort. This last Lord's day the church in Stockton, CA ordained me to the work of an evangelist. This is a great honor and I appreciate the confidence the eldership has placed in me. It is a pleasure to be of service in behalf of King Jesus. May God bless the faithful.

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, May 8--Since last report, I have spoken at Capitol Hill, Healdton and Weatherford, TX. I heard Jimmie Smith twice at Ada last month. May 1 - 5, I tried to help the small congregation at Okemah. Kevin Presley, Tony Denton, and Bruce Roebuck helped in the preaching and Joe Hibbs, Larry Barnes and I knocked a lot of doors and passed out invitations but without response. We need to pray for Joe and all others who are working with small congregations. I will be at the new congregation near West Plains June 12 - 16 and at St. Albans, WV June 18 - 23. Be with us if you can.

Brett Hickey, P.O. Box 68, Mtn. Home, AR 72653, April 18, 1996--Events both exciting and unusual have befallen us this year. Seven men have obeyed the gospel. One passed away, but the other have remained

faithful. One of them came from our preaching and studies in the local jail. Another inmate is at the threshold of being baptized. Two of our converts happened in part because of an excellent meeting last month with Lynwood Smith. This meeting followed up on a meeting Brother Lynwood held for us last fall. Both meetings gave the congregation and outsiders what we needed to hear. We had thirteen outsiders during the meeting. One, a local college student, has attended regularly since then. The most excitement this year came from an unusual opportunity to present the truth on the Lord's Supper to some local "cups and classes" brethren. Darryl Haun's older brother worships with this group. He invited Darryl to come hear their preacher, Jerry Henderson, defend the use of individual cups. Darryl said he would as long as he was given the chance to present his position. They agreed. Our congregation came out in force both Sunday nights. The first Sunday, Bro. Henderson spoke for about an hour and a half. Darryl followed a week later and surprised everyone with his able defense of the truth. After Darryl's presentation, Brother Henderson tried to answer some of his arguments. In the ensuing question and answer period, it was evident that there was something wrong with Brother Henderson's position. He could not answer the hard questions. One of his own brethren conceded that he received mercy at our hands. Since then we have carried two newspaper articles on the issue. He attempted to answer the first in his own article, but responded to the second by what appears to be some form of a debate challenge. We hope to draw out his intentions and accommodate him in the demonstration of truth and right. I am honored to be surrounded by brethren at Mountain Home who are not interested in striking a compromise with error as some are prone to do today. May all Christian soldiers awake to the enemies assault and never cower to the intimidation of numbers, money or power.

Kevin W. Presley, P.O. Box 2398, Ada, OK 74820, (405)436-1331, May 2, 1996--On February 28, I arrived in Ada after a three month stay with the church at Blue Springs, Kentucky. In addition to the results mentioned in a previous report, fourteen came forward to confess faults. The work was a tremendous success due to the interest and dedication of the brethren there. I considered it a privilege to be there and labor with Bro. Zade McClure. I not only appreciate the church at Blue Springs for the invitation but to Ada for allowing me the time to go. The week of my return home, I was able to enjoy the annual Spring Young Preacher's meeting here at Ada. The preaching and singing was some of the best we have ever had at the meeting. That Sunday evening, I "hit the road" to begin another year of gospel meetings. My first took me to Knoxville, Georgia. This is a fairly new congregation and is making a good start. We had good crowds, and the brethren were really enthused about the meeting. We had some community visitors,

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and ended up restoring one sister to duty. I enjoyed very much the hospitality of Bro. Gene Grant, who is quite capable in the pulpit. I appreciate him for his ability and great Bible knowledge. From there I went to Hilltop (near Liberty), KY. Large crowds filled the house at every service. In the past few years, these brethren have made great strides in building up the church. I was glad to assist an older gentleman in baptism during the meeting. Jasper, TN was next. Although sickness hindered the meeting somewhat, I very much enjoyed my time with the brethren there. I was competing with Bro. Carl Johnson who was in a meeting at Nashville the same week. So obviously, I got the short end of the stick, so far as the size of the crowds! We had a good meeting, with one confessing faults. After a week at home, I then went to the Mission Hills congregation in Springfield, MO for a meeting. Staying with Virgil and Francis Hogland was a real pleasure. We had a good audience of visitors each night, including several preachers. I look forward to being back there later this year. We just closed a great meeting here at home with Bro. Jimmie Smith. Jimmie did some outstanding preaching. There were some visible results. I go next to Bloomfield, IA (May 5 - 12); then to Olivehurst, CA (June 1 - 9). I appreciate so much the brethren who continue to ask me to preach. I esteem it a privilege. My prayer is that good is the result and the church is left to build up. May God bless the faithful everywhere!

"WINNER VS. LOSER"

The Winner--is always part of the answer;
 The Loser--is always part of the problem;
 The Winner--always has a program;
 The Loser--always has an excuse;
 The Winner--says "Let me do it for you;"
 The Loser--says "That's not my job;"
 The Winner--sees an answer for every problem;
 The Loser--sees a problem for every answer;
 The Winner--sees a green near every sand trap;
 The Loser--sees two or three sand traps near every green;
 The Winner--says, "It may be difficult, but it's possible;
 The Loser--says, "It may be possible but it's too difficult."
 Be A Winner!

"The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor."

Vincent T. Lombardi

THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

Let me tell you about my Great Physician,
 I'd like to recommend Him to you.
 His office is open twenty-four hours,
 His reputation is tried and true.
 I was in such a bad condition
 When I first came to Him.
 My disease was a fatal one,
 The disease called, "SIN."
 My Physician smiled and said,
 Ye shall not die in your sins, you see.
 I will tell you of a cure,
 Believe and have faith in Me.
 He gave me a prescription,
 But to be cured without a doubt,
 I had to follow each and every step,
 I could not leave anything out.
 First, there was the faith tablet.
 It wasn't so hard to swallow.
 Then, there was the repentance tablet,
 Sinful ways no more I'd follow.
 Then there was one more pill,
 "Confession" was its name I recall.
 Then, I was told to wash away my sin.
 Yes, baptism, but still that's not all.
 This remedy only took care
 Of the present condition I was in,
 Because there would always be the chance,
 Of sin infecting me again.
 He said if so, I must
 Come back to Him in a hurry.
 But to help prevent this happening,
 Here's how, so don't worry.
 Receive proper nourishment,
 God's word is the source.
 This will help fight off germs of sin,
 If you starve yourself, you'll get weak of course.
 I followed His advice,
 And rejoiced in my heart so.
 What a wonderful blessing it is,
 To my Great Physician I can go.
 My Great Physician's name
 Is none other than Jesus Christ.
 He can heal you of your sins,
 And He can give you life.

Our purpose is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

"To continue speaking the truth in love," "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," "keeping the ordinances as delivered."

"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) "And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in." (Isa. 58:12).

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NO. 7

THE MORAL LAW WITHIN THE HEART (PART 4)

By George Battey

Men are sinners and have been sinners since the time Adam introduced sin into the world. Men were sinners before Mosaic law entered. This implies a universal law, because there cannot be sin without law (Rom. 5:13). Israelites were sinners under Mosaic law. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God!" "There is none righteous, no not one!"

The gospel was not needed to make men sinners. They made themselves sinners without the gospel. Men today are sinners because they have violated law. The law they have violated is the universal moral law which man has been under since the days of Adam. This law is still valid because its purpose is still valid. This law has not been "taken out of the way" because the purposes of this law have not been taken out of the way. The gospel was needed to save men from the sins they have committed under this moral law.

THE MARRIAGE QUESTION

This information is very important when it comes to the marriage question. Let's begin with an illustration from Jewish history which will help us understand our present status.

The OT allowed divorce for trivial reasons. Yes...it is true that "from the beginning it was not so," but the fact remains that the OT allowed divorce for trivial reasons. For example, a Jewish man could divorce his wife for any of the following trivial reasons:

1. If a wife is not pleasing her husband (Ex. 21:7-8).
2. If a wife is requiring too much out of her husband (Ex. 21:9-11).
3. If a wife is not a "delight" to her husband any longer (Dt. 21:13-14).
4. If some "uncleanness" was found in the wife (Dt. 21:13-14).⁶
5. If the husband now "hates" his wife. (Dt. 21:2-4).
6. If the wife was a heathen. (Ezra 10:10-12).

Suppose, then, a Jew, in accordance with these laws, divorced his wife because she was not "pleasing" to him any longer (Ex. 21:7-8). Was this what God in-

tended from the beginning? Certainly not. Was it allowable under Mosaic law? Yes it was. When this Jewish man marries another woman, would he then be "living in adultery?" Certainly not, because the law he lived under did not declare this to be adultery. Suppose now, this divorced and remarried Jew, comes to Jerusalem on Pentecost and hears the apostle Peter preaching. He learns that Jesus died to save Jews from sins which they could not be justified by Mosaic law. He obeys the gospel. Since the NT law allows only one reason therefore separate from his second wife? No, because the laws of Christ are not retroactive. Since this man's marriage was not adultery under the law he lived under it will not be an "adulterous marriage" which he must give up when he obeys the gospel.

This answers the "unanswered questions" which many proudly ask: "If it was adultery before baptism, wouldn't it be adultery after baptism? If a man steals a car before he's baptized, does he get to keep the car after he's baptized?" The point being assumed in both these questions is that divorce and remarriage before baptism constitutes adultery and like a "stolen car," that marriage must then be forfeited after baptism. But as seen in the case of Jew, the law he lived under did not make divorce and remarriage sinful. A second marriage was not an adulterous marriage. The marriage was right and acceptable because the Mosaic Law allowed divorce for trivial reasons. If "baptism will not change an adulterous marriage into a scriptural marriage," it should also stand to reason that "baptism does not now change an acceptable marriage into an adulterous marriage." If baptism will not retroactively change an unscriptural situation into a scriptural one, neither will it be retroactively change a scriptural situation into an unscriptural one! And as the old time debaters use to ask, "If not, why not?"

APPLICATION

Men today are living under the "law of human nature." This law requires less from men today than

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⁶This is not sexual unfaithfulness, because sexual unfaithfulness in the wife was always punishable by death (Dt. 22:23-27; 22:13-21; 22:22; Num. 5:27-28).

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CHILD OR CHILDREN?

By Don L. King

For the past several months we have been studying about elders and the qualifications they must possess before being appointed. In Titus 1:6, Paul wrote: "If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly."

It is a matter of great interest as to whether or not a man who has only one child might qualify as an elder (assuming he is qualified in every other point). For some time I believed an elder must have a plurality of children and never questioned it. It was only when I began a study of 1 Timothy 5 and the "widow indeed" that I realized I might be mistaken about the plurality of children for an elder.

In 1 Timothy 5:3-16 Paul writes about widows and the conditions that must exist before she is to be supported by the church. The word "children" comes into consideration here. In verse 4 he said, "But if any widow have children or nephews..." etc. Then in verse 10 he said, "...if she have brought up children..." Paul explains in these verses that a widow who has children or nephews is to be cared for by them rather than obligate the church. If the word "children" (plural) in 1 Timothy 3:4 and Titus 1:6 means only the plural number and excludes the singular then it logically follows that it has the same meaning in 1 Timothy 5:4; 5:10. Does Paul mean to say that the widow who has only one child (not a plurality of children) is not obligated to be cared for by the singular child and is, therefore, to be cared for by the church? This simply cannot be the meaning. It obviously means "if any widow have (a child or) children..." Since we likely agree about this passage why isn't the same true with the passages regarding the elder and his "children?"

A number of times we have heard honest brethren point out the fact that the term for children is "TEKNA" in Greek, meaning the plural. It certainly is plural in Greek. However, it is plural in English as well. The translators gave the correct translation. In Matthew 22:24 the Bible says, "Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother." Notice, a man dies without "children" (plural) and is considered to be without "seed" and so, his brother is to marry his wife and raise up "seed" unto his brother. Would any of us suggest that the man who died and had only one child (singular) is without seed? We know the plural can, on occasion, include the singular. If the plural "children" here forbids the singular (child), the man must have two children before he has seed. This can't be because it was through the "seed" of

Continued on page eight

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: For what reasons did Jesus build his Church? (OK)

Answer: This is a very timely question. What might seem apparent to some, is obviously not known by the majority of people in the world. The concept or idea of "the church" to many means nothing more than a place where the community gathers for recreational activity and a good time. To others it is a social service agency that distributes food and clothing to all the poor of the community. The mission of the Church, from the Bible viewpoint, is not social. Christianity does not undertake social reform or guidance. It does not wage a campaign for social equality. Any attempt to get the church involved in such activities is misguided. The increasing tendency to socialize church services is neither good nor warranted. Social banquets, social hours, a church dining room, parlor, or cafeteria to entertain visitors and accommodate social functions has a tendency to lead directly to what Paul condemned on the part of the Corinthians. Church gymnasiums fall into the same category. Church sponsored baseball and basketball teams, skating or swimming parties have absolutely nothing to do with the work God has given the Church. Such practices not only pervert the energies of the Kingdom, but are an outright violation of scripture as well. Politics is another area where many denominational churches spend their strength and energy. The Church of Christ on the other hand, has no business being involved with the "hot political issues" of the time. Our obligation lies in the area of spiritual interests and duties. To become associated with a particular politician or political cause is not a work given the Church. Neither is making money. The Church does not exist to raise money through pie suppers, cake walks, bingo games, rummage sales, etc. etc. We are not here to become a savings institution or an investment firm. The only money we have comes from the freewill giving of Christians on the Lord's Day. (1 Cor. 16:1-2) Why, then, does the Church exist? For what reasons was she established? The work assigned to the Church of

God is threefold in nature: evangelism, edification, and benevolence. In the first area, it is the duty of the church to preach the gospel to the lost of the earth. The proof that God wants the gospel preached is taught in Mk. 16:15-16, Mt. 28:18-20, 1 Cor. 1:21 and other passages. It still pleases God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. The Church is a sowing agency Mt. 13:3-9. She is charged with "holding forth the light." (Phil. 2:16) Her work in this area will never cease as long as there are men and women lost in sin. What a shame when churches today spend their money on things that in reality matter little and men languish for want of the truth. How terrible that people are seemingly willing to attend any kind of recreational event, but will not support a gospel meeting to help reach the lost. The work of edification refers to the duty of the church in developing its spiritual strength. Eph. 4:16 "...unto the edifying of itself in love." It is the business of the church to ground and stabilize itself to prevent false doctrine from leading people astray. (Col. 2:7) "Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church." The church may edify its members through worship, Heb. 10:25, Col. 3:16; through faithful teaching 1 Tim. 3:2, Acts 20:28, Heb. 13:17; and by proper discipline. (2 Thess. 3:6; 1 Cor. 5:1-13) Finally, benevolence is a work of the church. Even though the church cannot be responsible for all humanity, she is responsible for certain needy saints. (1 Tim. 5:16) The church in Jerusalem relieved the needs of its destitute, (Acts 2:44-45) and widows. (Acts 6:1-6) When a great dearth came and afflicted saints in Judea the church at Antioch sent relief to the brethren by sending it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. (Acts. 11:27-30) When the Church functions by fulfilling its God given duties, she will grow and prosper. On the other hand, she will not be blessed of God when she operates in fields of endeavor and activities that are not a part of her work. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808)

DEFENDING THE WALLS

by Brett Hickey

The trumpet sounds. A brief pause. You can hear shovels, trowels and hammers clanging in unison as the artisans leave their various projects and converge on the section of the wall sieged by marauders. Why did these men not just secure their own stations? Were they not responsible for defending what they temporarily abandoned? Why yes! But, when a concentrated attack is waged, all available forces must focus their energies there. It is an emergency! (See Neh. 4:19,20)

At times, some Christians honestly question, "Why do we hear so much preaching on baptism, the Lord's Supper and church attendance?" The answer is simple. That is where the enemy has launched his attack. Where Satan strikes in force, there must God's watchmen sound the trumpet alarm. The adversary's onslaught must be bombarded by a band of believers unafraid to do battle, unwilling to compromise "on the plain of Ono." To do less is tantamount to surren-

der. To do less is to betray the sacred trust assigned to us as soldiers on the cross.

The bastion of baptism must not be abandoned. The Enemy knows that without proper submission to this ordinance, man must stand before God in the filthy rags of his own works. So, he has perverted the proper mode of baptism. He has belittled its design. Calvin confesses, "The word *baptizo* signifies to immerse and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church." (Institutes b. 4:5 15) Yet, he greatly influenced the transition from immersion to pouring within the church of England (Christian Baptism, Kershner, p. 72). Though Martin Luther's wisdom here has been ignored even by those who carry his name, he advised, "I would have those that are to be baptized to be altogether dipt into the water, as the word doth sound, and the mystery doth signify." (Opera, Vol. 1 ps. 335) The prophet Jeremiah relays (6:17), "I set watchmen over you, saying, Harken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken." As watchman, we must have our trumpets ready, before the "progressives" among us assault the entrance to the kingdom.

Why so much focus on the Lord's Supper? Have we made too much noise about the differences we have with some of our brethren? If we have erred, it has been in not publishing the truth widely enough. A "cups" preacher in his fifties said he was "flabbergasted" to hear that the literal cup represented the new covenant. Because we know "the terror of the Lord", we should feel dutybound to "persuade men" about the truth. Someone else says, "Even if extra-biblical worship is sin, will the grace of God not compensate for our mistakes?" The apostle Paul found that reasoning repulsive in Rom. 6:12, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died in sin live any longer in it?" Only those diseased spiritually, would be content to magnify God's grace by concealing the truth from the uninformed or by rebelling against scriptural worship once enlightened.

Recently, a cups preacher was asked, "Would you preclude the Lord from assigning the literal cup as a symbol for the new covenant?" He replied, "No, I could not do that." Then he was asked, "If the Lord wanted us to understand that the cup represented the new covenant, what would he have to say?" He then

responded, "Well, I would not want to put words in the Lord's mouth." Guffaw! Brethren, we do not have to put words in Lk. 22:20: "This cup is the new testament..."

The literal meaning of Heb. 10:25 is not always popular, but must be made clear nonetheless. Should we want to worship? Should we want to encourage our brothers and sisters? Obviously, yes. But, more than that, God demands that we come together every Lord's day. Notice how the RSV reads: "Not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some..." To make Christian living less demanding, some have suggested that violation of this scripture calls for complete abandonment of the Lord's day worship services. The greek word *egkateleip* can be translated "leave, abandon, totally abandon, forsake or disregard." Examining the word on its own merit, there may be justifiable discussion over shades of meaning. But, even at this point, why encourage the flock to take needless risks by teaching that neglecting, disregarding or abandoning a single memorial service is not sin? But, when we plug "forsake" or "neglect" into context, the intent of Heb. 10:25 becomes even clearer. This neglect became the "habit of some." We know habits are made up of individual occurrences. **Funk & Wagnalls Desk Dictionary** describes a habit as "an act or practice so frequently repeated as to become almost automatic." It would be redundant to suggest that someone could make a habit of totally abandoning the assembly. If you completely abandon someone or something, you eliminate the possibility of repetition. In the same book (13:5), Paul relays the promise, "I will never forsake thee." Was the Lord promising that He would never completely abandon us, although from time to time he might have to desert us? Of course not! This scripture assures us that He will always be there. He will not abandon us; not for a day--not even an hour. We should exhibit the same faithfulness to His weekly memorial. Let us not neglect the assembling of ourselves together.

When danger threatens Zion from within or without, we must sound the alarm. Upon hearing the trumpet blast, may the Lord's army engage the enemy with concentrated force at the point of attack less her bulwarks come crumbling down and Satan place his ensign in the midst of our camp.

HAS BROTHER J. ERVIN WATERS RETURNED?

About this time a year ago, word began to circulate through the brotherhood that Brother J. Ervin Waters of Temple, TX had made a confession for his sins and had been restored to the fellowship he had departed some 25 years ago. Concerned brethren from all parts of the country began to inquire into the facts of this significant event. That Bro. Waters' return to the fold elicited such national interest is not surprising. Many

years ago, Bro. Waters was a very prominent preacher among us. In fact, in the late 1930's, 40's and 50's, Bro. Waters together with men of the stature of Homer A. Gay and Homer L. King, helped to forge our brotherhood out of the fires of digression. His gradual departure from the faith he had so valiantly defended in the 1960's culminated with a clear break in the early 1970's. His departure caused a deep sorrow to over-

shadow the hearts of many across America. As is always the case when a leader defects, Bro. Waters led many other brethren away with him— some into digression, some into denominationalism, some into unbelief. Hearts were broken and deep scars were left upon the body of Christ. Naturally, the news of Bro. Waters' return to the faith was a matter of widespread interest and concern. Many, remembering the wounds of yesteryear, had questions that needed to be answered. Unfortunately, Bro. Waters has been somewhat less than openly forthcoming about his return to the faith he once decried. Numerous preachers and leaders have sought (for the most part unsuccessfully) to discuss the relevant issues with Bro. Waters. As a result, confusion has reigned as to whether or not the churches should receive Bro. Waters, whether or not he has in fact been restored. In addition, some have taken issue with any who would question a man's confession. With these matters in mind, and at the request of CE's publisher, Smith Bibens, I have written this article and published it in this manner. I have in mind two goals:

1. Try to clarify the issues at stake and to propose a solution to Bro. Waters and to the churches that would enable brethren in their own local congregations to make informed decisions for the protection and edification of the church relative to the status of Bro. Waters.

2. To appeal to Bro. Waters for a clear and unequivocal statement of his position relative to the fellowship of digressives, Christian church believers, and other immersed peoples. Such a statement from Bro. Waters would effectively resolve the controversy at hand concerning his restoration. If he were to recant his false position that such people could be used in our assemblies, then all could receive him with joy. If he were to uphold his false position, then the decision of our churches relative to his status would be made simple.

A DISCLAIMER

At the onset, I need to clarify several points myself:

1. This open letter reflects my own opinions regarding this matter which I believe have been shaped by the light of God's word and the history of this case.

2. This letter is not to be taken as a policy statement on behalf of any or all of the editors of The Christian's Expositor.

Though I have written it at the request of Bro. Bibens, all the blame for errors found herein must be mine.

3. In offering my opinions for the consideration of both CE's readers and Bro. Waters, I want to maintain the highest regard for the biblical principle of congregational autonomy.

4. I also want to maintain the highest regard for the principle that all believers must "love the brotherhood."

5. It is not my desire to question the motives of

Bro. Waters or anyone else.

6. It is my earnest hope and prayer that Bro. Waters will be found faithful and that our brotherhood will continue to grow in peace and love.

Having established these guidelines, I want first of all to examine the background of this problem in three areas:

1. Bro. Waters' departure from us in the 1970's.
2. Bro. Waters' two recent confessions.
3. Documentation of Bro. Waters' refusal to clarify his current position on fellowship.

Second, Bro. Waters has recently said that he should be judged by his fruits (as, of course, Jesus did, too— Matthew 7:15-20).

Third, I want to point out where I perceive the problem lies. We want to mention several matters that have arisen since Bro. Waters made his confessions.

Fourth, I want to propose a solution to this problem that would enable us to openly receive Bro. Waters back into our fellowship.

Fifth, I want to examine the issues of congregational autonomy and loving the brotherhood.

Finally, I will endeavor or summarize the situation and what seems to be necessary to resolve it.

THE POINT OF DEPARTURE

The point often obscured concerning Bro. Waters' departure from the faith back in the 1970's is that he did not leave us over the matter of worshipping in digression. Bro. Waters did not worship in an unscriptural manner (i.e. with the use of instrumental music, the class system of teaching, individual cups, multiple loaves, or fermented wine) for several years after he left us. Worshipping in an unscriptural manner was not the point of departure. He did, later, worship unscripturally as he states himself in his first confession and that matter did need to be confessed. As Bro. Waters acknowledged it was a sin for him to do so, we welcome this open confession of sin and accept it (Luke 17:3,4).

Neither was the point of departure the defamatory things Bro. Waters spoke and wrote about the Lord's church and the brotherhood. He did not say and write such things in the various digressive seminars he participated in and in his papers Fellowship Forum and Restoration Thoughts. Such remarks were sinful, and for this, Bro. Waters has apologized in his second confession. For this, all believers are bound by God's word to forgive him (Luke 17:3,4).

However, the point of departure was over broadening the fellowship to include all sorts of digressive brethren and other immersed peoples. To my knowledge, Bro. Waters has made no confession for this sin. In an article written in 1979 (which, in essence, covers the departing speech Bro. Waters delivered at the preacher's study in December, 1970), Bro. Waters says on page one:

The last time I saw Alva Johnson [a digressive preacher-AWB] was here in San Angelo, in 1962....When at long last he took that journey behind

the veil where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest, we were in fellowship and knew it. Thank God.

On pages 7 and 8 of his article, "The Positive Approach to Fellowship," Bro. Waters recommends:

Let us courteously recognize visiting brethren, even from various segments and backgrounds, by letting them share in corporate service and worship according to their ability and available opportunities... Let us invite from across the lines brethren to come and share with, preach and speak to us. Soon the lines will be erased (Fellowship Forum, Vol. 1, No. 2, Sept. 1980).

Not only did Bro. Waters speak these words of false doctrine, but he practiced them until finally he accepted and worshipped in digression—for him, the lines were now erased. Back in the 1970's, the congregations where Bro. Waters has made his home for over 20 years, 15th and "I" in Temple, TX, engaged Karl Ketcherside for a meeting. In addition, it has been their practice for many years to call brethren "across the lines" to speak to them. This was the point of rupture in our association with Bro. Waters.

Below is the full text of both of Bro. Waters' confessions made in the spring of 1995. In April he wrote:

I confess that I have sinned in occasionally worshipping unscripturally, for instance, where individual cups were used. I ask forgiveness for this. Also, I am sorry for any wrongful offense against any brother or congregation. I repent of the same and ask forgiveness from those offended and from God.

In order to satisfy "Those who complained that the above was not extensive enough, Brother Ervin enlarged his confession as follows" on June 11, 1995:

I hear that some do not think that my original confession was sufficiently broad and comprehensive. I will try again, hoping that there are not those who are "implacable" (2 Timothy 3:3), i.e., "will not accept a truce, cannot be appeased, placated or satisfied." I am sorry for any wrongful offense in word (oral or written) or deed against any person, male or female, living or now dead, or any such offense against any congregation now existing, or now disbanded, foreign or domestic. I have repented and I sincerely ask for forgiveness.

In Bro. Waters' second confession, he clearly has confessed his sins relative to unscriptural worship and things he said or wrote or did that were sinful either against individuals or congregations or both.

Are brethren obligated to accept these confessions? The scriptures say, "Yes" (Luke 17:3,4). However, as you can see, there is no mention in these confessions of Bro. Waters' current view of fellowship. What is his view? Does he still believe what he taught and practiced for over 20 years? Considering how many had their faith overthrown by Bro. Waters' teaching and practice regarding the extension of fellowship to digressives and all immersed peoples, it seems an appropriate question. Not only so, but in view of his

subsequent behavior since April of 1995, it seems a mandatory question.

Since Bro. Waters made the foregoing admissions, numerous brethren have inquired of his views on fellowship with precious little success:

*Bro. Alton Bailey was told by Bro. Waters to ask Bro. Gary Barrett what Bro. Waters' view of fellowship was—all questions were being referred to Bro. Barrett of Wichita, KS.

*For about four months (from June through September of 1995), brothers Wayne McKamie and Ronny Wade tried to arrange a discussion of this matter with Bro. Waters to no avail.

*This effort resulted in the brethren at MacGregor, TX, issuing a letter (to all the churches) stating that they could not determine that Bro. Waters had changed his position at all on the subject of fellowship.

*In July of 1995, when Bro. Waters was conducting a meeting for a congregation at Waterford, CA, Bro. Bennie Cryer contacted him by phone to set up a discussion. Bro. Waters replied by letter that he did not have time and chided Bro. Cryer for being suspicious of him.

*In this same period of time, Bro. Allen Bailey contacted Bro. Waters by phone in an effort to learn his current stand on fellowship. Though asked directly three times, Bro. Waters evaded the question. However, he did tell Bro. Bailey that we should judge him by his fruits.

That seems to be a good suggestion. Let us consider some of the happenings relative to this issue since Bro. Waters made his confessions.

JUDGE ME BY MY FRUITS

In July of 1995, Bro. Waters held a meeting for the congregation at Waterford, CA. This was not unusual, for he has been a regular there for many, many years. For over 20 years, this congregation has not been in our fellowship. They worship according to the scripture as far as we know, but have long subscribed to Bro. Waters' views of fellowship. In the late spring of 1995, they had a preacher from the First Christian Church of Ceres, CA, to preach for them. One of the leaders there is Bro. Jim Murray, who recently informed Bro. Bennie Cryer and Bro. Duane Permenter that it would be acceptable to him to call on a Baptist in the assembly. In the fall of 1995, this congregation used a preacher who fell from grace many years ago and is now with the Assemblies of God—Billy Jack Ivey.

On that same trip last summer, Bro. Waters preached at Armona, CA, which is the home of another fallen brother—Jimmy Albert. The congregation there also subscribes to Bro. Waters' liberal views on fellowship and has not been with us in many years. Bro. Albert has written many defamatory things about the church in his infamous California Letter.

Today, Bro. Waters continues to worship with the congregation at 15th and "I" in Temple, TX, which has a long-standing practice of calling on various sorts

of digressives, including, but not limited to, John Staley, Karl Ketcherside, and Olan Hicks. When questioned recently about their practice and urged to change it, one of the brethren reportedly stated that they (the Temple congregation) had no intention of changing either their view or their practice.

Finally, Bro. Waters continues to associate with and preach for the Lee Street congregation in Houston, TX, which was born in division from the Aurora Street congregation in the 1970's. This division was caused by the influence of the late Bro. Don Ash of Temple, TX. The cause of division was over the very same issue of fellowship to which Bro. Waters subscribed—and apparently still does. One might also inquire about Bro. Waters' relationship with China Springs, TX; West Plains, MO; and perhaps other similar congregations.

THE PROBLEM

The issue is not whether or not Bro. Waters' confessions should be received. They certainly should be accepted at face value. They are to be applauded and received with thanksgiving. The issue is not whether or not Bro. Waters intends to personally call on digressives. Reportedly, he has said he will no longer do this. For this, too, we give God thanks.

The issue is over Bro. Waters' view of fellowship and his practice of extending it to congregations and brethren who are not in the fellowship of our Lord. When Bro. Waters recants his position expressed above and when he demonstrates by his behavior that his position has come in line with the truth and in line with Jesus, then he will be received without question. Until then, he will not. For now, we will follow Bro. Waters' own advice and judge him by his fruits (Matthew 7:15-20).

Personally, I want Bro. Waters to be in fellowship with the church and to be found faithful by the Lord. I am sure the vast majority of the brethren agree with this sentiment and all should. If Bro. Waters truly wishes to spend his waning years in the company of the brethren he led so long ago, he needs to make a clear and penitent and open confession of his sin of false teaching and practice in extending fellowship and cooperation to all sorts of digressives and other immersed peoples. It's my prayer that he will do so, and soon. I am sure it is yours as well. Until he takes such a stand, I would not recommend that he be accepted and used in our assemblies.

CONGREGATIONAL AUTONOMY

As soon as brethren began to question the extent of Bro. Waters' confessions, the hue and cry of "violated congregational autonomy" was raised by those who had accepted Bro. Waters' status prematurely. (By the way, it is worthy of note that Jesus questioned Peter three times about his repentance in John 21:15-17.) Congregational autonomy is an important biblical issue. It refers to the fact that there is no earthly headquarters for the Lord's church. Literally, the term means self-governing, and the idea is that each con-

gregation is to govern itself under the authority of Jesus Christ expressed in His word and at the direction of its leaders, teachers, evangelists, and/or elders.

However, when you raise the sword of congregational autonomy, be advised that it is a double-edged sword. It is true that according to God's word, there is no organizational structure through which the church can function that is larger than or different from the local congregation. That is also a practical truth in our brotherhood. What this means is that a local church can make any decision it wants to make and no hierarchical body can do anything about it. If the congregation at Temple, TX, elects to use digressives in its assemblies, there is no biblical method given where another congregation or a group of congregations can force them to change their practice. But when a congregation makes such a decision, it must have the courage of its convictions because other congregations—and individuals, as well—are autonomous, too. One autonomous church does not have to accept or agree to work with another autonomous church's decision. Individuals do not have to attend where an autonomous church has made certain unwise or even unscriptural decisions. The point is, a congregation may choose to walk a different path. No one can stop them. But also no one can be compelled to accept and walk with them down that path.

Here enters the principle that requires both individuals and congregations to love the brotherhood. Thus, when one autonomous church or individual takes certain actions found to be unscriptural, then leaders and preachers in other churches around the brotherhood are duty-bound to warn the faithful in an effort to keep them from being led into sin.

The point is, Bro. Waters may do as he pleases until he is called to answer to God. The congregations which he attends are autonomous and may do as they please also. But faithful brethren, leaders, preachers, and congregations may refuse to accept the behavior of Bro. Waters and those churches where he chooses to preach. Those same faithful brethren may—even should—warn the brotherhood of error. In such action, no one's autonomy is violated.

What really happens is that sometimes when a church make a poor decision, and it is pointed out, they begin to whine about autonomy. The truth is that they should evaluate the rebuke. If it is valid, they should repent. If it is not, they may continue as they see fit.

However, there may be a cost to be paid, and that is a fact of life. It is simply not a violation of congregational autonomy to oppose publicly, privately or through a paper the unscriptural actions or teachings of a brother of a congregation. Such action is a necessary expression of love for the brotherhood.

IN SUMMARY

The point to be registered is that as of yet, Bro. Waters has failed to indicate that his false position of fellowship has changed at all. This matter is essential

because it was the precise point of severance many years ago. It is not enough for him to say that he is "out of the calling—on business." The question revolves around his continuing to extend fellowship to those who are not of us. If Bro. Waters clarifies his position, and if in doing so takes a stand for the truth, then brethren can and should receive him. If he continues to refuse to declare his position, then he should not be received. As of this day, Bro. Waters' position is the same as it was the day he left us. If that is not so, then let him say so. Congregations who accept Bro. Waters without such a clarification are certainly within their rights. But so are those congregations and brethren who refuse to attend those congregations or work with them. It is well to remember that many precious souls were lost over these very issues when Bro. Waters left us some 20 years ago. Let us not lose more over whether or not to receive Bro. Waters back. Let Bro. Waters demonstrate his repentance by humbly clarifying his position so that we can respond appropriately.

May God be with Bro. Waters as he contemplates these matters, and may God be with each local autonomous congregation and its leaders as they decide what to do relative to Bro. Waters. Be advised that it is important for you to decide, as Bro. Waters is currently sending out letters to unsuspecting brethren asking them to book him for meetings and appointments with their local congregations and those in the area. At this point, and until Bro. Waters alters his position on fellowship, I do not recommend that you accede to such requests, but yours is an autonomous congregation. Thank you for your patient consideration of these matters. May God's love and peace abide in the hearts of all his children. -Alan Bonifay

Note: If our timing was correct, this article has already appeared in the Christian's Expositor. We thought it would be helpful to run it in the July OPA in addition to the May report written by Clovis Cook of the effort in Temple, TX to bring about scriptural unity. We asked Bro. Bonifay's permission to use his article. DLK.

THE MORAL LAW WITHIN THE HEART (PART 4)

from page 1

the Law of Moses required of the Jews. Remember, the Law of Moses "added" things to the moral law (Gal. 3:19; Rom. 5:20). Therefore, Mosaic Law was more stringent; it required more! If Mosaic Law (a more stringent law) allowed divorce and remarriage for trivial causes, then the natural moral law (a less stringent law) will also allow divorce and remarriage for trivial causes. When men divorce and remarry for trivial reasons under the present "law of human nature" they are not "living in adultery," because this moral law does not declare divorce and remarriage for trivial causes to be adultery. Thus, when divorced people obey the gospel, they get to keep their second marriages and they are not living in adultery. This is why Paul declared: "Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. Brethren, let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called" (1 Cor. 7:20,24).

CONCLUSION

Every man, outside of Christ is under the universal moral law that is "written on the heart"—this unspoke

ken code of ethics, or moral law which was part of God's creation. This law cannot save us; it can only condemn us.

Paul wrote, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace (Rom. 6:14). Christians are "not under law" in the sense that we are not under the condemnation of the law that comes to everyone else. You can also come out from under the condemnation of the moral law by obeying the gospel. (2710 Somerton Dr., Morrow, GA 30260)

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EDITORIAL

from page 2

Abraham that all men were to be blessed, and Paul plainly says the seed is "one" in Galatians 3:16. Hence, one has "seed" in the specific sense of offspring when he has any number of children, whether it be one or many.

Again, we note that the plural may include the singular. For example, the Record says in Genesis 8:4

that the ark rested upon the "mountains" (plural) of Ararat. Surely we agree that the ark could not have physically come to rest upon more than one mountain. Of course, the often quoted passage is the one found in Genesis 21:7 which reads: "...Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children (plural) suck? For I have born him a son (singular) in his old age." We know that Sarah had only one child, yet she spoke of children in the plural.

It appears obvious that we must do one of two things when dealing with the passages we have briefly noted. Number one: make all other passages where the word "children" is found mean only the plural. Or, number two: allow the context to determine the application as we do in every other passage where a question arises.

We cannot escape the fact that if the passages dealing with elders and their children mean they must have a plurality of them, then all the others we have noted would carry the same meaning. If not, why not? However, if in these passages where the plural is naturally understood to simply mean offspring and can include the singular as well as the plural, 1 Timothy 3:4; Titus

1:6 would have the same meaning.

Having said all of this, we ask what is the safe course? No one can deny that it is right to appoint a fully qualified man who has a plurality of children. Such as man is above and beyond criticism by skeptics. Church trouble will never arise over the man with more than one child who becomes an elder. When a young man decides to be an elder, he would be well advised to do all he can to be above criticism by anyone. Shall we force the issue? Or, shall we take the safe way? To ask the question is to answer it. The Lord willing, we shall discuss "faithful children" next month. Think on these things. DLK

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BOOK AVAILABLE

The new book has been available since May 1. It is called "Blessed Fountain" and is a good book. We hope all will soon have it and be singing some new songs. We should consider that our singing is worship and very important. We all need to do our best to sing praise to the Lord as well as we are capable of doing. No effort should be spared to improve our singing and one way to keep our interest at a high point is by having some new songs to learn. The price is the same as last time: \$2.75 each plus shipping. When you get your new books, look at the box. Add that figure to the amount you owe Lynwood and send him a check. Order from M. Lynwood Smith Publications, 2789 Loyd Star Lane, N.W., Wesson, MS 39191.

CAN YOU HELP GLENDALE, AZ

In 1989 Brother Art Lynch moved to the Phoenix, AZ. area and started a church in his home. From this small beginning these brethren have grown and now have about forty in attendance each Lord's Day. Property is very high throughout the area. However, they have located a property at a reasonable price, and have made arrangements to buy it. They only need help with \$15,000.00 balloon payment the first year. Can you help them? It would be money well spent. They are a deserving group. Send all monies to Church of Christ in care of Art Lynch, 7740 W. Michigan, Glendale, Az. 85302. For further information you may call Art at (602) 938-7506. The new property is located at 8027 W. Northern Ave., Glendale, Az. 85303.

THANK YOU

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my brothers and sisters for the many letters, phone calls and prayers in my behalf. I cannot express, in words, what this means to me and my family. Every card and letter is treasured. I am in phase II which means I live at home wearing a beeper while I am waiting. I feel my condition is good and I attribute that to your prayers. Thank you all. Billy Orten.

OUR DEPARTED

Householder--Roy T. Householder of Coweta, OK was born May 4, 1908 in Strawberry, AR. He departed this life on April 5, 1996 in Coweta, OK. He had lived in Sulphur for about 93 years before moving to Coweta to live with his daughter Linda Merryman three years ago. After moving to Coweta, he became a member of the Broken Arrow congregation. He was married to Gladys Baker. She preceded him in death on May 23, 1992. He is survived by 3 daughters: Linda, Joyce Jones and Patsy Briggs; two sons: Ernest and Harold Householder; 3 brothers: Clifford, Erwin and Curtis; 2 sisters: Ethel Young and Alene Sneed; 20 grandchildren, 35 great-grandchildren and 3 great-great-grandchildren. He was a retired carpenter and cabinet maker. Most noteworthy: he was one of the carpenters who assisted in building the church building in Sulphur that is located just north of the tabernacle. While he was loved and respected in Sulphur, the congregation in Broken Arrow developed a truly great affection and love for Bro. Householder. Services were held in the church building in Sulphur. Several members of the church sang. Bro. Jerry Gilbert and I conducted the service. Jack A. Custer

Deatherage--Ardelia Jordan Deatherage was born Jan. 11, 1917 in Bowie, Texas. She passed away May 3, 1996 at the age of 79. She is survived by her husband Alfred (to whom she was a faithful companion for 58 years). Also, two daughters mourn her passing, Patty and Donnice; a son, Frank; two brothers, five grandchildren, and six great grandchildren. Ardelia obeyed the gospel in the early 1940's under the preaching of Fred Kirbo. She was a faithful member of the church at Davis, OK until illness forced her and Alfred to move to Oklahoma City a few years ago to reside with their son Frank. I became close friends to Alfred and Ardelia in the early 1970's when I worked with the church at Davis for three years. Their home was always opened to brethren, preachers, and even strangers; Ardelia was a great source of encouragement to me as a young preacher of the gospel. She truly epitomized the "virtuous woman" of

Proverbs 31. I considered it an honor to speak words of comfort and exhortation to those who gathered in her memory. Most of all, it was an honor to pay tribute to my dear friend and sister in Christ—one that I am looking forward to renewing acquaintance with, Lord willing, on that heavenly shore. Billy D. Dickinson

Strain--Bob Strain, born July 12, 1915 in Bloomington, In., departed this life May 29, 1996 while a patient at the Bloomington hospital. He was, at the time of this death, eighty years of age. He was united in marriage to Esther Barrett on July 23, 1932, and to this union were born three children, Deward, Doris, and Darlene. Bob was a member of the Harrodsburg, In. congregation. For years he has been a familiar figure at the fourth of July meetings, the Oklahoma New Year meeting, and the Eastern Labor Day meeting. He was known for taking photographic pictures at the meetings as well as audio and video recordings of singing and preaching. For a time he published the Church Directory and did printing for various brethren and



churches. Some of these tracts were distributed by the tens of thousands. He felt a dedication to his printing, believing that it was something he could do for the good of the Cause of Christ. He is survived by this wife, Esther, the three children, three sisters, six grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. Services were conducted in the century old meeting house at Harrodsburg where he had worshipped for many years, with burial in the Clover Hill Cemetery not far away. A crowd of his family, brethren, and friends gathered to pay their respects. The writer conducted the service. Ronny F. Wade

Boyd--Bro. Boyd Kent was born in Stigler, Oklahoma on Jan. 5th 1920 and passed from this life at his home in Stilwell on Saturday, April 27th, 1996 at the age of 76 years. Boyd was a plumber and since retirement loved fishing and gardening. He was a member of the Noel Chapel Church Of Christ near Stilwell, OK. Bro. Boyd Kent was a good leader in the church and had been a great help through the years. He married Ruth Brown on Dec. 25th, 1941. He is survived by his wife, Ruth of the home in Stilwell; one son, Billy Kent of Stilwell; two daughters, Alta Arnall of Stilwell and Betty Guffey of Fayetteville, Arkansas; one sister; 8 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren. (Submitted by Miles King)



Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, June 1--We recently enjoyed hearing Jimmie Smith at Ada twice and Joe Hisle once at Healdton. I also enjoyed attending some of the commentary study at Irving, TX. I look forward to attending the meetings at Lebanon, MO and Sulphur, OK and also to being at Cleburne, TX July 10-14; Tulsa, OK, July 21; Andrews, TX, Aug. 7-11 and Ralegh, NC, Aug. 21-23.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, Ca. 94539, June 14--Since last report we have preached at home as well as the Oakdale congregation Lord's Day morning and evening. We are scheduled to be at home this Lord's Day before leaving for a meeting at McAlester, Oklahoma June 23-30. Then we plan a few days at the 4th of July meeting in Lebanon, Mo and begin at Muskogee July 7th and continue through the 14th, if the Lord be willing. We look forward to the work and pray for good to be done. The church at home is at peace for which we are thankful. Don't forget us when you pray.

Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811 Springfield, Mo. 65808 June 6--The meeting at Fremont, Ca. closed with one baptism, one restored, and two confessions. We enjoyed being with Bro. Don King who labors among the people of this church. They are an energetic group who worked hard for the meeting. Attendance among the members was outstanding. Next we were at Manteca where Alan Bonifay works. We had large crowds at every service and good cooperation from the valley churches. Preaching brethren Richard DeGough, Bennie Cryer, Don King, Duane Permenter, Raymond Fox, Ron Jordan, and Alan Bonifay attended one or more nights of the meetings and were a valuable asset to the services. In addition Bro. Larry McElory attended nearly every service of both meetings, rendering encouragement and help. Our next was Richmond, In. with one baptism. These brethren are working and doing their best to spread the gospel. The Lord willing we go next to Greenville, SC June 9-16, London, Ky., June 17-23, West Chester, Oh. July 10-14, Fairview, La. July 20-28, Napoleon, Al. Aug. 4-11 and Lowery, Al. Aug. 12-18. Pray for us in the work.

Barney Owens 8782 Meadowview, W. Chester, OH 45069--Things at this writing are well with us at Sharonville. It is always a lift to have those of our number to correct situations in their lives which are warring against the spirit. Two have made acknowledgements of late and we are thankful. Again

through the school term Brother Jamie Leonard met with us on Wednesday Evenings, but has left us for the last time, under such circumstances. We will miss him, but were happy to have his help. My next meetings are: Garland, TX July 19-28; Lexington, OK August 3-11. Come and help us if you can, if such isn't possible, please pray for the meetings.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012--Things are going well in the Lord's work with the Stony Point congregation at Kansas City. Recently we baptized a young man who has become acquainted with the church of Christ through one of our young ladies. Through private studies and through attending the church services he made the decision to become a Christian. We continue to have studies. A young woman with whom we have been studying is convinced that we are right and that she must be baptized, but has not yet obeyed the gospel. Some of our young men have been making progress toward taking more lead in the services, and do well making announcements, leading singing, and in opening and dismissal prayers. We have visitors nearly every Lord's day. The contributions are holding up well making it possible for the congregation to support its own work without assistance, and to also contribute to the needs of others from time to time as we have opportunity. We have some wonderful folks with whom to labor, and we are thankful for the opportunity to have a part in this work. The Lord willing, I leave day after tomorrow for a short meeting at Rolla, MO. Later I will be in meetings at Sentinel, OK, July 13-21; Mt. Grove, MO, Aug. 10-18. The Lord bless all the faithful as we work for Him and His cause.

Billy D. Dickinson, 215 Forest Hills Dr., West Monroe, LA 71291, May 13--My monthly appointments are still as follows: I preach for the Fairview and Conway congregations each first Sunday, I'm at home on the second, at Strong, AR on the third, and at Jackson, MS on the fourth. I'm happy to report that the church in Jackson has grown numerically this year. One convert is a lady who lives across the street from their place of worship. She had been attending the services for some time. After I had a good study with her on Jan. 29, she obeyed the gospel the following Sunday. We are thankful to see the church at Jackson experiencing this and other growth! Our attendance is up here at West Monroe. We're looking forward to our summer meeting with Jerry Dickinson, June 9-16. I am looking forward to holding the following meetings: July 13-21 at Marietta, GA, Aug. 18-25 at North Shore (Houston), TX, Sept. 22-29 at Healdton, OK, and Oct. 11-13 at Tyler, TX. My son Chris (who just turned 20) is filling preaching appointments and is participating in Young People's Meetings around the country. He is developing into a fine preacher, if I may say so. In fact, we have several

young men of his generation who are impressing me with their ability, zeal, and knowledge. Brethren, this speaks well for the future of the church!

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820, June 10--We just closed a good meeting in Cable Ridge, MO. We had exceptionally good crowds throughout the meeting. Brethren were successful in getting their friends and neighbors to attend so we had visitors from the community at virtually every service. Preachers who assisted us with their presence included Ron Alexander, Clovis Cook, Smith Bibens, Doug Hawkins, and David Griffin. Since my last report I have also conducted meetings at Kansas City, KS (36th & Everett), Joplin, MO, Hartwell, AR, and Jacksonville, FL (the annual Memorial Day Meeting). I enjoyed all of these appointments very much and feel some good was accomplished at each place. One young man was baptized during the meeting in Hartwell. My schedule for the next few months includes: Hamilton, OH (June 16-23), San Angelo, TX (July 21-28), Bunner Ridge, WV (Aug. 4-11), Piedmont, AL (Aug. 18-25), Davis, OK (Sept. 4-8), London, KY (Sept. 15-22), Abilene, TX (Oct. 6-13), Temple, GA (Oct. 23-27), Covina, CA (Nov. 10-17), and Seminole, OK (Dec. 6-8). We continue to solicit your prayers.

Miles King, Route #1 Box 115, Scotland, AR 72141, May 28--Here at Scotland we enjoyed a short spring meeting with Bro. Bruce Roebuck. It was a pleasure to have Bruce and his family in our home. I'm glad to report the church at Lamar, AR now have their building completed with good crowds at their services and several visitors most of the time. I have really enjoyed some good meetings this Spring. In April I was with the congregation at Slocomb, Alabama for a 5-day meeting. I enjoyed the hospitality in the home of Bro. and Sister Lawrence Eubanks. It was so good to have visiting brethren from so many surrounding congregations. One night after leaving Slocomb I went by to be with brethren at Lowery, Alabama. April 26-28 I held a short meeting at Odom, near Dora, Missouri. I had heard of this congregation for years. It was my pleasure to be there for the first time. I loved being in the homes of brethren Jim Howard and also the Paul Roys. During this month I held a weekend meeting at Mitchel, Indiana. Even though I have known these brethren and preached when they met at Breeze Hill—this was my first time to be in their new building at Mitchel. I was so glad to drop by one night of the meeting in progress at Bedford, Indiana and also preach at Harrodsburg, Bloomington, and Brazil while in this vicinity. I have a weekend meeting at Memphis, TN May 31 thru June 2nd. We are looking forward to our Summer Meeting here at Scotland with Terry Baze June 23 thru 30th. Ya'll Come!

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE (USPS 407-560)

If the date near your name and address reads 7-96 your subscription expires with this issue. Please renew promptly. DLK
Send all subscriptions to 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, Cal. 94539.

Virgilio O. Danao, Sr., 23 N. Mangsaysay St., Roxas, Isabela, Philippines. May 2, 1996--Our Annual Study was held on April 1 - 4, hosted by our faithful congregation in Mangandingay, Cabarroguis. Though this congregation has no "full-time" and "U.S.A. financially supported preacher," through the efforts of her leaders, the study is one of the most successful our local brotherhood ever had. During the study, six young people from different congregations were baptized. Many brethren from different provinces attended. We salute the brethren in Mangandingay for their faithfulness to the faith and dedication to the Lord's work. However, despite this success, Sis. Alejandria Bayaca who has been suffering from "high blood pressure (hypertension)" for years, and wife of Bro. Remegio Bayaca, one of our faithful preachers in the province of Ilocos Norte, had a severe stroke/attack that caused a coma for about two days. Immediately after her "stroke" in the eve of April 3rd, she was rushed to the Quirino Provincial Hospital, but later in the morning was transferred to one of the hospitals here in Roxas, until her death in the evening of April 5th. Her body was transported to her home place in Cali, Dingras on April 8th, and was laid to rest later there on April 15th. Preaching brethren from Isabela, those in my area...Bro. C. Libertino, Bro. Benito Salamanca, Bro. Agapita Pilar, Bro. Warlito Agustin (an elder of the Roxas Church) and I attended her funeral. I was privileged to deliver a vigil message on the eve of her funeral and in the necrological service. Sis. Bayaca has gone to Abraham's bosom. She will be missed, but remembered by our brotherhood here. Once again this reminds us that life on this planet is short. Our days are numbered, and when the appointed day comes, wherever and wherever we are, whatever we are doing, we cannot pass the limit, and we cannot run away from the "cruel axe of death." True, we lament her passing, but our consolation is she "was taken" while serving God. We pray and hope the truth prevails, and our faithful brethren continue to be intact and united. Despite problems we encounter, we continue to bind ourselves as one body, help each other in the execution of our works, and in the efforts to safeguard the Lord's work from those who may try to trample underfoot the very principle and rudiment of our spiritual existence.

It is our dream and we are looking to the time when this materializes, when each of our local congregations has her own strong leadership, so that each may be able to exercise the real essence of the "local au-

tonomy of the Church" in the light of the Scriptures, and the leadership has always the final say, and not to always depend to whatever the preacher says, to avoid the so-called "pastor system" most denominations exercise. May God help and bless us in this endeavor. By the way, one soul, an adult sister who has been attending worship services in Sandiat, where I also work and preach during Sundays in addition to Roxas, was baptized on March 10th, and a couple here in Roxas on March 24th. These are results of a program for evangelism I initiated with the help of the leadership of both congregations. God is willing and helping, together with some of our preaching brethren, I am scheduled to go to Baggao area on May 15th to spend several days there visiting our congregations and conducting whatever activities of evangelism, whether personal or public, conducive to the works and places for the strengthening of the brethren in the faith, and the dissemination of the gospel of salvation. A preaching itinerary for us to visit our churches in the provinces of Ilocos Norte, Pangasinan, and Tarlac, including Baguio City, in the near future is being worked out also. Please pray with us for the realization of this plan. May I take also this opportunity to once again state our gratefulness to all of you brethren in the U.S.A. who, in one way to the other, continue to directly extend financial supports to the Lord's work in the Philippines. Rest assured your assistance falls in worthy hands; and that we are ready to monitor to you those who become unworthy recipients of your generosity and love, so the Lord's money maybe safeguarded. May God bless us all.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FRUITS—selected by E.H.Miller

LaGrange, Ga.

- S - Sunday school is like a tree.
 - U - Under which men like to be;
 - N - Never doubting what is taught;
 - D - Division is by Satan brought.
 - A - All trees are known by fruits they bear;
 - Y - You see, my friend, what kind is there.
-
- S - Such fruits, won't you stop and think?
 - C - Cannot please God, but soon must sink;
 - H - How deep, my friend, no one can tell.
 - O - One thing we know a place called hell;
 - O - Old Satan is the captain there;
 - L - Look out for fruits these trees do bear.
-
- F - For when earth's millions shall appear,
 - R - Remember when I tell you here;
 - U - Unto God's word account we'll give,
 - I - In which no human plant deth live;
 - T - There in is found no Sunday School;
 - S - So, who on earth now is the fool??

Our purpose is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

"To continue speaking the truth in love," "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," "keeping the ordinance as delivered."

"Thus saith the Lord, 'stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where in the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.' (Jer. 6:16) "And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in." (Isa. 58:12).

VOL. LXX

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NO. 8

JESUS UNDER SIEGE

By CARL M. JOHNSON

During "Easter Week" of this year the three national news magazines, *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *U.S. News and World Report* devoted their respective cover stories to the endless controversy over the "Historical Jesus." Just who and what was Jesus? Who did He claim to be and what did He actually say and do? In their efforts to answer these questions each magazine gives extensive coverage to the "Jesus Seminar," which has come to symbolize the debate in the religious world over the "Real Jesus."

The Jesus Seminar is a small, self-selected association of academics who meet twice a year in various locations throughout America to debate the "true" history of Jesus and the authenticity of His sayings. The Seminar was founded in 1985 by Robert Funk in Sonoma, California. The Seminar has been co-chaired from the beginning by John Dominic Crossan of DePaul University in Chicago. Funk has been the Seminar's most visible and vocal representative for the public, and the shaper of the Seminar's agenda.

There are approximately fifty Bible scholars associated with the Seminar. While Funk says these members represent a wide range of New Testament scholars, the truth is they do not represent anything like a consensus view of scholars working in the field of New Testament studies. Most of the participants are in relatively undistinguished academic positions, while others are not in academic positions at all. One of the panelists, Paul Verhoeven, works in the movie industry for Brookfilms, and his most recent credit is that he directed the movie *Showgirls*.

Funk made clear his agenda in his keynote address at the Seminar's first meeting in 1985: He cannot tolerate fundamentalist beliefs relating to the Bible. He vehemently denies that the Gospels are literally true and that Jesus is actually going to come again. He believes the Gospels were created solely by the Church after the death of Jesus; that the writers of the Gospels wrote down what they could remember of the sayings of Jesus and then filled in all the blanks with fables and myths they could adapt to deal with the circumstances of the times. Funk sees his goal, therefore, as one of liberating Jesus from the myths contained in the Gospels: "It isn't Jesus bashing...we want to liberate Jesus. The only Jesus most people want is the mythic one. They don't want the real Jesus. They want the one they can worship. The cultic Jesus" (*Los Angeles Times*, 24 Feb. 1994. View section).

Since Funk's actual mission for the Jesus Seminar is to combat traditional beliefs about Jesus and His words, the members of the panel are not selected necessarily upon their qualifications as scholars, but rather, their selection is based upon the fact they agree with Funk's assumptions about the origin of the Gos-

pels and are sympathetic with his agenda.

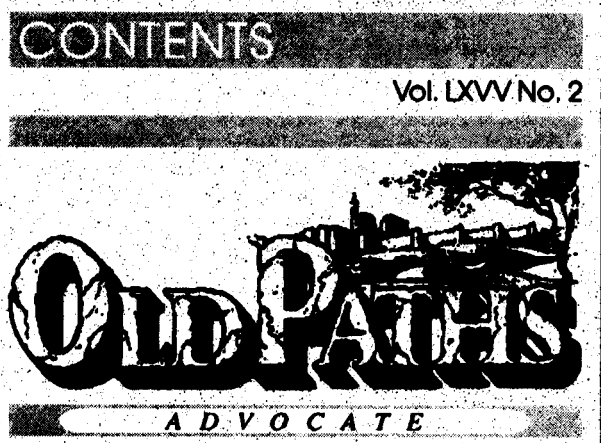
Funk and his co-chairman Crossan are not without academic credentials, but Funk's true genius is as a media-exploiting promoter. As a huckster he has to rate with the late P.T. Barnum. He has deliberately styled the Jesus Seminar to be provocative in order to draw media attention. In some respects the group proceeds like many other seminars devoted to a particular subject: papers are prepared and read, discussion and debate follow, and the participants reach some sort of consensus before moving on to the next stage. What distinguishes this seminar from others, however, is that at each meeting, participants vote with colored beads for the authenticity of a particular saying of the New Testament. What an effective way to draw attention! Scholars are voting on the contents of the Gospel.

In order to understand why the media have given an inordinate amount of attention to the Jesus Seminar it is necessary to remember some things about the media in this country. Two principles govern the professional ethics of the media: "get it first and get it right." If a news organization cannot get earliest coverage of breaking news, then it seeks exclusive coverage of some aspect of the event. Few newspapers or local television stations have the resources to do in-depth reporting on any issue. This fact is illustrated clearly in recent coverage of politics: Long-range policy is boring and is not digested well by an audience with a short attention span, but the downfall of a politician is juicy. The borderline between news and entertainment is almost nonexistent; both have increasingly been centered in the personal and the scandalous.

In such an environment, the coverage of religion poses a big problem. Religion is, generally, the non-news area of culture. There is not much in the religious world to raise eyebrows or sell papers. Being religion editor of the daily paper is like being the Maytag repairman in TV commercials. It's a boring job. You mainly watch the store and reprint the bulletins. The only time religion can be called real news is when there is a scandal or when a personality is involved. The tribulations of personalities such as Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart are followed obsessively. And when a cult is involved, happiness reigns. The David Koresh-Branch Davidian tragedy was terrific news...and it was religious! Otherwise, the yearly cycle for the religion pages is all too drearily predictable to be news.

Into this dismal situation blew the Jesus Seminar. It wanted coverage! It understood deadlines! It invited media response! Best of all, it provided colored beads, plus provocative statements crafted into usable sound bites! As a bonus, it dealt not

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FAITHFUL CHILDREN

By DON L. KING

In Titus 1: 6, Paul wrote: "If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly." In 1 Timothy 3: 4 he said, "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)"

When considering men for the office of elder, the subject of children becomes very important. Paul says an elder's children must be "faithful." Immediately one asks, "what is faithful?" The term is translated in various ways, but the general idea appears to be, children who are Christians. Likely, nearly everyone who reads the verse from their King James Versions would come to that conclusion.

However, notice a few of the translations; "...having children who are believers..." (Weymouth); "...A man whose children believe..." (NIV); "...children brought up as Christians..." (Phillips); "...father of children who are believers..." (NEB); "...Children are believers..." (RSV); "...having believing children..." (Panin); "...whose children are Christians..." (Twentieth Century New Testament); etc. Thayer says the word in the original (PISTOS) means, "one who has become convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and the author of salvation." (pg 514) Can we doubt that Paul intended for men who are chosen as elders to have children who are Christians? If that is what he wanted us to believe, how could he have said it better? How could he have made it plainer? Yet, there are numerous quibbles and the reason often seems obvious. Someone wants to be an elder whose children are not members of the church. Why stretch this passage away from its plain meaning otherwise?

Some suggest that perhaps the passage means that an elder's children are to be members IF they are old enough. However, it appears that position would defeat the very reason Paul gave the qualification in the first place. Does it not seem plain that an elder is to have demonstrated his ability to rule or guide in the way of the Lord by having those under his control to be Christians?

Reread 1 Timothy 3: 4,5 again at the beginning of this article. Paul plainly says that if one can't rule his own house how can he take care of the church of God? How can we be sure that a prospective elder has the ability to lead the Church until and unless he has demonstrated his abilities at home with his own children?

It is sometimes supposed that the term "faithful" means only that the children are to be faithful or obedient to their physical fathers. However, this position is, in our humble opinion, without scriptural basis and it certainly does not harmonize with the context which is one's past demonstration of the ability to lead his own house aright. Again, we can't possibly know about a person unless we can view his history. How can we know a person's abilities to lead others aright? Only when he has done the job!

"Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." (Matthew

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Would you please shed some light on gossip, slander, lying, and being a busybody. Why does so much of this go on in the brotherhood? (MS)

Answer: The word gossip does not appear in the English translation of the scriptures. The dictionary defines the word to mean "one who chatters idly about others." (Webster's New World Dictionary) There are a number of Hebrew words translated slander in the Old Testament. Their meanings include calumnious, clandestine, malicious report, to tongue i.e. to use the tongue freely, and by implication to slander, backbite, and tale-bearing. It would seem obvious that idle chatter or gossip could, and often does, become slander. The Scriptures condemn such behavior in a number of places. Prov. 10:18 "He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool." Lev. 19:16 "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among my people: . . . "People guilty of gossip and slander bear tales often designed to destroy the good name or reputation of the individual named. Some slanderous talk is purposeful. Some is careless. Regardless of the motivation the results are all too often the same. We should be very careful what we say about others. Most of the time saying nothing is the best policy. Hearts have been broken, lives disrupted, churches divided and souls lost because someone failed to bridle their tongue. What right do I have to destroy my brother? It matters little if I do it with the sword or tongue. The outcome will be the same. Can I afford to destroy with my mouth him for whom Christ died? Surely not. The sin of backbiting is defined as "speaking evil of one or against one." (Vine) The obvious reference is to going behind one's back to talk about them. Why not go to their face? Why not sit down with someone and discuss the problem, rather than seek to destroy the person without their knowledge? Such is not only wrong, but cowardly as well. Far too many times the person being talked about is the last to find out about it. Everyone else hears the talk long before the one who should have heard it first. A busybody is defined by Vine as "to be working about instead of at one's own business, signifies to take more pains than enough about a thing, to waste one's labour, to be meddling with, or bustling about, other people's matters." The word describes those who spend their time meddling in the affairs or business of other people, while failing to attend to their own business. Often the result is "talk" about other people and their business which usually leads to gossip, slander, backbiting etc. I do not propose to know why there is so much of this going on in the brotherhood. I have no way of knowing what specific thing or things the querist has in mind, but evidently there are things happening that make him feel that the problem is significant and needs to be addressed. If indeed it

does exist among us, it is wrong and cannot be defended. The problem with most people is that they feel they have the right to talk about anybody they choose, until someone begins to talk about them. At that point it becomes gossip or slander and must stop. The truth is, none of us have the right to pass on information for the purpose of hurting or destroying another. We should not be in the gossip and /or slander business. It is wrong. It is indefensible. All talk about other people, however, is not gossip. It is not slander. Some things are true. If a man is a liar, or a false teacher, or a wolf in sheeps' clothing, to tell such is not wrong. When Paul wrote to Timothy he said of Demas "he hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." Three verses later (2 Tim. 4:14) he said of Alexander "he did me much evil." Both these statements were true. They were neither slander nor gossip. We must always be careful not to sin with our tongue, however that does not mean we cannot, and at times, should not report the truth about certain individuals whose behavior or teaching is detrimental to the church.

Question: May a congregation sell a church building or property and make a profit from its sale and then use the proceeds to construct another building, support gospel preachers, take care of needy saints etc. (OH)

Answer: I believe that 1 Cor. 16:1-2 establishes the precedent for a congregation taking up a collection on the first day of the week. The Scriptures indicate that this money may be used for the care of the poor saints as well as the support of those who preach the gospel. (2 Cor. 8 and 9) A building is authorized by the generic command to assemble Heb. 10:25. We need a place to assemble. A place from which to preach the gospel. If a congregation builds and pays for a building, and decides to seek a larger place in which to worship or a better location for their meeting house, it would be my judgment that they could sell the building and use the proceeds to construct another meeting place. A problem would arise should a church decide to go into the business of building church houses for the purpose of speculation and profit. The Lord's Church has no business in business. I personally see no problem if a meeting house has appreciated in value and the sale brings a profit, which is used for scriptural purposes. However to conclude that because such is scriptural we may therefore start building buildings for profit so that the money can be used for the Lord's work is, in the opinion of this writer, a conclusion that does not follow. In fact, I believe the practice would be a violation of the New Testament teaching about how the early church raised money. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808)

THE FIRST PETITION

By JERRY DICKINSON

When you pray what is your first petition and request of the Father? Is your first petition that God would bless you and your family with good health? Do you first ask for prosperity? Is your first request that God would grant you and yours a long, happy and carefree life? No wonder you are so weak spiritually and virtually useless in the service of the Lord!

When the disciples came to Jesus with the plea, "Lord teach us to pray," Jesus gave them a model prayer from which we can greatly benefit. "Pray after this manner," declared the Lord, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come" (Luke 11:2) Have you ever noticed that Jesus taught that our first petition ought to be concerning the kingdom, i.e.

the church? Before we ask for our daily bread, and even before we ask for the forgiveness of our sins, we ought to be asking God to bless the church.

Now, I do hear brethren pray for the church in the worship services, but I wonder if we pray for the church in our private personal prayers. And even if we do pray for the church in our private prayers, is it our first petition? Many times, I fear, the church and the cause of Christ are more of an afterthought (or even a P.S.) after we have petitioned the Lord for all our personal and selfish desires. No wonder the church is not growing and prospering as we would like! The church itself is an afterthought for too many of us!

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33) "But first gave their own selves unto the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." (2 Corinthians 8:5) The Lord and his church must be first in our thoughts, plans, and aspirations - not to mention our prayers.

Several years ago a young man approached me at one of the New Year meetings and asked me a very provocative question. He wanted to know, as a young father, what he could do to ensure his children grew up to be Christians who would remain faithful even when they were adults.

"Jerry," he then added, "You and your brother Billy are both preachers, and both your sisters are faithful members of the church. What did your mother and father do to ensure that all of their children would remain in the church? What is the secret?" As I said, it was a very provocative question. I thought about his query for a moment and then I replied that I was not sure they knew any secret formula, but one thing my parents always stressed when I was growing up was that the church was first - first before anything or anybody.

I talked to another brother some time ago whose son has left the church and he was wondering out loud what he had done wrong. "Jerry," he told me, "We always put the church first in our home. I always insisted that my son put the services of the church before his school activities, sports activities, or anything else. Now he tells me the reason he doesn't go to church is because we made him go to church and because we stressed the church too much. Maybe I should have let him make his own decisions about going to church when he was growing up."

I told that brother, after hearing his son's excuse for not going to church anymore, that his son was just trying to put a guilt trip on him. That father may have made some mistakes raising his son, but stressing the importance of putting the church first was not one of them. Dear parents, you put the church first in your life and in the life of your children and you will not be making a mistake! There is nothing wrong with letting our children play ball on some league, but if we put those games before church, it's wrong! There is certainly nothing wrong with allowing our children to be involved in a worthwhile club or in some reputable activity at school, however if that club or activity interferes with the activities of the church - they are wrong!

When I was growing up I played little league baseball. Sometimes we had games on Wednesday nights that would begin at 6:30. About 7:15 my parents would come to the dugout, I would tell the coach (who already knew I would be leaving) I had to go to church, and off to church we went. Now, dear reader, I will be honest and tell you that when I was ten years old I think I would have rather stayed and played ball, but my parents insisted that the services of the church came first. Looking back, I believe my parents taught me an invaluable lesson - the church is first, be-

fore anything or anyone. This is a lesson we must pass on to our own children and grandchildren.

I understand there are some, here and there, teaching of late that it is permissible to miss assemblies of the church, including Lord's day morning services. It is certainly good to be at the services, they assert, but you are not required to be at every service, and certainly not every time. In Hebrews 10:25 Paul said it was the "manner" of some to forsake the assembling of the saints. The manner, or habit, we need to maintain in ourselves and in our children is putting the church, its activities, and its services first. But, someone interjects, what about what Jesus said about the ox falling in the ditch? That statement is in there to teach us a lesson, they say. Well, I agree with that, but what is the lesson? Is Jesus saying that we can just forsake the services anytime we get ready to take a vacation? Is he teaching that if I just decide I want to go camping next Sunday I can just take off because I have no obligation to gather with the saints and worship? Who believes such? I have never heard it put better that I heard Lynwood Smith put it in one of his sermons one time. He said, "Yes, I've heard about the ox falling in the ditch, but if I had an ox that fell in the ditch every Sunday I'd either get a new ox or I'd fill up the ditch!"

But, someone else objects, what would you do if you were on your way to church and you saw a bad car accident right in front of you. Would you just leave those poor people to bleed to death so you could get to the services of the church? Is going to church more important than helping someone in need? Of course I would stop and help those folks! Sometimes there are things beyond our control that prevent us from going to the services of the church as well as fulfilling other duties we owe the Lord. The Lord understands when we are thus prevented.

But what is the point? Are we to infer that because I am justified in missing the services of the church because I stopped to help some injured person, that I am also justified in missing to fulfill my own selfish desires? Who believes such? Is it logical to conclude that the Lord understands when I am sick and cannot attend the worship services, and therefore the Lord would understand if I decide to miss the services the next two Lord's days because I am on vacation in Paris? Who, dear reader, believes we can make such a gigantic leap in logic?

The church of Christ, dear readers, must come first. This is the very point Paul was making to the church in Corinth in I Corinthians chapter six. These brethren were taking each other to court and making a spectacle of the church and the cause of Christ before the world. Paul tells them they ought to be rather willing to suffer wrong than to thus see the church defamed. In other words, the church should come first, first even before our own welfare and well being. I will guarantee you one thing, if every church member put the interest and welfare of the church before their own we would see greater growth, greater zeal, and greater peace in our churches. If at every business meeting every brother would ask the question, "How will this decision affect the church?", instead of, "How will all this affect me?" we would see a dramatic difference in the work and worship of our churches.

Paul wrote about some brethren who had addicted themselves to the service of the Lord. (I Corinthians 16:15) We need more people addicted to the Lord Jesus and to his church! We need some fanatics for the cause of Christ! We need, everyone of us, to exalt the Lord Jesus and his church to the highest place in our hearts and lives. Then, and only then, will the growth, purity, and peace of the kingdom be our first petition.

“YOU JUST MIGHT BE A LIBERAL”

By *BILLY D. DICKINSON AND JERRY DICKINSON*

While in a meeting in West Monroe, Louisiana recently my brother Billy and I mused about some of the liberal views and tendencies of those who are advocates of the so called unity in diversity movement. It was interesting to note that our experience with these liberal thinkers were very similar and we began to write down some of our observations. We adopted a format similar to comedian Jeff Foxworthy who has risen to fame using the theme, “You just might be a redneck if...” After completing our list, we thought it might be worth sharing. After all, irony and sarcasm can often make a point better than a positive declaration. If the following list upsets you, or even makes you mad, it could be that there is more truth in these observations than you want to admit. Or, you just might be a liberal.

1. If you preach against being negative in a negative way - you just might be a liberal.

2. If you believe there should be unity in diversity in regard to everything except unity in diversity - you just might be a liberal.

3. If you answer every doctrinal question with the reply, “I cannot answer that...it’s a loaded question,” - you just might be a liberal.

4. If someone is trying to nail down what your position is on a doctrinal issue, and the only reply you’ll give is, “I believe what I’ve always believed,” - you just might be a liberal.

5. If you condemn others for intolerance, while you are intolerant toward those who oppose unity in diversity - you just might be a liberal.

6. If you say the way to convert people from error is by fellowshipping them, but you never teach them they are in error - you just might be a liberal.

7. If you condemn others for being judgmental while judging the motives of those who disagree with your liberal views - you just might be a liberal.

8. If you say the Bible teaches the use of one cup, but we cannot condemn as wrong those who use individual cups - you just might be a liberal.

9. If you complain about name calling (liberal or digressive) while you engage in name calling (pharisaical or sect) - you just might be a liberal.

10. If you claim to stand where you have always stood in regard to scriptural worship, but at a debate you find yourself sitting on the other side - you just might be a liberal.

11. If you always take the side of those you concede to be in error, while always castigating those you concede to have the truth (because you judge them to have a bad attitude) - you just might be a liberal. 215 Forrest Hills Dr. 13803 Crosshaven, West Monroe, LA 71291, Houston, TX 77015

“LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF”

By *VIRGILIO O. DANA O. SR.*

The title is found in Galatians 5:14. Sometimes so-called preachers of the gospel use this statement as their basis to rebuke others who make a review of their beliefs and teachings. “For how,” they say, “can we teach the world to love if we ourselves, who are expected to be harbingers of love, are criticizing and attacking each others’ teachings? If this is the case, where is our love?” This is the line of thought we often hear from preachers in the denominations, who claim to advocate the teaching of the Bible. If this is not scrutinized and studied carefully, it appears it is based on truth, the word of God. But what does the Bible say?

Let us remember that when it comes to our service to God, it is not what a preacher (no matter how brilliant and talented he may be) says, but the word of God is to be obeyed and followed. It is true the statement, “LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF,” is found in the Bible. But, does this mean this limits what we are to abstain from uttering words which may hurt their feelings? And that even if we see them doing things in the name of religion contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures, we do not warn them lest they are offended and they may say, we do not love them? Honestly, with all my understanding, this is not what our title means.

Note that, at first glance, the immediate connotation I can draw from this statement is that: If I treasure and love my own self, the same should be my aspiration and feeling toward my neighbor, or other people. I love myself; I should also love other people. I want to be saved; I should also want my neighbor to be saved. In other words, if I do not want to go the hell, my desire is that the soul of my neighbor can evade everlasting punishment also. Now, regarding salvation, what then should I do to prove I really “love my neighbor as myself”? There are two ways, among

others, in which I can show my love for him. First, I will tell him the truth — the teaching of the word of God — which I know. For example: Because I have known and believed what the Bible teaches that despite the existence of many religious bodies wearing different names, there is but one spiritual way that can lead men to the Kingdom of God in Heaven, and this is the spiritual body of Christ, the Church of Christ (John 14:6; Col. 1:18, 24; Romans 16:16, I must tell him this truth. For the Apostle Paul said, “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not heard?” ...so then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:14, 17). Because I have come to know the teaching of the Scriptures that in order for me to obtain the promise of salvation, I must have faith in Christ; repented of my sins; confessed my faith in Him; and be immersed in Christian baptism for the remission of my sins (Mark 16:16; Luke 13:3; Acts 8:36-38; Acts 2:38), I must inform my neighbor about these, so he may know the steps of salvation and avail himself of the promise of life everlasting. For if I do not tell him and teach him these Biblical truths, I can not prove I really love my neighbor, as I do myself.

And if he does not want to heed and believe the truth I preach, then I will go to the second alternative to be able to lead him to salvation; and, again I can prove to him I love him as myself. The move I am going to make is to bring to his attention, (and I am going to substantiate this by the teaching of the Bible), that is is spiritually serving God in error, to motivate him to study the word of God, and compare his religious affiliation with what the Bible teaches. For example: If he is a member of a religious body whose name is foreign to the word of God, I will show him that he is spiritually standing on very dangerous ground.

In short, how can I love my neighbor as myself, if I do not warn and correct his wrong concept and belief of serving God? I am not sincere to say, "I love my neighbor as myself", if I do not have the courage to tell him his mistakes. Did not our Lord Jesus Christ love the scribes and pharisees, when He called them hypocrites? (Matt. 23). Did not the Apostle Paul love the Jews when he preached to them the truth, which caused them to desire and attempt to kill him? Motivated by my sincere and pure desire that my neighbor will also be saved, I insist I must preach to him the gospel of salvation. But why should the world hate me, in my efforts to disseminate the word of God? To borrow the Apostle Paul's own words, "Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?" (Gal. 4:16).

Dear reader, in case in this article I happen to touch a teach-

ing of the church of which you are a member with which is not in harmony with the word of God, (and thus I would say, you are in error) I would like to honestly say, I do not have even the least intention to criticize you, or to attack your group; but because of my sincere desire to bring to you the truth, which I obeyed, with the hope and expectation you too may obey to prepare yourself for life everlasting in the Kingdom of God. Because of my sincere love for you, as I love myself, I am going to tell you the truth, whatever the effect or result may be, even if the world hates me! I do believe with all my heart that by doing this, I am executing the true essence and connotation of the statement, "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." — Roxas, Phillipines.

WHO SHOULD BE USED IN THE PUBLIC WORSHIP SERVICE OF A CONGREGATION?

BY JIMMY VANNOY

Does the Bible give specific instructions to determine which men should be used in the worship service and which should not? I believe that the Bible gives guidelines which can be applied in each specific case to allow the congregation to decide who should and should not be used without feeling a need to give proof. I will state that the following are not to be used: women, the heretic and one without the talent to do the job.

To determine who should and should not be used, judgment must be made. Some believe that this is wrong, but the judging which is unscriptural is judging whether a person is condemned. (Luke 6:37) To determine whether or not a person should be used in the service does not mean we are determining soul condition, but whether or not the person is qualified to be used. Because the leaders cannot judge the condition of the heart, they must judge on the basis of observable behavior. The criteria is listed below.

Two words are the bases for determining whether or not a man should be used. They are (1) faithful and (2) edify.

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (II Tim 2:2) The ones Timothy was to train to become teachers had to have the qualification that they were "faithful." Is it possible to determine who should be classified as faithful? Obviously it is, because Paul instructed Timothy to seek out these men, train them and set them to the task of teaching the gospel. This scripture teaches that it is the responsibility of the leaders of the congregation to determine whether or not a man is faithful before he stands in the pulpit.

How can it be determined whether or not one is faithful? (1) The man should regularly attend services of the church (Heb. 10:25) (2) He should live a moral life. (II Tim. 2:22, I Pet. 2:1) (3) He should be doctrinally sound (I Tim. 4:16, Titus 2:1) He should live a life of service to God and to others (Rom. 12:1), and (5) he should worship according to the scriptural pattern (John 4:23,24).

Although II Tim 2:2 applies particularly to teaching, it is obvious that faithfulness is required in leading a prayer, because only the prayers of the righteous are heard (I Pet. 3:12) A study

of the other items of worship would show that a faithful person is required to lead them.

"Moreover it is required of stewards that a man be found faithful." (I Cor. 4:2) A steward is one who cares for another man's matters. Christians are to be stewards of the things that God has given us. This is especially true of the leaders of the church, including those who lead in the worship service. Faithfulness is required of all who would participate in the worship service.

The second word is "edify." "Let all things be done unto edifying" (I Cor. 14:26) The word "edify" means to build up. Everything done by the leaders of the church should be for the purpose of building up the church.

If a person is used who is not faithful, does it edify him? Since faithfulness is the proper criteria for using a person, he would feel justified in his sin and would likely be reluctant to repent if he is used. It is certainly not to his edification to remain in his sin.

It is also not to the edification of the other members of the church for the unfaithful brother to be used. When the other members see this man who has been unfaithful used in the service, they are likely to be emboldened to do something similar if they are so inclined. This does not mean the leaders of the church have to agree with everything a brother does to use him, but if the brother is unfaithful using him is likely to have a weakening effect on the church and would not edify it. Paul said, "...but we do all things, dearly beloved for your edifying." (I Cor. 12:19)

These guidelines are not intended to try to exclude men from participation, but to include as many as possible. It is desirable for all who have talent to be used in the services. The leaders of the congregation should work with any man who does not meet the scriptural criteria so he can begin public participation in the services.

The Scriptures give two criteria for determining whether or not a man should be called on. He must be faithful, and using him should be to the edifying of the church.

Jesus Under Siege

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with hard-to-cover issues like sin and grace, but with a personality, the founding figure Himself, Jesus! And to bring it all home,

it promised, vote by vote, statement by statement, the shape of a scandalous attack on the foundations of Christianity. The conscious crafting of the Jesus Seminar into a media darling could not fail to be embraced by a segment of the media starved for the

chance to do real news.

Funk himself is always the first and best source of lively quotations. Some of his carefully crafted sound bites include: Jesus' "only real friends are the religious, economic, and moral outcasts of society," and in the end "he is accidentally crucified along with other rabble-rousers" (*Washington Post*, 12 Nov. 1988); "This Jesus was a social gadfly, upsetting now this, now that, convention...He was clearly no conserver of traditional values; He was no goody-two-shoes" (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 30 Sept. 1989). More than half of the members of the Seminar believe Jesus probably was not celibate, that He did not advocate celibacy as a lifestyle, and that He had a "special relationship" with at least one woman (*Atlanta Journal*, 30 Sept. 1989).

Seminar participant Leif Vaage, a New Testament professor at Emmanuel College at the University of Toronto declares Jesus was very likely "a party animal, somewhat shiftless, and disrespectful of the fifth commandment: Honor your father and mother" (*Atlanta Constitution*, 30 Sept. 1989).

The fifty Seminar panelists who gathered in the Flamingo Hotel Ballroom in Santa Rosa, California last year concluded that: only 18% of the words in the Gospels attributed to Jesus are authentic; none of the Gospel of John is authentic; and only one sentence in Mark's Gospel can be accepted as reliable. The Seminar panelists are also in unanimous agreement that the resurrection of Jesus did not actually happen, but was something Peter fabricated to explain away Jesus' death. Funk says in reference to Jesus' resurrection, "Few scholars believe that seminal doctrine anymore" (*Time*, 8 Apr. 1996).

Statements such as these are reminiscent of rebellious school children who deliberately choose their words to shock others and draw attention to them selves. With the use of sensational headlines the press help precisely the sort of commotion the Seminar wants. The *Washington Post* (31 Oct. 1987) reported under a banner headline that the group of biblical scholars had decided by secret ballot that "Jesus Did Not Publicly Proclaim Himself As the Messiah." A sample of other headlines includes: "Scholars say Jesus was often misquoted" (*San Francisco Chronicle* 18 Oct. 1987); "Lord's Prayer Not Jesus's, Scholars Say," (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 15 Oct. 1988); "Jesus Didn't Promise to Return, Bible Scholars Group Says" (*Los Angeles Times*, 5 Mar. 1989). What is remarkable about these headlines (and they could be multiplied easily) is that they all combine two features: first, they refute some part of the words attributed to Jesus in the Gospels, and second, the refutation is attributed to scholars.

Generally speaking, Americans have no idea how fraudulent people who claim to be scholars can be. Americans generally have an abysmal level of knowledge of the Bible. In this world of mass ignorance, to have headlines proclaim that our beliefs about Jesus have been declared untrue by scientific inquiry has a profound effect upon readers. There is no basis on which most people can counter these authoritative sounding statements.

It becomes increasingly clear the Seminar's declared enemies include all those who subscribe to any traditional understanding of Jesus as defined by the Gospels. Members of the Seminar also invite us to believe, with a great sense of relief, that since the doctrines of Christianity are false, morality based upon these doctrines isn't mandatory.

It should not be surprising to learn Funk and his associates have written a book about the findings of the Jesus Seminar entitled *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* (Macmillan, 1993). The Seminar can be regarded as one of the most brilliant pre-publication campaigns for a book ever devised. It would be hard to find a longer or more elaborate tease of public interest in the selling of a product.

Also, a movie is in the works based on the findings of the Jesus Seminar. All of the members of the panel are to be "consultants." You can see the strategy now behind Funk's inviting movie director Verhoeven to be a panelist.

For all its blasphemous notoriety, the Jesus Seminar has by no means cornered the market on the "Jesus business" in America. The book market has been flooded since 1990 with publications devoted to "the historical Jesus," suggesting there has been a virtually endless appetite for books about Jesus that offer something scandalous. L.T. Johnson says "Sales in scandal are high, stocks in shock are rising, and futures on the historical Jesus are sound. Commerce in the Christ has rarely been better."

Efforts to discredit or scandalize Jesus are nothing new. In fact, such efforts are as old as Christianity itself. The Jews were the first to challenge the claims of Christ. The Jews who lived in Jesus' day called Him: blasphemer, friend of publicans and sinners, glutton, winebibber, lawbreaker, and the cohort of the devil. Later Jewish writings label Jesus as a rebel, magician, illegitimate son of a Roman soldier, revolutionary, deceiver and heretic.

In the 17th century, French writers described Jesus as a solar fable, and 19th century German scholar Bruno Bauer maintained Jesus was a nonentity, myth.

These examples show the extremes to which skeptics and critics will go in a frantic effort to degrade the Jesus of history. But these examples also prove the slanderous criticism of skeptics is not going to destroy the true picture of the Jesus found in the Gospels.

History has proven the words of Christ to be like the Irishman's wall that was built four feet wide and only three feet tall. Why would a person be so foolish as to build a wall wider than it is high? The Irishman answered, "So if a storm should come and blow it over, it will be higher afterwards than before!" No book has weathered so many storms and survived as the Bible. All opposition has proven futile. Like the Irishman's wall, the words of Christ come back higher than before in influence and power. Jesus promises: "Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away" (Mark 13:31). 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820

Editorial

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7:20) That's what the Lord said. For that matter, one who is old enough to be an elder would likely be old enough to have children who are Christians.

Others ask: "If it is possible for a man to qualify with only one child, but he has more than one, must they all be Christians? In our opinion, yes. This qualification deals with one's

demonstrated ability to lead or rule well. If I have four children and one is a Christian while the others live a life of sin, have I demonstrated a skill in leading? Hardly! Rather, I have proven a lack of that essential ability. If I have failed to lead some of my own children to Christ, am I not likely to fail with respect to some in the church? If not, why not? Paul gave a very definite rule that those who are called to be Christians must be Christians. In view of that, we can only deduce that he meant ALL of his children are to be Christians.

Before anyone can qualify as an elder in the Lord's Church, he must be a father and have demonstrated his ability to lead or rule **WELL** (1 Timothy 3:4) his own house. Is it possible that

the father who has his adult children (or some of them) living in the world away from God has demonstrated his ability to rule well? Think on these things. DLK

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Church Directory Change

Please make these notes in your new 1996 Church Directory: Under Benecia, CA the area code for Leo Baldwin should be (510) not 501. The phone number for Justin Owen is (707)745 4309. The new congregation in Puducah, KY has been mistakenly listed under the churches in Tennessee. The information is correct, but appears in the wrong state. The Springfield, MO North Area Church should read 4937 North State Highway H (not 4). Our apologies. Please mark these corrections.

Dear Bro. King: Would you please publish in the next edition of the OPA my new address. Anyone needing to correspond with the Hilltop congregation at Liberty, KY by contacting me should address my mail to P.O. Box 898, Liberty, KY 42539. I will have another phone number in the near future. As of right now, I can still be reached at the number in the directory. -- Les Russell, P.O. Box 898, Liberty, KY 42539.

Missouri Labor Day Meeting

The meeting this year will be hosted by the Mission Hills Church in Springfield. The dates are August 30-September 1. For further information contact: Virgil Hogland or Dan Wissinger at 417-886-9961 or 417-882-1132.

Annual Texas Labor Day Meeting Fiftieth Anniversary

The Green Oaks congregation in Arlington invites all who can to attend the 50th annual Texas Labor Day meeting this year Aug. 28 - Sept. 2. Theme for the meeting will be "So we laboured in the work..." (Neh. 4:21), and speakers will be a few of the preachers who have had some association with the congregation in the past. The meeting was begun by the Vaughn Blvd. congregation in Fort Worth and has been conducted ever since at some congregation in Texas. Conducting the meeting will be Bro. Joe Norton, who will be assisted by leaders of the Green Oaks congregation in keeping with a tradition established from the beginning. The meeting was begun to give church leaders an opportunity to come together and report on work that was going on in their areas, and it was conducted by those leaders. Services will be at the Irving Arts Center in Irving, Texas, except for the Lord's Day morning service. The meeting will conclude at noon on Labor Day. All are welcome.

California's Annual Meeting Labor Day Weekend

The time for this meeting is fast approaching. This year it is being hosted by the Stockton, CA congregation. It will begin Friday, August 30 and continue through Sunday evening September 1. The meeting will be held in the Scottish Rite Temple Auditorium, 33 W. Alpine. Various gospel preachers will be used. For more information contact Dennis Mahurin 1 209-957-3262, Bennie Cryer 1-209-937-9727 or Gene Youngblood 1-209-952-5356. Contact Gene especially if you are looking for places to stay.

Can You Help Gary Weaver

Some time back Brother Gary Weaver went to Russia to assist in the work there. While in the country, he contacted a parasite that has caused him much pain and trouble. He has no feeling from the waist down, and is slowly becoming paralyzed in the same area. In order to kill off the bug, doctors gave him strong doses of medicine which destroyed the inner lining of the intestine. They do not hold out much hope that this will improve. He currently has back hospital bills totaling between 10-15 thousand dollars. His medicine is about \$300 per month. If you can help this brother, please communicate with him at: Gary Weaver, P.O. Box 1974, Rolla, Mo. 65401

1996 Church Directories Ready

The new 1996 Church Directories are ready for mailing. This years edition also has a preachers list in the back of the directory. The cost is \$2.00 each plus postage. Postage may be figured as follows: 1-(\$1.24) 2-10 (\$2.00) 10-20 (\$3.00) over 20 directories (\$4.00). Send all orders to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808.

Debate In Mountain Home, Arkansas

The Lord willing there will be a debate in Mtn. Home, Ar. on Sept 23 and 24 between Ronny Wade and J. T. Smith on the number of drinking vessels to be used in the observance of the communion. The debate will be held in the High School Auditorium beginning each night at 7:00. Brother Smith is from Tulsa, Ok. and will be representing the brethren who meet at the South Hwy. 5 church. Brother Wade is from Springfield, Mo. and will be representing the church meeting at Wade and Cross Sts. in Mtn. Home. Everyone who can, make plans to attend. For further information you may contact Bro. Brett Hickey, P.O. Box 68, Mtn. Home, Ar. 72653 Ph (501) 424-2523.

Fifty Years Together

On April 21, 1946, William Oxner and Leslie Beth Byford were united in marriage in Waco, TX by Homer L. King. Fifty years later, this marriage and home is still together and on the 21st, they, along with their two sons, Bill of Waco and Wayne of Tuscon, gathered with over 90 people to celebrate their anniversary. William and Leslie Beth are from the old school where "I Do" was a promise to keep. And they have kept it. William and Leslie Beth are known by many throughout the brotherhood. They are faithful Christians and members of the Johnson Drive Church of Christ in McGregor.-- J. Wayne McKamie.

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

Dorman-Fancher--On Saturday, June 15, 1996, Micheal Dorman and Kory Fancher exchanged wedding vows in Wichita Falls, Tx. Many friends, loved ones, and relatives gathered to witness the beautiful wedding and to wish Kory and Micheal many happy years together. Kory is the daughter of Arley and Nina Fancher who worship with the Crestview congregation in Wichita Falls. Mike's parents are Randy and Jill Leonard. Beautiful music was provided by Mark and Roxanne Triplett of Springfield, MO., and Charles Goodgion of Wichita Falls. Kory and Mike will be worshipping with the Crestview congregation in Wichita Falls. Our prayer is that God will bless Kory and Mike

as they go forth to establish their Christian Home. I felt it to be a great honor to officiate. --Arley Fancher

Baker-Rairdon--On June 29, before a near capacity crowd at the eleventh St. Church of Christ in Tulsa Ok. Randal Lee Baker and Thena Shawn Rairdon were united in Holy Matrimony. Singers were Gary and Linda Cannon, Greg Harris, and Michael Howard. Randal is the son of Monroe Baker and Deborah of Hoyte, Tex. and Shawn is the daughter of Candice Rairdon of Tulsa, Ok. At the present the couple will reside in Houston, Tex. Randal is gainfully employed but has preached and traveled quite a bit, especially in "young people's meeting". It was a joyous occasion and one in which it was echoed repeatedly "they are a well matched couple." We expect them to be quite a blessing to the cause of Christ. I was honored to stand in, for Bro. Morris, who was their first choice but could not because he was conducting the Lebanon meeting. --Jimmie C. Smith

Herman - McNeill--On June 1st, 1996 a host of relatives, brothers and sisters in Christ, friends and neighbors gathered at the West Highway 60 Church of Christ, building to witness the beginning of a new home. Bobby McNeill and Brandi Herman of the Seneca congregation were united in marriage, vowing to commit to each other for the rest of their lives. It was a joyous occasion for all that were present. Bobby and Brandi had been making plans for this day in their lives for quite a while. They will continue to meet, worship, and serve God, at the church in Seneca where they have been an asset for some time. We are thankful to have them at Seneca and pray that their life together will be filled with joy and happiness as they express their love for each other and for the Lord.--Kenneth R. Middick

OUR DEPARTED

Daniels--Sister Mildred Daniels, rural Joplin, Missouri, passed away at 4:11 a.m., Wednesday, May 29, 1996. Though she had not been in good health for some time, her passing came unexpectedly sudden. She is survived by two daughters, Billie Dahnke and Mary Lyerla, both of Joplin. Sister Mildred was a longtime member of the Church and had been a member of the Leawood Congregation approximately thirty-five years. Both she and her husband, William (Eick) Daniels had been instrumental in seeing the congregation through its early days and contributed much to its growth and development. Brother Eick passed away three years ago and was buried June 1, 1993. It is very unusual when any couple noted for the fact that they raised two daughters, have two sons-in-law, two grandsons, two granddaughters, one grandson-in-law, and one granddaughter-in-law who are all active members of the Church and attend the Leawood Congregation. As Joshua said of his family so could be said of this family, "but as for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord," (24:15). Little more needs to be said about this fine Christian lady. Such a tremendous example Mildred was to all who knew her! We extend our sympathy to all those that suffer in her loss. Funeral services were held on Saturday, June 1, 1996. Beautiful singing was provided by young people from the Leawood Congregation. It was my honor to assist our Elders Jim Stockam and Oscar Morris in conducting the memorial services. --Ronald Lanford

Smith--Dennis I. Smith was born Nov. 1, 1928 in Lincoln Co. Miss. The eldest son of Carlos B. and Maggie Lee Anderson Smith. His spirit took its flight May 2, 1996 at King's daughters

hospital in Brookhaven. He obeyed the gospel as a teenager and was a member of the Pearlhaven Church of Christ where he faithfully attended until his death. His father and grandfather were preachers and debaters. He too was quick to demand a reason for one's hope. He believed that even though he missed the mark at times, the Bible was right. You would have a hard time being around Dennis and not talk about the Bible and the Church. Dennis was very free hearted. For these and many more reasons people have often said to me "you can't help but love Dennis." I would that the church had more people of whom such could be said. He was preceded in death by his parents, one brother, Charlie Lee; and infant son, Keith. He leaves to mourn his passing his faithful companion, Lillie Mae; two sons, Larkin and Mike; two brothers, Ralph and Phillip; two sisters, Lillian Cockerham and Doris Mathis; four grandchildren and one great-grandchild. His passing officially chronicles the "changing of the guard" at Pearlhaven. He has handed the mantle to Mike who he trusted implicitly. He was my first cousin and I love him, and was honored to conduct the memorial service where the congregational singing was beautiful and was led by Dwight Smith. --Jimmie C. Smith

Curry--Debra "Debbi" Gayle Curry, was born April 3, 1952 to Reece and Wanda Middick, in Frederick, Oklahoma and was raised in the same house that her father was born and raised in. She died March 11, 1996, at age 43, in Lawton, Oklahoma. She was in a tragic auto accident on her way home from work. She is survived by her husband, Danny Curry and three wonderful children Shane, JoGayle, and Joshua, all of the home. The service for Debbi was held on March 13th in Frederick, Oklahoma. It was one of the largest services I have witnessed. The singing was done by the Ken Middick family and "Amazing Grace" was sung by one of Debbi's friends from work, who commented, "I just can't imagine the world without Debbi. Debbi was a joy to know and visit with. She seemed to bring sunshine with her smile. She never met a stranger, had not one bitter bone in her body, and was one of the most caring, compassionate, loving, tender, and beautiful ladies that you would ever meet. She exemplified the phrase, "reach out and touch someone." She seemed to always try and make everyone feel comfortable and included. She also gravitated toward those that stood off from the crowd. She was a proper example of the Christian attitude and lived in a way that many of us should use as a pattern for our own lives. She is greatly missed by all who knew her and our heart goes out to her family, and especially her three young children. She was one of my favorite cousins and it was my honored privilege to officiate at her service.--Kenneth R. Middick

Asplin--Funeral services for Arlie Mae Asplin, 77, of Sulphur, Louisiana were conducted at 2 p.m. Sunday, May 26, 1996 at the Hixson Funeral Home Chapel in Sulphur. Alan Lindley of Clyde, Texas was the main speaker. She died Wednesday, May 22, 1996 in an automobile accident while on a trip to visit friends in Mountain Home, AR and relatives in southern Missouri. Her daughter, Arlene Shores of Houston, Texas was with her on the trip, but survived the accident. Arlie Mae Daniel was a native of Mena, Arkansas. She later moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma where she lived until she married Leroy L. Everett. They moved their family to Sulphur, La. in 1949. Leroy preceded Arlie in death in January of 1962. Arlie Mae married C. Ray Asplin in 1970 and lived in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Norfolk, Arkansas and Seymour, Missouri before Ray's death in January of 1995. Shortly

after Ray's death, she moved back to Sulphur, living here until called away. Arlie Mae was baptized in November in Sand Springs Lake of Sand Springs, Oklahoma. There was a sheet of ice on the water which had to be broken before she and the preacher could enter. She once told me she never felt the chill of the water. Her survivors include three sons; a sister; fourteen grandchildren and twenty-one great-grandchildren. We comfort ourselves knowing she is in the hands of the Lord. --Dan Everett

Householder--Roy T. Householder of Coweta, OK was born May 4, 1908 in Strawberry, AR. He departed this life on April 1996 in Coweta, OK. He had lived in Sulphur for about 43 years before moving to Coweta to live with his daughter Linda Merryman three years ago. After moving to Coweta, he became a member of the Broken Arrow congregation. He was married to Gladys Baker. She preceded him in death on May 23, 1992. He is survived by 3 daughters: Linda, Joyce Jones and Patsy Briggs; two sons: Ernest and Harold Householder; 3 brothers: Clifford, Erwin and Curtis; 2 sisters: Ethel Young and Alene Sneed; 20 grandchildren, 35 great-grandchildren and 3 great-great-grandchildren. He was a retired carpenter and cabinet maker. Most noteworthy: he was one of the carpenters who assisted in building the church building in Sulphur that is located just north of the tabernacle. While he was loved and respected in Sulphur, the congregation in Broken Arrow developed a truly great affection and love for Bro. Householder. Services were held in the church building in Sulphur. Several members of the church sang. Bro. Jerry Gilbert and I conducted the service.--Jack A. Cutter



Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 10811 Springfield, Mo 65808 July 8--The meeting at Greenville, SC closed with one baptism and three confessions by women who formerly attended digressive congregations. We thoroughly enjoyed our stay among these brethren. Next we were at London, Ky for an enjoyable week. Crowds were good with a number of outsiders attending. Traveling with me for both these meetings were Brethren Brad Post and Aaron Risner. These are fine young men who aspire to preach the Gospel. They have both talent and dedication. I look forward to having them with me again this summer. The Lebanon meeting was well attended and was uplifting, as usual. The Lord willing we go next to West Chester, Oh. July 10-14, Fairview, La. July 20-28, Napoleon, Al. Aug 4-11, Lowery, Al Aug. 12-18, Columbus, Oh. Aug. 23-25, Miami, Ok. Sept. 8-15 and West Plains, Mo. Sept. 20-22 May the Lord bless his people everywhere.

Jim Franklin, P.O. Box 573, Blantyre, Africa--Brother Franklin reports he has not been able to report as usual due to the terminal illness of his 38 year old daughter, Rebecca. It has been necessary for him and his wife to come to the United States. Jim has now returned to Africa and his wife has remained in the U.S.

to be with their daughter. His son has also had heart surgery. He reports his work in Africa continues to be extremely busy and profitable for which we are all thankful. Please, brethren, remember Brother Franklin and his family in your prayers as these are very difficult times for all of them. Continue to pray for the work. It is difficult and lonely to be so far from home especially when loved ones desperately need you. --Don King

Jimmie C. Smith, Rt. 6, Box 199A, Harrison, Ark. 72601, July 6--Since last reporting I was privileged to hold a meeting at Ada, Ok. which was most enjoyable. The congregation has grown in every way since I was last there and is unified and at peace. Ada being Cindy's home town, they adopted me as a favorite son. Ada now has an abundance of good young teachers and song leaders. It all speaks well for the preachers (Joe Hisle, Carl Johnson, Kevin Presley) who call Ada home. They give Kevin a lot of credit for their good singing. They have the largest, most attentive group of young people I've ever preached to. The meeting closed with four confessions and 1 baptism. Joe Hisle held our meeting the first of June and did a fine job. He is a joy to have in our home and his subject choice is relevant and material excellent. We've enjoyed hearing Carl at Hartwell and Doug Hawkins at Mtn. Home. I was able to attend one night of the Sulphur meeting and six services of the Lebanon meeting. We are leaving this morning for Brazil, Ind. I have preached 5 funerals since Thanksgiving which reaffirms our mortality.

Bennie T. Cryer, 2340 Sanguinetti Ln., #93, Stockton, CA, July 2--In May we had the pleasure of attending the Irving, TX study where oral material was presented for the commentaries "Contending For The Faith." Much progress has been made in preparing and publishing these books on The New Testament. In May and June I preached at San Angelo, Red Oak, Weatherford, and Midland, TX. From there we went to Tennessee for a meeting at Union Hill where we enjoyed just about a building full of people for every service. It was a pleasure to work with Paul Walker in this meeting and to get reacquainted with the brothers and sisters there. Then we worked with the Chapel Grove congregation for two weeks. The elders, deacons, and members are doing a great work there. Since returning to California I have preached at Bakersfield and Olivehurst. The work with the elders, deacons, and members here at Stockton continues. We are preparing to host the annual California meeting.

Joe Norton, 1712 Wanda Way, Arlington, TX 76017, June 28--The year 1996 has been one of the busiest ever as I have conducted meetings while the school year was in progress. After returning from a very productive trip to Ghana, I preached at the Fairview, LA congregation in January and went back the last week in February to conduct a gospel meeting. Bro. Mark Elliott, Jr., of the Fairview congregation accompanied me to Ghana so that he could see the work first hand and report back to Fairview. His presence on the trip made an even greater impact on the work than we anticipated. Brethren there really appreciated that a member of a local sponsoring congregation would be willing to visit them and show such an interest in their spiritual welfare. May the Lord continue to bless the work in Ghana and the Fairview brethren for their dedication in that work. The gospel meeting at Fairview had wonderful crowds, and it was a blessing to be with the brethren there. The next two meetings were for congregations in my local area: Weatherford near Fort Worth and Duncanville near Dallas. It was wonderful to work with the

brethren in both of these congregations; I appreciate them very much for their worksake. My next meeting was in Jackson, MS, where I conducted the annual Memorial Day Meeting. It was encouraging to be with that congregation again; brethren there have continued that meeting for many years, and it has been a real benefit to the congregation. Enthusiasm was high before and during the meeting, the brethren did a good job in their preparations for the meeting. May the Lord continue to bless them in their efforts to spread the gospel in that community. When this report is published, I will be on my way to Ghana once again. Bro. James Orten will join me for a part of the work before he returns to the States. He will be moving back to this country after living in Zambia for two years. Please pray for us and for all who are working for the Lord.

Kevin Presley, P.O. Box 2098, Ada, OK 74821 (405) 436-1331--I enjoyed my stay in California recently. I was thankful for the opportunity to preach at Bakersfield (Planz), Modesto, and Oakdale. It was my pleasure to hear Bro. Lynwood Smith at Turlock during the Memorial Day Meeting. I held a meeting at Olivehurst, CA. Attendance from other congregations was down some, but I am thankful for those who came and supported us. We had several visitors from the community which I feel made the meeting a success. We witnessed one confession of fault. I thank the good brethren there for their hospitality. From there, I went to Bear Tract (Beattyville, Ky.) It was a pleasure to be associated with Bro. Bruce Roebuck during the meeting. We took turns preaching from night to night. Bruce is always a pleasure with whom to work. We had a good meeting, and I thank the brethren for the opportunity to be there again this year. I am presently at Earlytown, AL in a good meeting. We have had good crowds with some interest from the community. From here I go to Mt. Home, AR, July 19-21. From August on, my schedule is: Newton, IA, August 4-11; Watonga, OK, Sept. 15-22; Wynnewood, OK, Sept. 9-14; Collins, MS, Sept. 25-29; and Tulsa, OK (11th St.), Oct. 11-13. Pray for the work.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, July 15 --Pat and I returned late last night from meetings, etc. in Oklahoma. Our return so late in the month will likely mean your paper will be a bit late. There was nothing we could do, but we apologize and hope you will understand. June 23-30 we enjoyed a good meeting at the "Blue" congregation in McAlester, Ok. Crowds were pretty good, actually, and cooperation from near by congregations helped out also. We enjoyed the hospitable home of Bill and Christine Verner where we couldn't have been more nicely treated. It was good to be with Jack Lee again, a friend for many years. There was one confession of fault. We look forward to returning next year. While there, we enjoyed preaching at a morning service of the Sulphur meeting. We attended a few days of the Lebanon, MO 4th of July meeting and enjoyed it as always. That is a special time for us when we see so many from so far away. July 7-14 we enjoyed being with the congregation at Muskogee, Oklahoma. There were several congregations who helped us as well as a number of preachers who came one or more times. There was one confession of faults. We thank the Lord for any good accomplished as always. We enjoyed being able to stay with Jack and Jean Jackson who are family to us. They lived in the Bay area of CA for years and helped us in the work at Fremont for a long time. We also look forward to returning to Muskogee next year, Lord willing. We are to go next to Huntington, W.VA (18th St.) August 18-25. We

look forward to a profitable effort. Pray for us in the work.

P. Duane Permenter, P.O. Box 80687, Midland, TX 79708, July 6--Please note our new address and phone number (915) 520-6508. The meeting in Oakdale was well attended and we had one confession of faith. It was our privilege to go by Clovis, CA, On our way to Midland, TX, and I preached two nights. One young lady obeyed the gospel through the influence of her grandparents, Bro. and Sis. Bill Anderson. Since arriving in Midland, the brethren have welcomed us and made us feel at home. We have already had some visitors from the community and have started a couple of Bible studies. Several of the brethren have been visiting with me to help me get acquainted with the church and community. Bro. Alfred Base has been quite ill with heart trouble but a doctor in Houston, TX, believes he now has the problem corrected with medication. Please continue to pray for him. We were able to attend the Sulphur, OK, meeting for a few days and it certainly was enjoyable. Doug Edwards and Allen Bailey did a fine job in coordinating the services. Bro. Ivan Costa and Jim Bradford from the Manteca, CA, congregation sang the lead on every song through Lynwood's new songbook. "Blessed Fountain." This has been made available on four cassette tapes at the price of \$2 a tape or \$8 a set plus postage. This is an excellent way to learn the new songs in the book. If you have been hesitating to order "Blessed Fountain" from Lynwood, now you can order the new books and learn every song in the book with help from Ivan and Jim. Please send all orders to me at the above address. Please continue to pray for me in the work. May God bless you is my prayer.

An Open Letter to the Brotherhood May 24, 1996

Dear Brethren, Paradoxically, the progress of the work in Malawi, including that area of Mozambique bordering the southern area of the country presents a problem which I must share with you. It has to do with the observance of the Lord's Supper. Due to growth, spiritually and numerically, the demand for grape juice has increased considerably since I began working with this brotherhood in May of 1991. With object poverty prevailing in this country and the fact that grapes do not thrive in this climate, the Malawian brethren have had to look to the American brotherhood to supply their need for grape juice. Our sister congregations in the States have been gracious enough in the past to see to it that the Malawian congregations' requirement for this commodity was sufficient. However, for some reason(s) of which I am not sure, the response to our latest appeals have not been adequate. Consequently, we do not have enough funds to pay for our last shipment which arrived from South Africa on April 1. Unless things change very quickly, we will be running out of grape juice in a matter of days. I am very reluctant to place another order when I do not have the means to pay for the last one. (I am now a month behind). One way to lose your credit standing as well as an honorable reputation is to make a debt and fail to pay. Neither the Church nor I need an undesirable reputation. It now appears that I may be faced with a new problem which I have never encountered before in my life. My mind is having to wrestle with this problem: If it is beyond our Malawian brethren's ability to provide the grape juice for their worship, would the Lord charge them with sin for not observing the communion when it is their sincere desire to do so? I do not look forward to a time when I have no choice, but to tell these brethren that we are out of grape juice and then try to explain to them how to conduct a Scriptural worship without it. My prayer to the Lord is that such

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IF ONLY I HAD READ

will never happen. For your information as to what is received here as support: My personal support is \$1,000 per month and my work fund is \$2,000 per month. It is not possible for me to pay for the grape juice out of these funds. It may also interest you to know that the congregations supporting this work on a regular basis do more than supply the \$3,000 per month. They bear the travel expenses of Marlene and me to and from the States. In addition, they also supply funds for major repairs and upkeep of the property, etc., which the work fund could not possibly cover. We are needing no less than four shipments of 200 cases per year. Last year, 1995, there were two price increases. In September 1995 a case cost us \$9.60 (Stellenbosch now sells and bills all their commodities for export in US dollars instead of rands). Prices were increased again the first of this year. The last shipment we received (April 1, 1996), the price was \$11.60 per case. My invoice for the April shipment is for \$2,840. This includes prepaid insurance and freight (\$520) to the clearing agent in Blantyre (Local warehousing, handling and clearing charges are not included in this price. These must be paid locally. The small amount we charge the brethren for the grape juice is intended to cover these charges). \$2,840 x 4 is \$11,360, the minimum amount we will need for 1996. In 1995 we distributed 790 cases and two bottles. Counting what has been requested for delivery to the villages this weekend, May 25, we will have already distributed 353 cases in 1996. This leaves us only 21 cases in stock. I am needing to place an order immediately! But until I can pay for the last shipment, I dare not do so. Brethren it is not our desire to have to lean so heavily upon you in America. But circumstances being what they are in this country at this time, we must. Who else is there on this earth, but you do we have to turn to supply what we cannot supply for ourselves? May we depend on you to assist these children of God who live in this area of the world in their effort to serve Him faithfully? If you are able and choose to do so, please send your assistance to my Little Rock address: P.O. Box 191865, Little Rock, AR 72219-1865. Brother Maurice Chandler of the Little Rock congregation will deposit it in my American account for transfers. Please, be sure to indicate that your support is for the grape juice if that is what it is intended for. A report will be made concerning the amount of funds received. Thank you and may God bless. Yours in His Service, Jim Franklin, P.O. Box 573, Blantyre, Malawi, Africa

"The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor."

Vincent T. Lombardi

A nice neighbor invited me
 To go with him to worship one day;
 He spoke of the Bible,
 And he spoke of the "old-fashioned" way.
 I told him they were all the same,
 And he gave me a sad look.
 "This is what you need," he said,
 And he handed me this book.
 I recognized this familiar book,
 It was a Bible, you see,
 I was about to tell him I already had one,
 And then it all became clear to me.
 I noticed its worn cover,
 Its smudged pages and verses underlined,
 Evidence of study
 Was the difference between his Bible and mine.
 Later that day I reached for my own Bible
 Where I kept it on a shelf,
 He was right, those things he said,
 Because I was reading it for myself.
 Looking back on my life,
 I thought I was never wrong;
 When all I had to do was read,
 It was there in the Bible all along!
 If only I had read,
 But instead I was deceived.
 I was told to have salvation,
 All I had to do was believe!
 But now I know the truth,
 And the truth has set me free.
 Thank God I changed my life
 While I still had the opportunity.
 I'll be ready to give an answer
 To any man's opposing word;
 I'll be ready to give an answer
 To any man's opposing word;
 I'll tell him with the Bible,
 And with a "thus saith the Lord."
 So search the life-giving Scriptures
 And see whether things are so.
 Accept the truth for what it says,
 And plant it in your heart to grow.
 For should judgment come
 And reveal you've been deceived instead,
 Let not your regret be,
 Oh, if only I had read!

Our purpose is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

"To continue speaking the truth in love," "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," "keeping the ordinance as delivered."

"Thus saith the Lord, 'stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where in the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.' (Jer. 6:16) "And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in." (Isa. 58:12).

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NO. 9

APPLYING THE SCRIPTURES

By JOHNNY ELMORE

In the May, 1996 issue of *Gospel Advocate*, brother Stafford North, who is described as professor of Bible and homiletics of OCUSA, Edmond, OK, has an article entitled "Hermeneutics 101." To readers who may not understand the term "hermeneutics," I might give Milton S. Terry's definition: "The science or art of interpretation."

I found the article to be quite good, generally speaking. Stafford North points out that the use of command, example and necessary inference and other principles are "tools by which we apply the Scriptures to our situations." Some have denied that they "interpret" the Scriptures and argue that they take them just as they are, but if we do as the Levites did in the Old Testament with God's approval, we will interpret and apply. Neh. 8:8 states: "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." That is what we do when we interpret and apply. But to get back to the article, North writes:

To make application of a command, however, we must determine its level of specificity... The level of specificity tells me that anything above the level specified is excluded while I am free with options below the level specified... Put another way, above the level of specificity, silence forbids, but below the level of specificity, silence allows... So when God commands unleavened bread on the Lord's table, we are not allowed to substitute something else, but we are free to make or buy the bread and are free to distribute it in various ways. Paul makes it quite clear in 1 Corinthians 11:23 that when he told the Corinthians how to take the Lord's Supper, he excluded any other way of observing it. While there were, undoubtedly, some things on which they had a choice, any choice to change what was delivered about how to observe the Communion was excluded.

Please read that paragraph again. Does it strike you somewhat strange that brother North can say that "God commands unleavened bread on the Lord's Table" when unleavened bread is not specified, but is unable to see that God commands one cup and one loaf in the communion when they are specified? Surely we understand that we must use unleavened bread, but we must make a necessary inference in order to understand it. Since no leaven

could be used during the feast of unleavened bread (Matt. 26:17), we necessarily infer that we must use unleavened bread to follow Jesus' example. But why insist on unleavened bread and then refuse to follow the command to use one cup and one loaf?

Please note the following in Matt. 26:26, 27, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it."

To show that our brethren who employ individual cups and many loaves in one assembly understand this passage, I quote from a book published by *Gospel Advocate*—the same paper used by brother North—entitled *Around The Lord's Table*. Note what brother E.A. Elam writes on p. 9:

Matthew says: "And as they were eating (the passover described in Matt. 26:17-26; Mark 14:12-21; Luke 22:1-16; John 13; and before they had arisen from the table), Jesus took the bread (margin—"a loaf," and blessed... it." Luke and Paul say "gave thanks," which is the same thing. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul all say he "gave thanks," or "blessed," "and brake it." "After supper" he "took a cup"—"the cup"—"and gave thanks," and told all to drink of it. It is absolutely safe to follow this example." (Emphasis mine, J.E.).

Now note what brother T.B. Larimore says in the same book on p. 21:

In Matt. 26:26 we are told that "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples," when he instituted the Lord's Supper. In the margin, in the Revised Version, the word translated "bread" is rendered "loaf," and it is the singular of the word translated "loaves" in the account of the feeding of the "five thousand men, besides the women and children," with the five loaves and two fishes. The one loaf, to represent the one body mangled on the cross, is in perfect harmony with the spirit and purpose of the institution. (Emphasis mine, J.E.).

Gospel Advocate also publishes *The Gospel Advocate Commentary* and brother C.E.W. Dorris writes in his *Commentary on Mark*, p. 330: "And he took a cup,—

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

By BILLY D. DICKINSON

"It's amazing what some people can believe, as long as it's not in the Bible." I'm not sure who the man was who first made that observation, but it is certainly a correct one! In fact, it expresses the disbelief I've often felt as I considered the behavior of people who should know better. From time to time I read of events in the newspaper or hear reports on the radio and television that leave me shaking my head and wondering to myself, "What has happened to us as a society?" When I think seriously about the answer to that question, I am reminded of the words of God's prophet in Hosea 4:6: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge... seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." Yes, this is what has happened to us as a nation. This is why many Americans no longer know the difference between right and wrong; the standard for truth and righteousness, God's word, has been rejected and cast aside.

In this article I want to notice with you some items of interest that demonstrate just how far people have drifted from the word of God. They are items that should provoke in you thoughtful study and consternation. The first item appeared under the caption, "CHRISTIAN NUDISTS HOLD COMING-OUT CONFERENCE" [The News-Star, Monroe/West Monroe, Louisiana, Feb. 26, 1996, P. 1 A]. That's right, you read it correctly. There's no need to rub your eyes or clean your glasses! It seems that there is a nudist colony in North Carolina where people are attempting to take off their clothes to the glory of God. Read it and weep: "Take away the video screen and music and it might be just another Saturday night in a Christian camp ground tradition that predates Billy Graham— except the woman leading the song has no clothes on, her husband wears only a T-shirt and all the others are similarly undressed... Some 40 Christian nudists from around the country stood naked and unashamed before their God at the conference, which ended Sunday with a worship service where ministers both robed and unrobed distributed communion to the nude and nearly nude outdoors underneath a wooden cross."

Oh, the shame of it all! What a disgrace that these so-called "Christian nudists" don't feel the need to cover the shame of their nakedness (Rev. 3:18; Gen. 3:7, 10). What is even worse is that they think their perverted behavior is to the glory of Christ. The article gives this quote from one of the nudists: "The No. 1 goal of this whole thing, ultimately, is to glorify the name of Christ... We feel like we've been Christians for a long time, and this is our next step to get closer to God." The article also states that they describe themselves as "Bible-believing folk" who see "nudity as a path to the divine."

To all of this I say, "Hogwash!" If they are really interested in glorifying the name of Christ, why don't they do it in the way the Lord has authorized and asked them to do it? Why don't they follow the example of Christ Himself? No one was closer to God than Jesus, but He didn't dem-

continued on page eight

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Does Hebrews 12:1 teach that the ancient worthies are looking down upon us and are thus aware of our words and actions? (La.)

Answer: If departed saints are watching the deeds and actions of those of us living on the earth at this time, it is the opinion of this writer that Heb. 12:1 does not so teach. The word translated "witnesses" in the passage cited is (**matures**). According to Vine it means "one who bears witness by his death, denotes one who can or does aver what he has seen or heard or knows. . ." Heb 12:1 (a cloud) of witnesses, here of those mentioned in chapt. 11, those whose lives and actions testified to the worth and effect of faith and whose faith received witness in the scripture." Robertson in his **Word Pictures** p. 432 says "The metaphor refers to the great amphitheatre with the arena for the runners and the tiers upon tiers of seats rising up like a cloud. The (**matures**) here are not mere spectators, but testifiers (witnesses) who testify from their own experience (11:2, 4, 5, 33, 39) to God's fulfilling his promises as shown in chapter 11." In the **Expositors New Testament** Marcus Dods makes some very enlightening points when he says: "Witnesses", persons who by their actions have testified to the worth of faith. The cloud of witnesses are those named and suggested in Chapt. 11; persons whose lives witnessed to the work and triumph of faith, and whose faith was witnessed by the scripture, (11:2,2,5). This cloud is (encompassing) because, as the writer has just shown, look where they will into their history his Hebrew readers see such examples of faith. It is impossible to take (**matures**, witnesses) as equivalent to (spectators). If the idea of "spectator" is present at all, which is very doubtful, it is only introduced by the words **trecho** (run) ...(**agon**) race. The idea is not that they are running in presence of spectators and must therefore run well; but that their people's history being filled with examples of much-enduring but

triumphant faith, they also must approve their lineage by showing a like persistence of faith. "Macknight seems to summarize this view best when he notes that even though the writer has used the figure of the Greek games to show how the great worthies mentioned in chapter eleven were observing how these Hebrews were acquitting themselves in the Christian race, the figure is not intended "to insinuate that the saints in the other world know what we are doing in this; but to teach us to think of them often, that by recollection of their trials and virtues we may stir ourselves up to greater diligence in our Christian course." Hence, the idea seems to be that there were certain ancient worthies who were faithful to God, and their record is a witness of God's faithfulness to them. By faith they endured to the utmost, and God gave them strength according to their day. Their testimony should, therefore, encourage us to be faithful at all times and even to the utmost as were they. Other writers interpreting the expression to be a figurative one that carries the meaning that we ought to act as if they (the worthies) were in sight are Barnes, Lenski and Cargill as quoted by Coffman. On the other hand there are a number of other writers who hold the position that these ancient worthies are actually looking down upon us and beholding our actions and deeds in the world today. They contend that the word translated "witnesses" is used to refer to spectators. Among them Alford, Milligan, Wescott, Dummelow, and Bruce. It seems to this writer, however, that the weight of evidence is against such an interpretation. Of those writers who hold to the view that (**matures**) refers to spectators, most if not all agree that the word can and does have other meanings. Therefore, to conclude from this verse that departed saints are looking down upon us and know all that we do and say, is to conclude something that is not clearly taught. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 10811 Springfield, Mo. 65808)

Judgment

By WILLIAM L. ST. JOHN

Does it surprise you to learn that Jesus commanded his disciples to judge? Most people have read enough of the Bible, and particularly the New Testament, to know that Jesus taught "Judge not, that ye be not judged" in the sermon on the mount (Matthew 7:1). But with far too many, their study of the Scriptures must have stopped soon after that. Had they continued in their study of God's word, they would have learned that Jesus also said, "Judge not according to the appearance, but JUDGE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT" (John 7:24). Is this a contradiction? Certainly not. How then can we reconcile these verses with the ideas that people have against judging others? Such an attempt more often than not is hopeless, for men are often found believing and practicing things that the Scriptures do not teach. The Scriptures teach that men are to judge

righteous judgment; men teach that we are not to judge righteous judgment; men teach that we are not to judge at all. A thorough study of these verses and others will show that God condemns judgements that are not based on His word.

Matthew 7:1 does not condemn judgment: it condemns unjust judgement. Please notice that verses 2 through 5 explain the kind of judging that is condemned. It is clear that Jesus is referring to hypocritical judgement. We are not to condemn another for a mote or splinter in his eye while we ourselves have a beam or log in our own eye. Though it may be difficult to picture someone with a log in their eye trying to remove a splinter from someone else's eye, that is nonetheless the picture of a person making hypocritical judgements. Some have thought this to mean

that we may only make judgements when we are sinless or perfect. And since the Scriptures teach that there is none without sin (Romans 3:23), the conclusion is drawn that all judgements made by men are wrong. However, the men that Jesus commanded to make righteous judgments were not perfect or sinless men; therefore we must conclude that Jesus is not condemning all judging. Note also that the people were instructed to remove the beam or log from their own eye, and then they could see clearly to remove the mote or splinter from their brother's eye. In Luke 12:56-57, Jesus is again referring to hypocrites and asks the people why they were making judgements; but, we dare not conclude that because hypocritical judgement is condemned, all judging is condemned. Jesus also condemned false worship (Matt. 15:9), but that does not mean that all worship is condemned (John 4:23-24).

Jesus said, "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear. I judge: and my judgement is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30). Here is righteous judgement; here is judgement that is just. Jesus taught that his disciples are to judge righteous and this is the only way that such judgement can occur; we must not seek our own will, but the will of the Father in heaven. The word of God is the first and final authority in all religious matters. The apostle Paul declared, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11). The prophet Isaiah said, "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). When men make judgments based upon the word of God, they are not violating Matthew 7:1. But any judgment that is not based on a "thus saith the Lord" cannot be righteous judgment.

All people must make judgments about what they are going to do or not do. Have you ever wondered why people make foolish judgments? Why do intelligent men and women choose to do foolish things, all the while affirming that what they are doing is normal and right and good? Consider the two women in the 6th chapter of 2nd Kings. There was a very severe famine in Samaria and because of the severity of the famine these two women did a very foolish and wicked thing. The Scriptures reveal that one of the women had said to the other, "Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow" (2 Kings 6:28). The two women boiled and ate the woman's son, but then the other refused to give her son. Why had these women conspired to do such a wicked thing? How is it that they could consider eating their children in the same way that we might consider eating a loaf of bread? Notice too that the woman who had given her son was so caught up in this matter that she even brought it before the king. Why couldn't these women see the wickedness of their deed? Their judgment was perverted by the events that had happened. Such a perversion of judgment is not unusual. People often let circumstances pervert their judgment. But does this make something as wicked as murder acceptable? Does it make it right? Certainly not.

We have seen that difficult circumstances can cause our judgement to be perverted. What other things can pervert judgement? Most people are aware that alcohol affects a

person's ability to drive a car and their ability to make decisions or judgements; but, are you aware that the Scriptures teach that alcohol affects a person's ability to make proper judgements? In Proverbs 31:4-5, King Lemuel was warned, "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgement of any of the afflicted." The use of strong drink, or even of wine will cause you to forget the law of God; your ability to make righteous judgments will be destroyed.

Much to their sorrow, two of the sons of Aaron found this to be true. In Leviticus 10:1-2, the Scriptures record, "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord." Notice carefully in Leviticus 10:9-10, the warning that was given after this occurred. "Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die; it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: And that ye may not put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean." The use of strong drink or wine would so affect their judgement that they would be unable to tell the difference between holy and unholy. It has often been said, "You cannot reason with a drunk." Such is certainly the case, as they have lost their ability to make proper judgements.

Money or wealth can affect a person's judgment. The Lord commanded the children of Israel, "Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift; for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous" (Deut. 16:19). In Samuel 8:3, the Scriptures again give us a sad example of the perversion of judgment. It is recorded that the sons of Samuel "walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took brides, and perverted judgments." Lucre is dishonest gain. Because of their covetousness, these men turned aside and judgment was perverted.

The apostle Paul warned Timothy, "the love of money is the root of all evil; which while coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Tim. 6:10). Many religious errors have come about because men loved money. Have you ever wondered why some religious organizations collect money every time they meet? The Scriptures authorize the church to take up a collection from the members on the first day of the week (I Corinthians 16:1-2) and to partake of the Lord's supper or communion on the first day of the week (I Cor. 10:16 and Acts 20:7). Why is it that some organizations take the Lord's supper less often (yearly, quarterly, etc.) and take up a collection more often (twice a week, every service, etc.)? Is it possible that money have perverted their judgment? Some Christians even forsake the assembly to work on the Lord's day (Hebrews 10:25) rather than risk losing their jobs (Matthew 6:33).

The desire for power and fame also perverts judgment. In Luke 12:21-23, the beloved physician Luke records,

"And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of God, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory; and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost." Because King Herod accepted the blasphemous praise of the people and did not rebuke them, he died.

Is it not true that a desire for acceptance has caused many to pervert judgment and fail to obey the truth? Many of the chief rulers believed on Jesus, but would not confess him because they loved the praise of men (John 12:42-43). There are many people today who refuse to obey the gospel, who refuse to obey God's commands because of what other people would think or say about them. Even some Christians bring shame to the name of Christ because they will not live godly. They walk and talk and dress like the world because they do not want to be mocked or to be considered different from others. Dear friends, do not allow the desire to be accepted of others cause you to be rejected of God.

Human wisdom and knowledge can also cause judgment to be perverted. The prophet Isaiah warned, "For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness; thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee: and thou has said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me" (Isaiah 47:10). There is a vast difference between the knowledge of God and the knowledge of men. Notice this contrast between the wisdom of men and the wisdom of God: "But, if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish... But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:14-17)

Without the knowledge of God, people are destroyed (Hosea 4:6). Surely we have all heard the say, "He is too smart for his own good." Does this mean that there is a premium on being ignorant? Certainly not. It merely points out that human knowledge is not always beneficial, and this is certainly true when it comes to spiritual matters. When God gives us a command or an example of how something is to be done, we must accept His wisdom in giving it. Just because we may not understand why, does not mean that it is not best for us. Consider the example of the manna in the Old Testament. In Exodus 16, this wonderful miracle of the manna is recorded. While Israel was wondering for forty years in the wilderness. God fed them with manna or bread. Every morning for six days the manna was sent and on the seventh day none would be found. Notice the foolish reasoning or judgment of some of the Israelites. They were told to gather according to their need (Exodus 16:16-18), and one was to be left over to he following morning. They were to trust that God would send more; however, some foolishly disobeyed. It is recorded, "Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them"

(Exodus 16:20).

On the sixth day, they were to gather twice as much. What a test of faith! They knew what leaving it overnight would do; it would spoil and stink. But when they obeyed, it did not spoil (Ex. 16:24). But again, some of the people disobeyed: "And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none" (Ex. 16:27). A pot of manna was also gathered and put in the ark of the covenant as a reminder of how God had fed them.

Human reasoning failed, Divine wisdom prevailed. It would be so wonderful if people today could learn this lesson and trust in the way that God has ordained things. Too often we allow our human reasoning to pervert and destroy the beauty of God's commandments. Consider the following examples:

Singing - God commanded the church to sing and make melody in their hearts to the Lord (Eph. 5:19). Human reasoning enters in and demands mechanical instruments of music because "it makes it easier to sing." Instruments of music do not make it easier to sing, they destroy the beauty of singing and violets the command and example that God has given.

Giving - As we have already noticed, God commanded the church to take up a collection on the first day of the week. Enter human reasoning and preachers get on the radio and television begging for money, religious organizations begin to take up collections at every service, and money that was to be used to spread the gospel and help the poor and needy is used for recreational purposes. Thus the beauty and simplicity of God's arrangement is destroyed.

Communion - In the Lord's supper, Jesus took one loaf and one cup with fruit of the vine. Human reasoning enters and men are no longer content with the beauty and simplicity that God's wisdom and omniscience has ordained. We are told that one cup is unsanitary and that individual communion cups are better. Remember now dear friends, it was Jesus, the same one who created all the world and everything in it (John 1:1-3, Hebrews 1:2); it was Jesus, the same one who created every atom and every microbe; it was Jesus, the only begotten Son of God who gave himself for our sins; it was Jesus who instituted the Lord's supper the way he wanted it - with one loaf and one cup of fruit of the vine. But human reasoning enters and the beauty and significance of the Lord's supper is destroyed.

One loaf of unleavened bread represents the one pure and unblemished body of Christ (I Corinthians 10:16-17, 11:24). One cup represents the one New Testament ratified and paid for by the blood of Christ (Luke 22:20, I Cor. 11:25). Fruit of the vine represents the wondrous blood of Christ (Matt 26:26, Mark 14:23-24), freely shed to purchase the church (Acts 20:28), ratify the New Testament (Hebrews 9:16-17), and obtain the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28, Heb. 9:22). But what do many loaves, many cups, and fermented wine represent? They represent a divided body (John 19:33-36), they represent many testaments, many gospels (Galations 1:809), they

represent sorrow and woe (Proverbs 23:29-32). Those who follow such human reasoning plainly declare their lack of faith.

Baptism - Divine wisdom has decreed that baptism, that is, immersion in water is necessary for the remission of sins (Romans 6:3-4, Acts 2:38, 22:16, I Peter 3:21, Mark 16:16). But human reasoning sets this aside. Human reasoning or judgment tells us that water has nothing to do with the forgiveness of sins or that sprinkling is just as good as immersion.

Marriage - Originated in divine wisdom and designed to promote human happiness and holiness (Genesis 2:18), marriage is the foundation of home life and social order. But let human reasoning enter, and adultery, fornication, divorce, and even homosexuality are said to be acceptable (See Romans 1:21-27, 7:2-3).

The Church - Christ established His church (Matthew 16:18). It was the foreordained plan of God (Ephesians 3:4-11). It was and is God's plan to have but one church (Eph. 1:22-23, cf. 4:4; I Cor. 12:20) with no divisions (I Cor. 1:10). With human reasoning, we are told that it is a wonderful thing to have all the denominations and creeds, that we should be "thankful for all the religious organizations." Thus the beautiful plan of God is corrupted and God's will is violated.

Men and Women's Hair - God has commanded that women have long hair and that men are not to have long hair (I Cor. 11:1-16). To transgress the law of God brings shame (I Cor. 11:6 & 14). Human reasoning enters and we are told that this was only a local custom, limited to the city of Corinth. Please notice that the inspired apostle Paul states that the churches did not recognize any other cus-

tom concerning this (I Cor. 11:16). Was it only a local custom that God was the head of Christ and that Christ was the head of man??? (I Cor. 11:3). Failure to obey this command is a clear rejection of the authority of God.

Human reasoning told the children of Israel that there would be manna on the seventh day - but there was none. Human reasoning told the children of Israel that they should keep some manna until the next day - but it spoiled, bred worms and stank. Human reasoning told the children of Israel that collecting twice as much as on the sixth day and leaving some over for the seventh would cause it to spoil and stink - but it did not spoil. What a vast difference there is between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of men. As long as men continue to judge by appearance and fail to judge righteously, they will continue to make foolish decisions and violate the will of God.

Human reasoning has sought to justify virtually every sin that has ever been committed. Human reasoning has sought and continues to seek to justify adultery, fornication, idolatry, murder, drunkenness, lying, stealing, false worship and a host of other sins. Human reasoning led the two women to decide to boil and eat their children. The wise man Solomon warned, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord" (Proverbs 17:15). Isn't it time for us to have faith in the God of heaven? Isn't it time for us to accept the command of Jesus just as he gave them? Long, long ago, God told the prophet Isaiah: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9).

"Baptism" Part 1

By DOUG HAWKINS

In religion, there is not a Bible subject more misunderstood or distorted than the one we presently have under consideration. Generally speaking, modern pulpits completely ignore the role of baptism in man's salvation, forcing those who understand it to place more emphasis on it than actually necessary. Baptism actually plays no greater part in man's redemption than faith and repentance, but because denominations minimize and "push aside" the command to be baptized, we, who understand the necessity of it, are often compelled to exalt and overemphasize it. In three separate articles over the course of several months, I would like to note the following things: in this piece, the five assorted baptisms recorded in the New Testament with an explanation as to why one now applies to us; in part two, how this one baptism is accomplished; and finally, in part three, baptism's design and purpose in God's eternal scheme of redemption. Let's begin with part one.

FIVE BAPTISMS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the New Testament, we read of at least five different baptisms: Moses' baptism (I Cor. 10:1-3), John's baptism (Mk. 1:4), the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost (Mt. 3:11), and finally of Christ commanding his apostles to

teach and baptize believers among all nations (Mt. 28:19,20). With so many baptisms mentioned in the scriptures, someone may initially be confused and uncertain as to which one the Bible refers to at any given instance.

NOW ONLY ONE BAPTISM

Fortunately, this dilemma is unlikely if a person understands that of the five baptisms just listed only one now applies to us. The apostle Paul concisely states in Ephesians 4:5 "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." This refers to the "one baptism" that applies to all believers, of all ages, of every nation alike. The question is then: to which baptism does the apostle refer?

WHICH BAPTISM?

Which baptism is the one in Ephesians 4:5, and if there is only one, which is or was the purpose of the others? Let's quickly observe them all: 1) First of all, the baptism of Moses was a shadow of something to come in the new testament. Today, we cannot be baptized "unto Moses in the cloud and the sea." (Read I Corinthians 10:1-3) Based on that passage, I know this cannot be the "one baptism" to which Paul referred. 2) Secondly, the baptism of John

prepared the Jews for the coming Christ. Too, like unto Moses, we cannot be baptized unto John for salvation. (Read Matthew 3:1-6 and Acts 19:1-8) Knowing nothing more than John's baptism from Apollos, the Ephesians in Acts 19 were rebaptized by Paul in the name of Christ. I know "John's baptism" is not the one in Ephesians 4. After it serve its preliminary purpose, the baptism of John was divinely discontinued. 3) Thirdly, the baptism of fire stated in Matthew 3:11 symbolizes eternal punishment. No one, who understands John's meaning, truly desires the baptism of "unquenchable fire." (Read Matthew 3:12) The passage portends the event of Christ separating the wheat from the chaff, which is a picture of the future judgment. It cannot be the "one baptism." 4) Fourthly, the baptism of the Holy ghost was a special event in the gospel age that will forever remain unparalleled. It came upon the apostles in Acts 2 and then on the house of Cornelius in Acts 10. It was a baptism solely of promise. In other words, the baptism of the Holy Spirit was given by promise, limited in scope to a select group of people - namely the apostles and the house of Cornelius - and served a particular function in each case. (Read Acts 1:1-8, 2:1-4; 10:44-48) As for all the generations following, "Holy Spirit" baptism is impossible because it has not been promised to any of us. Therefore, it too cannot be the "one baptism" that Paul referred to. 5) Finally, Christ commanded his apostles to preach the gospel to all nations and baptize the believers in his name. He said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Read Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:46,47) Unlike the others, this baptism applies to all men alike (every creature), regardless of race, gender, education, or social standing. This, undoubtedly, IS the "one baptism" Paul alludes to in Ephesians 4. It is salvation or baptism "in the name of Christ" or by the authority of Christ. As evidence, I want to note two examples of conversion with you in the book of Acts.

EXAMPLES IN ACTS

To begin, I would like for you to note the words of Christ in Luke 24:47, where he says, "...repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem. Underscore these words in your mind. As instructed, the apostles remained assembled in Jerusalem awaiting Christ's promise of the Holy Spirit (Ac. 1:8). As promised, the apostles received the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Ac. 2:1-4), and Peter, as appointed by the Lord, stood amidst the vast assembly and proclaimed the significance of Christ's death, burial and resurrection (Ac. 2:22-36). Hearing Peter's moral indictment, the people's hearts were pierced, and they remorsefully asked what must we do (Ac. 2:37)? Recalling the great commission through divine inspiration, Peter replied (Ac. 2:38), "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." Examine the answer very closely. The apostles were ordered to preach repentance and remission of sins in the name of Christ. In complete harmony with the Lord's sacred charge. Peter commanded the hearers to be baptized. Is that what Christ told his apostles? Yes. What baptism was Peter referring to? Moses? John? Fire? Holy Spirit?

The same baptism Christ constituted when he said "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Again, the baptism to be administered upon believers is by the authority of Christ, and must be the "one baptism" Paul endorsed in Ephesians 4:5.

Furthermore, note the record of conversion found in Acts 10, the gospel's maiden voyage among the Gentiles (Gentile means "other nation") Peter was led to the House of Cornelius, after seeing the vision of the unclean animals. Still puzzled by the scenes of his trance and unsure of the events to follow, he reluctantly accompanied Cornelius' couriers back to Cornelius' home. Upon his arrival, Cornelius told of the angel that appeared to him with specific instruction to call for Peter. Immediately, Peter perceived that God is not a respecter of persons, but "...in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (Acts 10:35) Understanding the vision, the purpose, and the occasion more clearly, Peter preached to these Gentiles the good news of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. To his surprise, the Holy Spirit came upon these Gentiles (Ac. 10:44) as a sign of God's acceptance of all men. Acts 11:15-18 says:

"And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

At the conclusion of his heart-rending sermon, Peter extended the gospel invitation by saying in Acts 10:47-48:

"Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."

The only baptism relevant to our salvation today is in the name or by the authority of Jesus Christ. Peter said in Acts 4:12 there is salvation in no other name under heaven. When you read of baptism in connection with salvation in the New Testament, you can know it refers to the "one baptism" of Ephesians 4. Though men may say that we are to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire, the Bible irrefutably teaches that there is only "one baptism", and it is indubitably by the authority of Jesus Christ. In the next issue, we will notice how to accomplish this "one baptism."

More later.

Applying The Scriptures

continued from page 1

'A cup' is one, not two nor a dozen."

For many years, **Gospel Advocate** published **The Christian System**, by Alexander Campbell. Note Campbell on p. 269:

On the Lord's table there is of necessity, but one loaf... As there is but one literal body, and but one mystical or

figurative body having many members; so there must be but one loaf. The apostle insists upon this, "Because there is one loaf, we, the many, are one body; for we are all partakers of that one loaf." (Emphasis mine, J.E.).

The wide and rapid digressions of some of the more liberal brethren among those who employ individual cups and many loaves have caused the more conservative among them to retreat to safer ground; thence, their insistence upon

the time-honored and reasonable demand for command, example and necessary inference for biblical authority. May God help them to see that the same rationale by which brother North reached his conclusions about unleavened bread, if applied, will demand that they also contend for one cup and one loaf of that unleavened bread in one assembly.

Items Of Interest

continued from page 2

onstrate it by shedding His clothes. Instead, when Christ liberated a man from demon possession, the Bible says in Luke 8:35 that the people found the man "clothed, and in his right mind." Yes, under the control of demons the man wore no clothes (Luke 8:27); but under Christ's control and influence the man clothed himself. While deluded souls may view "nudity as a path to the divine," the Bible pictures it as being under satanic influence.

Also, since these nudists describe themselves as "Bible-believing folk," let them start preaching and practicing the words of Paul in 1 Tim. 2:9-10: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array. But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." That's Bible, isn't it? Paul says that women profess godliness—indeed, they glorify Christ—when they adorn themselves in modest apparel!

The second item of interest appeared under the caption, "COMMUNION TO GO! COMPANY MAKES CEREMONY CONVENIENT" [The News-Star, Monroe/West Monroe, Louisiana, April 6, 1996, P. 1 B]. Many religious people, even some members of the Lord's church, are more concerned with convenience than they are with the scripturalness of a practice. Well, there is now a Chicago company that is selling what they call "all-in-one-cups," which look like containers of coffee creamer. The article explains: "The company sells the Celebration Cups for 12 to 14 cents each. At a rate of 900 a minute, a machine forms the cup out of plastic, fills it with hot juice or wine, seals it, drops a wafer on top and adds a second seal." It seems that some churches are finding this "innovation" (a word the article itself uses) a welcomed convenience, while others are condemning it as "fast-food religion." One man is quoted as saying, "What they're doing here is selling speed and convenience. That's just become an integral part of our society." However, some are rejecting this innovation because they have a concern that "the cups may take away from the community communion."

Isn't it interesting that that's exactly what we have argued for years in our opposition to individual communion cups? Yes, communion is a joint participation; it is a sharing together of the body and the blood of the Lord as each of the communicants "eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (1 Cor. 11:28). Indeed, individual cups take away from the community aspect of communion and destroy

the unity that is symbolized by the use of one loaf and one cup in the communion.

Also, I found another interesting point in this article. One man is quoted as saying that he preferred this innovation because "it cuts the distribution time at least in half." He went on to say that "it used take eight to ten hours to prepare communion for 2,000 people." The point I want to make is this: Brethren have often tried to justify individual cups by bringing up large assemblies; they would have us to believe that if a large church uses individual cups this clears up all the inconveniences that one cup demands. However, according to the man quoted in this article, even with individual cups it takes quite a while to prepare communion for 2,000 people. So how about it brethren? Since you are more concerned with convenience than you are with the scripturalness of your practice — and you've tossed out the Bible pattern anyway for the scriptural observance of the Lord's supper — why not be consistent and accept these "all-in-one cups"? I predict that some churches of Christ will, if they haven't already! After all, when we throw the Bible aside there is no stopping point.

The last item of interest appeared under the caption, "INFANT KILLINGS SPARK NEW LOOK AT EUTHANASIA" [The News-Star, Monroe/West Monroe, Louisiana, Dec. 6, 1995, P. 4 A]. The article begins: "Amsterdam, Netherlands — The mercy killing of two newborns with severe birth defects has provoked a new round of soul-searching in a nation that has the industrialized world's most permissive adult euthanasia policy." Just as abortion has received wide acceptance in our society, euthanasia is more and more becoming an accepted practice. People with incurable diseases are being encouraged to commit suicide with doctors even aiding them in some cases. But we need to see where such godless conduct leads. The next logical step leads to the "mercy killing" of newborns with birth defects, the mentally retarded, and even the aged. If it is morally right to help the terminally ill to commit suicide, who's to say that it is morally wrong to end the lives of those who cannot make that decision for themselves? The article gives this quote by Dr. Karel Gunning: "This is exactly what we have always predicted. I think the rule is this: Once you have accepted killing as a solution for one problem, then tomorrow you have 100 problems for which killing might be the solution." When a society no longer holds life as sacred and something to be protected, that society is headed for self-destruction. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." — 215 Forest Hills Dr., West Monroe, LA 71291

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

GIBSON-HOWARD- On July 6, 1996, it was my good pleasure to officiate at the ceremony in Norman, OK uniting Todd Gibson and Johanna Howard in marriage. Todd is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Terry Gibson of Oklahoma City, and Johanna is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Howard of Norman, OK. Johanna is my great-niece and is special to me for that reason. The wedding was one of the most beautiful I have ever witnessed and best of all, these two young Christians have expressed to me in studies that their greatest desire is to have a happy, successful Christian home. We pray for them the richest of God's blessings.—Johnny Elmore

OUR DEPARTED

DEATHERAGE—Alfred F. Deatherage was born June 26, 1912 in Asher, Oklahoma. He passed away July 1st, 1996 in Oklahoma City at the age of 84. He is survived by two daughters, Patty and Donnice, a son, Frank, five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Ardelia, his loving wife, preceded him in death May 3, 1996. Alfred and Ardelia were members of the church at Davis, Oklahoma. They resided in Davis for several years until illness caused them to move in with their son, Frank, in Oklahoma City. I worked with the church in Davis in 1977 and became acquainted with them at that time. Their home was always open to company, and I took advantage of their hospitality on several occasions. Alfred had a dry sense of humor and we all appreciated that. 1996 has been difficult for Alfred's children. They have lost their father and mother, and a sister-in-law as well. We should remember them in our prayers. A crowd of his family, brethren, and friends gathered to pay respects. The writer conducted the service.—Doug Edwards

BYRD—Wanda Lou Byrd, 55, of Briar died Wednesday, July 10, 1996, at St. Bernard's Hospital in Jonesboro, Ark. Mrs. Byrd was born April 17, 1941, in Pine, Mo. A lifelong resident of Ripley County, she was a member of the Church of Christ. On July 14, 1963, she married George Byrd in Briar. He survives. Survivors include two brothers, Edwin W. Ball and Bob Ball, both of Doniphan. Visitation and the funeral were Saturday, July 13 at Edwards Funeral Home in Doniphan followed by a funeral at 1:30 p.m. with Jerry Richardson officiating. Burial was in Pine Cemetery.

FISHER—It is with great earthly sadness and heavenly joy that we chronicle the passing of Bro. Marvin Fisher of the El Cajon Congregation in San Diego, CA. Marvin was born in Texas on May 26, 1921 and passed away on July 26, 1996. Marvin leaves behind his devoted wife of 56 years, Johnny and one son, Walt Fisher of San



Diego. Marvin also raised from a very young age his niece and nephews, Janet Colera, Duane and Wesley Phares. There were also three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Two brothers, William Burt and Alvis, reside in Texas. Bro. Fisher was ordained a minister in 1956. Marvin also served as an elder for approximately 18 years. Those who have known Marvin over the years remember him as a man of tremendous faith, who always had an optimistic and enthusiastic approach to life and serving the Lord. He was a rock in the San Diego area churches for almost 50 years. He was certainly a man of unusual devotion and loved the church dearly. All of us were inspired by Bro. Marvin's courage and grace as he fought his battle with cancer. I have never witnessed more loving care directed towards a man than Marvin's family and friends showered upon him. His brother-in-law, J.W. Jones, was at Marvin's side almost constantly for the last 7 weeks of his struggle. As the Scriptures state he was truly an elder worthy of double honor. His friendliness, wisdom, knowledge, patient guidance, and pastoral care will be sorely missed. The writer along with Fred Lay, Richard Lechner, Elias Rodriguez, and Ron Jordan were privileged to share in this final earthly salute to this fallen soldier. As David said about Abner in (II Sam. 3:38) "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel."—Larry Lay.

FLOYD—Brother Lowell Floyd crossed the river of death at 1:34 p.m. Sunday, July 28, 1996. He had lingered for several months suffering from cancer. During this time, his faith was strong and he looked forward with great anticipation to coming of the boatman. He had no fear of death, feeling that he had made proper preparations. He will be missed in the church here in Springfield. He was the kind of person on whom you could always depend. Ever ready to help, encourage, and do his part. Lowell had just had his sixty-ninth birthday. His wife of forty-five years, Vivian, survives. She cared for him during his illness and no doubt the quality of that care accounting for his living as long as he did. He is also survived by his son Larry and wife Gayla, a son, Gary, three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. A large crowd gathered at the Greenlawn Funeral Home for the final service. Singers from this area sung the songs of Zion that he loved so well, and the writer attempted to speak words of comfort and warning. --Ronny F. Wade

A NEW EVANGELIST IN RUSSIA

The congregation in Corsicana, Texas has asked Constantin (Kostya) Alexseev of Tambov, Russia to become a full time evangelist, and he has agreed to do so. Kostya, age 32, is a former professor of English at a university in Tambov. He is married to Lena, also a teacher of English, and has two children, Daniel, 10, and



Sasha, 2.

Kostya and Lena first heard the gospel in the summer of 1993, the year the church began in Tambov. When we met them, they were atheists. In was 1994 before they obeyed. During the time between our first meeting and their obedience, Kostya studied the Bible diligently.

Kostya has been teaching in Tambov and Michurinsk and has been working with those who have fallen away and with problems that develop in the congregations. He is highly respected by the Russian brethren and will be much help to them.

Kostya has been my coordinator and translator for the last three years and has learned much from this experience. For the last two years, we have lived together during the entire trip. This gave us much time to study the Bible and to discuss evangelistic work. This year I concentrated on training him as an evangelist.

Kostya is highly intelligent and well educated. He is a man with integrity and high moral values. He is a talented man and will work well with people.

He will work with the Tambov and Michurinsk congregations and will do the research to determine where we will start a new congregation next summer.--Jimmy Vannoy

FALL GOSPEL MEETING

Covington County Church of Christ, Collins, Mississippi will hold their Fall Gospel Meeting Sept. 25-29, conducted by: Kevin Presley, weekdays 7:30 p.m. and Lord's Day: 10:30 and 1:30.

1996 NEW YEAR'S GOSPEL MEETING

Covington County Church of Christ, Collins, Mississippi will hold their 1996 New Year's Gospel Meeting conducted by: Floyd Harris, Jr., December 27-31. Night services are at 7:30 p.m. and Lord's Day: 10:30 and 6:00.

*For pre-arranged hotel discounts contact Hampton Inn in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Phone: (601) 264-8080.



Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808, August 1_ During July we held meetings at West Chester, Oh. where one was baptized and three confessed faults, and Fairview in La., where one was baptized and one returned to the church who had fallen away. Both the meetings were enjoyable and brethren in both places had a mind to work. It is always good to return to places where one has worked before. Such reunions remind us of the great day when all God's people shall be gathered home on fairer fields and in brighter climes. The Lord willing we go next

to Napoleon, Al. August 4-11, Lowery, Al. Aug. 12-18, Columbus, Oh. Aug. 23-25, Sept. 8-15 Miami, Ok., Sept. 20-22 West Plains, Mo. and Ada, Ok. Sept. 27-Oct. 6. If you can attend any of these meetings, your presence would be welcome. May the Lord bless all who labor for Him.

Bennie Cryer, 2340 Sanguinetti Ln., Sp. 104, Stockton, Ca. 95205, Aug. 9_ The church here in Stockton continues to do well. We are looking forward to hosting the meeting for the west coast Labor Day weekend. By the time you read this, Lord willing, it will be history. In addition to working with the church in Stockton I have been preaching at some of the surrounding congregations. My plans are to work with the Atwater congregation in a meeting Oct. 4-13, the Fortuna congregation Oct. 25-27, and the 64th St. congregation in Sacramento Nov. 15-17. I appreciate the good articles being printed in the **Old Paths Advocate**. Please note the change in my address. May the Lord bless all of you.

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, Aug. 5_ I enjoyed being at Cleburne, TX July 10-14 and associating with Melvin Blalock and others. The congregation is doing well and I loved the unique place of worship. We had some very good crowds. I was at Tulsa July 21 and enjoyed visiting with Joe Freeman and others. We had a great fourth Sunday singing in Ardmore July 28. Matt Trent has been visiting us since June and we have studied together some. He has kept several appointments in the area. I will be at Andrews, TX beginning Wednesday night. Other meetings this year include Raleigh, NC, Aug. 21-23, Walnut Grove, KY Oct. 5-13, Fair Oaks, CA Nov. 1-10, and Burkhardt, MO Nov. 27-Dec. 1.

Bruce Roebuck, P.O. Box 184, Wynnewood, OK 73098, Aug. 10_ This year we have enjoyed meetings in Greenville, SC, Bedford, IN, Beatyville, KY and Walnut Grove, KY. The meeting in Walnut Grove closed with three confessions, three restorations, and one baptism. As always the brethren put us up in fine fashion. The work here at home has continued well also. In recent weeks we've had a baptism. There is a young man here who desires to teach and we've been working with him as well. We continue to have a number of studies each week. In September, if the Lord wills, we plan a mission meeting in a rural community about twelve miles down the road. Our last meeting of the year is scheduled for September 15-22 in Geary, OK. This meeting is for the Watonga, OK congregation. I look forward to preaching "night about" with Kevin Presley. We are expecting our second child now and anticipation is running high. Please remember us in your prayers.

Jeff Thompson, 1859 County Road 644, Roanoke, AL 36274, (334) 885-6203. Please make note of our new address and telephone number. Last fall we moved from West Virginia to Alabama and are now worshiping with the congregation meeting at Napoleon, AL. The congregation here is doing well. Our annual spring meeting with Lynwood

Smith, May 5-12 was a big success. Four souls were baptized into Christ and one made a confession of faults. We here at Napoleon are very thankful for Lynwood, his work, and the good he has done here in the past and continues to do! At the present time, we are looking forward to our meeting with Ronnie Wade, August 4-11. Please come and be with us if you can. I just returned home from a meeting with the Hilltop congregation in Liberty, KY. In spite of inclement weather that produced thunderstorms and flash floods, the meeting was well received during the meeting; one was baptized into Christ and one made a confession of faults. During the meeting, I stayed in the home of Les and Mary Ann Russell and as usual, the hospitality of the Hilltop congregation was unsurpassed. God bless his children everywhere.

Miles King, Rt. 1, Box 115, Scotland, AR 72141_ We had a good meeting at Scotland the last part of June with Terry Baze doing the preaching. There was one baptism and one confession of fault. I have had a nice trip to Texas preaching at McGregor and San Antonio (Glendora Ave.) and it was good to hear Greg Gay at Irving, Allen Bailey at San Antonio (Vance-Jackson) and Jerry Dickinson at Tyler. Enroute home I went by Fairview, LA and heard Ronny Wade, who was "running" a meeting. Please keep praying for Bro. Billy Orten. I visited with him and he is doing better. I'm looking forward to some short meetings this month at Grassy Fork in the Smokey Mountains and then back to Memphis, Tennessee (Aug. 7-11). Meetings in September are Chouteau, Ok. (Sept. 4th thru 8th) and Powe, Mo. (Sept. 20-22). So many are sick and it is hard to mention everyone, but I was so glad to see Mark Bailey doing better and able to attend the Irving meeting. I'm so concerned about Bro. Gary Weaver. He needs your continual prayer.

Douglas T. Hawkins, HCR 3 Box 203-C, Rocky Mount, Mo. 65072. Since last writing to the OPA we have had the privilege to be in several places for meetings. We have enjoyed them all immensely and hope the congregations were benefited as well. In Auburn, Ca. the meeting closed with one confession of fault. During the meeting we enjoyed the company of several gospel preachers. From Auburn we went to Covina, where we took delight in Bro. Don McCord and all the brethren at Covina. The meeting in Covina closed with two confessions of fault and prospects of outside interest. After Covina we were at Mt. Home, Ark. in the company of Brett Hickey and his family. Enough good cannot be said about their efforts in that area. The meeting closed with five confessions of fault. As of late, we just returned home from Harrodsburg, In. It was wonderful to get to know the brethren there. We were privileged to have preaching brethren Walter Hunter, Greg Jordan, and Jimmy Cating at several services throughout the meeting. Our tent meetings this summer at home in Missouri have proved useful in generating some interest and developing new leads in the areas where we have conducted them. Outside interest has been exhibited at both meetings thus far. We look forward to the others. Lord

willing, Joe Hisle will hold our meeting in Brumley Sept. 8-15. We look forward to efforts at Blue Springs, Ky. (Sept. 29-Oct. 6) and Brundage Lane in Bakersfield, Ca. (Oct. 13-20). We solicit your prayers. God bless the faithful.

Kevin W. Presley, P.O. Box 2398, Ada, Oklahoma, 78421, (401) 436-1331, August 10, 1996_ My meeting at Earlytown, AL was a real pleasure. The meeting closed with 2 baptisms and 17 confessions of fault. I enjoyed the good ole' southern hospitality of Larry and June Broxson. It was my first meeting in the area and the good people there already occupy a special place in my heart. I look forward to being with them again in the future. From there I went to Mt. Home, AR for a short meeting. Bro. Brett Hickey has done an outstanding work with the church there. They are really going to miss him after he moves back to California. I enjoyed the meeting and hope that good was the result. Several disgressives attended. I enjoyed staying with Daryl and Lucy Haun. My thanks to Bro. Jimmie Smith and his family for supporting the meeting. I was glad to have Bro. Brian Osburn with me in my meetings this summer. He is from Bakersfield, CA and is getting ready to enter his first year of college. He aspires to preach the gospel in the future. He was a real asset to the meetings and it was a pleasure getting to know him better. I have been around home for a few weeks. I plan on taking in the Labor Day meeting. at Chapel Grove, TN, and then I have meetings in Oklahoma and Mississippi in September. We at Ada are looking forward to Bro. Ronny Wade being here Sept. 29-Oct. 6. May God bless His church!

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539_ Since returning from Oklahoma we have enjoyed preaching at home as well as the Lodi congregation. It was the Lodi church who ordained me to preach about 1967. In the years since, we have enjoyed a good relationship with them and also held a number of meetings. They have, for several years, generously paid for the rental car during the Philippine trips I make each year. The Stockton and Lodi congregations have stood behind us both morally and financially in any number of efforts through the years. May the Lord bless them. The church at Fremont has backed the Philippine work since the start in March of 1981. They send me each year to help the brethren over there and never complain about the cost or the effort various members make. The Lord needs more like these folks who will do what they can to see that the gospel is preached to the lost. We are to begin in Huntington, W. Va. this coming Lord's Day for a week's meeting. We held a meeting there a few years back and I lived there as a boy in 1952-3. It is always enjoyable to go back and see them again. We look forward to the California Labor Day meeting which will be in Stockton this year. Also look forward to working with the church in Escalon for a meeting Oct. 20-27. Pray for us, please.

P. Duane Permenter, P.O. Box 80687, Midland, TX 79708, (915) 520-6508, Aug. 4th_ We had an excellent

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gospel meeting in Midland with outsiders at every service. Some new leads have come as a result of the protracted meeting. The brethren are to be commended for the energy expended in preparing for the meeting. Brethren from Andrews and Odessa were faithful to attend many services of the meeting and this was very much valued. We continued to make contacts with new people in Midland and have high hopes for the future of the work. We are studying with some members and outsiders on a regular basis. Brother Alfred Baze persists in having problems with his heart, and we ask for your continued prayers in his behalf. One of our elderly sisters, Lola Dunlap Harper passed away this last week. She had been sick for some time. Lola was known by some of the older preachers as sister Dunlap. Her daughter, Joy Norton is a member here in Midland. We recently enjoyed hearing Carl Johnson in San Angelo, Texas. This next week, we are contemplating Johnny Elmore's meeting in Andrews, Texas. We are excited about the Texas Labor Day meeting in a few weeks. This will be our first time in several years to miss the California meeting. We will miss seeing our many friends in Stockton, California, but anticipate a great meeting in Texas, too. The Lord willing, I am returning to California for my grandparent's (Tim and Lorene Dougherty) 60th wedding anniversary in October. While in California, I am to preach at Fremont the 13th. My God bless the faithful everywhere. Please continue to pray for us.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012, Aug. 5_ It has been some time since my last report. Besides working full time with the Stony Point church at Kansas City, I have held several meetings recently. June 6-9, I was with the church at Rolla, MO where Gary Weaver has done a commendable job of establishing a faithful congregation. It was a real joy to see the interest and the enthusiasm of some of the members that have been converted from digression. Gary and Peggy are well respected in the area, even among some of the digressives that we met and visited with. One woman from the cups and Sunday School persuasion attended all but one service. After the first night she said that was the first Gospel sermon she had heard in three years. My next was at Sentinel, OK. I have held several meetings there, but this one was special. It was fifty years ago this month that I preached my first sermon at Sentinel. In that meeting I baptized a young man and his wife, Louis Hopkins and Irene. They have remained faithful through the years, and reared three fine Christian girls. It was wonderful to have them and their Christian husbands at the meeting, as well as others locally and from out of town. We had one restoration. I

look forward to going back in '98. My next meeting was for the church here at Kansas City, my third since we moved here in 1994. I was honored to be asked to do the preaching. Several young men came from out-of-town and were very helpful in leading singing and prayer. We continue to have Bible studies. I am presently studying with three non-member adults, besides several members. One woman has already expressed an interest in being baptized. May the Lord bless the faithful everywhere.

Do we love the Savior with a love that is deep?
Do we leave our cares at the Great Masters feet?

He died on the cross to pay that awful price;
While soldier's gambled for his garments with a pair of dice.

He had such love for all of man;
That he didn't ask his father to stay his mighty hand.

He gave a gift that was so grand;
That all we have to do is just take the Masters hand.

And like a father he will always be there;
If only we trust him and leave every care.

Trust in him only is his prayer;
Just talk to him and he'll be there.

Cast all your cares and burdens on him;
Just ask him and he'll forgive you of all sin.

Trust in him through all your strife;
Remember he gave his son so that we might have life.

You've heard the song, I Surrender All;
But our Savior paid a price far to tall.

For us he will always be there;
If we only go to Him in prayer.

He was beaten, scourged, spat upon and mocked;
But he did this in love, to save his fathers flock.

He did this for all of sinful man;
And gave his life, to fulfill the Masters plan.

Our purpose is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

"To continue speaking the truth in love," "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," "keeping the ordinance as delivered."

"Thus saith the Lord, 'stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where in the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.' (Jer. 6:16) "And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in." (Isa. 58:12).

VOL. LXX

LEBANON, MISSOURI, October, 1996

NO. 10

"BAPTISM" PART II

By DOUG HAWKINS

Having laid a foundation in part I by discussing the "one baptism" of Ephesians 4:5, we are now ready to notice from New Testament examples how baptism is administered and who is a fit subject to be baptized. Hence, in this article, we propose to discuss how a person is "scripturally" baptized into Christ, in contrast to the various religious practices of our day. Paul said, "For as many of you has have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" in Galatians 3:27.

BAPTISM REQUIRES WATER

In the book of Acts we read of the apostles "commanding" men and women to be baptized in the name or by the authority of Christ. By noting these examples, we learn "how" baptism is administered and the element that must be used. To begin, let's reconsider the example of Cornelius' conversion found in Acts 10. After Peter preached Christ's death, burial, and resurrection to Cornelius' entire household, he "commanded" them to all to be baptized in water. In Acts 10:46-48, the Bible says:

"For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commended them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."

Honest students of the Bible easily apprehend that Peter intended for these Gentiles to be baptized in "water" in order to be saved.

Another enlightening instance is found in Acts 8. Here, we read of the Ethiopian nobleman returning home from Jerusalem after worshipping God according to the customs of the old law. As he journeys toward his homeland, he reads from an Old Testament passage found in Isaiah 53. In the desert, Philip approaches the chariot and asks the eunuch if he understands what he has read. Puzzled by the prophecy and greatly disturbed by its meaning, the nobleman invites Phillip, the evangelist, to ride along and explain the implications of the passage to him. The Bible says Philip began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus. In Acts 8:35-39, we read:

"Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believeth with all thine

heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."

Again, our sincere hearts quickly detect that baptism requires water. "See here is water," the Eunuch said. Now before we leave this point, note I Peter 3:20-21:

"which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, which the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

BAPTISM REQUIRES IMMERSION

The word "baptism" in our English Bible translates the greek word *baptizo* which means to dip, to immerse, to submerge. Concerning the definition of the word baptism, Alexander Campbell noted, "No word indeed, in the Greek language has already been more rigidly canvassed and more accurately traced than *baptizo*, and more satisfactorily established." (*Christian Baptism* pg. 95) In concert with the grammatical laws of language, every instance of the word's usage must relay the standard meaning, which is to immerse. Candidly speaking, the word baptism cannot be accurately used at any time to refer to the practice of sprinkling or pouring as performed by many religions.

Also, we see from new Testament examples that the mode of baptism requires sufficient water for immersion. For instance, we read, "And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized" Jn. 3:23. Again, in Acts 8:38, it says, "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." The words "much water" and "down into the water" suggests that the essential act of baptism is immersion.

Besides the definition and the action of baptism that we have just noticed, we draw the distinct conclusion from other passages that baptism means to completely immerse. Paul's treatise in Romans 6 reveals that baptism symbol-

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Three Questions From Hebrews

By DON L. KING

The book of Hebrews has always been one of my personal favorites. It is full of "riches." 1) Notice the passage in Hebrews 1:14: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? (KJV) This scripture is rendered as follows in the 20th Century New Testament: "Are not all the angels spirits in the services of God, sent out for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation, to minister to their needs?" This passage quite obviously deals with angels and is located in the midst of the longest passage about angels in the Bible. One of the main points in chapter one is that the Lord is better than angels (1:4-14). In chapter two angels who sinned in order to save man. The world which was to come was not going to be put under subjection to angels (2:5), etc. In fact, it appears that the real reason for discussing angels at all is found in chapter 2:2,3. "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him."

If the law, which God gave to Israel through the ministration of angels, was steadfast and every transgression of it or even the mere neglecting of it received a certain punishment, what does this mean? It surely means that we can never hope to escape our just and certain punishment when we neglect the "great salvation" brought by the blood of God's own Son! His Son is far above the angels and we can rest assured that the Father in Heaven will not take lightly the rejection of the finest and greatest sacrifice in existence. Likely, there will be great wrath spilled upon those who refuse to be reconciled by the death of the Son of God.

In the passage at hand (Hebrews 1:14), Paul speaks of angels being ministering spirits in what is sometimes said to be a rhetorical question. He just assumes his readers agree with him. The text says they are "ministering spirits." The word translated "ministering" from a word in the original language (*leitourgikos*) which, (I'm told) comes from the same root word that the term "deacon" (*diakonia*) comes. This word is used with reference to Paul and Barnabus "ministering to the Lord" at the church in Antioch in Acts 13:2. This merely indicates they were rendering service to the Lord. In a similar sense, angels are also servants of the Lord. They are servants in fulfilling His will and seeing that His purposes are carried out.

One of the most obvious facts we can know of angels is that they render a service to the Lord. They ministered to Him in the garden according to Luke 24:39. They are also mentioned by Matthew (18:10) where Jesus said children have angels always beholding the face of the Father. What do they do? We are not told. However, these individuals have angels who are spoken of as "theirs." In some way angels ministered to those who belonged to Christ. Angels carried the soul of Lazarus to the place of rest called the "bosom" of Abraham in Luke 16:22. Do they do this for all? We are not told.

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Does 1 Timothy 2:1-2 teach that the services of the church should be opened with a prayer? (Ga.)

Answer: The scripture in question reads as follows: "I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, may be made for all men; for kings and all that are in high place: that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity." The phrase "first of all" refers not to order of the service, but rather do what is of primary importance. The Greek Expositors N.T. translates "In the first place, let me remind you that the Church's public prayers must be made expressly for all men..." The same writer later comments "The most important point in my exhortation concerns the universal scope of public prayer." This passage is not dealing with the place (first or last) of prayer in the public worship service, but rather the importance it should be given. Many churches vary in the order or arrangement of the items of Christian worship. Since the scripture gives no "set order," such variation is permissible so long as it is decent and orderly. It is certainly not wrong to begin the worship service with a prayer, but neither is commanded.

Question: What is the meaning of "lifting up holy hands" in verse 8 of the same chapter?

Answer: The passage reads: "I desire therefore that men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dispuring." First of all it should be noted that Paul restricts the offering of public prayers to men as distinguished from women. For women to lead the prayers in the assemblies of the Church is thus forbidden by the apostle. In any public gathering women are restricted in what they may by divine approval do. Brethren need to be careful about this truth. It is not something that can be cast aside at the whim and fancy of some change-agent operating under the guise of a preacher, present social attitudes to the contrary notwithstanding. The Expositor's Greek New Testament correctly notes: "The ministers of public prayer must be the men of the congregation, not the women. A woman's positive duty is to make herself conspicuous by good works, not by personal display. Her place in relation to man is one of subordination. This is

one of the lessons of the inspired narratives of the Creation and the Fall. Nevertheless this does not affect her eternal position. Salvation is the goal alike of man and woman..." The phrase "lifting up holy hands" is probably an allusion to the ancient practice of presenting the uplifted hands as an act of respect to God as in Neh. 8:6, Psa. 141:2 and Lam. 3:41, and should not be considered a prescription demanding a particular posture in prayer. Those men who conduct the public worship services of the Church should be men of "clean hands and pure hearts." Some writers also believe that there is an allusion here to the practice among the Jews who were so concerned about ceremonial cleanliness that they washed their hands before they ate bread, thus signifying their purity. The point of difference being that the hands of those taking the lead in the services of the Church should be holy i.e. undefiled by sin. (MacKnight)

Question: When we pray should there be some kind of prioritized order that we use when we make requests of God? Should we pray for some things before others?

Answer: This writer is unaware of any revelation from God, that specifies a particular order in which our requests or thanksgivings should be made known to God. It is interesting, however, that in Luke 11:2 when Jesus taught his disciples to pray, the first petition concerned the Kingdom or Church. It was later that mention was made of "daily bread, forgiveness of sins, heavenly guidance etc." Many times in our prayers we ask for everything we need or want, with little or no apparent concern for the welfare of the Church. In fact, one might get the idea that the Church is secondary to every other concern and problem. In reality the Church and its welfare should be of primary importance to us all. We need to be careful that we don't use prayer simply as a means of asking selfishly for what we want, to the exclusion of those things that really matter most. We would all do well if we prayed for the Church, others, and self in that order. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808)

Dressed Up Heathenism

By JERRY DICKINSON

In March it was my pleasure to be in a meeting with the church in San Diego (El Cajon), California. I enjoyed the beautiful California weather, the glorious scenery, and above all else, of course, the joy of being with the hospitable folks who make up the El Cajon church. An unexpected treat, however, was a visit one day to the Institute for Creation Research which is located in San Diego. I had seen and read some of the material published by members of the Creation Institute in the past. The institute was founded by Dr. Henry Morris and there are over one thousand scientists with post-graduate degrees who are members.

These scientists believe the Bible account of creation is literally true. They maintain that the earth is not millions

of years old, as evolutionists claim, but no more than six to ten thousand years old. These creationists offer an alternative view and explanation of the fossils, geological formations, and other archeological data that evolutionists claim support (and prove) the theory of evolution. I immensely enjoyed going through the museum at the Creation Institute, and I noted a number of things I had never thought about before. There are four things that really stand out and I want to share them with you.

1. Dressed Up Heathenism--After my tour of the Creation Institute museum it occurred to me that evolution is nothing more than dressed up heathenism. Charles Darwin was not the first person to develop the idea that all living things evolved from lower life forms. Actually,

as several exhibits in the museum showed, the idea of evolution has been around for thousands of years. The ancient Egyptians and some of the Greeks held a view similar to modern day evolutionary thought. Not only that, but the ancient religions of Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Hinduism, and well as other old religions that emphasize idolatry and paganism are structured around the concept of an infinitely old, continuously evolving cosmos. In other words - evolution!

Charles Darwin did not arrive at the theory of evolution after carefully considering the evidence - he adopted the ancient evolutionary view and then adapted his data to fit this ancient pagan idea. Darwin, and evolutionists who have followed him, have simply dressed up the pagan theory in scientific terminology and intellectual language that intimidates most of us. Not only this, but the New Age movement is but a similar attempt to convert people to the old heathen and pagan religious ideologies. There is nothing new about the New Age movement - it's dressed up heathenism! Evolutionists and New Age advocates, like their pagan and heathen forerunners, really have but one goal - to eradicate the idea of a Creator God to whom we owe our existence and our allegiance. It is dressed up heathenism!

2. Ice Age After The Flood--Another interesting thing I learned while visiting the museum had to do with an ice age that creation scientists believe took place after the flood. There is evidence, they aver, that shows that for five hundred to a thousand years after the flood there was an ice age, during which the dinosaurs (and other animals) became extinct. Of course, evolutionists claim that the ice age occurred millions of years ago, but creationists believe it took place after the flood.

Before the flood the earth had a dense canopy that allowed the growth of huge animals such as dinosaurs. When the flood came this canopy was removed, and the result was an ice age after the flood which was due to cataclysmic effects on the earth's atmosphere. This ice age was not so severe that no life could exist but it did result in the extinction of dinosaurs and other animals. There was even an exhibit that had several quotations from the book of Job. The book of Job, of course, is considered by most scholars to be the oldest book of the Bible, and it is believed that Job lived somewhere in the Middle East. There are several references to snow and ice in the book of Job, showing that the period during which Job lived (right after the flood) was indeed an ice age.

I might just mention here that the creation scientists believe that dinosaurs did exist and that Noah even had some of them on the ark. How could he have carried such huge creatures on the ark? Well, the creationist believe that instead of full grown, mature animals Noah may have taken young dinosaurs which would have been much smaller. One exhibit showed a replica of Noah's ark and it is estimated that the ark had a volume of 1,500,000 cubic feet, or the equivalent of 589 railroad cars. The conclusion is that the ark contained more than enough room for Noah to have taken aboard the animals God commanded him to take.

3. A Tree Is Known By Its Fruits--Jesus proclaimed a universal and an incontrovertible principle in Matthew 7:16-20. "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather

grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles. Even so very good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit...Wherefore ye shall know them by their fruits."

One of the exhibits in the museum had to do with the fruits of the evolutionists' dogma which has so permeated our world for the past one hundred years. The belief in evolution and the teaching of the Godless and atheistic dogma that goes hand in hand with evolution has led to a rapid decline in morals and the value of human life. Racism, Nazism, and even communism have their roots in the teaching of evolution. There were quotations in the exhibit showing that Adolf Hitler was influenced by evolutionary thought in his conception of a "master race." The extermination of lower life forms.

Of course, today even in our own country we see the devastating fruits of evolution. Evolution is taught as an accepted fact in our schools and people have been indoctrinated to believe this Godless dogma. Abortion, euthanasia, mercy killings, not to mention the despicable immorality so prevalent in our society, are the fruit of the evolutionary tree. Truly, as our Lord declared, by their fruits ye shall know them!

4. Reassurance For Our Faith--Certainly, we do not need scientific evidence to support our faith in the Bible as the Word of God, however it is (to me anyway) reassuring to know that there are a myriad of scientists who do believe that the bible account of the creation is literally true. I certainly do not consider myself a scientist, and I quite frankly concede that much of the material I read I did not fully understand. I think this is what intimidates so many of us when we read or discuss the various theories about the origin of life or the age of the earth, etc. It does bolster my faith, however, to know that there are biologists, archeologists, geologists, engineers, etc. who declare that have found scientific data that demonstrates that the earth is not millions or billions of year old, that there really was a world wide flood, and that life forms (including man) originated suddenly instead of gradually as evolutionists suggest.

Creation scientists offer an alternative explanation for the same data that evolutionists claim proves evolution. The explanation offered by creationists is that a Supreme Intelligence created the universe and put living things on the earth some six to ten thousand years ago. Of course, this is precisely what the Bible says. Too, some of the greatest scientists who have ever lived have believed unflinchingly in the literal accounts of creation and the origin of man as found in the scriptures. That does not in and of itself establish our own faith in the scriptures, however surely it bolsters our confidence and reassures our convictions.

In 1863 the French Academy of Science published a booklet that contained some fifty facts of science that the Academy claimed contradicted statements found in the Bible. These facts of science, it was asserted, proved the Bible was not the Word of God. Did you know today, dear reader, that no scientist worth his salt accepts a single one of those so called facts of science as being true. Science changes - but the Word of God never changes nor alters.

"For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth forever."

(1 Peter 1:24,25) With unwavering confidence and unshaken conviction may we stand up to the evolutionists and other modern day pagans of our day and declare our complete faith in the Bible account of creation and the origin of life. Let us cling to, and let us pass on to our

children the only possible (and logical) explanation ever given for the origin of the universe, life on the earth, and man himself: "For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God." (Hebrews 3:4) 13803 Crosshaven, Houston, TX 77015.

They That Were Scattered Abroad Went Everywhere Preaching the Word

By K. G. WILKS

In the gospel according to Matthew, 28:19,20, that devine writer wrote, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

He meant for them to teach and baptize the people of all nations; for, the word "nations" is neuter gender, but the word "them" in the Greek is masculine gender, "autous." (Autous, accusative case, plural number, masculine gender.) Since the end of the world has not come the authority of the Lord still stands.

In Acts of Apostles 20:26,27, the Apostle Paul felt so strongly about his obligation to preach the gospel, he told the Ephesian elders, "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."

When Paul, before his conversion of Christ, was making havoc of the church (Acts 8:3), the Divine writer in Acts 8:4 (next verse) records "...they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." Wherever they went they preached it.

Paul, the Apostle, wrote in 1 Cor. 11:1 (Revised Version) "Be ye imitators of me, even as I am of Christ." He meant for the Corinthians, as well as the rest of us to imitate him in his zeal toward getting the gospel to all persons on earth.

I learned from the Waco Tribune-Herald of August 11, 1985, in these United States of America there are 52 million Roman Catholics, one quarter of them being Hispanics (13 million and more coming all the time). Our person to person gospel workers are finding more and more of the Hispanics who speak only their Spanish language. They understand no English. Does any sincere Christian, especially our evangelists, dare to say, "If they want to hear the gospel, let them learn English?" Did Paul ever say or indicate in any wise that the gospel would be delivered in only some special language? Nay, not so! In 1 Cor. 14:18, he told the Corinthians, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all." There was no English language until 500 to 600 years after Christ. Were those people out of God's mercy?

My plea is for 1,000 men to learn the Spanish language and their Bibles and to out to the Hispanics of Catholicism here in the areas where they concentrate and preach the gospel to them, just as the disciples did when they left Jerusalem to escape the persecutions befalling them. The writer of the article in the paper stated that they were treated coldly by their church and its priests; many are turning to other churches to satisfy their hunger for God; they find no pastoral guidance. Are they beyond the realm of God's

creatures; (Mk. 16:15) are they beyond the realm all nations? (Matt. 28:19) Nay! They are very receptive of God's Word.

We who wear the name Christians, the Church of Christ, The body of Christ, are not doing enough to scatter and preach the gospel. What time and money we have are not used advantageously.

Our priorities are all out of order--like piling the letters of an alphabet out on a table or on the floor, then allowing a little child to choose them one at a time until they are all finally picked up.

In all sincerity, yet in all respect and appreciation for our evangelists, we are just swapping pulpits rather than going out to the unsaved with the gospel. Having lived in the faith under Christian parents for 66 of my 79 years of my life I am pretty well aware of what has happened to **the faith**. I see much good, but I also see much that is not good. If John Bunyan (1628-1688), (Not Paul Bunyan), who had only a third-grade education, could study and acquire a grasp of the Bible which has made him one of the most noted authors of our time, then certainly any Christian in our day should be able to take a good interlinear, such as Jay Green's interlinear New Testament, and learn the truth taught in the divinely inspiring writings of the New Testament. Indeed, any one with knowledge enough to read and write, can learn Spanish and Greek, the language of the people in our country who are so in need of the gospel; and the language of the New Testament, the Greek, if enough study and reading is engaged in. The trouble is we will not do it. The majority of us will not even read in our own mother tongue (English) what we ought to be reading. Then we argue and fuss over what we do not even know to read. There is no use in such a one trying to teach any other what they themselves do now know--for the simple reason they have refused to study. But they have time for the things of the world, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life..." 1 Jno. 2:16. That quotation covers the whole field of the world. Study the verse. Most will deny the first two, indulge in the third.

I know not a single congregation of the body of Christ but what, if they would, could do all of the preaching needed, allowing our preachers to go on out into unpreached areas to convert untaught souls. That is the way the congregations of the first century did it. But who **wants** to go? Where are 1,000 preachers willing to learn Spanish, then take the Spanish language gospel to where the untaught people are? One young man told me he is ready to go as soon as his children finish school. God bless him, but the need is now. Is there anyone at all now

ready to learn Spanish and now go to where the need is? The blood of mankind is upon us, according to what Paul wrote in Acts 20:26,27. Of course we can say, "But I am not an apostle" as Paul was. Admitted! If it takes apostles to do it all then as of A.D. 100 the body of Christ has been and is in a pitiable condition. The answer is that Paul told them in verse 28 "...the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers (Bishops, from the Greek word "episkopous" masculine, accusative, plural) to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Shall we by neglect make of none effect the blood of Christ, because we do not want to leave our "good lives", leave our games, our economic advantages, our bob tube hours, tasty food,

the lust of the flesh (not necessarily sexual lusts), the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (the things that give us prestige, social standing, financial opportunities, dress, housing, furniture, automobiles above our needs, keeping up with the Joneses)? Excessive prosperity makes us vain, selfish, arrogant, filled with pride which goeth before destruction (Prov. 16:18) 1 Tim. 3:6. Preach a self sacrificing gospel and live by it. Spanish transients by the 1,000's need you.

Note: This article written by the late K.G. Wilks over a decade ago, still containing some current good thoughts. We need to think on these things. DLK

"Baptism" Part II & III

Continued from page 1

izes the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:3-5). Paul said once more in Colossians 2:12.

"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

Practically speaking, a burial implies a complete immersion or covering. Suppose your pet were to die and unfortunately, you were forced to bury it. How would you do it? No rational mind would think of burying the pet by sprinkling a little dirt over it, leaving the majority of its body exposed. To bury means to completely cover. Yet, there are people who will contend that a scriptural method of baptism is to sprinkle or pour. The bible plainly teaches that baptism is a burial.

BAPTISM REQUIRES FAITH AND REPENTANCE

A common argument by those who discountenance the necessity of baptism is that men are saved by faith and not by "works." Citing Ephesians 2:8,9 as proof, these advocates identify the action of baptism with a work of man's righteousness, as though men devised the whole scheme. Thus, they teach that people are saved in spite of baptism. Incidentally though, no where does the Bible say that baptism is a work of man's righteousness, nor that it is associated with the law of Moses. Howbeit, when Jesus was asked what to do to "work the works of God" he said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" John 6:28,29. Obviously, there are works that save and works that don't. Am I to conclude that we are not required to believe because we are not saved by works? Of course this is a ridiculous notion and a plain contradiction of what the Scriptures actually teach. Jesus emphatically says that we are to believe or "die in our sins" (Jn. 8:24). If I were to reason that belief is irrelevant because we are not saved by works, then I have misunderstood and misinterpreted the scriptures. Due to such fallacious reasoning regarding the subject of baptism, men irreparably harm the sacred volume and cause souls to be lost in the process. Like belief, baptism is an act of faith or a work of faith (James 2), which has nothing to do with the "works" Paul discussed in Ephesians 2. Consequently, it is reasonable to conclude that a person is baptized or immersed in water "BY FAITH". Baptism in water was designed by God, commanded by Christ, and is to be obeyed by all

who want to be saved (Heb. 5:8,9). Reading the examples in the book of Acts, demonstrates that conversion always begins with preaching the gospel or the news of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (I Corinthians 15:1-4). A man opts either to believe or dismiss the gospel message. If he chooses to believe, faith causes him to repent or turn from his former life (Lk. 13:3, Act. 17:30,31), confess the name of Christ before men (Mt. 10:32; Rm. 10:9, 10; Mt. 16:16), and be baptized in water (Mk. 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Acts 2:38). Are any of these commands less important than the others? No. Does any one suspend the other? No. Are all these commands required? Yes. Can a man be saved without baptism? Jesus says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..." Men say, "He that believeth and is not baptized shall be saved too..." Whom shall I believe? The point is that we are saved by faith when we are immersed in water. It is an undeniable part of God's plan of salvation.

In addition to vindicating the importance of water baptism, the preponderant evidence implicitly leads us toward two more unavoidable conclusions. First, the popular practice of "infant baptism" is unscriptural because infants and small children to not have the capacity to be taught, to believe, nor do they have any sins to repent of. And secondly, such practices as the Mormon's of being baptized on behalf of the deceased is futile because a man or woman must work out their own salvation (Ac. 2:40; Phi. 2:12), which includes being baptized for their own sins. In our next article, we will conclude the subject of BAPTISM by discussing God's design of it in His eternal scheme of redemption.

"BAPTISM" PART III

The audience sat quietly in anticipation of witnessing the baptismal rite. The ripples rolled along the top of the water as two men stepped down into the baptistry and waded toward the center. Steadying both him and the other man, the preacher raised his clenched fist into the air and said "Upon your faith and confession that Jesus is the son of God, I baptize you for the remission of sins into the name of the father, the son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen." As the sound of his voice faded away and the shattered silence returned, the preacher lowered the man beneath the surface of the water and lifted him up again. Why baptism? The focus of this last article centers around the de-

sign and purpose of baptism in God's eternal scheme of redemption. As such, showing how the scriptures teach that baptism is a new birth, the only means into Christ, a form of Christ's death, burial and resurrection, and the only manner in which a person can contact Christ's saving blood is our primary concern.

NEW BIRTH

In his first general epistle, Peter uses the term, "babes" (I Peter 2:2), a term not unfamiliar to the apostle Paul either (I Col. 3:1, Heb. 5:12). Apparently, there is a time in every Christian's life when we are considered a "babe." How and when does a person become a babe in Christ? Naturally, we assume that it's after their conception and birth.

Amidst the cover of the night's shadows, Nicodemus, a Jewish ruler, went to Jesus. At some point during their conversion, Jesus stated, "...except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (Jn. 3:3) Bewildered by the statement, Nicodemus responded, "How can a man be born when he is old?" To elucidate his meaning, Jesus answered, "...except a man be born of the water and of the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (Jn. 3:5).

In an attempt to explain how one is born again, some presume that the birth of water refers to a physical birth and the "birth of the spirit" occurs when one accepts Christ as a loving savior. However, Jesus does not associate "born of the water" with the procreation of a child. To the contrary, he said, "except a man be born..." In other words, Jesus addresses what one must do to enter the kingdom of God, be born spiritually which requires both water and the Spirit. Nicodemus understood Jesus to refer to a man for he asked, "How can a man be born when he is OLD?"

In various religious circles, folks speak of "born again Christians"; however the vast majority who use this phrase misunderstand its implications, and they do not recognize that the only way for a person to be "born again" is by baptism in water. What other purpose does water serve in God's scheme of redemption? Conception in this birth process occurs when one hears, believes, and accepts the facts and terms of the gospel. Paul states in first Corinthians 4:15 "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." Subsequently, after hearing the gospel, if one desires to enter the kingdom of God, he must then be born of the water and Spirit, a metaphor referring to immersion or baptism in water. After baptism, he rises to live in "newness of life" (Rom. 6:5), procreated for the service of God. The "new birth" is what Paul calls the "washing of regeneration" (Titus 3:5). The term "regeneration" (*Palingenesis* in original Greek) is defined as "new birth" (*palin* - again; *genesis* - birth) by W.E. Vine in his expository dictionary. To understand the meaning of the phrase "washing of regeneration", consider Ephesians 5:26 where Paul says, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." This washing of regeneration occurs in water, which undoubtedly refers to baptism in water. As Jesus said, **YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN.**

"IN CHRIST"

The apostle Paul frequently uses the expression "in

Christ" to establish where the blessings of redemption are found. For instance, "being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:" (Rom. 3:24) "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1). "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (I Cor. 15:22) "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17) In very definitive terms, Paul states that salvation is "in Christ." How does one get "into Christ? Galatians 3:26-27 says, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized 'into Christ' have put on Christ." Furthermore, Paul says in Romans 6:3, "Know ye not that so many of us were baptized 'into Jesus Christ'..." The only scriptural method of getting into Christ is to be baptized into Christ.

"FORM OF DOCTRINE"

Baptism is the form or likeness of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, which frees us from the bondage of sin. The apostle Paul stated in Romans 6:16-18 "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience into righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." In order to represent the passage fairly, consider the following diagram.

Servant of Sin
"being then made free"
Servant of Righteousness
Obey "Form of Doctrine" delivered

In essence, Paul says you were formerly sin's servant, but you have obeyed or submitted to the form of doctrine I delivered to you. Being "then" or at that time free from sin, you became the servant of righteousness. What is the "form of doctrine" and how does a person obey it? Paul says it is the form of doctrine that has been "delivered." What did he deliver? Paul in I Corinthians 15:1-4 says "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:" The essential element of the doctrine or the gospel that Paul delivered in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Notice further, Paul said, "you obeyed a form of the doctrine (DBR)." Some translators render it a "mold of the doctrine" or in other words, something similar or like it. How? In Romans 6:3-5 Paul states, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ as raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:" One should clearly see, therefore, that bap-

tism is an obedient form of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection and that a person cannot be free from sin until he is baptized.

"THE BLOOD"

I don't know of anyone who disagrees with the statement, "we are saved by the blood of Christ." (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). The pertinent question is not "if" but "how" are we saved by the blood of Christ? Jesus said, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28) The blood was shed for the remission of our sins. Bear that in mind. Likewise, John said, "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Rev. 1:5) It's veritably true to say the blood of Christ washes away sin. Underscore that in your mind too. However, the vast majority of people don't understand the connection between water baptism and the blood of Christ. As we proceed, you should remember why the blood of Christ was shed; ie. "for the remission of sins" and "to wash away sin." With that embedded deeply in your mind, Peter says in

Acts 2:38 "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission..." Again, Ananias told Saul of Tarsus in Acts 22:16 "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Evidently, since both baptism and the blood remit sins and wash away sins, there is a correlation between the two. The Bible tells us that we are baptized into Christ's death. It is there, then, that we come in contact with his soul saving blood. If that is not true, then I humbly challenge anyone to find a passage of scripture that describes another means into the death or the blood of Christ. Prayer, repentance, confession, belief will not bring me in contact with Christ's blood, but as shown, baptism will.

The import of the Scriptures show that unless or except one is baptized in water, he cannot be saved. Can a man be saved without faith? No. Can he be saved without baptism? No. To be saved, one must believe in Christ, repent of his sins, confess the name of Christ as the son of God, and be baptized in water for the remission of sins. If you've not done that, do not delay for today is the day of salvation.

Three Questions From Hebrews

continued from page 2

Various and sundry passages might be cited, but it is important to remember that angels are *spirits*. This means they are very different from us. They have neither flesh nor bones according to Jesus in Luke 24:39. They are usually seen in a heavenly setting. However, in rendering service to the Lord, they have, on occasion, appeared as men.

We cannot speculate in what ways they ministered to the Lord's people. Neither can we afford to speculate as to what they might do today. However, it is important to keep in mind that Paul did not say (in Hebrew 1:14) that they are sent to minister TO heirs of salvation, but rather, he says they are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister FOR them who shall be heirs of salvation." Whatever their functions and wherever it may occur it is FOR us and not TO us! I need not be present (indeed I have never been) nor do I need to know when or how they minister for me. That is a matter we must be content to simply leave with the Lord who doeth all things well. It is comforting, however, to realize that God has His servants who perform a service for His people. This is as far as we can go with this question for the answers to further inquiries is not furnished us. When anyone goes beyond what God's Word reveals it is mere speculation. Naturally, we might offer an opinion but what value is that?

2) Hebrews 10:26: What is "wilful" sin here?

Read the verse along with verse 25: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." What does he mean? Some say it refers only to a sin one commits wilfully, that is, on purpose. It is also believed by some that it specifically refers to one who forsakes the assembly. Can it be possible that we are to understand that the one who misses

the worship has no more sacrifice remaining for him? If so, can he ever be forgiven?

Now, there is no doubt that to forsake the assembly is absolutely a sin. Whatever verse 26 means, we are forbidden to miss the worship in verse 25. As Edwin Morris once quipped, "Whatever you believe about this verse (verse 25) whether the day approaching is the first day of the week, destruction of Jerusalem (I so believe, DLK) or the second coming of Christ, you can't miss church!" So, that much is settled. But what is meant by "wilful sin?"

Let's look at the context of the verse. From the past reading of Hebrews, we know the writer was very concerned with Christians returning to the Law of Moses. They were in danger of leaving the liberty, or freedom, from sins gained when they obeyed the gospel of Christ. Apostasy was a real and ever present danger Paul tried to guard against. This seems to have been a main issue in the letter to the Hebrews. The danger of neglect is pointed out in chapter 2:1-3. The Israelites, and their fall, are held up as a warning in parts of chapter 3. The danger was definitely there and the writer was concerned for them or he would not have taken such great pains to recall the many pitfalls they had encountered along their way. Paul told them over and over how Christ was greater than Moses. He approached this from a number of perspectives as was his usual practice. There was no doubt about it, the Jews were being tempted to return to the old religion of Judaism. They would leave Christ and His once for all time sacrifice. Why would Paul have gone to such great lengths to repeatedly show the superiority of Christ over Moses if this had not been his concern? Robert Milligan, who wrote what we consider to be the best commentary on Hebrews, believes that Paul simply refers to a person who had left the Law of Moses, been baptized into Christ, then apostatized back under the old law. When he did, he placed himself under subjection to a law which no longer existed. Christ had nailed it to His cross (Colossians 2:13,14). Hence, there "remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." The child of God

had left the only refuge of safety in existence. He left Christ and went back under the old animal sacrifices! That law had been taken out of the way, hence no remaining sacrifice there.

Every sin we commit through weakness is wilful in the modern use of the term. That is, it is on purpose and we know it is wrong when we do it. However, Paul is not saying that when we thus sin, we can not be forgiven! It must be repented of, God's forgiveness sought, etc., but we all surely believe when we do so we are forgiven. Even the forsaken of the assembly today is a "wilful" sin. It is on purpose (unless one is providentially hindered, etc.) and the one who thus forsakes realizes the disobedience, or sin, at the time. However, we all would be glad to take his confession and pray the Lord to forgive him. In other words, we know he can be forgiven. It is possible that those individuals of whom Paul wrote had forsaken the assembly, a sin in and of itself, because they had already apostatized from the gospel. If so, there absence was only a symptom of much deeper problem. The person who leaves the Lord will obviously miss the assembly of the saints also.

3) Hebrews 12:5-11: How does God chasten His children? Does He do so today? Paul reminds the Hebrews (Milligan believes it is only the living members of the Jerusalem church to which Paul speaks, see page 346) that though they were experiencing some persecution as a result of their being disciples of Christ, it was relatively light. It had not yet cost them their lives. They had not "resisted unto blood, striving against sin." (chapter 12:4). As their afflictions had been comparatively light, there was no real excuse for their wavering attitudes and tendencies to go back under the Law. He quotes from the Proverbs (3:11,12) in verses 5 and 6. Some, no doubt, were still faithful but others had forgotten that afflictions had always been the lot of God's people. Paul, therefore, encourages them to look on the light afflictions as a form of chastened from God. This was an indication He recognized them as children. These relatively light problems (at that time) were to be seen not as signs of God's anger but His love, and would ultimately work for their benefit. Paul wrote the Corinthians: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. (2 Corinthians 4:17) In Hebrews 12:6, we are told: "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."

No, I don't believe Paul intended for us to believe God sends us the tragedies, terminal illnesses, heartbreaks caused by the sins of perhaps even our immediate families, etc., as a direct form of chastisement. These things, we know, happen to all people in all walks of life. However, if we are willing to properly set our attitudes, God can use even these things for His eventual glory and our own betterment. After all, who can explain the providence of God? Paul wrote in Philemon verse 15, "For perhaps He therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldst receive him forever." This runaway slave was sent back to Philemon with the suggestion that perhaps his losing this slave might be the work of the Lord. It is difficult, likely impossible, to pinpoint any event in our lives and say it was from the Lord. Many of our heartaches are simply the results of "reaping what we sow." It may not always be possible to "know" when or if consequences are the results of past actions or not. However, we can always try to become better as a result of our trials.

Paul indicates, in verse 8, that unless we have chastening we are not really sons at all but illegitimate. This has troubled me for some time. It can be explained from the context of the letter to the Hebrews and for the Hebrews. They were enduring persecution because they were following Christ. They were members of the Church of Christ. But what about today? We are not undergoing such things now, at least not in America.

One thing, however, may be a possibility. Unless one stands for the right, insists on strict morals, is uncomfortable with the ways of the world, he will not be persecuted by the world. I still recall lying awake at night in concern for my children. Their whereabouts, their desire to attend some worldly place of entertainment I had a conscience against, etc. I can recall feeling "chastised." We became more dependent on God and His Word for help and guidance. Others, sometimes even those who were members of the church, were seemingly unconcerned about their children doing the very same things we were so concerned about. In other words, some seem to receive the benefits of chastisement while others do not. It would be of great concern to me, brethren, to think that perhaps the Lord was not treating me as a son at all, but an illegitimate for whom He had little concern. Not enough to chastise even within my own conscience. Think on these things. DLK

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SEVENTY YEARS TOGETHER

On October 12, 1926 Foy Wade and Inez Ward were united in marriage. The Lord willing they will celebrate seventy years together on that same date this year. In a day when marriages are often ended for the most trivial of reasons, it is refreshing to hear of someone who has exerted an effort to make their marriage work. Life for these two has been far from a bed of roses. They like all couples have suffered the difficulties and problems of life, yet they remained together. Thru the years their home was a place where preachers stayed and were refreshed. The Church has been the central object of their lives. They have two children Jan Goodgion of Wichita Falls, TX and Ronny Wade of Springfield, MO. Both are still in fairly good health, although Inez has been sick and in and out of the hospital of late. They would ap-

preciate a card or letter from their many friends on this special occasion. You may address them at 2535 S. Weller, Springfield, MO 65804.

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

Harris — Bonifay: On July 26, before a standing-room-only crowd in the Church of Christ building at Lodi, California, Franklin L. Harris and our daughter, Danae Bonifay, were united

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

We are required by law to publish, each year, a statement of OLD PATHS ADVOCATE. The paper is owned by Don L. King, who also serves as Publisher. It is a private endeavor; not a work of their church, hence not intended to be supported or subsidized by church treasuries, but by paid subscriptions of our readers.

in marriage. Frank is the son of Floyd Harris, Sr. and the late Jean Harris of Flint, MI. As you know, Frank's family is a large one but thankfully all of them were able to attend. The singing was beautifully done by a group from Danae's home congregation in Manteca — Ivan and Gina Costa, Revis and Robinn Middick, Steve and Ronda Cozby, Jim and Patty Bradford, and Danae's mother, Tonya. Frank has become a fine gospel preacher since he began traveling and studying with me over three years ago. The bride and groom will make their new home in Santa Rosa, California, where Frank works with the local brethren on a full-time basis. The wedding was a gala occasion celebrated by the couple's families, and by their many friends and loved ones from throughout California. As the bride's father, I was honored to officiate as Frank and Danae committed their lives to one another and vowed faithfully to work together all the days of their lives. Thank you to all who helped us make this day special. — Alan Bonifay.

OUR DEPARTED

Wood--On Sept. 15, 1996, Sister Freida Wood of the Hartwell congregation near Huntsville Ar. departed this life after only two days in the hospital. Her departure reminds us of the uncertainty of life. At the time of her leaving she was seventy-nine years of age. She had been a faithful member of the church for many years. Quiet, unpretentious, she went about her life as wife, mother, and servant of the Lord.

She is survived by her husband of sixty-years, Virgil, a son Clifton, three sisters, two brothers, and three grandchildren. She will be missed. The writer conducted the service, assisted by Bro. Jimmie Smith.

NEW CONGREGATION

Ogemau Co, 2719 East Greenwood Road, Prescott, Michigan 48756. Take I-75 to exit 202, go north on 33 about 2 1/2 miles to Greenwood Road turn right, go through skidway, building on the left. Look for sign. Sunday, 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.-James H. Hensby

LOOKING FOR BACK ISSUES

I am looking for back issues of various brotherhood journals in order to have a more complete set for reference use. If you have any of these issues and don't need them any longer I would be glad to hear from you. Old Paths Advocate: any issues before 1947, Jan. 1951, June 1956, March 1962, Jan. 1963, Nov. 1965, March 1967, Feb. 1976, March 1976, April 1976, May 1976 and Feb. 1980. The Truth (J.D. Phillip's paper): any issues before 1968, Oct. 1968, March 1970, Aug. 1970, any issues for 1971, Feb. 1973, and Aug. 1974.-Edward Williamson, 219 W. Hwy. B, Raymondville, MO 65555.



Barney Owens, 8782 Meadowview Ln., W. Chester, OH 45069 — It has been my pleasure to hear Ron Alexander and Ronnie Wade in parts of meetings of late. We here at Sharonville have had David Griffin and John Scott visit us and bring lessons recently. Joe Hisle is to conduct our fall meeting Oct. 5 - 13. I am to be with the church at Mitchell, IN Oct. 25-27. I do have time for some weekend meetings (3 or 5 days) open. Pray for us.

Cecil E. Smith, Rt. 2, Box 189-1A, English, IN 47118, August 26 — I feel I have been very blessed to be able to come and work with the church formerly of Marengo. We enjoyed very much the opportunity to come before Doug, Debbie and their boys left. It has been a pleasure to begin my work with such a talented evangelist, and I certainly commend him for his work's sake. The work here has certainly flourished under his care. Since arriving here we have been able to witness two precious souls obey the gospel under Doug's preaching. Even after his departure we have had one, who has for years been out of duty, come and take her stand with us for the truth. We feel this is all due to Doug and Debbie's influence. We have a meeting scheduled for September 14-22 with Ron Courter as our speaker. We plan on doing extensive evangelistic work in the next few weeks to prepare for this meeting. We have about seven communities in which we hope to work. We have already seen much interest in the church in our new location, and it is our prayer and desire to win many souls to Christ. The congregation here consists of some of the most wonderful and dedicated people I have ever had the privilege of working alongside. We also plan to continue to conduct mission meetings as we have the opportunity. Please pray for us in our endeavors as we also pray for God's children wherever they may be.

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820, September 6 — At this writing we are in the midst of a meeting in Davis, OK. We have had good crowds so far and we are enjoying the meeting. Since my last report we have also conducted meetings at San Angelo, TX, Bunner Ridge, WV, and Piedmont, AL. We enjoyed each of these meetings very much and are confident some good was accomplished. My schedule for the remainder of the year includes: London, KY (Sept. 15-22); Abilene, TX (Oct. 6-13); Houston, MO (Oct. 16-20); Temple, GA (Oct. 23-27); Covina, CA (Nov. 10-17); and Seminole, OK (Dec. 6-8).

Virgilio O. Danao, Sr., 23 R. Magsaysay St., Roxas, Isabela, Phillipines; Tel. No. (076)642-8020, August 22, 1996 — Greetings to all brethren who are faithful everywhere! I am glad to inform you that seven (7) very precious souls were added to the Church through baptism as results of an exerted efforts on evangelism: One — Bro. Noli Portuguese — is a former preacher of a "Born Again" group in Baguio City, who was accompanied by Bro. Fernando Alvaro to Roxas on August 14th, primarily to have further Bible studies with me, and perhaps to let me confirm whatever issues he has already studied with Bro. F. Alvaro, our preacher in Baguio City. Bro. B. Salamanca happened to come here while we were making our studies, and so he joined us. We touched vital issues such as: the Communion; Teaching the Word; Non-use of Instrumental music in Christian worship and other subjects, but we emphasized Biblical teaching regarding simple plan of salvation, while we encouraged and challenged him to make decision. He humbly responded by requesting us to baptize him that same hour of the afternoon. He was baptized immediately at the baptistry tank of the Roxas Church. On August 17, Bro. Eduardo O. Danao, my older brother in the flesh who preaches and works with our congrega-

tion in Santiago City, and I went to Lapogan, conducted Bible study (personal evangelism) in the evening with the prospects of our preaching brethren there; worshipped with them in the morning of Sunday, then after the service, immediately went to Masasi to conduct worship service there in the afternoon. As a result of these efforts, six (6) were baptized; four (4) from Lapogan; and two (2) from Masasi. On August 6 - 8 the congregation in Catabban hosted a LEADERSHIP SEMINAR AND FELLOWSHIP, where subjects such as: QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELDERS/LEADERS, RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ELDERS/LEADERS/PREACHERS AND THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH, IMPLEMENTING DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST ERRING ELDER/LEADER/PREACHER AND BIBLICAL STEPS TO BE OBSERVED AND FOLLOWED BY A REPENTANT LEADER BEFORE HE IS CALLED AGAIN, and other vital subjects. Many leaders, elders and preachers form congregations in other places attended. The seminar was a success. Some preaching brethren helped me prepare the program — topics to be discussed and others. Other congregations I visited and where I preached are Mallig, Simpreviva, Dammao, Caligiuan and Santiago City, a side from my work with the congregations in Sandiat and Roxas. Because of our desire to safeguard the Lord's work in my country, just recently we — all preachers and congregations concerned — implemented, and is still in force, disciplinary action against erring and unrepentant preacher here, so others maybe warned and fear. Please pray for us that God may give us strength, courage and wisdom to combat whatever attempt made to undermine the Lord's work here. May God bless us all!

Bobby J. Pepper, 16870 HSV.Brownsferry Road, Athens, AL 35611, 8-16-96--The trip bro. Jimmy Vannoy and I made to Michurinsk Russia was very rewarding. The church was strengthen in our studies with them concerning congregation responsibilities. The crowds continued to grow each night in our lectures, and we had eighty to sign up for our english classes. From these studies eight were baptized; it is so very exciting to witness the power of God's Word, and we give Him the glory! Brother Kostya Alexseev is now working full time in the Tambov Region, and will be able to work more with the congregation in Michurinsk. It was a pleasure to work With Kostya, and the other Christians in that area once again. God's Word continues to be taught by faithful Christians in Russia, by the Russian Christians; which I know is the answer to many prayers. The Corsicana Texas congregation continues to accept the responsibility over seeing the work in Michllrinsk. The Sanderfer Road congregation here in Athens continues to enjoy the unity in Christ. Five were baptized here recently. If you are coming our way please stop by and worship With us. May God bless the faithful everywhere is our prayers!

P. Duane Permenter, P. O. Box 80687, Midland, TX 79708, Sept. 4th.— The meeting hosted by the Green Oaks church in Arlington, TX over Labor day week-end was certainly enjoyable. It was a the preachers who were scheduled around the theme of Nehemiah and his work in Jerusalem. Our work in Midland continues to move along even

though there has been a lot of illness in the congregation. Harold Taylor has recently had heart problems, but seems to be recovering. We have had seven different people in the hospital or in a doctors office for serious problems in the last month. Please pray that these can soon recover. My family and I continue to do well. We are working hard and ask your continued prayers in our behalf. May God bless the faithful everywhere. The cassette tapes with Jim Bradford singing the first 119 songs and Ivan Costa the last half of the songs from Lynwood's new songbook BLESSED FOUNTAIN" is still available through the above address or by calling (915) 520-6508. These can be shipped post paid for \$9.24. Jim and Ivan call the number, pitch and sing the soprano of each song.

These tapes are an excellent way to learn the new songs. The tapes were not intended for entertainment, but to help us learn the pitch and timing of each song. We still have some available and you can call or write today for your copy.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr. Fremont, CA 94539, September 10-- The meeting at Huntington, W.VA closed with no visible results but we pray the church was helped by the effort. I enjoyed preaching there. Visitors from a number of nearby congregations came nearly every service as well as some who were not members from the community. I stayed with Bill Chatterton and family who went out of their way to make me comfortable. Hospitality is still alive among the church there. We look forward to working with the Escalon, CA congregation in a meeting October 20-27. We would love to see you all there. We have held a number of meetings there through the years and always enjoyed them. We enjoyed the Labor Day meeting at Stockton, CA this year. Large crowds were in attendance and the church worked hard to make it a good meeting. It was my pleasure to preach Lord's Day morning to a large crowd. We recently preached on Sunday at Yuba City, CA morning and evening and are scheduled to be at Atwater next Lord' Day. It was great to see Brother Felipe Bayani and wife at the Labor Day meeting. They were visiting from the work in Hawaii and he reports the work is doing very well. They have purchased a house which will soon be converted into a permanent place for worship. It is near the airport in Honolulu and should be a good location. Remember, we need your regular field reports Please take a few minutes each month to write a brief report. Brethren everywhere need to know of your work, Why not let them know what you are doing? We look forward to the Philippine trip this year, Lord willing, we will travel with Bennie Cryer as in years past. Pray for us.

Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808, Sept. 25--The meeting at Napoleon, Al. was most enjoyable. Our crowds were large and attentive. One came back to the church. Brother Calvin Prince is a pillar of strength in this congregation, as well as the whole area. Next we went to Lowery in south Al. Five made confessions. Brother Aaron Risener was with us here, and we enjoyed having him. It is always a pleasure to go back to this area and preach. I first went there as a lad of fifteen, forty-five years ago. Many things have changed, but not the hospitality.

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Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, Cal. 94539.

Our meeting in Columbus, Oh. was encouraging to me. This was my first visit there and I learned to love the brethren who live and work there. Brother Barney Owens and Bill Ferguson came up and rendered valuable help. Next we were at Miami, Ok., where we had one confession. This congregation, though rather young, is active and is to be commended for its faith and dedication. Sept. 20-22 we were with the church at BenDavis, Mo. It was good to see so many people that I had worked with in years gone by. We had good support from surrounding congregations. The Lord willing we go next to Ada, Ok. Sept. 27-Oct. 6, West Plains, Mo. Oct. 11-13, White Bluff, Tn. Oct. 14-20, Liberty, Ky. Oct. 23-27, and Harrison, Ar. Oct. 30-Nov. 3. Please remember us when you pray.

OPPOSED TO CARNAL WARFARE

To whom it may concern:

I cannot take part in military service in any form, directly or indirectly, in combatant or noncombatant service. Below are listed some of my reasons:

1. My duty and obligation to God is superior to all other obligations (Acts. 5:29; Mt. 23:37).

2. My God in the Bible forbids that I engage in carnal warfare in the following references: "Put up again they sword...for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Mt. 26:52); "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (2 Cor. 10:3-4); "Turn the other cheek" (Mt. 5:39); "Recompense to no man evil for evil" (Rom. 12:17).

3. To enter any military service combatant or noncombatant I would be compelled to "swear" (take an oath), but the Bible forbids that I do so. "Swear not at all" (Mt. 5:34).

4. To enter any military service I would be compelled to be yoked with unbelievers, which is forbidden. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14).

5. To be in any branch of the military service in any way, I would be a part of an organization and would therefore have fellowship in the service but such is prohibited. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11)

6. To serve in the military service in any way, I would be deprived of obeying the command to assemble on Lord's Day to worship God in the Bible way at least part of the time, hence would disobey God (Heb. 10:25; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2).

Therefore, I cannot conscientiously engage in carnal war in any form or branch and for the above reasons I ask that my name be listed in support of the above principles.

Charles M. Robison, RR3, Box 232, Broken Bow, OK #4728.

David Johnson, 1400 Northcrest, Ada, OK 74820

Scott Renfro, Rt. 1, Box 149R Ringling, OK 73456

Robert De Chaume, c/o Rt. 3, Box 166-B, Cameron, TX 76520

Eric Eubanks, 4855 Winding Way, Auburn, CA 95602

Evan Eubanks, 4855 Winding Way, Auburn, CA 95602

It Doesn't need Pasteurizing!

By TONY MELTON

Two cows watched the milk truck drive by with this sign painted on it: "Pure milk-pasteurized-homogenized-vitamin D added." One cow commented to the other, "Makes you feel a bit inadequate, doesn't it?"

The Bible tells us to "desire the pure milk of the word" (1 Peter 2:2). God's word is pure and does not need any additives or changes. It cannot be improved! Often man seems to think it is necessary to pasteurize, homogenize and add vitamins to God's word. This attitude sends a message to God saying that His word is inadequate. Without changing one letter, the Bible completely equips us for every good word (2 Timothy 3:16,17). It is the perfect or complete law of liberty (James 1:25).

Have you ever wondered why so much confusion exists in the religious world today? The answer is simple: Man had taken the "pure milk of the word" and pasteurized, homogenized and added to it. God warns: "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2). Again He says, "If we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8).

"Self-Deception"

By TONY MELTON

The New Testament warns against "self-deception," saying, "Let no one deceive himself" (1 Corinthians 3:18). Self-deception signifies "to deceive one's self by false reasoning, to delude one's self or to confide in a falsehood.

We may be deceived by others or we may deceive ourselves. The worst of the two is self-deception, because it results when we convince ourselves that is okay in God's sight, that in reality displeases Him. It is as the French author Lambert wrote: "We cheat ourselves in order to enjoy a quiet conscience, without possessing virtue."

The worst product of self-deception is that it causes men and women to sit idle after hearing God's word. The Bible says, "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22). We are deceiving ourselves when we hear or read what God wants us to do, but do not do it. Why is this self-deception? The deception is in the notion that we can serve God and please Him without obeying Him. Jesus says, "But why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' and do not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). To call Jesus our Lord while refusing to follow His laws and commandments is simply an exercise in self-deception. In doing this, we are certainly not deceiving the Lord, which is impossible, but rather ourselves.

Our purpose is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

"To continue speaking the truth in love," "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," "keeping the ordinance as delivered."

"Thus saith the Lord, 'stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where in the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.' (Jer. 6:16) "And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in." (Isa. 58:12).

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NO. 11

"My Name Is Gossip"

By DON McCORD

The caption is the title of the following anonymous, brief, but revealing, disquisition: "My name is gossip. I have no respect for justice. I maim without killing. I break hearts and ruin lives. I am cunning and malicious, and gather strength with age. The more I am quoted, the more I am believed. I flourish at every level of society. My victims are helpless. They cannot protect themselves against me because I have no name or face. To track me down is virtually impossible. The harder you try, the more elusive I become. I am nobody's friend. Once I tarnish your reputation, it is never quite the same. My name is gossip."

Of all the blows and "spots in feasts of charity" in the Lord's church, present-day, none is more despicable, devastating, shameful than gossip. All who have ears can attest to this deplorable practice, done sometimes so sanctimoniously, in mock innocence, under the guise of doing a service. Someone has used this fitting analogy: "Gossip is a little insect; it has neither legs nor wings. It is made up wholly of tales, and most of them have stings."

There is no defense, excuse for gossip; for this insidious practice is indefensible, it is inexcusable. It is wrong; it is cowardly; it is SINFUL, soul-condemning. Practitioners need to be ashamed of themselves. Those who graspingly listen to it, and take pleasure in the same, without rebuking sharply the gossip, need to bow their guilty heads in abject shame and remorse, and implore earnestly God's forgiveness and mercy.

That the tongue is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison, in this regard is evident. From James 3:5-6 we learn: "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth; And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell." Yes, "hell"; not sheol, hades, tartarus, but gehenna, "the hell of hells," used 12 times in the New Testament scriptures, 11 of those by the Master Himself; the other time here by James in this masterful indictment of the tongue. If you have ever been the victim of gossip, you know what he means; the victim of an unleashed, unbridled, unmerciful, unprincipled tongue! Not only condemned here is the tongue of gossip, but the tongue of jest, the tongue of making-fun at some innocent absentee's expense. Time of day is spent in the gossip-circuit talking irresponsibly about the things in the lives of precious people that have broken their hearts into a million pieces. Yet, on the gossipers go

with their gloating listeners, inclining their hungry ears to hear more. Brothers and sisters are thus brought before this tribunal of ungodly injustice, tried, condemned without a hearing, the work of the gossip and his listeners.

Who am I, who do I think I am, to take your name, the name of your child, the name of your wife, your husband, your parents, and use, abuse, misuse in such an ungodly forum? — your name, their name that does not belong to me; yes, who do I think I am; who do we think we are? How presumptuous is the gossip to think it is any of his business to invade such a private and personal arena!! Yes, where he has no part nor lot — just who, yes, who does he think he is?

If a man will gossip to you about your brother and sister, he will most likely gossip to them about you; so beware. Gossip will backfire. "The chickens come home to roost." "What goes around comes around."

The gossip would not think of worshipping wrong, contrary to the Scriptures, in digression. That he should not do for sure. He would not think of singing in the assembly with an instrument of music; he would not think of practicing the Sunday School system in teaching and learning; he would not think of having more than one loaf and more than one cup of fruit of the vine on the Table. Again, for sure, he should not. But with no apparent compunction or conscience, he will not hesitate to lash and slash, malign with his tongue, cutting your name, your character, your reputation into ribbons. What hypocrisy! What injustice! What a glaring incongruity in practice, in living right, in worshipping right, talking right!

God, the Father, must be terribly disappointed, to say the least. How do we feel when the gossip takes the name of our child, abusing and misusing it? This crushes the heart of any father. We feel betrayed, abused, misused, and that we ought. So, when we gossip about His child, our brother, sister, He must feel no less hurt, no differently. A wise and insightful man once said, "Among my most prized possessions are words that I never spoke."

Oh, the condemnation the Book heaps upon the gossip! He is a backbiter, tale-bearer. See Lev. 19:16; Prov. 11:13; 18:6-8; 20:19; Ps. 15:1-3; 140:3; 34:12-14; Rom. 3:13; I Peter 3:10; Matt. 12:34-37. In view of such and more, when asked to advise young preachers, saturate your sermons with scriptures appropriate to the message. When it comes to your living, steer clear of the gossip circuit

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Editorial

God Cares For You

By *BENNIE T. CRYER*

Several are suffering various maladies, losses, and problems in the brotherhood. There are those suffering through terminal illness. The heart ache and pain embraces the loved ones who stand helplessly by their bedside. Others are experiencing the agonies that follow the loss of a loved one: a husband, wife, father, mother, child or dear friend. The tentacles of disappointment have coiled themselves around the hearts and minds of others so tightly grasping them so they can hardly function. If we are not suffering these things ourselves at the present time we know that in the future we will experience some or all of these pangs. What can we do during trying times like these? How can we steer our lives safely through such labyrinths of problems? Consider that

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

Remember the words of Peter as he wrote to those that were enduring terrible afflictions.

I Peter 5:7, Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

The heavenly Father does care for you. He has provided many things for us in our times of trouble. He knows you personally by name.

John 10:3, To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

When you pray to God Jesus is able to call your name out to God and say to him, "This is (place your name here.) and he or she is offering supplications. They are having severe problems and they need your help." Our Father is so aware of you that the very hair of your head is numbered.

Matthew 10:30, But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

It is said that a German scientist took time to make a study of the number of hairs on a person's head. He found that there were more in number if the hair was black than if it were red. But if you had brown hair you had more than the one with black. And, if you were a blond-headed woman you had more than a black haired woman. If God pays that much attention to the hairs on our heads how can we doubt His being with us in these significant problems? We are not alone.

Not only does our Father know our names and numbers the very hairs of our heads, He also puts our tears, figuratively speaking, in bottles and writes them in His book according to the Psalmist.

Psalms 56:8, Thou tellest my wanderings; put thou my tears into thy bottle, are they not in my book?

Putting our tears in His bottle may have reference to the ancient practice of bottling the tears of a mourner and burying it with the deceased. These tear bottles were called Lachrymatories. What David is asking of God is that He

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Does the word "forsake" in Hebrews 10:25 mean that one has to completely abandon the faith to violate this passage, or may one violate the passage by neglecting to assemble because of work or a vacation trip? (Mo.)

Answer: The passage in question reads as follows: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25) The word "forsake," in this passage, translates the Greek word *enkataleipo*, which according to Vine means "to forsake, abandon, leave in straits, or helpless, ...of things by Christians (negatively) Heb. 10:25."

Thayer says "to abandon, desert, ...i.e. to leave in straits, leave helpless, (collq. leave in the lurch)" The question that needs to be answered is this: is Paul saying that in order for one to "forsake" the "assembling together" he must completely turn his back on it, and thus reject the Christian religion, or is it possible for one to forsake, abandon, and leave in straits, the Lord's Day assembling by merely neglecting to attend it? In answering that question let us notice the following: A.T. Robertson in his **Word Pictures of The New Testament**, makes the following observation on p. 412 "Not leaving behind, not leaving in the lurch." (2 Tim. 4:10). The assembling of yourselves together... As the custom of some is. "As is custom to some.'... Already some Christians had formed the habit of not attending public worship, a perilous habit then and now." In this verse we have a command for Christians to do not forsake the assembling together with other Christians for the purpose of exhortation. When one fails to do so, he/she has done the very thing Paul commanded should not be done. As Robertson points out some were already forming the habit of missing or not attending these public gatherings. They had not abandoned the faith, they were just neglecting their duty in assembling. When one, who could assemble, fails to do so, they forsake, abandon, or leave in the lurch that particular act of assembling and are thus guilty of violating this passage. If not, why not? Vincent makes an important point when he notes: "The assembling of ourselves together... The act of assembling, although some explain assembly. The antithesis is, "not forsaking assembling, but exhorting in assembly." Lunemann aptly says that the idea of apostasy which would be conveyed by the rendering of assembly or congregation is excluded by ethos, habit or custom, which implies an often recurring act on the part of the same persons." In other words Lunemann says that these people under consideration had not completely abandoned the faith, but were guilty of "an often recurring act." The same people, were time and again, guilty of violating this passage. They were missing church, or as Robertson said they were forming the habit of not attending. To conclude, therefore, that the only way one could violate Heb. 10:25 is to completely abandon the faith, misses the mark and denies the clear intent of the passage. Consider the following illustration:

suppose you and I have a standing business appointment every Monday morning at 9 a.m., last Monday I failed to show up for the appointment because I had another matter I wanted to address. On Tuesday you call me up and ask "where were you yesterday?" I reply, "I had another matter I wanted to address." You then say "you stood me up, left me in the lurch, deserted me." I reply by saying, "no I didn't, I plan to meet you next Monday," "but what about yesterday," you complain, "and besides that, you have missed several appointments lately." "Oh, that doesn't mean I won't ever meet you again, it just means I didn't meet you yesterday."

Surely you can see the point. The fact that I failed to keep the appointment, when I could have, when I chose to do something else in place of keeping it, means that I forsook that particular appointment, I deserted my friend. I left him in the lurch. The same thing happens when we treat the Lord's Day assembling in the same way. Let us now look at some of the commentaries and see how they understand this verse, Robert Milligan: "The Apostle refers here, not to apostasy from the Church, as some allege, but simply to the neglect of public and social worship." Dods in **The Expositors Greek Testament**: "In order to fulfil his injunction they must not neglect meeting together for Christian worship and encouragement...Some made a practice of neglecting these meetings, whether from fear of persecution or from scorn or from business engagements...This good custom of meeting together and mutually exhorting one another was to be all the more punctually and zealously attended to." Ellicott said "this neglect was the first step toward apostasy." The teaching of Heb. 10:25 is simply that the Hebrew Christians were to continue assembling for the purpose of exhortation. They were not to forsake, abandon, leave in the lurch, neglect such an important part of their Christian responsibility. Some apparently were forming the habit of staying away from the assemblies. The warning and command to all is clear: don't do it. The argument that the word "forsake" means to abandon hence refers to a complete apostasy from Christianity is not only unwarranted, but is clearly contradictory in the light of the foregoing evidence.

To contend that it is all right to neglect the "assembling together" if you have to work because in such a situation one hasn't completely abandoned the faith, is regrettable indeed. Such reasoning would allow people to miss any number of Lord's Day gatherings. The idea that an individual can miss up to fifty Sundays a year, to work, and still be in good standing with the church, is ridiculous. Surely all can see that such a belief could eliminate the worship assembly altogether. If one could do it, why not everyone? If everyone does it, then no assembly. Brethren, stop and think, are you willing to embrace such a doctrine as that? Surely not.

(Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808)

“Offended By Him”

By RICHARD DEGOUGH

Jesus had left Capernaum and came home to Nazareth where he had been brought up, and on the sabbath day as his custom was he entered into the synagogue and stood up to read. After reading the prophet Isaiah (Isa.61:1-2), with all eyes fixed upon him he declared unto them; “...This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” The people marveled at his words, wisdom, and his mighty works, insomuch as to declare: “Is not this the carpenter’s son”...”Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him.” (Matt.13:55-57) They disapproved of him and refused his authority; “And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.” This was not the only time people were offended at the Lord. When Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for their hypocrisy, the disciples declared; “Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?” Jesus answered; “Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.” Matt.15:3-13. Previous to his being apprehended, his trial, and crucified Jesus declared unto his apostles; “All ye shall be offended because of me this night.” Meaning of course that they would stumble, and desert him in the dark hour of trial. The apostle Peter made the boast; “Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.” We can recall the denial that Peter made of his Lord shortly after this statement. Matt. 26:31-33. While many were offended in the Lord during his ministry because of his words and mighty works, the same can be said to exist in our day of people in various situations of life. It is sometimes hard to understand how anyone could be offended in the Lord Jesus, but it is a reality just the same. His words caused offense while he lived and they are still offensive to many.

THE MORALIST

Morality is essential if a person is ever going to inherit eternal life, but it is not the only requirement given. The rich ruler kept the moral aspects of the law, but failed to do the one thing Jesus asked him to do. Lk.18:18-24. There is not a person living that can surpass the morality of Cornelius, the centurion, and in all of his goodness and admirable character he was still unsaved until he complied with the words of the angel of God who instructed him to send for Peter “Who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.” The Moralist of today can boastfully say: “I am a good person because I do not steal, lie, cheat, kill, deceive, bear false witness, commit adultery, and I’m honest and a good neighbor, so why wouldn’t the Lord save a person like me? With this reasoning people dismiss the commands of the gospel as unnecessary and become offended if you point out that Jesus said; “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Again, the Lord’s word becomes an offence to the moralist.

THE ORTHODOX JEW

When we preach that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ the son of the living God, the orthodox Jew of today is offended. He does not believe the New Testament, nor does

he accept the prophecies of the Old Testament as referring to our Lord who came and died for our sins. His unbelief is a blatant denial of all the facts stated, and puts him against the Lord, rejecting His word, thus placing himself in a condemned position with God. Jesus said; “...but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Mk.16:16 His unbelief is his downfall, expressing the fact that he “...is condemned already,” and “shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” Jno. 3:18,36. Strong statements from the Lord, but nevertheless true and unchangeable.

THE DENOMINATIONALIST

The Lord becomes an offence to these people in so many ways we could never name them all. An example for instance is the church being one. (Matt.16:18, I Cor. 12:12, Eph. 4:4) Baptism for the remission of sins, no mechanical instruments of music in worship to God, no women preachers, no “Sunday school classes,” no salvation by faith only, grace only, love only, or any other “only.” If we preach against the charismatic “feel good religion,” along with the “I know what I feel in my heart,” and, the “Holy Spirit speaks to me, guiding me, in a personal way,” completely ignoring the words of the Lord and the apostles, you will offend them, I promise you. They are so Calvinistic from the core, and throughout, that they are intolerable of any teaching to the contrary. Try to reason from the Scriptures with one of them concerning any issue that “pertains to life and godliness,” and see what I mean. Jesus is an offence unto them.

THE LIBERALS

These people are in the world, the Church, they are everywhere. They are not interested in a “thus saith the Lord,” because they abandoned that principle long ago. I appreciated the article of Jerry and Billy Dickinson; “You Just Might Be A Liberal,” in August O.P.A. It certainly identifies the liberals in the church. The liberal is the chronic wailer at the “wailing wall,” always crying about being persecuted. They are never really satisfied with the preaching or teaching of sound doctrine about anything. They want you to believe that they are loving and compassionate to the “inth” degree in all they do and say. Well, just cross one of them and witness how loving and compassionate they are! They are the soft peddlers among us, and their lives prove it. They have no qualms about using terms such “you are legalistic, Pharisaical, uncharitable, and judgmental.” The last term is the one they use when you offer one critical word against their weak unscriptural path they have chosen to follow in life. Their preaching will always be love, and how loving we ought to be, while ignoring sin and rebellion against God in every aspect of life. They tell you that you are uncharitable and judgmental if you point out the dangers and consequences of sin, so, therefore just sweep it under the rug and everybody just love one another! We have seen the results of this false concept among them with their children. Many of them have lost their children to the world or to the denominations, or have turned out to be scoffers and mockers of the Church of Christ and her stand against

the sins of the world. They are easily identified under their cloak of so called righteousness. While preaching love they hate and spew their venom on brethren that call their attention to the fact that we are followers of Jesus Christ and not men, Lastly, you never find them establishing a congregation anywhere, but they prefer to stay in a

congregation that endeavors to serve the Lord and disturb it. Mark them brethren, because they will cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and AVOID THEM! The Lord and his word is an offence unto them.—OPA.

Productive Christianity

BY LARRY LAY

An unusual story, rarely referred to in the modern pulpit, was told by Jesus in (Matt. 12:38-45). Surprisingly, the story was directed at some people who considered themselves very religious. Had you talked to them they no doubt would have assured you that their lives were lived "According to the pattern." They would have been quick to talk about their religious heritage. They honored the sacrifice, tithed faithfully, and read from the law often.

But something about them aroused the ire of Jesus. There was some thing so sadly lacking in their lives that Jesus painted a chilling picture of their existence and made them confront it.

They had presented to God a righteousness that had no basis in duty, desire, or love. They were ceremonially clean, but their hearts were faithless and lacked devotion. They had purged many moral evils from their lives, but had failed to fill their hearts with a fervent love for God or His people. Read (Matt. 12:43-45)

When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, "I will return to the house I left. When it arrives it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there, and the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation.

What is haunting about the parable is the fact that the individual, perhaps representative of the Jewish nation, had made attempts to clean away the evil and sin. The house was clean and in order. The failure comes when nothing is put back into the house.

There is an important principle that should not be lost on us. The problem was not so much what was removed, but what wasn't replaced. This is a commentary on nations and individuals who try to approach God with ceremonial cleanness and empty hearts.

One of the criticisms we have heard is that there seems to be an abundance of negative preaching. We are always quick to dismiss such criticism. Yet, Jesus establishes an irrefutable point. You cannot approach God on the basis of negative Christianity.

It is a parable of lips that can sing hymns, but hearts not stirred to love, prayers that rise from lips that never praise.

Jesus wanted them to know and Jesus wants us to know the quality of one's life does not consist of, nor can it be measured by the things we do not do.

Admittedly, there is much said in the Bible about negative prohibitions. For instance, "abstain from fornication" (I Thess. 4:3). "Abstain from all appearances of evil" (I Thes. 5:22). "Abstain from fleshly lust which

war against the soul (I Pet. 2:11). No one would argue the importance of keeping these commandments. But the point remains, our Christianity must ultimately be measured by what it does, not by what it refrains from doing. One occurs because we fear and honor God therefore, we obey His prohibitions. The other is based upon our love and devotion to God and a desire for the spiritual.

All Christians face tremendous challenges in this modern world. How do we measure our Christianity? I don't do this, or that. It is worth thinking about...there are worldly people who may well refrain from committing the sins you will not commit. What, then, is the difference?

The parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-28) draws us back to the difference. Some servants were productive, one was not. He was not evil, he wasn't lawless, he was simply unproductive. His idea of serving God was like a lot of people today...just don't do anything wrong. The problem, God doesn't accept that level of commitment. Christianity by its nature is productive—that is it responds to all events with appropriate and positive action. It is not weak nor passive. Sometimes people reason, "I haven't hurt anybody, I haven't gone to the wrong places, I haven't been hanging out with the wrong people, I haven't been drinking" and we sincerely add that is commendable. The Lord adds this: "When did you glorify me? Where did you shine light, where did you shake salt? What did you add to your life? Where is the virtue, the goodness, and faith, self-control, and love? (II Pet. 1:5-9) Where did you use your talents? How were you productive?"

Christianity grows by addition much more than subtraction, and so the Apostle concludes, "For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." That's the crux of it! If we are content to have a relationship with Christ that is based primarily on what we don't do...the sad truth is we will be ineffective and unproductive.

James knew that real Christianity was intense and directed."Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." (James 1:27)

Every life is destined to love God and fulfill His plan or be left to the cunning desires of Satan. But Jesus reminds us that something is going to enter your spiritual house. Your heart and your life are not a vacuum. They will entertain the Son of God or evil influences will take up abode.

No other relationship in life can be maintained by passively sitting back and doing nothing. We all know from experience that relationships that grow, and develop,

and mature are relationships based on giving, caring, and devotion. What is any different in the family of God? Why do we think we can have a strong, healthy spiritual life and not participate in those positive actions which bring it about and maintain it?

If you have a talent to teach, thank God and ask Him to help you develop it. If you can sing, thank God for the opportunity to praise Him. Perhaps you have a special way of helping the helpless, encouraging the discouraged, lifting the fallen, or healing the hurting. Thank God. Use the talent. Glorify Him through your life. Hundreds of ways there are to be productive. The next time you are content to not get involved in productive Christianity stop and think about a man and a nation that raised the ire of Jesus just because they thought it was enough to just not be bad. Think about a man who thought he wasn't hurting anyone just because he wasn't misusing his talent.

But the fact is, he did misuse it because he did not use it to God's glory. Note the latter part of (Rom. 12:6-12) "...Never be lacking in zeal, keep your spiritual fervor."

You can't keep it by focusing on the negatives in life. Get involved and learn to use your talents and opportunities cheerfully. Everyone naturally feels more enthusiastic when they are involved.

I truly hope when you find the strength to sweep the sins and negative attitudes and ways of living from your heart, you will fill that heart with duty, devotion, and involvement with God...and God's people.

Involved Christians will be Christians much more likely to stay strong and close. The less we are involved the more likely to grow weak, stagnant, and distant from God.

Make it a point daily to thank God for allowing you the opportunity to serve Him publicly and privately. When you consider it a privilege, you will be amazed at how it can change your outlook and disposition.

You will understand what it means to glorify God in all that you do. The phrase, PRODUCTIVE CHRISTIANITY will truly take on new meaning and add new perspective to your life.

Wade/Smith Debate

By JIMMIE C. SMITH

Ronny Wade and J.T. Smith met in a public debate on Sept. 23-24th at Dunbar Auditorium in Mountain Home, Ark. The first night of the discussion Bro. J.T. Smith affirmed: "The Scriptures Teach that a Congregation for the Communion may use individual cups (drinking vessels) for the distribution of the fruit of the vine," while Bro. Wade denied.

On Tuesday evening Ronny affirmed: "The Scriptures Teach that a Congregation for the Communion must use one cup (drinking vessel) in the distribution of the fruit of the vine," and J.T. denied.

It was an orderly discussion with 149 in attendance on Monday night and 99 on Tuesday night. It doesn't take a Solomon to see that their people aren't interested in a discussion of this subject as our people far outnumbered their's. The instrumental brethren aren't interested in a discussion of the music issue; the institutional brethren aren't interested in a discussion on the colleges and orphan homes in the budget; and neither are the cups brethren interested in a discussion on the communion. This alone, if nothing else, makes me feel secure in our practice. We know that our practice is of faith (Rom. 10:17).

J.T.'s first speech centered almost entirely around metonymy, affirming, "Every single use of Cup in the New Testament is metonymical in the Lord's Supper": J.T. relied heavily on Bullinger and Arndt and Gingrich.

Ronny rebutted by pointing out that nine lexicons define cup literal in Matt. 26:27, and that Arndt and Gingrich define cup "literal," and that J.T. had omitted Matt. 26:27 on his chart of scriptures involving the Lord's Supper and figurative uses.

Ronny also quoted J.T. on "Bible Authority" where J.T. demands Command, Example and Necessary inference in fighting institutionalism. In regards to metonymy, J.T. would not deal with the "metonymy of the container for the contained," but only the "metonymy of the subject." J.T. repeatedly said, "I do not know what Christ used." He

didn't know how many "a cup," "the cup," "this cup" were, but when he found "chalices" (plural) in the Ante-Nicean Fathers he knew how many they were.

I had the distinct feeling that J.T. was rattled after Ronny's first negative and at times was uncharacteristically stammering. Ronny met and answered every argument with force and clarity. He also proved in the metaphorical use of the word "cup" according to Bullinger that the "two nouns are always literal." Thus, "this cup is the Test Testament," the container and the New Covenant are literal and could not refer to the fruit of the vine as the cup. Ronny also pointed out that all innovations have a common origin in that they come from men. G.C. Brewer takes the credit for introducing individual drinking vessels into the Churches of Christ and J.T. Smith accredited G.C. Brewer with the introduction of the college in the budget into Churches of Christ, so Ronny conceded that Bro. Brewer was a good innovator. The only thing is that J.T. accepts and defends one innovation and rejects the other. J.T. made no attempt to prove his proposition by Command, Example, or Necessary Inference, the only means of establishing Bible Authority.

In Ronny's affirmative on Tuesday night Ronny used J.T.'s writings on "How to establish Bible Authority" — i.e. Command, Example and Necessary Inference" and then proceeded to prove the practice of one cup filled with the fruit of the vine by each.

J.T. spent the first portion of his negative trying to answer Ronny's last speech the night before. He used 13 of his own charts and called for only one of Ronny's affirmative charts, that being Ronny's chart; "Christ used one cup". As usual he accused Ronny of making an idol of the container and believing an empty Cup represents the New Covenant. Ronny restated that he never believed an empty cup represented the New Covenant, and if believing the Cup represents the NC makes it an idol, then believing the Bread represent Christ's body makes the bread an idol, and

the fruit of the vine to represent his blood an idol.

Ronny begged repeatedly for J.T. to address the three metaphors (bread-body; fruit of the vine-blood; Cup-New Covenant), but to no avail; and reiterated that the two nouns must be literal in a metaphor (Bullinger), thus cup cannot be figurative (fruit of the vine).

J.T. had used the altar argument (Heb. 13:10) and Ronny pointed out that is a metonymy of the subject, but not a metonymy of the container for the contained. Ronny then appealed and proved his premise by a definition of the greek words "ek" and "pino."

J.T. was repetitious throughout the debate and no where was it more evident than in his last speech. He did make a statement in his last speech that some of us thought put him in quite an inconsistent corner. He said that he once went to a place to preach and took his overhead projector, and while he was putting it up, someone told him he would have to take it down because some of the brethren there believed such was an innovation; and so he gladly took it

down. But he won't give up his cups for the same reason!

CONCLUSION

This discussion came about because Bro. Darryl Haun of the Wade and Cross St. congregation was given the opportunity to present our views on this subject on a Sunday night at the S. Hwy. 5 congregation, soundly defeating the local preacher. Bro. Brett Hickey did much of the leg work and kept time for Ronny at the debate. On Tuesday night when we were in the affirmative, Bro. Don Pruitt led the prayer, Bro. Johnny Elmore led a song and Bro. Lynwood Smith dismissed. Ronny never underestimates an opponent and was loaded to the gills with material that he was unable to present.

An interesting aside: Linda Leicht, managing editor of the Baxter Bulletin (Mountain Home's newspaper) attended both nights of the debate and wrote a lengthy article covering the discussion greatly slanted in favor of our practice.—Rt. 6, Box 199A, Harrison, AR.

"My Name Is Gossip"

Continued from page 1

where some preachers and some preachers' wives are prone to amble and ramble. People will love and admire you for it; your influence will be lasting and far-reaching; your demand for preaching will be such that you cannot answer all the calls. Brethren generally take a dim view of the preacher who comes to them bearing tales on others from afar. They hold the gossiping preacher in suspect.

In the long-ago days of Gunter College, Gunter, Texas, a paper, "The Pioneer" was published by them. In the July 1927 issue appeared, "Gossip Town," by Henry M. Barr. Its message ever-old is ever-new. Here it is:

"Have you ever heard of Gossip Town, on the shores of Falsehood Bay, where Old Dame Rumor, with rustling gown is going the livelong day? It isn't far to Gossip Town for people who want to go; the Idleness Train will take

you down in just an hour or so. The Thoughtless Road is the popular route, and most people go that way; but it is steep downgrade; if you don't look out, you will land in Falsehood Bay. You glide through the valley of Vicious Talk, and into the Tunnel-of-Hate; then crossing the Add-to-Bridge you walk right into the City Gate. The principal street is called "They Say", and "I've Heard" is the public well. And the breezes that blow from Falsehood Bay are laden with Don't-You-Tell. In the midst of town is Tell-Tale-Park. You are never quite safe while there, for its owner is Madam Suspicious Remark, who lives on the street "Don't Care." Just back of the park is Slanderer's Row; 'twas there that Good Name died, pierced by a shaft from Jealousy's Bow in the hands of Envious Pride. From Gossip Town, Peace long since fled; but Trouble and Greed and Woe, and Sorrow and Care you'll meet instead, if you ever a chance to go."—Box 1773, Covina, CA 91722

God Cares For You

continued from page 2

not forget his tears. This verse indicates the interest that God has in the tears we shed in our sorrows, griefs, and losses. When we ask God to remember our tears we must also remember His promise about taking away all of our tears.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. Revelation 21:4.

Remember also you are not alone in your suffering. I know that your affliction is unique, and very special and personal to you. I cannot know exactly how you feel. God wanted you to know, however, that others are suffering along with you. So, He caused Paul to write:

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. I Corinthians 10:13.

Trials, temptations, and afflictions are shared by oth-

ers. We are not the only one that has a problem in this area. But doesn't our's seem so much larger than any of the others? Sure it does! But that is because it is so close and personal to us. You can hold two dimes near your eyes and blot out almost all of your vision of the universe. Hold those same two dimes at arms length and they hardly block out any vision. Just remember, others are suffering and know a little bit about how you feel.

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Phillipians 4:6-7

This verse imposes a responsibility upon us to trust in God and draw nearer to Him in our difficulties. No wonder Peter wrote,

I Peter 5:7. Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

May God richly bless you in your difficult situations and may these difficulties cause you to walk closer to Him who loved you, suffered so much in your behalf, and then died for you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THANKS

Marlene and I express my appreciation to all who have expressed their condolences when we lost our eldest child, Rebecca, who died at the age of 38 on July 9th and was buried on the 11th at Creswell, Oregon. May the Lord bless all of you for your thoughtful gestures: the flowers, cards, letters, telephone calls and your prayers on our behalf. These demonstrations of love for us and our family has encouraged us to be stronger in faith and accept our loss.—

Jim Franklin, Blantyre, Malawi.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

State: Georgia - Knoxville (Crawford County). Approx. 20 miles West of Macon, Georgia on Highway 80 across from Courthouse.

Sunday 10:30 A.M. Wednesday 7:00 P.M.

Contacts and addresses are as listed in 1996 Directory.

NOTICE OF CHANGE OF ADDRESS

The Church of Christ, formerly of Marengo, IN, has changed location. We are now meeting in a little community about 12 miles East of our former location. The old building has been up for sale for some time and finally sold. Upon finding out the building had sold, we immediately began looking for a new and better place to meet. We found an older building in the town of Depauw, which, with Walter Hunters' help, we were able to purchase. We have great expectations for the work in this place. The building is located on the corner of Wetzeland Brown Street, not far from Hwy. 64 and Hwy. 337. Please make note of this change in your directory, and let those around you know as well. We are still meeting at 10:30 and 6:00 Eastern Time.

60th ANNIVERSARY

Brother and Sister Orville Graham, 326 N. Santa Ana Ave., Modesto, CA 95354 celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on Sept. 27. They are now homebound and would certainly appreciate a card. Please include your name and the congregation you attend.

OKLAHOMA NEW YEAR'S MEETING 50 YEARS!

The Oklahoma New Year's Meeting will begin the night of Dec. 27th and continue through midnight, December 31st. It will be a special year for this meeting, which has grown into the numerical thousands. It started as a small meeting for the younger boys at Healdton, OK, with the guidance of Bro. Tom Smith and Bro. Lynwood Smith. Through the years this meeting has grown to be one that is dear to the young and old. The older ones grew up looking forward to this each year and the young people have had the privilege of attending from childhood to teenagers, and now some are married couples with children.

The younger ones that are just learning and making their memories look forward to this special meeting of learning and meeting new Christian friends. To sum this up... Oklahoma looks forward to this meeting each year with zeal and enthusiasm! The meeting has been held in several places throughout Oklahoma during this 50 years. The last few years, it has been in the Oklahoma City area to ac-

commodate the crowd and have the help of the churches in this area. Bro. Lynwood has had a theme for this meeting for the last few years. He has also published a book of new songs each year for us to learn together and look forward to them being published in his new songbooks. There is lots of work going on by the host congregation and Lynwood to make each year a special one. But there is also a blessing that we receive from all this work. It is an uplifting work and is beneficial to all who attend. This meeting has produced numerous preachers, preachers wives and some of the most talented song leaders anywhere to be found. Lifelong friendships have been made and the fellowship is enjoyed by everyone. Through the years, various preachers have been in charge of this meeting and hosted the meeting well. But our older brother who had the original idea for this meeting at Healdton, OK has won the respect of the young people. To them, the New Year's Meeting means Lynwood will be in charge and see that they are the Christians they should be - along with the encouragement he has given to many throughout the years. Plan to attend this year! The singing and preaching is awe inspiring. Also the Midnight Service of singing the old year out and the new one is, under the direction of Bro. Johnny Elmore, with a special prayer to start the new year is one that "Binds The Hearts Of Thousands" across the brotherhood. Make your plans now!!

DEBATE

There will be a public discussion between Douglas T. Hawkins of Rocky Mount, MO and Michael P. Hughes of Camdenton, MO, focusing on the number of containers a congregation is permitted to use in distributing the fruit of the vine in the communion. The debate will be held beginning each evening at 7 p.m. December 2, 3, 5, 6 in Camdenton, MO at the Church of Christ on South Hwy. 5 where the brethren who use individual cups worship. Make your plans to attend.

BRETHREN - PLEASE NOTE

In an effort not to conflict with the Southeastern New Year's Meeting at Oyster Bay, Florida, Covington County Church of Christ in Collins, Mississippi is canceling their New Year's Meeting. We apologize for any inconvenience that this may have caused.—Covington County Church of Christ.

50th ANNIVERSARY

Sam and Irma Smith will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary Sunday, November 17, 1996. Their children will host a reception in their honor that afternoon from 2-4 p.m. at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Mike Furr at 614 Quail Run Drive, Brookhaven, MS. If anyone is passing through, we would love to have you join us. Remember them as they celebrate this joyous occasion.

A SPECIAL THANKS

In my prayers I've always thanked God for my brethren. But it means so much more when you have a crisis in your life and you get calls, cards and letters from all over the brotherhood. It is very humbling and at the same time very, very uplifting. Brethren, I cannot thank you all enough, but most of all I cannot thank God enough for all my loving brothers and sisters in Christ across the nation. Thank you, brethren, from the bottom of my heart. May

God richly bless us all in His service.—Jackie C. Lee.

FOREIGN SUBSCRIPTIONS

It has again been necessary to renew numerous foreign subscriptions. We would appreciate any help we might obtain with the cost. It is extremely costly to send these especially when you consider the additional postage. It is a great work and we must continue to send the OPA into foreign countries. The OPA has been a direct link to much of the work around the world. Thank you for your continuous support. We could not possibly defray the extra expense without all the help we have received through the years.—DLK.

1996 PREACHER'S STUDY

This year the study will be hosted by the NW 21st St. Church of Christ, 3440 NW 21st St., Oklahoma City, OK. The dates will be December 23-26, 1996. Allen Bailey and Cliff Arney will conduct the meeting.



Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808, Oct. 11_ The meeting at Ada, Ok. closed with large crowds and four confessions of fault. We enjoyed our stay in Ada. Preaching brethren from all around attended the meeting. It was good to have the local preachers, including Carl Johnson, Joe Hisle, Kevin Presley, Clarence and Ray Kessenger present for several services. Their presence added to the success of the meeting. The debate in Mtn. Home, Ar. with J.T. Smith is now history. We had a good turn-out from our brethren. Several preachers traveled many miles to encourage and support the truth. I appreciate it so much. We believe good will come from our efforts. The Lord willing we go next to White Bluff, Tn. Oct. 14-20, Liberty, Ky. Oct. 23-27, Harrison, Ar. Oct. 30-Nov. 3, and Fieldstone, Mo. Nov. 29-Dec. 1. We look forward to these meetings, and pray the Lord will bless our efforts.

Bennie T. Cryer, 2340 Sanguinetti Ln., #104, Stockton, CA 95205, October 9_ We are currently in Atwater, CA in a gospel meeting. We have had attendance from the community as well as from surrounding congregations. We are enjoying the hospitality of Johnny and Diane Broughton. The congregation in Stockton continues to do well. More teachers are being developed. A young man was baptized this month. Bro. Granville Mahurin is not feeling too well due to cancer. He is currently undergoing treatments and we hope and pray his condition will improve. He is one of our elders and helps with many of our studies. We look forward to visiting with the Fortuna, Ca. congregation in a short meeting this month and also with the 64th St. con-

OKLAHOMA NEW YEAR'S MEETING

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Oklahoma New Year's meeting. Even though every year is special, this one will be very special. Eternity alone will reveal all the good wrought by this annual gathering. Many of our seasoned gospel preachers got their start at this meeting. The first meeting was held in Sulphur, Ok. in Jan. of 1947. With Brother Lynwood Smith taking the lead, young men present and making talks were: Glenn Elmore, Johnny Elmore, Jesse French, Billy Jack Ivey, Donald McCord, Bobby McGill, C.A. Smith, and Billy Joe Tate. Resulting from this small and seemingly insignificant beginning is the great meeting we have all come to know and appreciate. Why not make your plans to be present at this landmark gathering. The meeting will be in the Okla. City area again this year and will be hosted by the Norman congregation. A more detailed announcement will appear in the next issue of Old Paths Advocate.

gregation in Sacramento in November. Our prayers are especially with our preaching brethren and their families who are suffering various illnesses at this time.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, Oct. 14_ I enjoyed being with the new congregation at Grant's Pass, Oregon recently for one service. A good crowd was present and a number of visitors from the community. We hope the work there is a huge success. Bro. Glen Arnett is working among them and likely needs your financial help. His report is in this issue. Get his address and contact him if you can help. The report is that on the first Lord's Day the brethren in Hawaii met in their new building nearly fifty were present. We are thankful for that. I have enjoyed preaching and being at home lately. Duane Permenter preached for us yesterday and did a fine job both services. We look forward to being at the Escalon, CA congregation for a meeting beginning next Lord's Day. Remember to pray for us and the preachers among us who are so sick presently. May God bless the faithful.

Richard DeGough, 1907 Tully Rd., Hughson, CA 95326, Oct. 8_ The work of the church goes on at Turlock. The church is at peace and our plans are to reach all the souls possible, by continual support of faithful gospel preachers. We are blessed with several good teachers, who are committed to the truth, and boldly teach it, edifying the church. I continue to preach in various places, such as Fremont, Atwater, Bakersfield, (Planz Rd.) and Modesto. The brethren are gracious and seem to me they want to grow stronger in the faith. I have enjoyed the preaching of gospel preachers holding meetings, and especially the recent Labor Day meeting. It was good to hear brother Bayani at Stockton and Atwater, along with the visits I had with him and sister Bayani when they stayed in our home. We plan to start a meeting in Cottage Grove, Oregon October 13-20. It will be enjoyable to be with Gayland and Roetta, along with all the brethren. We expect good crowds and trust in the Lord for the increase. May the Lord bless his people everywhere is my prayer.

Glenn Arnett, 1445 S.E., N. St., Grants Pass, OR 97526_

It has been good to hear of all the good work that is being done in this country and especially in foreign countries. Certainly most would agree that the gap between society and Christianity is growing wider more rapidly every day. It is very hard any more to bring souls out of the world into the church and perhaps even harder to keep them in the faith even though we exercise patience and longsuffering in love. We have baptized four into Christ here this year, but two have since gone back into the world because they were unwilling to change their way of life. This, of course, is prophecy being fulfilled and as a result, as the apostle Paul, said we must all, meaning every member, be joined together, and compacted by that which every member supplies, each one of us effectively doing our share of the work to bring growth and edification to the church in love. This comes to mind because of the recent visit we had from many of the brethren who were spending their vacation in this area the past two weeks from Stockton, Fremont, Lodi, and perhaps other churches in California. It was good to hear Don King preach again. He gave us a good lesson from the fourth chapter of Paul's letter to the Corinthians. I wish everyone could have heard that lesson, especially those who feel they are being abused as a Christian. It was certainly humbling to me to read with him and hear of the abuse suffered by the apostles as they went from place to place preaching the gospel. The following Lord's Day Howard King preached another good lesson for us concerning things that are immutable. He brought to our attention how the world has turned so rapidly in the past few years from him, at least some degree of stability, to almost chaos. This was certainly a timely lesson of the times we live in. It was good and meaningful, for the church here, which basically is a house of babes, to have fellowship with these faithful brothers and sisters in Christ. We pray for the church everywhere, in these perilous times, and ask you to pray for us.

Douglas T. Hawkins, HCR 3 Box 203-C, Rocky Mount, MO 65072_ We just closed a meeting in Blue Springs, Ky. on Oct. 6. The meeting ended with one confession of faults and one baptism. The crowds were very good and the spirit of the meeting was very uplifting. It was a real pleasure to be there. We enjoyed the company of Zade and Rekel McClure throughout the week. Brother Johnny Elmore began a meeting at Walnut Grove, Ky. at the close of our meeting in Blue Springs. Johnny came over to our final afternoon service. It was so good to see him. Johnny Elmore is largely responsible for the work beginning around the lake area where I'm now living. I greatly appreciate him as a preacher and soldier of the cross. Back in August we enjoyed our meeting in Orange, Ca. While we were there, we made our home with Alvin Smith. Alvin is always a joy to be with. Brethren from neighboring congregations throughout the LA area came to support the effort. It was also a real joy to see Fred and Larry Lay and their families of the El Cajon congregation at the meeting in Orange. We appreciated everyone's support so much. The congregation at Orange is small, but they are committed to upholding the cause of Christ in that area. Alvin is a determined man to keep that congregation going. He is so willing to make any sacrifice necessary. I appreciate him for that conviction. May God richly bless him. We

were privileged to be present both nights of Ronny Wade's debate in Mt. Home, Ar. with J.T. Smith. As usual, Ronny very capably defended our position. I greatly admire his ability as a preacher. Finally, we enjoyed Joe Hisle's meeting here at home in Brumley. The meeting closed with great enthusiasm. Joe sparked and renewed our zeal to continue with our efforts in this area. As we expected, he preached some great sermons. Presently, I am both looking forward to and preparing for my first debate. The announcement is included in this issue of the paper. If you are able, please come and support this effort. May God bless all the faithful everywhere.

G.V. Ayers, 6365 Arcadia Ave., Loomis, CA 95650, October 4, 1996_ The punishing heat this year has made it the hottest summer on record here in the Sacramento, CA area. Everyone seems to be enjoying the cooler weather of the early part of autumn. The church here in Auburn is looking forward to our upcoming meeting with Taylor Joyce (October 6-13) - and my family in particular is looking forward to my parents, Yance and Oleta Ayers, coming for a month or so this fall. Over the past year or so, the church in Auburn has enjoyed growth in several different ways: Don Boatwright, the son of brother Dan Boatwright, was baptized this summer; Pat and Wendy Bibbens moved here from the Bay Area (Fremont congregation); and the church is experiencing an explosion of new babies (three under age two, and three more are on the way). There are a number of people at Auburn who have been converted within the last three years. In order to root and ground these newer Christians in the truth, we have emphasized basic doctrinal teaching.

This year I have been privileged to speak at a number of congregations here in California, including: Placerville, Fair Oaks, Oakdale, Lodi, Olivehurst, Manteca, and Yuba City. Every fifth Sunday I preach in Porterville. There are about 30 members in the church there, but that's a good sized number for a city of only 35,000. I am impressed by the closeness of these brethren, their eagerness to learn and worship, and the way they like to sing. In July, I also preached at El Reno and Edmond in Oklahoma.

Jim Franklin, P.O. Box 573, Blantyre, Malawi, Africa, Sept. 7_ We are now well into the dry season in this area of Africa. This means that this is the busiest time of the year for the work here in Malawi. This is the time when congregations in the villages like to have Gospel meetings. I have been scheduled to visit and speak at six different congregations every week until the first week in November. Not long after we began filling our schedule, I had to make a trip to America due to the death of our daughter, Rebecca. My fellow preachers have stepped in and took my place during my absence. Brethren in the villages were very understanding when they learned of the situation which called me home. Marlene and I delayed our return to Malawi due to my dad experiencing a major heart attack three days before Rebecca's death. By the grace of God, he survived. We returned here the 3rd of August. I have not slowed down since! Our meetings have been well attended as brethren have worked hard to prepare for their meetings. Responses have been encouraging also. Brethren in Zimbabwe have asked me to help

them in their work. even if it is for a short time. I am making plans to go there about the middle of November and stay for a month, if God be willing. Marlene and I are looking forward to a visit from Dennis and Nancy Smith next week. They hope to pick up some Bibles and song books for the work in Zambia. Brethren, please think of the work in Africa and those of us whom you have sent here to work when you pray. Thanks and may the Lord richly bless the brotherhood.

Greg Gay, 7821 Saybrook Drive, Citrus Heights, CA 95621, September 20, 1996_ This summer has been a busy one for us. In May we started working with the 64th St. congregation in Sacramento, taking Duane Permenter's place there. Our studies continue there. Several have given us leads that we are following up on, and we welcome more. In June my home congregation, Auburn, CA ordained me to the work of an evangelist. July 10-14 we were in Irving, Texas for a meeting there. The brethren requested sermons directed to their many young people. We enjoyed staying with my brother-in-law and sister, Dean and Vicky Holt. We were in the homes of Allen and Suzanne Bailey, Bruce and Tonya Bailey, and Dick and Jean Knopf and enjoyed visiting with everyone. The brethren there are doing a wonderful work. Several preachers attended the meeting: Miles King, Bob Johnson, Terry Baze, Rod Watson, Mark Bailey, Glenn Ballard, and Gerald Hill. August 8-27 I went to Tula, Russia to continue the work there. Thanks to help from many congregations they have been able to purchase a little building. It is an old log cabin, built after the end of World War II. The brethren there have worked hard to remove interior walls, paint, and wallpaper to fix it up. Matt Hayes, from Yuba city, CA, went with me on this trip. Matt has the desire to be a preacher and he and I have been studying together for about a year. Matt was a great help in the work there. We visited many who were out of duty, which is no easy task when you must rely on inconsistent public transportation and walking. We held a meeting our last week and baptized one. We had at least 15 outsiders to attend one or more services. My thanks to Placerville, Oakdale, and Yuba City for help with the expenses of the trip and for 64th St. Sacramento continuing my support while I was gone. We got home the week of the California Labor Day meeting. Stockton did a great job hosting a meeting and the preaching was excellent. I have recently started studying with Matt Trent, from Sanger, CA. Matt has a desire to be a preacher, and we look forward to working with him. It is commendable that his home congregation has asked him to conduct his first gospel meeting there in November. Recent travels have taken us to Seattle, Washington where it was good to renew friendships. Last Sunday we were in Fremont for a long-scheduled appointment. We enjoyed the hospitality of Weldon and Sandra Offill. It was good to get to visit with Don King and all the brethren there.

Kostya Alekseev, Tambov, Russia_ Hello from Russia! The churches of Christ in Russia salute you. Who could believe that it would be possible to write or even to think about writing you as a Christian from Russia a few years ago? But now it is a reality. I think that Americans and Russians have never worked in such a noble cause as the

saving of souls. For me, Christianity became real through the help of eight Americans who came to Tambov for the first time about three years ago and then kept returning every year. They are Gary and Teresa Barrett, Jimmy and Diane Vannoy, Michael and Lynda Whitworth and Bob and Denise Loudermilk. They were the first Americans I met in my life, and they were Christians. Only now I fully understand how fortunate I was. I thank God that nothing happened to me before I became a Christian. Now it is the most important thing for me to share the good news about Jesus with others. My name is Konstantin (Kostya) Alekseev. I am 32. I am married and have two daughters. I got my degree in education. I was asked to work as a full time preacher about a year ago. It was a difficult decision for me. I understand the responsibility of such work. There is nothing more important than the eternal souls of people. I have worked with six American preachers. It was a good experience for me. Now I can say I know the joy of this work. There is much work to be done in Russia, including the Tambov Region where I live. This year I am planning to work in two cities of our region. Tambov and Michurinsk, where there are congregations. The most important part of my work is the saving of souls. I am going to visit and teach in the homes of the lost. Also, I want to work with leaders of two congregations and other Christians to train them how to teach publicly and privately. I will do everything possible to help Christians to develop the desire to study the Bible regularly and help solve their problems by advising them according to the scriptures. I am also planning to continue to coordinate the work of American preachers who come to the Tambov Region. I would like to thank you for your love, your prayers and your support. There are no words to express my feeling of appreciation. We need your prayers for us in our efforts for the Lord. May God be with you all.

C.A. Smith, 810 NW 6th St., Andrews, TX. 79714_ It was our good pleasure in early August having Bro. Johnny Elmore in Andrews for a Gospel Meeting. It was also profitable, as Johnny, a very capable preacher of the gospel, shared with us the treasures of the Gospel that God has entrusted to his earthen vessel. We had no visible results, and very little outside interest, which seems so hard to generate in these times, but those of like precious faith, were built up and encouraged. Young brethren Matt Trent, and Brian Osburn was with Johnny and lent to the meeting their presence and talents. Both of these fine young men are aspiring preachers of the gospel, and if they persevere, they will be. Johnny's grandson, Clay, also accompanied him. He was a joy to be around. So mild mannered and filled with the strength of youth. We are also happy to welcome to this area, Bro. Dwayne Permenter, who is now working with the church in Midland, Tx. We look forward to a good association with him over the years that he resides in this part of God's world.

We have had a lot of sickness among our people, which is a hindrance to them as well as the church, since our infirmities tend to hold us back and slow us down a bit, but hopefully we will regain our health and be able in the near future, all of us, to expend our efforts toward expanding the borders of Zion. If any of you should ever have the opportunity to visit our way, we would be so happy, for

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 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, Cal. 94539.

very seldom do we get to see our brethren from afar, except at the "Big Meetings."

We are thankful to be living in these times, and we hope and pray that God can use us effectively in his plans to introduce Christ to men. Our earnest prayer is, that the church, worldwide, will affectively do the work that Christ left us to do, and as a result, many lost souls will come to the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." May God richly bless you all!

Joe Hisle, Rt. 4, Box 188, Ada, OK 74820_ It has been some time since I have reported to the OPA. Guess it is about time to catch up. We have had a busy year in the Lord's work. I thought as you got older things were supposed to slow down, but that doesn't seem to be the way it works! Since last report I have worked with the following congregations: Piedmont, AL - the meeting was enthusiastic and well attended. The congregation has experienced some growth within the last year. One was baptized during the meeting. I enjoyed my stay in the home of Bro. and Sis. Charles Hurst. Oakdale, CA - the congregation is doing very well. We had several non-members visit the meeting due to a flier the brethren had inserted in the local paper. Bro. and Sis. Philip Permenter provided my home away from home and I thank them for their hospitality. Spring Valley, W.V. - this was the first full length meeting that I have held at this location. I certainly enjoyed the encouragement of the brethren and the opportunity to stay with long time friends, Darrell and Debbie Wellman. Harrison, AR - it had been several years since I had been in Harrison. The congregation there has grown and matured under the leadership of Bro. Jimmy Smith. I had the pleasure of staying in Jimmy and Cindy's home. Cindy and I grew up together so it was enjoyable to have a week to visit and to reminisce about "old times." Columbus, GA - the meeting at Columbus was well supported by the members. You will not find a better group to preach to. Odom, MO - it was a pleasant experience to go back to Odom after not having been there for about 22 years. Some of the younger members have matured into strong Christians with a zeal for the Lord's work. There is a whole new enthusiasm among the members of which I am thankful. Pansey, AL - Pansey is a regular on my preaching circuit and we always have a good meeting. This year was no exception. The brethren there are working in peace and harmony, when that is the case, good always results. Wayne, W.V. - Wayne is another regular for me and I thank God for the good brethren there. I made my stay with Tommy and Judy Bloss. You could not ask for a more hospitable place to be. Mt. Home, MO - This was the first opportunity that I have had to be with the brethren at Mt. Home. The meeting was well attended by the home crowd, which is saying a lot today, and well supported by sur-

rounding congregations. Bro. and Sis. Dallas May went all out to make my stay with them comfortable. At the present time I am in a meeting with the church at Bakersfield, CA. The brethren here are a wonderful group to be with and to preach to. I might also mention that their singing is inspirational. I am staying in the home of Darrell and Gail Brewer. You could not ask for more gracious hosts. One of the "perks" of being a gospel preacher is the fellowship of my brothers and sisters all over the brotherhood. I am thankful for everyone of you. The end is in sight for my schedule for 1996. I am to be in Sharonville, OH and then in Seminole, OK. I appreciate all the support, both financial and moral that I have received this year. Please continue to pray for me and my family.

Painless Giving

By JOHN ALLAN MCKAIG

When I was in business, I also served as President of the Boy's Club of Carlsbad. The club was very poor. We adopted a program of Endowment Giving that literally saved the Boy's Club.

I copied that idea when I made out my will, leaving the top 10% of my modest estate to the Church of Christ, to help five or six small congregations realize a church building of their own.

I also served the Church of Christ as treasurer for 23 years after my father, James H. McKaig, passed away, and came to understand that this need of the small congregations will always be here with us.

To contribute means to give. To endow is to give or assign a portion of your assets/wealth after your death to someone or some entity.

My children understand this and enthusiastically agree. It wouldn't matter if they didn't. This is not a punitive move or an effort to buy my way anywhere.

After your death, your will/wishes are obeyed to the letter, and the gift (endowment) is made compliant to your wishes.

I call this "Painless Giving". Now one might argue with me claiming that someone else is being made to give a portion of their new found wealth i.e. your "old wealth." But the wording of the will sets the sequence of giving in its order.

One must not fall into the trap of thinking, "Fine, I will do this type of giving than I don't have to give anything on Sundays." This is very risky thinking, very! Endowment giving has nothing to do whatsoever with your regular Sunday contribution.

I think this idea is viable for the entire brotherhood and the sisters also.

How about making out a will, or adding a codicil to your existing will, leaving 10% to the Church of Christ when you pass on. It will help to propagate His word.

That small amount will not hurt your heirs. Your wife can get by on 90%--San Marcos, CA

Our purpose is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," and to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

"To continue speaking the truth in love," "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," "keeping the ordinance as delivered."

"Thus saith the Lord, 'stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where in the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.' (Jer. 6:16) "And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste, places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in." (Isa. 58:12).

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NO. 12

PRINCIPLES OF EVANGELISM FROM THE PARABLES

By J. WAYNE MCKAMIE

A favorite formula of our Lord's teaching was "Whereunto shall I liken it?" Jesus knew what was in man. He spoke in man's own tongue and within the range of things with which man is familiar. He who is "in all things" was "made like unto his brethren" and was able to bring the truth within reach of humble humanity. He accomplished this by the use of parables. "Parable" means "a throwing alongside;" it is teaching by comparing some thing familiar with something unfamiliar.

This "throwing along side" opened up a world for us that we otherwise would not see. We read, and life in the poor homes of Palestine is opened before our eyes—the baking of bread, the patching of garments, and one borrowing a loaf at midnight. We also see barns bursting with the fruits of harvest and laborers not eating until the master dines. In other settings, we see the scramble for chief seats at feasts held by the noble and great. No facet of human life was untouched—farmers plowing, nets being dragged through the sea, a wedding procession, kings marching off to war, and a relentless widow before a heartless judge.

Over and over our Lord brought forth from His vast treasure things old and new, showing us the world of His day, and revealing to us the way of salvation. Our purpose is to learn from the means and methods that Jesus used to communicate truth about His kingdom, and incorporate that into our preaching today.

THE KINGDOM IS LIKE...

The purpose and passion of Jesus Christ was preaching the goodness of the kingdom of God. His ideal was defined quite clearly: "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Mt. 6:10). Our Lord described the kingdom in amazing terms— terms that when first heard, sounded paradoxical. The kingdom would arrive, be present (Mk. 9:1), be possessed (Mt. 5:3), be sought (Mt. 6:33), be entered (Mk. 10:15), and produce eternal fruit: "Though a man go forth in tears At the sowing of the seed, Yet he shall come again rejoicing, Bearing his sheaves with him" (Psa. 126:6).

SOWING AND REAPING

The concepts of kingdom, sower, seed, soil and harvest are bound together in these sermons of Jesus. The Parable of the Sower (Mt. 13:3-9, 18-23), the Parable of Spontaneous Seed Growth (Mk. 4:26-29), the Parable of the Mustard Seed (Mk. 4:30-32), and the Parable of the

Leaven (Mt. 13:33), all speak of the vitality of human toil mixed with the vital force of the Divine. We often fail to recognize this connection between human and Divine working. Seed, growth, and harvest— one should never be contemplated without the others. The Word of God is living and powerful (Heb. 4:12), possessing a divine vitality, and is indeed the seed of the kingdom (Lk. 8:11).

The Lord comprehends the enigma of growth, though man "knoweth not how" (Mk. 4:27). God, who "made every tree to grow" (Gen. 2:9), knows how a seed dies, develops, ("first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear"—Mk. 4:28), and bears fruit ("God giveth the increase"—1 Cor. 3:7). Though a seed may fail of fruitfulness because of hard hearts, stubbornness, shallowness, or because of roots of bitterness, the seed still has a strong hope of survival. In spite of it all, soil and seed have a basic harmony.

A harvest demands at least two seasons of toil—"a time to plant; and a time to pluck up that which is planted" (Eccl. 3:2). Our purpose is to plant, and we must plant in hope! How sad that we often plant, expecting nothing. Note that Jesus, in the beginning of parables (Mt. 13), gives a general description of the sowing, and moves quickly to the harvest. On the one hand we have a description of the manifold frustrations to which the sower's labor is liable (the wayside soil, the stony ground, the thorns), but on the other hand we see a field of yield (thirty, sixty, and a hundred fold).

The message?—"Sow, my brother, sow!" "Except a corn of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit" (Jn. 12:24).

WAITING ON THE LORD

Our Lord knew that we needed to know how the kingdom grows, lest we grow weary in seed time (planting). To human eyes, much of the labor seems futile and fruitless, resulting in apparent failure. Why sow then?

A closer look at the parables about the mustard seed and the leaven indicates that Jesus anticipated His followers would experience this apparent futility (Mt. 6:5; Mk. 3:6; Jn. 3:60). The servant is not above his Lord. Why did Christ not give up being the Sower (Mt. 13)? Despite His mighty works many continued in their unbelief. Bitter hostility was daily endured (Mk. 3:6), and many deserted Him (Jn. 6:60-66). Did not all this conflict with the claims of His

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Editorial

THE WORK OF ELDERS

By DON L. KING

In recent months, we have been discussing the subject of elders. Thus far, we have confined our attention to the qualifications for the most part. However, what do elders do once they they are qualified and ordained? I recall reading about the election of President John F. Kennedy. After the long campaign was finished, the inaugural ceremony over, he and his brother, Bobby, walked into the oval office. J.F.K. sat down behind the desk, looked around a moment, then said: "Now what do I do?" It had dawned upon him that he must now act as the President. So it is with elders. Once they are ordained they have a great work to do!

Every congregation talks about having elders. Some brethren desire to be elders and work hard to qualify. However assuming they finally are, what do they do?

In the excellent booklet, *The Eldership*, J.W. McGarvey has a chapter dealing with the duties of the eldership. Beginning at page 24, he writes the following:

In two distinct passages already quoted, (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:2) the elders are exhorted to be *shepherds* to the church. This exhortation, or rather this apostolic command, has failed to make its due impression on the English reader, because of the very inadequate translation of *poimaino* in the common version. It occurs eleven times, and is seven times rendered *feed*, and four times *rule*. When connected with church work it is uniformly rendered *feed*. No doubt the translators intended by this rendering to make their version intelligible to their uneducated readers in England and Scotland, where very little is known of the shepherd's work except *feeding* the sheep through the long winters. But this attempt at adaption has led to serious misapprehension: for even to this day, and in America as well as in Great Britain, the term *feed* in these passages has been understood by the masses as a metaphor for public teaching, and the whole work here enjoined is supposed to be accomplished when a suitable address is delivered to the saints on the Lord's day. Many an elder has imagined that the chief part of his work is accomplished when he has called together the flock once a week, or it may be once a month, and given them their regular supply of food, even when the food given is nothing better than empty husks. And many an evangelist, miscalling himself a pastor, has labored under the same mistake. Let it be noted, then, and never be forgotten, that the term employed in these passages expressed *the entire work of a shepherd*, of which *feeding* was very seldom even a part in the country where this use of the term originated. The shepherds of Judea, and those of Asia Minor, *pastured* their sheep throughout the entire year. Their duty was to guide them from place to place to protect them from wild beasts, and to keep them from straying; but not to *feed* them.

The Apostle Paul leaves us in no doubt as to his own use of the term in question; for after the general command,

continued on page eight

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Do the instructions in 1 Thessalonians 5:26 regarding the holy kiss, apply to the church today? (In.)

Answer: The instructions regarding the holy kiss are given not only in 1 Thess. 5:26 but also in Romans 16:16 and 1 Peter 5:14 where the writer says we are to "salute one another with a kiss of love." The holy kiss was a form of salutation during N. T. times and quite common throughout the biblical period. It should be noted, however, that it was not the only form of greeting. In 1 Corinthians 16:21 Paul wrote "The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand." Again in 2 Thess. 3:17 he wrote "The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write." These scriptures identify a written salutation as a means of expressing warmth and love from one person to another. Another form of salutation is mentioned in Acts 18:22 "And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch." Also Acts 21:7 "And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemis, and saluted the brethren and abode with them one day." Both passages identify a verbal salute which must have consisted of a personal greeting by Paul. Evidently he went before the church to express his genuine love and affection for the brethren and in so doing is said to have saluted them. The point of all this is to simply show that various forms of greetings including the kiss of love were used in New Testament times. In the passages that refer to the kiss of love, it should be noted that neither Paul nor Peter originated the mode of greeting, but merely sanctified it, by urging that it be observed in keeping with the morality and purity characteristic of the high calling they had espoused i.e. it was to be a HOLY kiss. The practice of greeting with a kiss pre-dated the New Testament era, and was not limited to the Christian community. In Eastern cultures even to this day, it is a common form of greeting. There was, however, a tendency on the part of some to abuse this form of greeting, hence the necessity to remind Christians that such a salutation must conform to the high principles of Christian conduct and decorum. The so-called Constitution of the Holy Apostles, written sometime between A.D. 300 and 400, has the following injunction: "Then let the men give the men, and the women give the women, our Lord's kiss. But let no one do it with deceit, as Judas betrayed the Lord with a kiss." The kiss of love is as appropriate today as it was in N. T. times. It was not the only acceptable form of salutation then, nor is it now. When practiced it must be genuine and free from impure motives,

it must be a Holy kiss.

Question: In the book of Hebrews, reference is made a number of times to "priests." Who were these priests and do we have them in the Church today? (In.)

Answer: The terms "high priest" and "chief priest" are found 123 times in the N. T. Of these occurrences 113 directly or indirectly refer to the priests of Judaism (under the law of Moses). The ten exceptions are located in the Hebrew epistle where the reference is to Christ as our great high priest, who was foreshadowed by the high priests under the Law of Moses. There is not any reference to any priest in the kingdom of God, except our Lord Himself. The Greek word for priest is *hiereus*. This term is found 33 times in the New Testament. Eighteen times the reference is to Levitical priests, of the remaining 15, 8 refer to Christ, 3 to Melchizedek, 1 to the pagan priest of Jupiter, and the other three to the entire membership of the church, who are designated as "a kingdom, even priests." In no instance is the term applied to a special ministry or caste in the Church of the Lord. In New Testament times no preacher, elder or deacon was ever referred to as a priest in any distinctive sense. The word "priesthood" is found six times in the N. T. Four of these occur in Hebrews chapter seven, and in every instance refer to either the Levitical priesthood or to that of our Lord. The other two references refer to the entire church as "a holy priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:5) and "a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9). It is very clear that in the New Testament Church there was no priesthood other than Christ and every one of his disciples. Under the Law of Moses, the priests constituted a special class who officiated in worship. Today in Christ all believers are to participate in worship, hence we constitute a priesthood of believers. Peter writes: "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5) Again "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" (1 Peter 2:9). Every Christian can pray, we need no special "priest" to intercede for us, since we are all a "kingdom, even priests." There is no special "group" or "lot" authorized by the Bible to worship or represent us in worship to God. We have that right as God's children, and no man can take it from us. The application of the term "priest" to a special "group of clergy" is without divine authorization, and should be rejected by all God's people. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808)

"BE NOT WEARY IN WELL DOING"

By EDWIN MORRIS

Today in our modern society there are many things happening that often times causes Christians to become discouraged and troubled. Such things as the evil and the low morals in the world; which have also crept in among church members; the illness that afflicts members, preachers, and leaders; more and more broken homes, etc.

First of all, it was not God's will that man should have these things come upon him. Man was created in the image and likeness of God, but violated God's command. When man sinned he was made to see between right and wrong. He is free to obey or disobey. God has provided a way in which we can be saved and provided ways in which

we live a happy life. We are taught in the scriptures how we can take those things that seem to hinder us and use them as things to strengthen us.

In Phil. 1:12-14 "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear." What were the things that happened unto Paul? Read 2 Cor. 11:23-28— In prisons, stripes, beaten with rods, stoned, shipwrecks, many perils, weariness, pain, hunger, thirst, fastings, cold and nakedness. He said all these things serve to further the gospel. He could do this because of his convictions and his great love for Christ and His cause. In Acts 20:23-24 "Save the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." We are taught in Rom. 8:6 "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

When we are of a carnal of worldly mind the things that happen to us discourage and cause us to be troubled, but if we are spiritually minded we rejoice knowing that we can overcome those things and use them for greater faith. We become more spiritual when we mind the things of the Spirit. To become more spiritually minded read the

Bible every day; pray often; attend all services of the church; associate with Christians in the church; become involved in the work of the church; and realize your duties and responsibilities to the church and to your brothers and sisters in Christ. We should have the attitude of the Apostle Paul "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Phil. 4:13. When these temptations come upon us we should remember what Paul said in I Cor. 10:13 "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." It is essential that we do our part and when we do Christ will certainly help us.

We are taught in the Scriptures that trials will come upon us. I Peter 4:12-13 "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad with exceeding joy." Jesus said John 15:18 "if the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you."

Finally Gal. 6:9 "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." Weary means to be utterly spiritless, to be wearied out, exhausted; Literally faint or lose heart. Faint —metaph. to weaken, relax, exhaust; to have one's strength relaxed, to be enfeebled through exhaustion; to be tired out. May the God of heaven help us all to do His will.—10520 N. McKinley, Okla. City, OK 73114

UPDATE ON BILLY ORTEN

BY WAYNE FUSSELL

Due to the widespread interest of the brotherhood in Billy Orten's condition, Don has asked me to send a monthly update on him. Early in the year Billy was diagnosed with cardiomyopathy, his heart was operating at only 15 efficiency. He was evaluated and accepted as a candidate for heart transplant. At the insistence of the doctors, he was admitted into the hospital here in Shreveport on September 4th to await a donor heart. Ten days later he became very ill with a high temperature. They determined that his gall-bladder was the culprit and removed it. After surgery, however, his fever continued to be high and he developed other problems. His kidneys, liver, and lungs almost shut down. He contracted more than one "staph infection" and developed a strange bacterium in his body. At his lowest point, Billy suffered acute renal failure, ARDS (adult respiratory distress syndrome), a shut-down of his entire digestive system and total respiratory failure. Desperate measures were taken. Among other things, they administered dialysis and eventually put him on the ventilator. His condition was so bad that the medical people could only say, "We are doing everything we can." Of course, prayers were going up for him all over the world, but at this point the churches in North Louisiana joined hands in united prayer, and the Shreveport elders offered special prayer in his room. The

result was immediate and wonderful. Billy's condition has remained relatively stable since that time. Brethren, prayer works! Billy has been in ICU for almost two months. At this writing he is intermittently off the ventilator. All his vital organs are functioning, but he is terribly weak. He still has the tracheotomy in his throat and is being fed through a tube. He is a very sick man. The bright side is that he is improving gradually each day, and he is again a candidate for a heart. Keep your ring of prayer about him. Also, pray for his faithful wife, Peggy, who has been at his side through all of this and rendered inestimable aid to him. She is staying at the hospital in a courtesy room. You can write them in care of Willis-Knighton Hospital, 2600 Greenwood Rd., room 533, Shreveport, LA 71103. Please pray that Billy will receive a heart soon.

UPDATE

We spoke with Wayne Fussell by telephone last evening. Brother Billy Orten has now received a new heart and is doing, to use Wayne's own words, "amazingly well." Billy is spending some time out of bed and slowly gaining strength. Let's keep praying for him. Also don't forget Dennis Smith and Jack Lee when you pray. As for Billy Orten, we will expect a more complete report from Wayne Fussell next month.—DLK

EMPTY TEMPLES (ACTS 17:24)

By C.A. SMITH

The term "Temple" was first used of the tabernacle, which is called "the temple of the Lord" (I Sam. 1:9). In the New Testament we find the word used figuratively as "Christ's body" (John 2:12,19,21). Believers are called the "temple of God" (1 Cor. 3:16, 17). The church is designated "an holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:21). We read where Heaven is also called a "temple" (Rev. 7:15). We read also of heathen temples such as the "temple of the great goddess Diana" (Acts 19:27), and as in our text "the temple to the unknown god" (Acts 17:24).

However, this word is more often used in Scripture of the sacred house erected on Mount Moriah for the worship of God. It is called "the temple" (I Kings 6:17); "the temple (R.V. 'house') of the Lord" (2 Kings 11:10); "thy holy temple" (Psa. 79:1); "the house of the Lord" (2 Chron. 23:5,12); "the house of the God of Jacob" (Isa. 2:3); "the house of my glory" (Isa. 60:7); an "house of prayer" (Isa. 56:7; Matt. 21:13); "an house of sacrifice" (2 Chron. 7:12); "the house of their sanctuary" (2 Chron. 36:17); "our holy and beautiful house" (Isa. 64:11); "the palace for the Lord God" (1 Chron. 29:1); "the tabernacle of witness" (2 Chron. 24:6); Christ calls it "My Father's house" (John 2:16). God did not literally dwell in this temple, as most of the temple worshippers thought, but He did choose it as a place where His name would dwell. See (Deut. 12:5,14,18,21,26; 14:23; 15:20; 16:2; 17:8; 18:6; Joshua 18:1; I Kings 8:29). There were, in fact, three temples erected at Jerusalem: Solomon's, Zerubbabel's, and Herod's. The first stood until it was destroyed in 586 B.C. The second stood till the time of Herod the Great and the 3rd was destroyed in A.D. 70.

The "Temple," that we have just referred to, was a perpetual reminder and symbol of God's presence, and protection, a strong bulwark of all the sacred traditions of the law, a witness to duty, and impulse to historic study, an inspiration of sacred song, and continued to be so until it became a "den of thieves" (Matt. 21:13). When Jesus died on the cross He established a New and Living Way. Jerusalem had been until that time the correct place to worship God, but Jesus brought a totally new system into being, in which the place of worship would have no significance at all. Please bear in mind that God may be worshipped properly anywhere, provided only that the divine worship is tendered in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Within four years after this interview with the woman at the well, all of the regulations concerning the worship of God in Jerusalem were suspended by the ordinances and requirements of the New Covenant.

Thus, when Paul, surrounded by magnificent temples built by the Athenians to their gods, and virtually in the shadow of the historical Parthenon (temple of Athena), Paula declared: "Our God does not dwell in temples made with hands." Paul was not a timid preacher of the Gospel. He found the courage to speak out against the dangers of such practices, in spite of the dangers. How we need today to do the same when we face our present state of confusion in American religion, which is similar to the situation Paul found at Athens. No doubt there were people all

around that "temple" made with hands, but Paul said: "Nobody's at home." In other words, Paul declared that spiritually speaking, it was unoccupied, and had no worth or purpose whatsoever.

It is obvious that the truth "Our God does not dwell in temples made with hands," places the sacredness of "The Church of Christ" on a ground entirely different from that which influence the minds of Jew or Greek in regard to their respective temples. Stephen in (Acts 7:48-50) appealed to the prophecy of (Isaiah 66:1) when he made the same statement "Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in houses made with hands; as saith the prophet... Heaven is my throne, And the earth the footstool of my feet: What manner of house will ye build me? saith the Lord: Or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?" Of course this sets forth the impossibility of Almighty God's actually dwelling in any house made by human hands. The teaching in view here is fundamental to Christianity. It is not any house, but "in Christ," that one may receive all spiritual blessings in heavenly places (Eph. 1:3). God's true temple was not and is not a physical house at all, but a living community of believers in Christ. Yes, the Church is holy, but not because of its ornate buildings, but rather, because of sanctified believers who comprise it.

What did Paul mean, when he said: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands." Well, he was telling them that God made all things. In doing so, he did not begin with philosophical proofs of the existence of God. Most people believe in something called a "god," as the Athenians did. Rather we find that Paul's sermon commenced where the Old Testament does (Gen. 1:1) by referring to the "God who made the world and all things in it." Paul's words may bring to mind marvelous sights such as the vastness of the Grand Canyon, the formations of the Carlsbad Caverns, the majestic Swiss Alps, or an awe inspiring sunset over the beaches of Hawaii, the glory of a starlit night on any continent, etc. It truly fills us with wonder when we realize that God made it all! What Paul really told them though was: They had not made God, but God had made them! They had not made God a house, but God had made them a house - this earth! His words refuted the materialistic concept of the Epicureans that this world came into being as a result of a chance collision of atoms. In (2 Chron. 2:6) we read: "But who is able to build him a house, seeing the heaven of heavens cannot contain him? Who am I that I would build him a house, save only to burn incense before him?"

This materialistic concept is still around today! Today, people still believe that God can be contained in a man-made temple. For example, the Mormons teach that their temple in Salt Lake City, is the true house of God and that he dwells in it. They also claim that the tabernacle which is in connection with the temple was actually erected by inspired architecture. The auditorium, with its circular gallery running completely around it, its choir gallery, and its great organ, seats 10,000 people, and yet its acoustics

are so perfect that ordinary conversation in its pulpit is heard with distinctness and ease in every part of its vast space. This is their ground for claiming it was erected by inspiration. Of course it is not so! Not one word of it! The Mormons are not the only ones who foolishly believe such,

for such a belief is widespread, especially in the large denominations. It might come as a surprise that some in the Lord's church believe the same. However, their believing it does not make it so! To be continued.—810 N.W. 6th, Andrews, TX 79714.

ELDERS AND DEACONS IN JACKSONVILLE

By WAYNE FUSSELL

Five years ago, the congregation in Jacksonville, Florida, set the elevated goal of ordaining elders and deacons. It was their desire and aim to establish scriptural church government and "set in order the things that were lacking." Nine months ago they realized that conditions were right, and they could finally accomplish their long-sought-for goal. They began intensive teaching on the subject of church government and the qualifications of elders and deacons. Three months ago, after careful and prayerful study by the church, two men were nominated to be the elders and four men were nominated to be deacons. These names were placed before the church and the members were given over a month to consider them in relation to the qualifications laid down by Paul in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Their acceptance was unanimous since no objection was raised.

September 28th was set as the date for me to come and formally ordain them. To be absolutely sure that there were no objections or questions about these men, a meeting

was called and each man was compared to the qualifications established by Paul. Individual members were polled to be sure that it was the consensus of the church to ordain them to these offices. In my opinion, the brethren went the second and third mile to be sure that this process was carried out in a fair and scriptural fashion. And so, with great enthusiasm and humility, I officiated in the ordination of six fine men to serve the Lord and His church as elders and deacons. With fasting, prayer and the laying on of hands, Carl Hurd and Gordon Prince were installed as elders and Bill Atkinson, Fritz Parman, Phillip Prince and Davey Sessions as deacons.

People came from several states to witness this beautiful ceremony. Never have I observed greater unity in any undertaking of the church than was exhibited by this congregation. It is my prediction that great things will happen in this church because these brethren have diligently pursued God's plan of church government. Watch them grow!

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE BROTHERHOOD

By JIM FRANKLIN

Dear Brethren,

It is not difficult to decide to let others fill the need when a call, "come over... and help us" is sent forth, especially if responding costs money, requires firm commitment, unrelenting dedication and personal sacrifice. Surely, the Lord can use more Pauls who are willing to endure "labors more abundant....stripes...prisons...deaths...beatings...perils (of all kinds)...weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst...in cold and nakedness—and (show their) deep concern for all the churches." (See 2 Cor. 11:23-28, Commentary mine —jf).

Furthermore, the Lord can use more congregations like those in Macedonia who "in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God." (2 Cor. 8:2-5 NKJV —Emphasis mine -jf). Just think how many more souls would be added to the Kingdom if every preacher and every congregation everywhere in every land were as committed to the work of the Lord as were Paul and the Macedonians. We commend those of our brethren in the States who are already heavily committed in supporting mission work in various parts of the world. Even so, there remain areas where the harvest

is ripe, but due to the lack of support, laborers are few. (See Matt. 9:37, 38 and Rom. 10:13-15). How it must grieve the Lord's heart when He sees a harvest that is not being reaped.

There is a call coming from Africa. Brethren in Zimbabwe are crying for help. The brotherhood there needs at least one qualified seasoned preacher to assist the indigenous preachers with the spiritual development of the existing work. There are a little over 100 congregations in the whole of Zimbabwe at the present time. Even so, there are yet many areas of the country where there are no congregations. However, the potential for growth is tremendous! With the right preacher to assist and encourage the indigenous preachers, there exists the possibility of establishing congregations throughout the entire country. Are there not congregations in the States who are financially able to assume the responsibility of coordinating the assistance needed in Zimbabwe? Surely, there must be a number who could be supporters of one of the most productive fields of the Lord that exists at the present time. There is an indication that this work may deteriorate due to stagnation if we do not do something positive very soon. I have visited the work in Zimbabwe on several occasions in recent months by request from brethren there. They have explained their problems as well as their desires. I have had discussions with brethren in the States who are responsible for my being in Africa concerning the work in Zimbabwe. We agree that some help should be forthcom-

ing.

Since no congregation at the present time has assumed responsibility to work with Zimbabwe, I have, in agreement with all concerned, agreed to assist in that work until other arrangements can be made. The present plans are for me to visit Zimbabwe for at least three times a year for one month at a time to assist and encourage the work. As you may already know, I am primarily committed to Malawi and that area of Mozambique bordering Malawi where the language of Chichewa is spoken. Certainly, my absence here will be noticed. But, the current conditions in Malawi are such that I do not feel that it will cause any adverse effects in the work here by me assisting Zimbabwe as planned.

Brethren, I beg those of you who would take on such a

responsibility as the work in Zimbabwe to give some serious consideration in doing so. Please, why not investigate this work? I believe you will find no other work on earth that produces more results in saved souls for the dollars invested than the cause of Christ in Africa. Get in touch with Maurice Chandler of the Mablevale Pike congregation in Little Rock, AR (He is listed in the church directory). He can supply you with the names of brethren who have both an interest in, and knowledge of this work. Of course, should you wish to contact me, I would be very happy to answer my inquiry.

Please, let us keep in mind that into our hands the Gospel is given, not for us to keep to ourselves, but to carry it into all the world. May the Lord bless our efforts to serve Him.—P.O. Box 573, Blantyre, Malawi, Africa

Principles of Evangelism from the Parables

Continued from page 1

mission and His sowing? Jesus challenges us to consider the hus bandman in the Parable of the Sower. He might well despair in view of the many adverse factors which destroy and threaten his seed. Nevertheless, he remains unshaken in his confidence that a rich harvest will reward his labors. "How is it that you have no faith?", Jesus asks (Mk. 4:40)? The message is: "Patience, dear sower, patience."

The kingdom from heaven did not spring up in a moment, nor is it spread overnight. The seed is "cast upon the earth" (Mk. 4:26) and this must give way to patience and trust. Growth is gradual. It is not difficult to detect the result of growth, but the process is difficult to discern; man "knoweth not how" (Mk. 4:27).

Lightfoot observed:

The growth of the kingdom is gradual. In the production of grain nature works step by step. Nearly all of its marvels are wrought gradually. Christian growth is gradual. If it is possible to expect too little of ourselves, it is possible also that sometimes we expect too much of ourselves. In our moral and spiritual development (and in our sowing—jwm) we want to take giant steps, and if we fail we are sorely disappointed. We forget nature's lesson, the necessity of gradual growth . . . One does not go to bed a sinner and wake up a Christian. Men must be taught the way of Christ, and rarely are they brought to Him with one word. We should remember that the human mind is so constituted that only by patient and persistent efforts can the word of God come to rule the hearts of men (Neil R. Lightfoot, *Lessons from the Parables*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965, p. 29).

GOD GIVES THE INCREASE

The sower must sow. His is a vital part in the process. As the Scripture says, he will asleep, and rise night and day (Mk. 4:27) while he "waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth" (Jas. 5:7) In this parable the Lord states our place in the process and thus puts us in our place! We are helpless without Him. "God giveth the increase" (1 Cor. 3:7).

The kingdom of heaven would, Jesus said, increase from the smallest beginning until "the height thereof reached to heaven" (Dan. 4:11) and to the ends of the earth. That which began in Galilee as a speck too trivial for human

acknowledgment was indeed "less than the least of all seeds" (Mk. 4:31), yet Jesus was sure it would survive and grow. Daniel was sure that the little stone would eventually prevail over other kingdoms (Dan. 2:31-45). The proverbial smallness of the mustard seed compared with its relatively great growth made it an excellent figure for the expansion of the kingdom, and affords us a valuable lesson, and how we need this lesson!

We are victimized by bigness. Big is best! Our buildings must "reach unto heaven" and our projects must "make us a name." Campaigns to take the world for Jesus, and movements for the Master on a grand scale, are brought forth by those who know not Jesus, and in some instances, even by the church. They flourish for a time like "a green bay tree" and then soon die in honor of their creator—man, not God. Did not Jesus speak of the grain of mustard seed, the cup of cold water, the one talent, the widow's mite, the lost coin, and the kindness unto "one of the least of these?" God gives the increase. The message? "Sow the lowly seed!" Stay in your place. Stay with the Word. God gives the increase.

LESSONS FROM LEAVEN

God does move in wondrous ways. No one overhears a seed in the process of germination, and shrewd ears would be required to detect leaven busy at its task. Leaven works by contagion "until the whole is leavened" (Mt. 13:33). Leaven, salt, and light are silent forces. Leaven is unique in that it is invisible and inward—so like the kingdom that "cometh not by observation" (Lk. 17:20). Leaven is quick, quiet, thorough, and sure; so is the working of the gospel which it here represents. How can we miss this truth so fitly pictured? Our task is to hide the gospel truth in a heart. Nothing will happen until the germ of life is implanted (Jas. 1:21). Salvation did not come to the house of Cornelius until the gospel came.

Leaven is a change agent that refuses to stop "until the whole is leavened" (Mt. 13:33). The gospel was designed to permeate and to transform, to change and conquer the whole of the person. The gospel changes people and thus changes things. What a picture of New Testament Christianity! It is so upsetting, disturbing (Acts 16:20), and contagious. Andrew found Peter, Jesus found Philip, and Philip found Nathanael. With the same compelling certainty that causes a tall shrub to grow out of a tiny grain of mustard seed, or a small piece of leaven to permeate a vast mass of

dough, the gospel creates new creatures in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) and a mighty kingdom.

THE HUMAN FACTOR

There is a factor of initiative and there is a factor of response.

The preacher. How quick are we to blame the sower for the failures of the soil. People often complain, "If only the preacher knew more, spoke more, or would stick to the gospel," or, "If the preacher were a different man and his message was a better message . . ." and other such things.

Let the weaknesses and failures of the under-sower be acknowledged! Only One sowed perfectly the words of eternal life, and they nailed Him to a cross. Hear the Prince of Preachers; some would not be persuaded "if one rose from the dead" (Lk. 16:31).

The hearer—take heed how you hear. The seed of the kingdom in the Parable of the Sower translates into the children of the kingdom in the Parable of the Wheat and Tares (Lk. 8:11; Mt. 13:38). Children of the kingdom can only come from the seed of the kingdom, the Word of God. Christianity must, then, require three basic things: a sower, good seed (a pure gospel), and an honest heart. Men often assume that because initiative is with the speaker, that the message controls the hearer. Jesus, however, taught that it is possible for the hearer to control the message, thus His admonition, "He that has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Mt. 13:9).

Hearing is urgent business! The factor of hearing conditions the factor of preaching, so far as results are concerned, but it never, ever is to stop the preaching. Sowing must be ongoing in every clime and condition and to every creature. His Word will not return to Him void; it will accomplish that which He pleases (Isa. 55:11).

THE DIVINE FACTOR

The greatest factor in the entire matter of evangelism is God's great desire to save the lost; He is indeed the God of the lost. This thread runs throughout the parables. The Great Shepherd is sent to the unshepherded: the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Mt. 15:24; Jn. 10:1), to the "other sheep I have which are not of this fold" (Jn. 10:16), He seeks the lost sheep and bears it home (Lk. 19:10), He gathers the little flock around him (Lk. 12:32), and He

gives His life for the flock (Mk. 14:27). The Physician has come to the sick (Mk 12:17). The Teacher instructs His students concerning the Will of God (Mt. 10:24; Lk 6:40). The Messenger brings the invitation for the banquet (Mk. 2:17). The Fisherman calls and appoints fishermen in His service (Mk 1:17). The lamp has been lit, the light is shining, not to be put out, but to give light! God is the God of the lost. He would welcome publicans and sinners (Lk. 15:1). He is represented in the parables of the lost coin and the lost sheep as actively seeking the lost.

What man of you (an appeal to our own good sense) losing a sheep would not seek it? Or what woman losing a coin would not search the house for it? (Cf. Lk. 15). What beautiful word pictures from God, that we might understand the heart of God! He seeketh the "lost," the "away," the "one," and they are sought "until he find it," and rejoices "more" over the recovery of one, than over those who have not "strayed" or been "lost" or are "dead."

Intensity and thoroughness are big factors in the quest for the lost. And let us not forget joy! "There shall be joy in the presence of the angels of God." Why? The lost have been found. God stands ready to "bring forth the best robe," and to "place a ring on his finger." He's ready to restore all the signs of sonship (Lk. 15), if sin is confessed and if the lost one is willing to return home. God is ready to work with those whose hearts are open to His Word.

CONCLUSION

The work of God is salvation: to gather in the lost, to reap the harvest, and to see His will come to fruition. It has been, and remains His goal, ever since the Sower came to begin His lonely task. What a contrast we see from the insignificance of the beginning to the triumph of the end! The end is implicit in the beginning. The fruit is in the seed. It will bring forth after its kind. The fruit is the result of the seed having been planted and watered, with God producing the crop. The finding was the result of men diligently seeking that which had been lost, with the love of God in their hearts and on their tongues. What is the message? "Take God seriously dear brothers. Sow, my brother, sow! Sow the precious seed of the kingdom and let God do His wondrous work!"—1921 McKamie Rd., McGregor, Texas 76657.

Editorial

Continued from page 2

"Be shepherds to the church," he proceeds to distribute the idea by adding these words: "For I know this, that after my departure shall ravenous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Therefore, *watch* and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." (Acts 20:28-31) Here, continuing the metaphor of the flock, he forewarns the shepherds against ravenous wolves, who can be no other than teachers of error who would come into Ephesus from abroad, such, for example, as those who had already infested the Galatian churches; (Galatians 1:6,7; 5:12) and he commands them to watch..."

"Here, then, are two specifications under the generic

idea of acting the shepherd, and they are strictly analogous to the work of the literal shepherd. It is made the duty of the eldership, *first*, to protect the congregation against false teaches from abroad; *second*, to guard carefully against the influence of schismatics within the congregation; *third*, to keep watch both within and without, like a shepherd night and day watching his flock, so as to be ready to act on the first appearance of danger from either direction..."

"The duty of "taking oversight" is enjoined upon the elders in express terms, and the expression is used as the equivalent of acting the shepherd. Peter says, "Be *shepherds* to the flock, *taking the oversight thereof*. (1 Peter 5:2) The essential thought in overseership, that of *ruling*, is frequently enjoined. Paul says to Timothy, "Let the elders that *rule well* be counted worthy of double honor." (1 Timothy 5:17) The Greek word here rendered *rule* is *proisteemi*, the etymological meaning of which is *to stand*

or place one object before another. But the fact that rulers stand before their subjects, with all eyes of the latter looking to them for direction, led to the established usage of this term in the sense of ruling. It is so defined in the lexicons, and is so used in both classic and Hellenistic Greek.

Another duty of the eldership, distinct from the preceding, is that of *teaching*. By a mistake already mentioned, this duty has been supposed by many to be the chief work indicated by the term pastor or shepherd; but in the only place where the latter term occurs in the common version in its appropriated sense pastors are distinguished from teachers. "We gave some, apostles and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some *pastors* and *teachers*." The distinction here evidently made between pastors and teachers, does not imply that they are always different persons; or as one person might be both a prophet and an evangelist, so, for the same reason, he might be both a pastor and a teacher. But the distinction made shows that one might be a teacher and not a pastor. From other passages, however, we know that all pastors or

shepherds, in addition to what is implied in this title, are also teachers. In the statement of their qualifications, Paul says that they must be 'apt to teach,' (1 Timothy 3:2) and they should be 'able, by sound teaching, both to exhort and to convict the gainsayers:' (Titus 1:9) That they should be able to teach, necessarily implies the duty of teaching.

From Brother McGarvey, then, we learn that among an elder's duties are the active work of protecting the church from false doctrine and false teachers. This means he must be knowledgeable in the Scriptures so he will know right from wrong. An elder is also to work within the church to guard against those who might cause trouble. Hence, he is a trouble solver. A peace maintenance man. Third, to watch from all directions for trouble. Anything that is a potential danger to the church immediately becomes of interest to elders who are doing their work. We will write more next month. However, it is obvious that an elder is not a mere figurehead. He does more than merely wear the title and make a few decisions. The Word of God is plain about that.- DLK

ANNOUNCEMENTS

KENTUCKY NEW YEAR'S MEETING

The meeting, this year, will be held at the Walnut Grove congregation. The dates are December 27-31. Services each evening at 7:30 p.m. Aaron Risener will conduct the meeting. All are invited.

LET HER BE COVERED

We still have plenty of this tract on hand. They are \$1.00 each postage included. This deals with the subject of the hair as the Christian woman's covering. I Corinthians 11:2-16. Order from Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539

SERMONS AND WRITINGS OF HOMER L. KING

This is a book of sermons, essays and outlines published a number of years ago by Homer L. King. Every young preacher needs this book and every home can benefit from it. It is hard back and only \$5.00. That is truly a bargain in our modern world. Order from Helen King, 1061 North Pilgrim, Stockton, CA 95205.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

Our time in Ft. Smith, AR will be ending in May, 1997. If you are in need of a preacher with 15 years experience to work with you, please contact Tony Denton, 3604 Brooken Hill Dr., Ft. Smith, AR 72908, (501) 648-0477. We also have time available for meetings.

FREE SONGBOOKS

The church at 79th and Kansas Ave., Kansas City, Kansas has some back issues of used songbooks published by Lynwood Smith that we are willing to share with other congregations who are in need of them. Storage has be-

come a problem and we would like for others to benefit from the books. We will share them on a first come first serve basis. Please specify the number of books you need and we will be glad to send them to you. All we ask is that you pay the postage.

Please send all requests to: Church of Christ, in care of Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012.

SPANISH LANGUAGE BROADCAST

Las Sendas Antiguas is the name of a new Spanish radio program, broadcast over WWCW, 15.685 khz. The church at Council Hill, OK is supporting this short-wave radio program on Fridays at 4:30 p.m., CDT. It reaches Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Central and South America. There are approximately 50,000,000 short-wave radios in this region. Our work in Mexicali this past summer went well. Two souls were baptized. Matt Trent and Bob Keesece worked with me in the effort and plan to return in the future. Bro. Tony Melton and his family worked with the Mexicali congregation and were successful in training and restoring brethren to the Faith. Tony is a faithful and diligent worker. Lord willing, Nellie and I will spend a couple of weeks in Mexicali this December. If you would like more information about the work, or if you would like to visit Baja, California write: James Hickey, P.O. Box 471331, Tulsa, OK 74147. Remember us in your prayers.—James Hickey.

NEW BUILDING IN HAWAII

We would request that the purchase of the house of worship in Hawaii will be published in the Old Paths Advocate, extending also our thanks to all the congregations and individual brethren who help us in the purchase of this building. The address is: 94-371 Ikepono St., Waipahu, HI 96796. Telephone number is (808) 678-9158. To locate is take H-1 west and exit at exit #7, turn left at Paiwa St., turn right at Waipahu St., then turn right at Waipahu Depot Road, turn left at Waipahu St., then turn right at Ikepono St.—Felipe Bayani.

SPECIAL NOTICE

The address listed for me in back of the new 1996 church directory, is where our place of worship is located. All mail for the church should be directed to P.O. Box 68, Frisco, TX 75034. My home address is: 8078 Whitewing Dr. Frisco, TX 75034. Phone: (972) 335-1005. Thank you, Bob Johnson.

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

Baker-Sprague--On June 22, 1996 before a large audience Jason Baker and Shanna Sprague were united in marriage. Jason is the son of Cathy Gibson and Gary Baker and Shanna is the daughter of Rick and Marilyn Sprague. It was a beautiful wedding with several scriptures read that they desired to be used. They wrote the wedding vows they desired to repeat as they committed themselves and their love to each other. Jason and Shanna were both Christians and endeavoring to live the Christian life before they met one another. The characteristics they desired in a partner for life no doubt led them in establishing this new home. They are members of the Oakwood Church of Christ in Edmond, OK. I was honored that I was chosen to officiate. Our prayer is that they will have a long and happy life together.--Edwin S. Morris



Barney Owens, 8782 Meadowview Ln., W. Chester, OH 45069_ Our fall meeting with Joe Hisle preaching was good. His lessons were presented well. The number of outsiders was not as has been in the past, but some did attend with two obeying the gospel. It has been my pleasure to help the brethren on Lord's Day at Garrett's Creek (Wayne) W. VA. And a 4 day meeting at Pleasant View (Mitchell) Indiana. Then a Lord's day evening with the Bedford congregation. It is a joy to be with brethren and sisters in Christ. I have heard Ron Courter, David Mabry, and Richard Reed recently, which is always a blessing to be in attendance to help in hearing the Gospel. Signs of winter are all about us, I pray that the spirit will not be chilled. Pray for us.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, November 11_ The meeting at Escalon, CA closed with one confession of wrong and one baptism. We enjoyed being with them, appreciated their hospitality and pray that much good was done. Nearby congregations were good to help out and crowds were pretty good throughout. We appreciated that a number of preachers also came from time to time. We are to be at Oakdale, CA Dec. 6, 7, 8 for a weekend meeting, Lord willing. We look for-

ward to that. Rod Watson preached two good sermons for the Fremont congregation this past Lord's Day. We enjoyed a day of visiting in between. It will soon be time for us to make the Philippine trip again. It is always a real "shot in the arm" for me. It is so encouraging to preach where there are results nearly every service. Then, to return the next year and see them still faithful (most of them) is encouraging, to say the least. We need to preach the Word!

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820, November 5_ The months of September and October are very busy ones for us. In September I conducted a meeting at London, KY. This meeting was my first opportunity to preach in that area, and I enjoyed it immensely. I found some strong brethren there with a fervent zeal for the Lord's cause. Upon my return home, I was able to attend most of our meeting with Ronny Wade. Ronny did an outstanding job with the meeting, and did the church here a lot of good. My next meetings were in Abilene, TX, Houston, MO, and Temple, GA. I enjoyed each of these meetings very much, and am confident some good was accomplished. Our meeting at Houston was our first time there also. Phyllis and I enjoyed the hospitality of Don and Dianne Pruitt's home, and were impressed with the size and spirit of the congregation. We were here at home for Wednesday night's services. It is sure good to see everyone, and I thought Corey Johnson did a good job with the chapter study. Lord willing, I shall begin a meeting this Sunday at Covina, CA. We continue to solicit your prayers.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012, Nov. 4_ I was at Harrodsburg, IN for a meeting Nov. 19-27. The crowds were never large, but we did have people to attend from several different places, both far and near. I would not attempt to name all the congregations which were represented during the meeting, but we appreciated everyone of them. Besides other brethren and sisters we had several preachers which encouraged us by their presence: Floyd Harris, Bruce Roebuck, Cecil Smith, and L.K. Alexander. I visited Sister Judene Peek who was very ill with cancer. At my second visit (Lord's day afternoon) I could tell that she was liable to live, but a very short time. She passed away during the night. My sympathy goes out to Cloyd and the family. We have lost two members of the congregation at home recently, Mary Piper and Thelma Ennis. We have been praying for the several seriously ill preachers in our brotherhood: Dennis Smith, Billy Orten, Irvin Barnes, Gary Weaver, Jack Lee, and Mark Bailey. Brethren, time and disease are taking their toll. We need to prepare for eternity. I am happy to report that I recently baptized two ladies whom I have been studying with. The Lord bless us all.

Kevin W. Presley, P.O. Box 2398, Ada, OK 74821 (405) 436-1331, Nov. 10_ I am about finished with meetings for this year. I have recently held meetings in Collins, MS and Tulsa, OK. The Collins brethren stated that Saturday night was one of the largest crowds they have ever had. I appreciate the brethren from New Salem and the Brookhaven area for their fine support. I enjoyed staying with Mark and Lisa Walters. It was good to be able to preach again after a vocal cord condition kept me at home for about 10 weeks. Upon arriving home I enjoyed attending our meeting at Ada with Ronny Wade. His preaching was, as always, timely and well done. It is always good to associate with Ronny. He has aided me greatly in the past few years in my efforts to preach. Crowds were off a little, but did not hinder having a good

meeting at Tulsa. It was good to see the brethren in that area once again. I am indebted to Gene and Bernice Hopkins for their fine hospitality. I am currently at Earlytown, AL. I have returned here to work with the Earlytown church for three months this winter. Bro. Bruce Roebuck stopped by and preached two good sermons for us yesterday. I am just now getting settled, but we already have some studies scheduled in the community for the next few weeks. I am looking forward to a profitable work in this area. My phone number is still active in Oklahoma, but if you need to reach me here in Alabama, the number is (334) 898-1301. My last meeting for this year is at Ardmore, OK November 22-24. I am looking forward to seeing Johnny and Sally Elmore, and all of the other brethren there. Remember to pray for the preaching brethren and their work throughout the world. God bless the brotherhood.

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, Nov. 1_ I have been to Andrews, TX Aug. 7-11, accompanied by Matt Trent and Brian Osburn, where we enjoyed a short meeting at the home of my childhood friends, C.A. and Iva Jo Smith. It was good to visit with preachers Dwayne Permenter and Paul Wilkerson, also. I spoke at Ft. Smith, AR Aug. 21, then Tony Denton drove me to Raleigh, NC, where I spoke three times on Aug. 23-25 and engaged in a study of the Bible with the congregation. Five confessed faults and a lady expressed a desire to study the Bible with a view to being baptized. I held a short meeting at Sulphur, OK Sept. 13-15. I also have heard Billy Dickinson, Kevin Presley, Bruce Roebuck, Ronny Wade, and Ron Courter in area meetings lately, as well as Ronny Wade in his debate with J.T. Smith. Oct. 5-13, I went to Walnut Grove, KY. We had one restoration in the meeting and I enjoyed being with this fine congregation and staying with Marvin Cromer. I heard Doug Hawkins once at Blue Springs. I must say that I was really impressed with the good cooperation between congregations in that area. The Lord willing, I look forward to going back in 2000. I am to be at Fair Oaks, CA Nov. 1-10 and Burkhart, MO Nov. 27-Dec. 1, which will end my meetings for this year. I hope to see all of you at the 50th Oklahoma New Year's meeting.

Reggie Kinser, 4407 Georgetown Dr., Columbia, MO 65203, Oct. 21_ Although it was my first opportunity to speak at the church in Canon City, CO, I was made to feel at home from the beginning of our meeting. The congregation did a wonderful job of showing hospitality throughout our stay. Mike and Arlene Middick were especially kind, making us part of their family. All of the brethren seemed to be supportive of our preaching even when we spoke on such delicate issues as "long hair" (I Cor. 11). Mike and his family are to be commended for their commitment to the Lord and His work in that area. May God bless them in abundance. There was one restoration during the meeting. More recently, we just returned from a very enjoyable meeting with the church at Aurora, MO. It was great to be in the home of Roy Lee and Zella Criswell during our first visit with that congregation. I have a great appreciation for the Criswells and the work they continue to do. Attendance during the meeting was very good. There were visitors from several surrounding churches as well as from the community at almost every service. Many thanks to all the brethren for their kind words of encouragement during that meeting. Meanwhile, the work here in Columbia continues to prosper. Since our last report two families and one widow lady have left digression in order to worship

God according to His pattern. The Dennis Nilson family, Don and Mary Lee, and Dorothy Pace have all made confessions for worshipping in error. The commitment to Truth that I have observed in these brethren is indeed an inspiration. Not only have they changed the way they worship, but they have also made changes in areas where even seasoned Christians often struggle—such as church attendance, hair and apparel. May God bless them for their honesty and sincerity. Also in regard to these changes I can't say enough about the involvement of the brothers and sisters here at Rice Rd. congregation. As Paul said in Romans 16:3 they are my "fellow workers in Christ Jesus." The house to house teaching by our members, coupled with their example, has been of enormous value in helping to strengthen our new brethren. They are worthy of commendation. Since our last report we have also had several baptisms. Lenora Aldridge, Josh Nilson, Tres Stone, and Ann Cheshire are among the most recent conversions. For these good things we give God the glory. Presently, we continue to impress the importance of scriptural unity on the minds of our brethren in digression. We are also engaged in home studies with various people from the community. I see wonderful potential in the work here at Columbia, and look forward with great anticipation to our studies this winter. Please pray for the new converts and ask the Lord to continue to bless our efforts.

Brett Hickey, P.O. Box 68, Mtn. Home, AR 72653, October 23_ Since reporting in June, spiritual growth has picked up where numerical growth left off at Mountain Home. Our summer meeting with Doug Hawkins proved as beneficial as it has each of the past three years. Our meeting climaxed Sunday with an attendance of 89. This was our largest assembly in two and one-half years here. There were five confessions of fault and at least 28 different outsiders from the community. In the three summers Doug has held our eight day summer meeting, we have had almost 150 outsiders. I admire the local brethren for not giving up on the Lord's work stateside. The Lord has blessed Doug with the stamina to hit the pavement hard in the daytime and still preach powerful sermons night after night. We handed out 1000 invitations during the meeting. Who says "cold-calling" is a waste of time? Especially in smaller cities, we are responsible for letting people know that we exist and care. Every avenue should be exhausted to reach this end. This fall, Mountain Home has had meetings with Brian Burns, Kevin Presley and Bruce Roebuck as the congregation seeks another evangelist to carry on the work here. We greatly admire them for their work in the Lord. We extended our radio program from 5 to 15 minutes. Occasionally we have a question and answer format. It has been well received. We have had calls directly from our radio program. Others tell us that they are listening to the program. We still have live leads from the TV program. One "cups" lady we have studied with recently called. She regretted she could not attend our debate. She requested another study and a rundown on how the debate went. Our weekly newspaper article is still our hottest source of lead generation. Last week at the library, a gentleman walked up and started a conversation on our article on the "one loaf." He is an informed Catholic. A rare bird indeed. It was refreshing to find one who at least indicated that the Bible is important. Our studies will reveal his sincerity. This month we have had studies with ten different members and fifteen outsiders. A number of men from the local jail provide a captive audience every week. Ronny Wade's debate with J.T. Smith on individual cups was very informative. We were disappointed by the turnout of 120 to 140 people. Those young in faith were greatly strengthened by

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Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, Cal. 94539.

the discussion. Two individuals in attendance with a denominational background were convinced by Ronny's strong defense of the one cup position. One of these individuals said they had the "overwhelming feeling" that Bro. Smith knew the Lord used one cup. It was surprising to hear someone of Bro. Smith's caliber and experience say that he believed the cup of Mt. 26:27 was both literal and figurative. He claimed the authorities classified each use of the cup in the Lord's supper as a metonymy. Ronny demonstrated the inaccuracy of that statement. No one can judge another's heart, but we are confident that an honest consideration of this discussion in light of scripture will draw, over time, some to the truth.

We have had several enjoyable meetings. Our meeting at Marion, IA bore the most visible fruit. These brethren are zealous of Christ's cause. Our meeting closed with five confessions and one baptism. Particularly impressive was a confession for "forsaking the assembly." This confession did not seem painful, but liberating. One young man, Chris, has since expressed his desire to preach. We pray the Lord will bless him in this endeavor. Our meeting at Springfield (Northside) was highlighted by a Saturday morning study on evangelism followed by a question and answer session on what has worked for us in Mtn. Home. Northside is loaded with talent. They have two preachers and two who are working toward that end. Our meeting at Pocahontas, AR was a joy as always. They always make us feel like we are at home. The brethren there have worked closely with Mtn. Home. We were glad to help Broken Arrow, OK move into their new building. We canvassed the area the week of their opening services with Jerry Dickinon. Their first service was a full house and Jerry's impressive sermon was appropriate for the occasion. Our efforts to stir up interest in Anderson, MO were at least temporarily unsuccessful. Vigorous support from at least seven area congregations compensated for the lack of community concern to have a good meeting. It was personally gratifying to become better acquainted with Nelson Nichols and family. In each of these places, the hospitality is to be highly commended. We were glad to participate in the Tennessee and Missouri Labor Day meetings. For a last minute meeting, everyone was raving about the number of preachers and caliber of preaching over the weekend. The old-time, outdoor atmosphere and the Southern Hospitality of the Lawrenceburg area brethren, combined with uplifting services made for a uniquely enjoyable meeting.

Joe Hisle, Rt. 4, Box 188, Ada, OK 74820_ The second week of September I had the distinct privilege to work in a very special effort to take the gospel to the lost. The brethren in Brumley, Mo. held an open air meeting, (actually under a pavilion in the park) to give those who might have some aversion to coming into the church building an opportunity to hear the truth. I soon discovered that this type of meeting was not new to the brethren in this area: they have made a concerted effort to provide the public with an opportunity for salvation by supporting open air meetings, tent meetings, etc., in most of the small communities

in the area. The reasoning is, there are people who are more likely to come to a less formal setting to hear the gospel preached; also the opportunity is provided in their community. This is not the easier way to hold a gospel meeting. There is considerable effort that must be spent. The place of meeting must be arranged; chairs, songbooks, a blackboard, speaker stand must be provided; mosquitoes and an assortment of other crawly things dealt with; rain, hot weather, and unseasonably cold weather add to the problems. All of these hindrances and others, that I failed to name, were overcome by these brethren because they have a "mind to work" and a desire to spread the gospel. The congregation at Brumley is a little over a year old, and they already have about thirty members! The work in this area was originally started due to the efforts of Bro. and Sis. George Windes. They enlisted the assistance of preaching brethren Ron Alexander and David Griffin who worked diligently to give this effort a running start. Bro. Doug Hawkins now lives in the area and is working with the church. Doug is doing a really good job with the work. He is one of the motivating factors in holding the type of meetings we are talking about. Doug tells me that the church at Lebanon is the "Antioch" in this area. They are responsible for supporting financially and providing leadership in the effort to evangelize this part of Missouri. The main reason that I wanted to report this to the brotherhood was to express how impressed I was with the effort that was put out and the energy and enthusiasm that was expended in this effort. I witnessed an effort in cooperation among congregations and a will to help demonstrated by individuals that should be the rule rather than the exception. Brethren from Cable Ridge, Eldon, Lebanon, Columbia, Mt. Home, Buffalo, and Niangua were in attendance every night. Brethren drove many miles on crooked roads to be there night after night. About forty members of the congregations in Springfield chartered a bus and came up on Friday night to be a part of the effort. This was the night that it was unseasonable cold, there was no doubt about brotherly love that night, the congregation sat close sharing the quilts and blankets that were available. It was one of those assemblies that you can tell your grandchildren about! The preachers in the area who were not away in other works supported the meeting with their efforts and influence. David Griffin, Clovis Cook, Gary Weaver, Reggie Kinser, Dan Wissinger, and Smith Bibens were in attendance one or more times while Ron Alexander was there most of the time and of course Doug Hawkins who was there each night. I guess we are down to the bottom line and you are wondering now about results. I would like to report that there were conversions every night and that we "turned the world upside down for Christ" but I guess that would be expecting too much in the USA today. We did have from two to seven non-members in attendance every night. We believe the seed was sown and any time the gospel is preached that good is accomplished. I know that these brethren have "cast their bread upon the waters" and I commend the Brethren at Lebanon and Brumley along with Bro. Doug Hawkins for having a "mind to work."