

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. LXXI

LEBANON, MISSOURI, January, 1997

NO. 1

THE IMPREGNABLE FORTRESS

By G. V. AYERS

Several years ago, when we were living near Seattle, Washington, we studied with several members of the United Pentecostal Church. A nicer group of people you will never meet.

They were hospitable, kind and courteous. But they were wrong. Dead wrong.

In all, we had four studies with the group. In the first study my wife's parents, Delbert and Sandra Boman, studied with one Pentecostal family. They touched on a number of subjects, but prominently talked about the Pentecostal "baptism in the Holy Ghost." Delbert kept asking, "What does your experience do for you that God's Word does not do for me?" Well, they couldn't answer him. Everything they brought up can be supplied through the Word of God without their miraculous gifts.

The following studies also included second Pentecostal family and my family. One dominant topic that we discussed was the number of individuals in the Godhead. We held that the Scriptures teach three distinct beings make up the Godhead: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (cf. Mt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14, etc.), and that each may be rightly called God (2 Tim. 1:2; Heb. 1:8; Acts 5:3-4).

They claimed that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all one being, and that they express three different manifestations of God. You take them to Matthew 3:16-17, where Jesus was baptized, and the Father is speaking from heaven, the Holy Spirit is descending in the form of a dove, and Jesus is standing beside the river, and they say it is just a graphic display of the individual manifestations of God. "God is everywhere." They say, "That is how he can be in heaven and on the earth at the same time."

However, two Scriptures that they really got stuck on were John 5:31-37, and John 8:16-18. In these passages, Jesus tells the Jews that he is not his own witness, but there is another who bears witness of who he is. That other witness is the Father in heaven. Now, if the Father and the Son are the same individual, then it follows that Jesus is intentionally misleading, and deceiving the Jews—he is lying. Do we dare lay such a charge to the Son of God?

The one issue that dominated our discussions was their "baptism in the Holy Ghost." We pointed out to them that this baptism was given by promise to the apostles (Mt. 3:11; Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:4-5, 8), and that Paul, the last apostle, received it at some unnamed time, since he was as "one born out of due time" (1 Cor. 15:8). We also showed them that purpose the Holy Spirit fell upon the household

of Cornelius was in order for God to demonstrate the acceptability of the Gentiles into the New Covenant (Acts 10:28, 34, 44-47; 11:15-18; 15:7-8). But they still persisted in their "Holy Ghost experience."

"Don't you think that when God comes on the scene that big things happen?" one man asked. "God delivered the Israelites by the plagues upon Egypt, he parted the Red Sea, he brought down the walls of Jerico. Jesus walked on the water and healed the sick. And when the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost, great things happened. Don't you believe that big things happen when God comes on the scene?"

We replied: "Let me tell you what happened when I was saved. Something happened that was greater than the plagues of Egypt, or God parting the Red Sea. It was bigger than Jesus walking on the water, or all of the miracles that were performed. What happened was this—God forgave my sins. Now, that was something that was unprecedented since the foundation of the world. Long ago Jesus died on the cross for my sins, but it didn't happen for me until my sins were washed away when I was baptized into Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (cf. Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-6). To this they fell silent.

They often spoke about how much their life had been changed. "I was addicted to drugs and alcohol, I was in prison," one Pentecostal man said, "And God changed my life. He delivered me from my addiction and from prison..." On and on he went.

Pentecostals always talk about the big change—but they seldom ever talk about the forgiveness of sins. We told them, "I was never in prison, and never addicted to drugs or alcohol. But let me tell you one thing that is as bad as those things, even worse—I was dead in trespasses and sins, and I was made alive again through obedience to the gospel" (cf. Eph. 2:1-6; Col. 2:11-13). Again they fell silent.

Later we asked, "Tell us (and I mean it in all sincerity, and am not at all trying to be mean), do you believe that since you have this Holy Ghost experience that you have superior knowledge about the Scriptures?"

"Well, I wouldn't put it that way, but I do believe that you cannot truly know what the Scriptures are teaching without the guidance of the Holy Ghost."

"Then, how could one ever prove you to be wrong on anything? You go into any discussion with a predisposition that you have superior knowledge about the Word. With

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PUBLISHER

Don L. King
 41931 Chadbourne, Fremont, CA 94539
 Fax 510-651-3926

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

Ronny F. Wade
 P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808

EDITORIAL STAFF

Clovis Cook
 Edwin S. Morris

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Bennie Cryer	Johnny Elmore
Barney Owens	Jerry Dickinson
Billy Dickinson	Kevin Presley
Carl Johnson	

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Editorial

THE WORK OF ELDERS

By DON L. KING

We began a study in last month's OPA regarding the work of elders. So much is heard about the qualifications and too often very little about their work. The various terms used by the Spirit to refer to the elders also is indicative of their work. Such ideas as shepherds, overseers, rulers, leaders, examples, etc. may give us some hint of what the Lord expects.

The office of an elder or bishop is a good work (1 Timothy 3:1). However, it requires a great deal of time and serious thought. The office can never hope to be filled satisfactorily by anyone who is lacking in a love for the church and Christ. Their work (elders) will require them to be at home most of the time. How could one otherwise shepherd the church? Can one be a leader while on the road? May he rule from a distance? Is it possible to oversee a congregation from afar? If a man is not willing to make the home congregation his number one concern and stay at home with it he had better not take on the job. To my mind, this creates a real problem for the preacher who also wishes to be an elder. The work of an evangelist demands that he be gone preaching while the work of an elder demands that he be at home shepherding. How can we be at both places at the same time? Yes, we are aware that many preachers stay at home. However, it may be that much of the work they do is really intended for the elders (once they are appointed). Once elders are appointed the evangelist is to be on his way to begin all over again. Obviously the idea of the preacher becoming the "pastor" by himself is unscriptural. He is temporary while elders are permanent. He is often by himself while elders are always in the plural. Probably, we have become too accustomed to the preacher or a certain man called the "leader" doing the work intended for scriptural elders. We need to be very careful lest we allow an unscriptural form of government to evolve through generations of neglect on our part.

We notice in Acts 20:28, as Paul spoke to the elders from Ephesus, that he said: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves,..." What great advice! The duties of elders involve the souls of men. How fitting that elders always inspect themselves before others. An elder must know how he himself stands with the Lord if he is to be effective in doing the great work he has been ordained to do. He must be able to take care of his own house (1 Timothy 3:4,5) before he undertakes to rule the Lord's house.

Elders who always "take heed to themselves" are not likely to be unaware of personal faults. He will not cause division in the church because he is uncaring of the Lord's will. In other words, he will correct his own mistakes before others must correct them for him. It is difficult to imagine a more embarrassing situation than to be condemned by others because we are not able, or willing to correct ourselves.

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: If a woman trims her hair, is she violating 1 Cor. 11:1-16? (AR)

Answer: Before I give an answer to the above question, there are several observations that I would like to make. When I first began preaching over forty years ago, it was rare to find very many women in the churches who cut their hair. Now and then there would be one, but they were few and far between. Today, the opposite is fast becoming the norm. More and more women are not only cutting their hair, but many openly declare that there is nothing wrong with it. Often as a first step there seems to be an idea among some that if a woman just trims a little of her hair it is not wrong, but if she were to cut a significant portion of it off, she would be in violation of the above passage. Is this sound or correct reasoning? Please note the following facts before you draw your conclusion. "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering" 1 Cor. 11:14-15. The expression "have long hair" translates a Greek word which means "let the hair grow" Thayer p. 354. The idea of length is not relative. Paul is not contrasting the length of a woman's hair when compared to the length of a man's hair. (To argue that a woman's hair is longer than a man's misses the point.) In fact, the idea of a certain lineal length in so many feet or inches is not under consideration. Our hair is either natural length or not natural length. We either let our hair grow or we do not. If we let it grow we do not cut it. If we cut or trim it, we do not let it grow. Thus Paul is actually saying: "If a man let his hair grow, it is a shame unto him. But if a woman let her hair grow, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering. " How much of her hair is given her for a covering? The word "hair" in this verse translates a Greek word meaning "head of hair" Thayer p. 354. Thus it is a woman's "head of hair" or all of her hair that is given her for a covering. When a woman trims the edges or the last few inches of her hair, she no longer has "long hair" in God's sight. She ceases to "let the hair grow" by trimming it. To argue that trimming the hair will cause it to grow, also misses the point. Paul is not suggesting ways to get the hair to grow, but merely telling women to not interfere with its growth. When a woman trims her hair, she has cut

her hair, and in so doing has violated this passage.

Question: Is Paul merely addressing a custom that applied to that time and place?

Answer: "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God (v. 16)" The idea expressed by Paul here is not, as some have concluded, that if anyone objects to his teaching just forget it or ignore it. But actually he is saying the very opposite. His meaning is: if anyone refuses this teaching, let him know that we, nor the churches of God recognize nothing else, i.e. no other teaching. It would be utterly foolish to charge Paul with presenting the content of vs 1-16 and then say if anyone wants to argue about this, then just forget it. Certainly not. Other translations make the meaning unmistakably clear: "If any man presumes to raise objections on this point, well, I acknowledge no other mode of worship. " (Mof) "If, however, anyone still thinks it is right to contest this point" (TCNT), I for my part recognize no other practice in worship than this" (Goodspeed). Paul also affirmed that such teaching was recognized in all of the congregations of that day. To try and negate the plain teaching of the Apostle in these verses, is to tread on dangerous ground. Sisters, do not think that you can ignore what is here said and taught and escape the judgment of God. This inspired writer did not spend sixteen verses of sacred text merely to have it swept under the rug with one fell swoop. In summary, Paul declares that there are three things a woman may do with her hair. She may cut or trim it, she may shave her head, or she may let her hair grow. Regarding the first two he said "...but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn (cut) or shaven, let her be covered. " So, of the three things a woman may do with her hair, two of them are a shame. The other thing she may do is "let the hair grow" i.e. have long hair. If she does this, Paul declares that "it is a glory to her." Glory or shame, which will you choose? Often when preachers discharge their duty in pointing out this sin, many become upset and disgruntled as though someone has trespassed into a forbidden area. Such, however, is the duty of every preacher of the gospel, and should result in thanks, rather than scorn, on the part of the hearers. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808)

EMPTY TEMPLES (ACTS 17:24) PART 2

By C.A. SMITH

As stated in our earlier article, Paul's declaration: "Our God does not dwell in temples made with hands", plainly and simply teaches us that God's true temple was not and is not a physical house at all, but a living community of Believers in Christ. Oh, yes, the church is holy, but not because of her ornate buildings, but rather, because of sanctified believers who comprise her. This was a lesson that they needed, and may I say, one that we need as well, for this materialistic concept is still around today, and men foolishly believe that they can contain God in a man-made

temple. It cannot be done! Naturally this raises the question: If God does not dwell in temples made with hands, and these temples are not the "Temple of God", What is?

The Church Is The Temple of God! "Knew ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16) The words of this text are sometimes applied to individuals, but, the reference here is to the church. The building of which the apostle speaks is the CHURCH OF CHRIST, called in this verse "The

Temple of God.”

Under the Law of Moses there was first a tent and later a building of stone which was called God's house. Today, God does not dwell in a temple made with hands. The church is God's temple. It is a spiritual house that enables his people to offer up spiritual sacrifices.

(2) The church at Corinth defiled the temple of God by becoming carnally minded.

Paul said that he “could not speak to them as spiritual, but as carnal” (1 Cor. 3:1).

Today we are guilty too, when we allow the temporal and fleshly things to become important in our lives, while allowing the spiritual things to become secondary. It doesn't seem to bother folks anymore to read, “To be carnally minded is death” and “They that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8:6,8).

3) The church at Corinth defiled the temple of God by improperly observing the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:17-22). A sin that is prevalent in the churches of Christ today. When we fail to observe the Lord's Supper or improperly observe the Supper as Jesus instituted it, we defile the temple of God.

(4) The church at Laodicea defiled the temple of God by allowing indifference to pervade the church. They were just unconcerned, and because of their unconcern, Jesus said: “I will spew thee out of my mouth”, and admonished them to “anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see”, “be zealous and repent” (Rev. 3: 14-21). I wonder what he thinks of the church today, who in her indifference has opened the flood gates to any type or kind of sin that might want to enter?

(5) In the Old Testament temple, nothing was allowed in this temple as an act of service or glory to God except that which had been dedicated by the blood of animals, which was the way the temple was dedicated. And today, in the church of our Lord, nothing is allowed as an act of worship or a condition of salvation, or condition of living the Christian life that has not been dedicated by the blood of Christ in the New Testament.

Of all the beautiful metaphors of the church, such as the bride of Christ, the vineyard of the Lord, the household

of God, the pillar and ground of the truth, the spiritual body of Christ, and the flock of Christ, none is more beautiful and more intriguing than “The Temple of God.” The Spirit of God is alive in the church only when the teachings of the New Testament are put into practice. Peter says that “We are living stones” (1 Pet. 2:5). The true Temple of God, therefore, has never been anything except the church of Jesus Christ our Lord. In it alone, not in some man-made shrine, men are called to worship and serve the Lord of glory.

However, in spite of God's revelation that the church is “The Temple of God,” men are prone to ignore it and to “Defile The Temple of God.” There are even those in the church of our Lord who do the same. What shame! It appears to me that we could learn from the Book of God how that men defiled the “Temple of God” and profit therefrom. The church at Corinth comes to mind. They flagrantly defiled “The Temple of God.”

(1) The church at Corinth defiled the temple in their division and strife. There was different groups following different men, like Apollos, and Cephas, and Paul. Paul condemned this and shows that to do this was defiling the temple of God, in 1 Cor. 1:10-13. Division and Strife were sinful then, and they are sinful today.

Any or all who perpetrate and engage in such are guilty of defiling the temple of God. Today, divisions and strife are still around. When will we ever learn to “be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment?” We must, if we “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3).

Away then with Instrumental Music, Individual Cups, Multiple Loaves,

Sunday School, and etc., and let us realize how sacred the “true” temple of God is, and with reverence and awe hold the church, as given us by God in highest esteem. If we do not, our efforts will surely be in vain, and cause the church to be a hollow empty shell. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Cor. 3:16)—C.A. Smith, 810 N. 6th, Andrews, TX 79714.

AS WE BEGIN OUR 65TH YEAR

BY DON L. KING

It is hard to believe we are beginning the 65th year of publication. It is even more difficult for me to realize that I have been doing this work for more than 20 years now. So many mistakes on my part, but you have been kind indeed. We would like to take this opportunity to personally thank all of you who subscribe regularly. Many of you do so years in advance. That makes our work easier and we appreciate you so very much. Thanks, too, to you who send extra money for the foreign subscriptions. It is expensive for the paper to send to so many faraway places. Yet so much has been accomplished in years past because you have made this possible with your financial help. We have never asked that you haven't responded to the need. God bless you. Our costs to print as well as mail have steadily gone up and we struggle to keep the price of the paper as low as possible. We sincerely believe the paper

is a bargain and we want to keep it that way. Our grateful and sincere thanks also to the good brethren and preachers who write articles and send regular field reports and news announcements. Obviously the paper could do nothing without you. Please keep up the good work. We appreciate every good word you say about the paper. Please try to send subscriptions or friends and brethren when you can.

We occasionally hear words and comments both complimentary and critical. We appreciate the compliments, of course. However, we would like to make critical comments heard as rarely as possible. We will consider your criticisms if you will send them to us. Some feel the paper has a too harsh policy in the articles, etc.

Frankly, this creates a problem to fix. Would you really have the paper be soft on sin? Likely not. How then, may

we be softer? Should we deal less with moral problems? Would you prefer a paper that deals only in scholarly themes? Please write us with your suggestions. We

promise to consider them. However, we must keep the paper an effective tool against Satan at all costs. We need your help.—DLK

UPDATE ON BILLY ORTEN

By WAYNE FUSSELL

On November 8, just after our last update on Billy, a compatible heart became available. Around midnight that evening while the family and a group of Christians from several congregations waited prayerfully, the brilliant heart surgeon, Dr. Moshem Hakim, announced that Billy had received a "great" heart and that it was beating beautifully. He had earlier that evening informed the family that Billy's chances (because of his debilitated condition) were only 40 percent; but we, who had seen the Lord bring Billy through the "valley of the shadow" three times, prayed and believed fervently that the Lord would supply the other 60 percent. He has! Billy was placed in isolation ICU for about two weeks. He was terribly weak. He had lost 45 pounds, could not stand up or move on his own, and he could not swallow; however, each day we have seen progress. He is now in a room with special care and re-

ceiving therapy. He is now eating and walking with some assistance. He is still very weak, but growing stronger each day. The doctor now predicts that he will go home December 18. His home must be remodeled to provide a sanitized environment for his recuperation. The first year is critical. He is highly susceptible to germs because his immune system must be maintained at zero. He cannot have company. He must wear a mask and have very little contact with people. In February, he will be allowed to go to church but must keep his distance from folks as much as possible. If all goes well, Billy should be able to travel and hold his "postponed" meetings one year after the transplant - beginning January 1998. Billy and Peggy give glory to God for Billy's new lease on life. They thank you all for the constant prayers which have moved the Hand of God on his behalf. We urge you to keep praying for him.

REPORT ON THE WORK IN MEXICO

By J. WAYNE MCKAMIE

Saltillo, Mexico was the place and Oct. 9-11 were the days of our twentieth annual preachers study. Forty-one preachers and leaders of congregations were in attendance from many parts of the country. In addition, we had many from the U.S. who came to attend and to be involved. Among them were Julio Rodriguez and Manuel Treino of Walton Walker in Dallas, Johnny Herrera of Waco; Bill Verner, Kent Davis and Jack Lee of Blue, OK; Tony Melton of Healdon, OK; William St. John of Paris, Jonathan Bunner of Bunner's Ridge, W.VA and Buddy Brumley of Exeter, CA. Juan Asuncion Rodriguez were there to aid in presentation and translation as needed.

The study was not only one of our best attendance-wise but also one of our best in many other ways. The studies were well done, orderly, timely, and scriptural. The question-answer sessions indicated a great deal of growth on the part of all participants. Some of these men have been in all the studies that have been conducted in Mexico. And, having been in those twenty consecutive studies and in others there for twenty-nine years, I can see a definite growth in knowledge, experience and maturity. The topics for the studies are generated by the needs and requests of the preachers and for the leadership of various congregations. Sometimes they grow out of studies, debates, or needs of the people and preachers involved in their day-to-day work. Some of the topics covered this year were: How To Train Leaders In Congregations, Saving Our Children, Fellowship, Personal Work, Spiritual Gifts, When That Which Is Perfect Is Come, 1 Corinthians 14, The Church of Christ 1914, The Godhead, The Lord's Supper, What It Means To Be A Preacher, and our Goals or The Future.

The night services were attended by large crowds of brethren from the various congregations in the Saltillo area. Three were baptized and two were restored. After the study it was necessary for some of the preachers to return to the U.S. Those who could stay joined us for visits to congregations in the Saltillo-Conception del Oro region, the Zacatecas area (five were restored), the Leon area, and finally back to Monterey and Laredo. All in all, this took about two weeks.

This work was made possible by Fairview, LA, Blue, OK, and McGregor, TX and by other congregations and preachers who wanted to be involved.

This work, which is one of our oldest work of the brotherhood, continues with promise. We thank God that we now have a new generation of young people in the Mexican church who have never been Roman Catholics or any other denominations. These young people are capable workers in the Lord's church. We now have Mexican preachers and leaders who are older and wiser. We have brethren in the U.S. who have never forgotten this work and we have young men across the U.S. who are equipping themselves for the future of the Lord's work in Mexico.- J. Wayne McKamie

THE IMPREGNABLE FORTRESS

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that frame of mind how could anyone ever prove you to be wrong?"

Again, we asked them, "If there is a difference between what you feel in your heart and what the Word of God teaches, which one do you follow?"

"Well, the Word of God, of course," they replied. "Any revelation or manifestation of the Holy Ghost must be in perfect keeping with the Word of God."

"Then why do you accept the feelings in your heart over the plain teaching of Scripture? You deny the words of Jesus when he distinguishes himself from the Father in John 5:31-37 and 8:16-18." Again, they did not answer.

Later we asked them if the Assemblies of God denomination, a Pentecostal group that does not believe their oneness doctrine, had the same Holy Ghost experience that they had met with. They replied, "No, they have received the spirit of error."

"Where does that spirit come from?"

"From the Devil," they answered.

So, there you have it. By the terms of their own reasoning they are in a position where they cannot conceive of themselves as being wrong. They are untouchable. They

have built for themselves an impregnable fortress. In their own mind they cannot be wrong. Those who claim the exact same experience that they do, but do not agree with their oneness doctrine of God, have the spirit of the Devil. In their reasoning, they are untouchable. As long as they keep that mind-set, there is no way that they can be shown their error. They are much like those in Jesus' day, who refused to see the truth (Mt. 13:13-15). The only way that they will ever understand their error, is when they finally face the fact that they deny the plain teaching of Scripture.

Surely passages which speak of deceivers, and false workers of miracles must mean something (Mt. 7:21-23; 24:24; 2 Thess. 2-9-12; Rev. 13:14; 16:14; 19:20). How can they know that their experience is from God, and the experience of others is from Satan?—G.V. Ayers, 6365 Arcadia Ave., Loomis, CA 95650 (916) 652-5725.

THE WORK OF ELDERS

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Take heed to yourselves, indicates a group of men who are very, very careful about the church. Can you imagine an elder who does not regularly attend the services? He will always be there because he cares for the church. Lack of attendance normally shows an absence of care for the church. The elders make it their business to know what is going on with the congregation. They will have to be aware of the members lives and problems. They will have a great care about how the services are carried on. They will see to it that the teaching is what it needs to be. They will know what needs to be taught and why. They are in tune with the church. They will see to it that the song leaders are chosen carefully so

that the singing will be as good as possible. They would be careful to see that the Lord's table is taken care of by capable men. They literally oversee the church and her work in the local capacity. It will likely be necessary for the elders to regularly visit among the members so they can be better informed as to members' needs. In other words, elders are to be pastors. They pastor the church. The preacher doesn't do it, the elders do. In a private visit an elder can easily learn what the other members are thinking. If there are questions or needs, he can be of real help.

It seems obvious that the work of the elders is pretty intense. They are not, and should never become, mere figureheads who only arrange services or book teachers for weekends.

More later-DLK.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHURCH DIRECTORY TURLOCK, CA

Please delete Nolan Young and add Richard DeGough, 1907 Tully Rd., Hughson, CA 95326, (209) 883-4168.

NORTH CANTON, OH

The brethren of North Canton, OH would like to announce the Sunday evening service time is being changed from 6 p.m. to 4 p.m. We would like to invite anyone who might be in the area to stop by and worship with us.

1996 CHURCH DIRECTORY

I still have a few of the 1996 Church Directories left, but they are fast being depleted. If you have not ordered yours do so today. The price is \$2.00 each plus postage. Send all orders to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808.

MATERIAL FOR PUBLICATION

Since I will be away from the U.S.A. for a time, please send all material intended for publication to: Ronny F.

Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808. After Feb. 15, resume sending to me in California as usual. Thank you.—DLK.

BRETHREN PLEASE NOTE

A new congregation is beginning in Allen, TX. This work is the evangelistic effort of the Robin Road Church of Christ, Garland, TX. Additionally, Christians throughout the brotherhood have generously supported this effort. If you know of any prospects in the Allen/Collin County area (including North Dallas, Richardson, Plano, McKinney, Parker, Wylie, Fairview, Lucas), send their names to David Risener, 101 N. Greenville C-81, Allen, TX 75002, or call (972) 390-9184. If you wish to offer any financial contributions for the building project, please send them to the same address. Lord willing, the building will be completed and open for worship services shortly after the beginning of 1997. An opening notice will be published when we near building completion. Please keep this endeavor in your prayers, that much fruit might come forth from the efforts here.

Bruce Caskey, Aaron Risener, David Risener, Gary Robinson, Hans Roodschild, Jon Roodschild, Bobby Shelton.

BRETHREN:

This letter is to make you aware of a man that seems to be running a scam on our brotherhood. He uses the names, Tom Glover and David Swann. Be aware that he tells convincing lies to suit his purpose, and will do whatever he feels is necessary (including baptism) to gain your confidence. However, he does not seem to ask for money on the first visit.

The man is 35-40 years old, weighs between 160-170 lbs., has light brown hair w/moustache, and hazel eyes. He says that he is from California where he served time in prison. His job will bring him into the area about every two weeks. He has many questions about the church, and acts as if he is choosing a church that worships as he thinks is correct. He has a church directory (Where The Saints Assemble).

If you need further information just let me know.

Joe Dan Morgan, 316 "G" St. N.E., Miami, OK, 74354, (918) 542-2489

REPORT CONCERNING RESPONSE TO 1996 APPEAL FOR FUNDS TO PURCHASE GRAPE JUICE FOR COMMUNION SERVICES OF CONGREGATIONS IN AFRICA

Brethren, once again you have come to the rescue of the Lord's poor and needy saints in Africa! We are most grateful to all of you who have responded to our appeal for assistance to purchase grape juice for congregations of the Lord's Church here who are not financially able to do this for themselves. We are overjoyed and encouraged by your demonstration of love and concern for brethren whom you have never met.

Bro. Maurice Chandler has informed me of the generous contributions made by caring brethren like you. He also tells me that many have telephoned him to inquire about our need and to make it known that they are prepared to assist when the need arises. In addition, on October 30th, he informed me of a congregation who has accepted the responsibility of seeing to it that we are kept supplied with our requirements of grape juice. Before I divulge the name of this congregation, I will first correspond with them and arrange a workable approach to their handling this project. This will be a tremendous financial responsibility for them. I am confident that they will appreciate any help they can get from sister congregations. More about this later.

Maurice made deposits for purchasing grape juice in my work fund account as follows: \$1,950.00 on 6/17/96; \$12,265.00 on 7/8/96; \$8,910.00 on 10/29/96. The total being \$23,125.00 received for purchase of grape juice.

I have made payments to Stellenbosch in 1996 as follows: \$2,476.00 on 2/29/96; \$2,840.00 on 5/27/96; \$2,840.00 on 7/8/96; \$8,520.00 on 6/9/96 (Advance payment for order of 600 cases). The total being \$16,676.00 for payments made in 1996.

The money paid to Stellenbosch on both 2/19 and 5/27 was what was "robbed from Peter to pay Paul." "Peter" has been repaid. We now have \$6,449.00 in reserve for

future requirements.

The payment on 6/9 was a prepayment I made when placing an order for 600 cases of grape juice. This was done to boost our rating with Stellenbosch. By the way, when Dennis Smith was in the hospital in Johannesburg, I took advantage of the opportunity to visit the Stellenbosch company. I visited the office where all of our orders are processed. Mrs. June Sharp, who is in charge of export sales, informed me that we have been given a price reduction. Instead of \$11.60 per case, they only charged us \$9.40 per case. This amounts to \$5,640.00 for the 600 cases. I have always requested Stellenbosch to send our shipments prepaid as it costs us less to pay it there than here. The prepaid freight charges for this shipment which we received on the 18th of October was \$1,655.00. The total shipment cost us \$7,295.00. This means we have a credit balance with Stellenbosch in the amount of \$1,225.00. When considering this along with the cash reserve, it amounts to \$7,674.00.

The 600 cases we have just received should be adequate for about nine months, i.e. if the numbers of members and congregations remain at their present level. However, it is our prayer and shall also be our effort to make sure the work continues to grow. With the Lord blessing us, and with your support the work in Africa will continue to go forward.

Brethren, I thank God for all of you who have helped to lift an awesome burden which troubled several of us involved in this work. May the Lord ever look upon you with His tenderest love and bless you abundantly, both now and forever. Please, pray for us.

Our Departed

Norton--Pearl Norton was born February 5, 1909, in Decatur, TX. She died Thursday, September 19, 1996, in Ada, OK, at the age of 87. Sister Norton was married to John Andrew Norton June 18, 1927 in Ada. He preceded her in death September 1, 1977. She is survived by three daughters: Betty Cannon of Conway, AR, Billie Hunter of Greenville, TX, and Zona Chilcoat of Rockport, TX. She is also survived by seven grandchildren, 13 great grandchildren, and two great great grandchildren. Sister Norton was a longtime, faithful member of our congregation here in Ada. She was sweet, pleasant person and we miss her. I was honored to eulogize her at the funeral and to speak some words of comfort and warning to the survivors. Carl M. Johnson.

Piper--Mary A. Piper was one of the original members of the Lord's church which met for scriptural worship in the Kansas City area. She was born in Alma, Kansas June 23, 1911 and passed away at Bethany hospital in Kansas City, KS at the age of 85. She moved to this area 56 years ago and lived here until her death. Sister Piper was a member of the Kansas Ave. congregation, but was incapacitated for some time, being confined to her home until going into the hospital for gallbladder surgery, from which she never recovered. She was preceded in death by her husband, Clyde Piper, in 1991. Surviving her passing is her son, Harley Piper; six brothers, Harley Jones, Leland, Joseph, Byron; two sisters Leola Crawford and Alta

Bossert; five grandchildren and one great-grandson. It was my privilege to officiate at her memorial service. The beautiful singing was done by members of the church. Interment was at Clay Center, Kansas. Paul O. Nichols.

SMITH--Laura was born December 30, 1902 in Tennessee. She was a member of the 3rd St. Church of Christ since 1926. Laura passed away on Lord's Day afternoon August 17, 1996 in Hobart, OK. She was laid to rest on August 20, 1996 in the Sentinel Cemetery by the side of her husband, Homer, who passed away in 1958. Homer and Laura's home was always the preachers' home away from home. Laura was the last of the members who stood firm for the truth here when the church split over the cups and classes. She was a firm, true soldier for the truth and was a person who was a good example to all. Laura was one of five members here in Sentinel who had worshipped together for over 50 years. I can truly say that she has been a great help and encouragement to me and my family for 50 years. She was always willing to do what she could for the cause and for members of the body of Christ. Laura's funeral was conducted at the 3rd Street Church of Christ. I felt privileged to be asked by her many years ago to preach her funeral. I endeavored to comfort the bereaved and also to warn those who were not Christians. The singing was beautifully done by our three daughters and their husbands. She is being missed so very much. Louis (Mike) Hopkins.



Billy D. Dickinson, 215 Forest Hills Dr., West Monroe, LA 71291, Dec. 9_ It's been a while since I've sent in a report. 1996 has been a busy year for me and I'm now looking forward to the new year. However, before I say farewell to 1996, I would like to thank these congregations I conducted meetings for and the privilege I had of being with them: Marietta, GA, North Shore, TX, Healdton, OK, and Tyler, TX. It was a blessing to be associated with the following preachers in those endeavors: Ricky Martin, Jerry Dickinson, Tony Melton, and Terry Baze. All of these men are dedicated preachers of the Gospel; they love the church and are working hard to sow the seed of the kingdom. I was able to attend two nights of Doug Hawkins' debate with Michael Hughes in Camdenton, MO on the issue of individual cups. Doug did a superb job of defending the truth. No one could have guessed this was his first debate defending the truth. No one could have guessed this was his first debate; he met his opponent's arguments with ease and was forceful, but respectful, in his presentation. With all due respect to Bro. Hughes, I found him surprisingly weak in both argumentation and presentation. Billy Orten received a heart transplant on Nov. 8 and is progressing well at this time, probably ahead of the doctors' expectations. His illness has left a void in our area,

especially with the Conway and Fairview congregations. We look forward to the time when he'll be able to stand in the pulpit again and preach those edifying sermons that the brethren are now missing. Please remember Billy and his family in your prayers. My family and I are looking forward to attending the New Year's meeting in Oklahoma. My first scheduled meeting for 1997 is in Edmond, OK March 2-9.

Clovis T. Cook, 12913 Hwy. 64, Lebanon, MO 65536, Dec. 11_ I continue to preach, almost every Lord's day, and sometimes more. My health has improved rather slowly since my last open heart surgery. But I am thankful that for the last year I have had no more complications. While on our trip out West, last August I preached at Auburn, CA. I have preached at the Garden's Edge church in Wichita Falls, Texas several times in the past year. They are growing and doing very well. I had the privilege of attending the Hawkins-Hughes, discussion, Dec. 2-3 and 5-6. It was held in the digressive church building in Camdenton, Mo. Fairly good crowds were in attendance each night. Douglas Hawkins left his brethren with nothing to do be ashamed of. I'm sure the discussion will be reported elsewhere, but I just want to go on record, in saying that it has been many years (if ever) since I have heard a man do better in his first debate, and I attended my first one sixty-three years ago, and a goodly number since. Of course, I have not heard too many men in their first attempt. Joe Hisle, moderated for Doug, and did his job well. Doug was well up on the arguments and handled himself in a very dignified manner. It was Bro. Hughes' first debate as well, but it was easy to discern that he was no match for Doug in the very outset. I preach at Eldon, Mo., the fourth Lord's Day each month, and Doug and his wife, Lorie, usually come over for the afternoon service. Doug is a hard worker and we are blessed to have him in these parts.

Bruce Roebuck, P.O. Box 184, Wynnewood, OK 73098, December 10_ Our time here at Wynnewood is quickly coming to an end. Though we have benefited by our stay here we must move onward. Plans are being finalized for us to work with the congregation in Mt. Home, AR. Brett Hickey has done a fine job there and leaves large shoes to fill. This fall has been a busy one for us. In September we conducted a mission effort in a neighboring community. A number of the brethren knocked doors in the area and Kevin Presley and I held a meeting there. The first night we had ten outsiders and two or three every night afterwards. This proved to me that we need to spend more time in mission efforts. The days of simply announcing a meeting and getting a house full every night are gone! We appreciate the help of preaching brethren Johnny Elmore, Doug Edwards, Tony Melton and Richard Frizell. The very next week Kevin and I held a mission meeting in Geary, OK. Again there were visitors from the community most every service. Also in September we took in the Wade-Smith debate in Mt. Home, AR. The following weekend we held a meeting there and enjoyed it thoroughly. In October we conducted a meeting in Avon near Indianapolis, IN. Here we enjoyed the hospitality of John and Mary Trisler. We have enjoyed and benefited from another year of service

and looking forward to '97 with great hopes and expectations. Please remember us in your prayers.

Bill Harmon, 411 Willow Dr., Wichita Falls, TX 76305_ We are growing numerically, 7 baptisms since April 11, 1996 at the Garden's Edge Church of Christ. The members are praying souls, going into the streets asking for bible studies and leaving brochures. The members have a mind to work. In November we hosted a congregational workshop lead by Michael Fox. There were 75 in attendance on Saturday with six states represented. We are growing in spirit as well as numbers. Let us give God the glory.

Mark Deatherage, 180 Applegrove N.E., North Canton, OH 44720_ Greetings! In June of 1996 my wife, Sherri, my three children, and I left the Cincinnati area and my job of 13 years. We moved to the congregation in North Canton, Ohio to begin working with the church. We left with the support of our home congregation, Dallasburg, Ohio (Goshen). We had decided that we need to do more for the cause of Christ. We have grown to love the brethren here in North Canton, and we have high hope for the work in this place. We are using the telephone at the building, and we are advertising in the newspaper for our weekly 5 minute message. We have had several calls. The brethren are willing to do what it takes to have this congregation growing. There has been one course completed, and one just about to finish. Our studies with the members have been going well, and seem to be gaining interest. We have had a few confessions recently. We, of course are cautiously excited about this, and we will continue to work with them as much as possible. Please come and visit. I believe you will be pleasantly surprised. Please pray for us and the brethren here.

J. Wayne McKamie, 1921 McKamie Rd., McGregor, TX 76657_ The Lord's work continues in Central Texas with several being added to the church this year. The church "labors on" regardless of what's going on around it - and there's much to be said for that. There is a tremendous amount of talent here and we are gradually moving toward the maturity that the Lord requires. The ability to bring into this area the great talent that our brotherhood affords has been a key factor in our development. 1996 has been a busy year at home and in meetings throughout our brotherhood. It has been our privilege to preach in 19 congregations this year and with some result. Our final meetings for the year are New Salem, MS November 27-Dec. 1, and Irving, TX December 6-8. I am still convinced that we work among the best people on earth. May it ever be so.

Bennie T. Cryer, 2340 Sanguinetti Ln. #104, Stockton, CA 95205, Dec. 6_ The work here in Stockton continues with numerous studies being conducted each week. One was baptized in November. It was a pleasure to conduct a weekend meeting in Fortuna, CA Oct. 25-27 and work with Roger Boone once more. Then Nov. 15-17 we worked with the 64th Street congregation in another weekend meeting. Bro. Greg Gay is working part time with this church and judging from the good attendance at the meeting is doing a fine job. Here in Stockton, Bro. Granville Mahurin, one of our elders is still undergoing treatments for cancer. Pray

for him. I plan to go to the Philippines with Bro. Don King January 2 to help him in the good work that is being done on the Island of Luzon. God bless all of you.

Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808, Dec. 4_ The old year will soon be gone and a new one beginning. This past year has been very rewarding to me in many ways. I am so thankful that I have been able to circulate among so many churches throughout this country in an effort to help spread the truth and strengthen the Cause. In the recent past, we have enjoyed meetings at White Bluff, TN, where Brother M.R. Kimbro works and stands like a rock for truth and right. Next we were at Hilltop near Liberty, KY for a good meeting. Several confessed wrongs and came back to the Church. Brethren from various congregations helped us out in attendance. Our next was in Harrison, AR where Bro. Jimmy Smith lives. Jimmy is esteemed highly by people in this area and his influence can be seen not only in the church, but in the community as well. Two returned to the Lord during the meeting. Over Thanksgiving weekend we were at Fieldstone near Cabool, MO for their annual meeting. We had good crowds, with several outsiders present. Bro. Don Pruitt lives and works in this area. He is respected by all, and his influence for good is evident. We look forward, Lord willing, to the New Year Meeting at Norman, OK, and the annual preachers study in Ok. City. Jan. 22-26 we are scheduled to be with the church in Irving, TX. May the Lord bless us all with His abiding presence in the year that lies ahead.

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, Dec. 4_ We had good attendance in our gospel meeting Nov. 1-10 at Fair Oaks, CA, where I made my home with Harvey and Imogene Hodson, and enjoyed visits with several preachers, including Bennie Cryer, Richard and Greg DeGough, Carney Briggs, Greg Gay, Michael and Raymond Fox, Max Buttler, and Alan Bonifay. I also heard Roger Boone at Auburn. Here at home, we had good attendance in a short meeting with Kevin Presley, Nov. 22-24, climaxing with the 4th Sunday singing. Nov. 27-Dec. 1, Sally and I were at Burkhart, near Racine, MO where excellent crowds attended every night of the meeting and we enjoyed staying with John and Charlotte Scott. I leave today to begin a meeting jointly with Ronny Wade and the Crestview congregation in Wichita Falls, TX, at their new building at 2111 Hwy. 79 South. This has been a wonderful year for me. May God bless the many who have favored me in so many ways.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, December 10_ We closed a very enjoyable meeting (weekend) last Lord's Day with the Oakdale, CA congregation. Crowds were excellent with extra chairs used every service except the morning worship. It was good to see fellow preaching brethren. Bennie Cryer, Alan Bonifay, Richard DeGough and Matthew Trent one or more times. We enjoyed staying with the Philip Permenter family. They are old friends and we couldn't have been treated better. The church at home is enjoying peace. Recently, two young brethren confessed wrongs at Fremont. The Lord willing, we will begin some training with the young men as soon as we return home from the Philippines. We hope to help

them with their teaching and also serving at the Lord's table, etc. Fremont is blessed with at least eight young married men who have a great deal of ability in teaching, song leading, etc. We hope good will come from our efforts. Since I will be away for a while, we ask that you send your material intended for publication to Ronny R. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808. After February 15, please resume sending to me in California as usual.

P. Duane Permenter, P.O. Box 80687, Midland, TX 79708, (915) 520-6508, Dec. 4_ The work in West Texas continues to progress. Our study on Church Leadership was an excellent time of learning for the congregation. Brother Mike Oestmann and John Brickey did a great job presenting the qualifications and work of the deacon in the local church. Harold Taylor and C.A. Smith did an exceptional job presenting the qualifications for the eldership and the relationship the members should have toward the eldership. During the weekend, brother Alfred Baze also did an excellent job speaking about the necessity of continuing to promote scriptural government in the church. Also, I addressed the idea of the eldership taking oversight. If it is the Lord's will, we are going to put Harold in as an elder along with other elders, Alfred Baze and Art Oestmann. Our plans include Mike and John being ordained as deacons. We continue with our studies both with members and non-members. Since last reporting our family has been attending regularly. Mike Oestmann is studying with them consistently. He was privileged to baptize the family's daughter, Angie into Christ a few weeks ago. We have many other prospects and ask for your continued prayers. The sick people in the congregation have recovered and we are very thankful to the Lord. Also, I preached at Oakdale and Fremont, California on our trip in October. I am to return to Stockton, California for a meeting in June of 1997. It was my privilege to preach at Andrews and San Angelo, Texas recently. May God bless all the faithful as we strive to serve Him.

Jerry Dickinson, 13803 Crosshaven, Houston, TX 77015_ It is true. The older you get the more swiftly time seems to pass. The year 1996 is almost gone and another year is dawning, a year which brings us closer to a new century and the return (when know not when) of our Lord. This last Sunday I baptized a man and his wife in a muddy pond not far from the Coldiron's house and the Sandgrove church in central Texas. When I first started going to Sandgrove some twenty-five years ago the little country church was filled to capacity and they had some of the best singing I have heard anywhere. Over the years, however, the older members have died off and the younger folks have either moved away or, sadly, dropped out of the church. There have only been a handful there the last few years, but with these baptisms there is hope for the future of the church in Sandgrove. The lady who was baptized is brother and sister Coldiron's granddaughter and she and her husband have teenage children. They brought another lady with them who had a teenage daughter as well. Brother Coldiron, who is in his eighties and has really been concerned about the future of the church at Sandgrove, told me he felt this was an answer to their

prayers. I agree. I continue to preach on a regular basis for the church at Sandgrove as well as Hoyte. These two churches have been a support to me since I first started preaching, and only the Lord knows all the good done by these two small congregations in the rural area of Central Texas. When God found Elijah in a cave he bemoaned the fact that he was the only one left to serve the Lord. All his work and sacrifice, he thought, added up to one. But Elijah didn't know how to add! God added up the same ledger and came up with seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed to Baal. Sometimes we, like Elijah, get the blues and think we have accomplished little for the Lord, but we cannot add. Only when we get to heaven and see the ledger the Lord has been keeping will we realize the great things that have been accomplished by little Christians. Let us look up and keep moving. The Lord will answer our prayers in due time if we faint not.

Terry Baze, 16852 Timberidge, Tyler, TX 75703, Dec. 3, 1996_ It has been quite some time since I last sent a report to the OPA. The Lord's church is doing very well. Within the past few months we have had three sisters who had fallen away return to the fold. We've also had two baptisms during this time. There are a number of good prospects at present that we are studying with regularly and we anticipate that we might see as many as eight souls added to the church within the next couple of months. Our normal Sunday morning crowds average around 75 to 80 people. We recently had a good meeting with brother Billy Dickinson that was well attended by several visitors. We are studying and working toward scriptural church government and it is our prayer that in the not too distant future, we can ordain elders and deacons. We are actively looking into areas in the surrounding communities where we might establish another congregation in the east Texas area. The fields are ripe, but the laborers are few. We give God all glory, honor, and praise for His grace upon us in this great work. I am presently engaged in gospel meetings in Missouri at West Plains and the Odom community. I'm looking forward to the study and New Year's meeting. May God bless you all. Please pray for us.

Miles King, Rt. 1 Box 115, Scotland, AR 72141, Dec. 3, 1996_ Thanks so much to Don McCord and the Old Paths Advocate for such a good article in the November issue on "Gossip." Oh, how much I need this! And how much the world needs this. I must get permission to copy this article and not only keep it close by my side, but have copies to hand to my friends, relatives and neighbors. I hope to read it over and over again and let it become a part of my life. What a New Year's resolution this could be for all of us! Brethren, I have really enjoyed short meetings in the "south" at Memphis, TN (1914 Frayser Blvd.) and Knoxville, GA (near Macon). I was glad to see so many visiting these meetings that I had not seen in a long time. I preached one night at Jonesboro, GA and while in the vicinity I was asked by the family of John Prince to preach his funeral (reported elsewhere in this journal). Thanks so much to the brethren who support our work here in Arkansas. The year 1996 has been a good one with two new church buildings at Lamar and Dardanelle. The church at Witts Springs and Lamar is growing with several young

people being baptized into Christ. Brethren, let's look at this new year—1997 with more zeal and determination to fight sin! Sin is on a rampage! Come on brethren—let's get away from those televisions and do some work for the growth of our spiritual lives—and the growth of the Lord's church!

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012, Dec. 3_ We have baptized another precious soul here at the Stony Point Church of Christ in Kansas City. We have also had several confessions of fault. We continue to "plant and water" knowing that it is God who gives the increase. We are happy to work with and to be a part of this congregation and to see progress and growth in the making. We have several teachers and are striving to develop more. Not only are the services edifying to attend, but the business meetings are an example of how brethren can work together in harmony in prosecuting the affairs of the church. In spite of the fact that we do not have any rich people in the congregation, the church has rendered financial assistance to individuals and other congregations amounting to thousands of dollars and at the same time without the aid of any other church gives me full support to work with them. Bro. Irvin Barnes and I have been honored by being asked by the Lee's Summit congregation to work with them in holding the annual brotherhood meeting at Lebanon in 1997. Also, I count it an honor to be asked to hold the Eastern Labor Day meeting in Brazil, IN in 1997. We have been praying publicly and private for our sick and afflicted all over the brotherhood. So many are seriously ill. May the Lord bless us all in His work.

Alton B. Bailey, 410 Ginger Circle, LaGrange, CA 30240_ By the time this reaches the pages of the OPA the New Year will have already come. We look forward to a wonderful and fruitful year in the Lord's work. I have to admit that due to the sickness of our son, Mark, 1996 was one of the worst years of our life in some ways. Although he is to undergo surgery Friday, Dec. 6th, he is still much better than he has been since his trouble began. From all the Bailey family we would like to say a special thanks to all the brethren and sisters across the nation that prayed for him, sent cards and letters with words of comfort. I believe and say without any reservation I do not believe he would have been with us today if it had not been for the many prayers on his behalf. He is back at his work preaching and doing personal work and home studies. Please continue to pray for him and a complete recovery of his health. Due to his sickness and other things I had to reschedule my meetings from April until Labor Day. I would like to say thanks again to all the brethren and/or churches that were so understanding about this. This is the first time in over forty years of preaching I have had to stop my meetings like this. I held the Tennessee Labor Day at the Chapel Grove congregation near Lawrenceburg, TN Aug. 28-Sept. 1. The interest was very good. There were about 400 from a number of states that came. One of the elders in the closing announcements of the meetings said it was probably the best Labor Day Meeting they had. We sure encourage parents to attend and by all means see that the young people have a chance to go. Sept. 15-22 we en-

joyed a good meeting in Mozier, IL. There were three motor homes that came from out-of-state to attend the meeting and enjoy the wonderful Christian fellowship. Oct. 20-27 we were with the Bandy, KY congregation and enjoyed good crowds from all the sister congregations and a number of visitors from the community. This congregation has a bright future having so many young people and a number of them now taking part in the services. Our meetings will begin in 1997 at the Blue congregation near McAlester Jan. 15-19; Dunnellon, FL Feb. 10-16; Baton Rouge, LA March 14-16; Texarkana, TX March 18-23. The work in LaGrange continues well. We had one more to be baptized last week for which we were thankful. We ask for your continued prayers in our behalf. God bless all the faithful. Please note my change of address.

Virgilio O. Danao, Sr., 23 R. Magsaysay St., Roxas, Isabela, Philippines (Tele. (076) 642-80-20), Oct. 23, 1996_ Generally the Lord's work in the Philippines continue to fare well. Several baptisms conducted by our preaching brethren in different places have been reported. One of the preachers who had been disciplined in the past has recently made public confession of fault, asked for God's forgiveness, and prayers in his behalf—a Biblical move necessary for him to do before the brethren may call him again. We are scheduled to go to Pangasian to attend our Preachers Study, which will be held on November 5-7, 1996 in Matulong. It will be a study that deals primarily with the qualifications and functions of preachers/leaders or elders of the local churches. We expect preachers and leaders of our local churches to attend. On October 14th we, Bros. C. Libertino, B. Salamanca, I. Pataueg, A. Pilar and I went to Gappal where Bro. Alejandro Pascual works to help him in his preaching efforts. We conducted personal and public evangelisms in Gappal, Linglingay and Mangandingay — places where we have local churches located east of the town of Cauayan, Isabela. I had to drive my old dilapidated jeep through very rough, rugged and muddy roads to reach Gappal and Linglingay, but we still had to walk a very muddy and slippery hilly trail for about four kilometers to reach Mangandingay. Because of the heavy rains, we decided not to extend our stay there, but made a plan to be back there as soon as the weather is favorable. Although there were no baptisms, the brethren were strengthened, edified, in the faith, while prospects have been contacted for further follow-up and Bible studies. I continue to hold/conduct three worship services during the day of Sundays: Sandiat (to start at 7:00 a.m.), Roxas (9:00 a.m.) and Luna (2:00 p.m.). Sandiat and Roxas are about 14 kilometers apart, but I need about 30 to 40 minutes to drive because of the rugged road, while Luna takes me more than an hour drive through dusty rugged roads also. Since September, I have been conducting studies with leaders and elders of the Roxas Church, on How To Prepare A Sermon, and plan to include lessons on Bible Doctrines, every Friday evening at home. I had done this kind of studies in 1983 and developable preachers, like the late Bro. Eduardo Agustin. I do pray and hope this will be successful again. I also continue to work with the radio program. In one of our preacher's meetings, we revised our project in the previous years regarding the construction of meeting houses. In the past, the funds were from

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the voluntary contribution of church members and each of us financially supported preachers had a share. This project was able to construct about three meeting houses made out of bamboo and cogoon grass. We believe is now time for us to teach local churches and brethren to mind their own local needs, and not to always depend on the assistance from brethren abroad — although we are in dire need of their financial support considering the fact we Filipinos are indigent, most of us live far below the standard of living our brethren in the U.S.A. have. Our priorities are meeting houses that need repair and construction needing completion. The meeting house in Dammao is our immediate priority for the cogoon grass roofing is already rotten so that when it rains, it is as if “you are under a tree.” The brethren there desire to change the roofing to G.I. sheets to make it permanent, and thus their appeal for help. The Sandiat and Roxas congregations and some individual members here were the first ones to respond to this appeal. We hope the Dammao congregation will be able to raise F5,000.00 (about U.S. \$200.00) for G.I. sheets, nails, paints, etc. We preachers, leaders and elders and members, agreed to contribute our manual labor free, especially those who know carpentry works. Please pray with us for the success of this project.

Brett Hickey, P.O. Box 68, Mtn. Home, AR 72653, Nov. 15_ Our efforts at Mtn. Home are coming to an end. We love and esteem the brethren here and look forward to visiting them in the future. I cannot imagine a better environment to begin a full-time work. Leaving is hard now, as it was when we left the small group at Ventura three years ago. Our initial intent was to work with Ventura, but the timing was not right-it is now. Ventura is small, but has strong, well-grounded leadership. Both men and women are enthusiastic and evangelistically-minded. So we are anxious to join Ventura in flooding the area with the truth of the gospel. Bruce Roebuck has agreed to carry on the work at Mtn. Home beginning in February 1997. We are confident that the congregation will continue to make great strides toward maturity. They have come a long way and realize their responsibility to work towards self-sufficiency and the eldership. With the Lord's blessing, we are also confident that more lost souls will be snatched from Satan's grasp through their combined evangelistic efforts. Good things continue to happen locally. A few days ago a man called saying he listened to the radio program for three weeks and wanted to study more about salvation. It was

evident from our study that he had very little Bible knowledge. In fact, he did not even have his own Bible. He understands the plan of salvation, but needs to think more about the commitment. Our studies at the jail are going well. On Sunday afternoons, we share in a preaching rotation with local denominational preachers. One inmate asked how to tell which of us was right. I suggested being sure that we both had scripture to back up our position. If two preachers disagree, compare the scriptures they use, remembering the Bible does not contradict itself. I said usually one is taking a scripture out of context or is not considering all scriptures on that subject. One asked about getting the two preachers together to defend their respective position. I said that would be great. Another inmate said he asked other preachers to get together with us and they refused. I reminded them that truth has nothing to fear. Since that study, one 19 year old inmate said he noticed that the last preacher said repentance and faith were necessary for salvation. He raised his hand and asked, “What about baptism?” The preacher said it was not required. The young inmate respectfully asked, “What about Mk. 16:16?” He answered uncertainly, “Well, baptism is something you should obey, but it doesn't save you.” Then he asked about women teachers referring to I Cor. 14:34. The “preacher” responded, “We don't have time to get into that.” Although he has yet to obey the gospel, he accepted the truth on salvation and other subjects. Last month we were benefited by Ronny Wade's meeting at Harrison and Wayne McKamie's meeting at Hartwell. It was very encouraging that a couple made confessions of fault for worshipping in error. The brethren here at Mtn. Home have asked us to hold a couple weekend meetings before we leave. We recently completed our first one with positive results. We had fifteen outsiders from the community. Especially encouraging is the rapid development of Jason Justice, a teenager who recently obeyed the gospel. He is now teaching, leading songs and leading prayers. For his age and experience, he does extremely well in each of these. A respected preacher told me recently that a man cannot be made a leader unless he is born a leader. If so, it is reassuring to me young men like Jason come along. We were able to be at the Odom congregation on Sunday night after our afternoon services. In December, we look forward to preaching at Joplin and at Neosho's year-end meeting. Please pray for our transition to the work at Ventura.—Received too late for December issue—our apologies—DLK.

We Wish You A Safe And Happy New Year!

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. LXXI

LEBANON, MISSOURI, February, 1997

NO. 2

"BUILDING A BRIDGE TO THE 21ST CENTURY"

By BILLY D. DICKINSON

As we enter into the new year and begin our journey through 1997, let us reflect upon the fact that we are now only three years from the year 2000.

Think about that! If the Lord wills and the judgment day is delayed, our world will soon enter into the 21st century. (Incidentally, the 21st century will actually begin in the year 2001.) Doesn't a realization of that fact produce a variety of emotions in all of us? On one hand, it probably makes us feel "o-o-old," because people who will be born in 2001 will be born in a different century than those of us who were born in the 1900's. On the other hand, it should be exciting and invigorating to realize that we might get to see the dawning of a new century and a new millennium. In this article, I want to discuss what that should mean to us as the church, and how we need to be laying the foundation that will provide a bridge to the 21st century—a bridge that we can all walk across and find victory and success on the other side.

Surely this expression is a familiar one—"Building A Bridge To The 21st Century"—because it was Bill Clinton's theme in the 1996 election year. If the President said it once, he must have said it a hundred times, "Help me build a bridge that we can all walk across together into the 21st century." Like most everyone else, I suspect, I'm glad the election is over and I don't have to listen to President Clinton talk about that bridge any more. However, this was a theme that seemed to work for the President and it resonated in the hearts of his followers. Yet, when you stop to think about it, if God allows this old world to keep on turning, we're going into the 21st century whether we like it or not. In other words, it doesn't necessarily take a bridge, because we are going into the new century one way or the other, even if we must go in kicking and screaming. However, what the President was saying was this: If we (as a nation) want to enter the new century with hope and promise for everyone, we must begin to build a bridge of prosperity (by making the right decisions and having the right vision) that we can all walk across together into the 21st century.

Well, I want to give this a spiritual application, because as we are being hurled toward a new century we want to make sure as the church that we are ready for the challenges that lie ahead. Therefore, let's reflect upon the bridge that we need to be building; actually it is the bridge that God has provided us with that we should all be committed to walking across. It is a bridge that will take us to victory

and great triumph if we will only utilize it.

The bridge that will lead us into the 21st century is our faith and hope in Jesus Christ! This is the "bridge" that links our past and our future; it's a bridge that we dare not burn behind us because we're going to need that bridge to provide us safe passageway into the 21st century with courage and fidelity. As 1 John 5:4 declares: "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." As we near the end of one century and stand upon the threshold of another, there are those who would encourage us to leave our faith behind.

They would say it is time to let go of a belief in God and His Son Jesus Christ. "Give up your superstitious opinions and an archaic standard of morality that is holding back human progress," is their plea, "and let's enter the new century with a brand new outlook on life." But let us never forget that it was our faith in the Lord that sustained us during the rough times in the 20th century and it will be that same faith that will serve as a bridge over troubled waters in the 21st century!

Thus, as we get ready to enter a new century, let us fortify our faith in Jesus Christ, because that faith will be the bridge that leads us to victory and that will keep our hope steadfast and sure. While there are men who have lost their faith in the 1900's, let's determine to "walk by faith" (2 Cor. 5:7) all the way into and through the 21st century!

Also, as we cross the bridge of faith, we must allow the word of God to lead the way. In fact, it is God's word that provides the support and is the underpinning of this bridge (Rom. 10:17). There are those who would also encourage us to enter the 21st century without God's word and to allow the Bible to remain a "relic" of the old century. But as the church, we need to renew our commitment to the belief that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Yes, there have been many who have lost their faith in God's word in the 20th century; even some members of the Lord's church no longer look to the Scriptures as a safe and sufficient guide. This century has seen several departures from the truth and the church was divided over innovations that were introduced without

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PUBLISHER

Don L. King
41931 Chadbourne, Fremont, CA 94539
Fax 510-651-3926

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

Ronny F. Wade
P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808

EDITORIAL STAFF

Clovis Cook
Edwin S. Morris

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Bennie Cryer	Johnny Elmore
Barney Owens	Jerry Dickinson
Billy Dickinson	Kevin Presley
Carl Johnson	

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Editorial

MAKING GOD WAIT

By *BARNEY OWENS*

People of the 20th Century have become accustomed to waiting. Lines are easily formed and delays are common. Major cities have highways that were but a dream during the lives of many of us, yet traffic jams are so common that panic does not arise when one is hindered from moving on a daily basis. Airlines (so it seems to me) are late more than they are on time. One can have an appointed time to see a doctor, but is less than shocked when the physician is running late. Department store lines compel us to expect somewhat of a wait. Even places of amusement require us to wait. I was recently told that a local amusement park had as much as a six hour wait for one ride which lasted only a few minutes.

Because of these, some people think nothing of being late, requiring others to wait for them. In my view it appears that some enjoy making others wait for them and dote on a cherished reputation. What does it matter if dinner is cold and others have to eat it that way, or if many are inconvenienced, they can wait.

However, there are some circumstances that one would never think of being late, or of making another wait. Some events of the day require one to be early to "get a good seat." Even the aforementioned "never early" people are on time. We wouldn't think of making the President of the United States, or even a Governor, wait for us. We would gladly arrive on time. Well, why the above title? Would anyone ever make God wait? No! you say? Read with me:

"And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head. And he said to another, follow me. But he said, LORD, SUFFER ME FIRST TO GO and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, LORD, I will follow thee; LET ME FIRST GO and bid them farewell which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, no man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Lk. 9:57-62 emp. BO).

Whatever other lessons may be found within these words, one can easily see these wanted to follow Jesus, but wished Him to wait until other things or persons were attended FIRST. They wanted God in his purposes for them to wait on them.

MAKING GOD WAIT FOR OUR LOVE

Who is there that is unaware of the love which God hath shown to man? As sinners He loved us to the point of doing for us what we are incapable of doing for ourselves. Jesus, as the "Lamb of God," was provided as a sacrifice for our sins, opening the way of salvation by the forgiveness of sins. (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8; Jn. 1:29).

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Please explain James 5:14-15. Is this for the church today? (Ms.)

Answer: "Is any afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. "The word "afflicted" or "suffering" in the preceding verse (13) translates a word meaning to "suffer evil." It is a comprehensive word, broad enough in meaning, to embrace every type of affliction including both physical and mental anguish. Just as then, so today, the people of God are confronted on every hand by illness, disease, sadness, and various losses. When so confronted, we are commanded to pray, (literally:) "keep on praying." God is the source of our comfort and relief in these types of situations. What a blessing we have here promised and provided. Unlike those in the world, we have someone to whom we can go for help, relief, and encouragement. We are not left alone to confront the obstacles in our pathway, but are given the assurance that "he will never leave us nor forsake us." "Trust in him at all times, ye people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us" (Psa.46: 1). We should never doubt the power or necessity of prayer. In verse (14) James advances the question: "is any among you sick?" The word sick means literally "to be weak, without strength" and is often used in the N.T. for illness (Woods). J.W.Roberts points out that James has moved from the general terms for "suffering" or "trouble" (Vs. 10 and 13) to the more specific word for suffering bodily ailments. Commentators are divided over whether this word (sick) should be taken literally or figuratively. It seems to this writer that the context favors a literal interpretation since the sickness is mentioned in connection with literal suffering, praying, cheerfulness and singing. Also in verse 15 it seems clear that physical illness is under consideration since it is mentioned along with, and in addition to, spiritual illness. Such a person, is to "call for the elders of the church;" literally "Let him call (at once) for the elders of the church. "Since the local congregation has elders, we understand that to be the significance of "the church", i.e. let him call for the elders of the local congregation. The elders are to then pray over the sick man. The meaning is they are to pray in his behalf. They are to beseech God for him. "Anointing him with oil" (v. 14). The act of anointing was to be performed either before the prayer or in connection with it. Olive oil was used in Bible times both in a medicinal and symbolic sense. Its medicinal use can be documented in such passages as Luke 10:34, Isa. 1:6, Jere. 8:22 etc. Examples of ceremonial or symbolic use may be found in 1 Sam. 16:13. Oil also seems to be used in connection with miraculous healing such as Mk. 6:13. In such cases, the use was evidently symbolic, calling attention to the miracle which accompanied its use. James 5:14-15 appears to be an instance where oil is used in a symbolic rather than medicinal sense, serving as a token of the power of God, by which the healing was

accomplished. Trasker notes: "It is probable that the mention of oil in this passage is to be regarded as one of the accompaniments of that miraculous healing which was no infrequent occurrence in the apostolic age, and is regarded in the NT as a supernatural sign vindicating the truth of the Christian gospel in the early days of its proclamation" (p. 130, **Tyndale Commentaries**). We are told by James that the "prayer of faith" shall save the sick. The "prayer of faith" is one prayed by those who have faith i.e. the elders. It is noteworthy that it is the "prayer of faith" that saves the sick. Not prayer and oil, not prayer and medicinal treatment, not prayer and laying on of hands, but the prayer of faith. Saving the sick refers to making him well, hence a physical healing of the affliction possessing the man under consideration. "And the Lord shall raise him up. . ." No if's, and's, or but's, about it. The Lord shall raise him up. No failures to explain away. In the situation under consideration, when the instructions were followed the sick man was "raised up" i. e. he got well. In the light of the foregoing, it seems obvious to this writer that the passage under consideration was applicable to the period of miraculous gifts in the church and limited to it. J.W.McGarvey remarks ". . . every reader of the New Testament should know that this was written when many elders of churches possessed the miraculous power of healing, which was imparted to them by imposition of the hands of an apostle. To argue from this that elders of the church, or anybody else, can do the same thing in the present day, is to leave out of view the one thing that enabled them to do it then; that is, the imposition of apostolic hands with prayer for this gift" (**The Christian Standard**, Oct.8, 1898). Had this healing been the result of medicinal or natural means, the scripture should have said, "let him call for the doctors, who will diagnose and then prescribe proper treatment. " Such, however, were not the instructions. The elders were called and their prayer of faith saved or raised the sick man, a result which we feel must be attributed to the miraculous power they possessed. Burton Coffman says "James in this remarkable paragraph plainly has under consideration the charismatic gift of healing, one of the special gifts that attended the early propagation of Christianity for the purpose of confirming the word of God." The statement "and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him" is in addition to the healing of the body. Since the Lord only forgives those who repent, we can only conclude that such was the case here. Guy N. Woods in his commentary on James says "Evidently, for a limited time, and for special purposes, God ordained that the foregoing instructions should be followed; and in every case the promise was realized. That it was not widely followed, or intended to be a universal practice during the apostolic age, follows from the fact that not infrequently saints were sick and often died (Acts 9:32-43; Phil. 2:19-30; 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:1-8). While those to whom this passage particularly applied received, without exception, the blessing of healing and forgiveness, others of the apostolic age were often afflicted without relief. Paul had a thorn in the flesh;

Timothy had a stomach disorder, and Trophimus was by Paul left in Miletus sick." But what about today? Should we pray for the sick? Of course we should. Will God hear our prayer? Yes, He will, He has promised to do so. Will God answer our prayer? Yes, if we pray according to His will, and in faith He will answer our prayers. Does God heal people today? Yes He does. How? Through means i.e. the various techniques of healing with which we are blessed today. This may be explained in much the same way that God feeds us. He at one time miraculously, and independent of means fed multitudes. Today he still feeds

us, but does so through means i.e. seed, sower, soil, rain, sunshine, harvest, baker etc. People who fail to seek the help and expertise of a doctor, claiming that God will heal them, overlook the fact that God no longer operates in that way. Others who rely solely upon doctors and fail to pray deprive themselves of God's providential power and the blessings He promises to His children. If I am sick, I want the best doctor, medicine, and medical technology available for my particular condition. I also want the prayers of the faithful everywhere in my behalf. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808)

ONE STONE AT A TIME

By CLOVIS T. COOK

The old adage that says, "Rome was not built in a day" still holds true in many fields of activity. In construction, several things are to be considered before an idea can come to fruition. Plans have to be made, and may I add they must be followed in every minute detail, and sometimes this requires a considerable length of time.

Alexander Campbell became the recognized leader in the restorative work of the nineteenth century. It may be well to have a word from his pen in the very outset of this article. In a sermon preached in the home of Mr. Buchanan, he gives the following reasons for not being a "party man." He declared that, "Christ has forbidden it." He said, that "we are taught to keep the unity of the spirit, to be of one mind and one judgment." He said, "man was not made for the Bible, but the Bible for man—but if I am asked by a partisan, could you not join us and let these things alone?" I answer, "NO! Because the man that promotes the interest of a party stands next in guilt to the man who made it. The man who puts the second stone on a building is as instrumental in its erection as the man that laid the first stone." He further states, "I desire to fight for the faith once delivered to the saints. I like the bold Christian here."

I am entering my sixty-fifth year of gospel preaching. I still believe the Bible means what it reveals, even if we wish it didn't. It is still true, and I believe it. Some time back, Don King, in some of his writings asked a question. I thought the question was a timely one and needs to be addressed. The question was: "When a person steps out of rank, or steps over the line forbidden by the scriptures, why do we keep on fellowshiping him?" This is a good question. Why do we? The Bible is as clear as can be in declaring what our relationship should be towards one who has erred from the faith.

Building a congregation can be a slow process. A day at a time, and even sometimes, a year at a time. It requires dedication and hard work. However, what may have taken years to build, can be torn down or destroyed in a lot less time. From a tiny acorn, mighty oaks grow. The first stone of discontentment is laid (it may be any number of things), then the second stone is placed in the scheme. Usually animosity, ill-will, dislike, a lack of love; so "one stone at a time a schism is created." This word means "a rent, division, (as in I Cor. 12:25), which metaphorically means of the contrary condition to that what God has designed for a local church in 'tempering the body together' (verse 24)."

W.E. Vine p. 326. A "schisma" can exit in a local congregation where they all assemble at the same place for worship, but such it not any part of the doctrine of Christ, and therefore sin. For example, the church at Corinth were all assembling together, but a schism had been created for they had exchanged principle for personalities, for some said, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ." These men were personalities, and the principles were: "That you all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you...." When a schism is not healed, it will most likely develop into a "heisses" which denotes choice, in which a few begin to form little groups and talk about establishing another assembly for worship. Then eventually a vote is taken and they agree to leave the church. It usually is not something agreed on by the church, but a choice by a few. W.E. Vine says, "Then that which is chosen, and hence, an opinion, especially a self-willed opinion, which is substituted for submission to the power of truth, and leads to division and the formation of sects (Gal. 5:20; marg. "parties". Such erroneous opinions are frequently the outcome of personal preference..." -Vine. When a separation takes place, they who caused it are to be "marked" and "avoided." (Rom. 16:17).

Jesus prayed in Jno. 17:21 that his followers all be one. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God..." (2 Jno. 9) "Not the teaching about Christ, but that of Christ which is the standard of Christian teaching..." A.T. Robertson. Division is not the doctrine of Christ, whether the division is caused intentionally, or unintentionally, purposely or accidentally. The rent or tear should be mended to heal the schism, and reconciliation should be effected to heal the heresies (separation).

Now there is a question that needs to be answered. If a group pulls away from the church, without the consent of the church and not for evangelistic reasons, and they decide they did wrong and make a confession for doing so, does the confession for dividing the church make it scriptural for them to establish a separate assembly for worship? I asked a preacher who has been preaching for forty years. I'm sure, if he knew of a Bible example where a church ever scripturally divided for any reason except for evangelistic purposes? He said, "Some say the case of Paul and Barnabas" (Acts 15:39). But this was not a church matter. It was a private matter, and Paul knew how to fix a

private matter, (Matt. 18). But what I want to know, where is the example, or the scripture that permits a group to pull off from the church and establish another assembly for worship? If there are reasons for a "peaceful division" other than for enlarging the borders of Zion, or establishing new congregations, where are they?

Now since division is no part of the doctrine of Christ, can a person take a divisive group into his full fellowship and not be a partaker of the evil deed of division? Let us look at the word "evil" associated with "deeds" and see where we stand. We know that "evil" belongs to the realm of darkness. John says, "...men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (Jno. 3:19-20), therefore "evil deeds" are the "unfruitful works of darkness" with such Paul said "...have no fellowship" (Eph. 5:11).

Strong translates the word 'KAKOS' Gk., to mean "worthiness" while Thayer translates the same word, "of bad nature, not such as it ought to be." W.E. Vine — of the same word says, "which may be broadly divided as follows: (a) of what is morally or ethically evil, whether of persons or (b) qualities, emotions, passions, deeds, etc." Now it is "evil deeds" that John warns against in 2 Jno. 10, 11. H.C.R. Linski says, "to receive one into your house, who brings not the doctrine of Christ, and wish him well, or say peace be with you, makes you a partner of their evil deeds." McKnight says, in substance, he who "expresseth his approbation of his conduct... of what ever sort it is in teaching or practice, partaketh of the evils, which his corrupt doctrine may occasion."

Brethren, my concern is this: When are we going to learn that "Two is better than one..." Eccl. 4:9. Unity is better than diversity? The eternal judgment makes sense, and it is surely coming. In the judgment many things will be made right that were not made right into this world. Why would one wait for the judgment to settle a matter that could be settled in this life?

I am not trying to be stubborn or obstinate—as I have been accused. Persistent, yes! I base my reasoning upon testimony, without which there can be no faith, and without faith there can be no pleasing God. It's just that simple! I must speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Bible is silent. I must "Contend for the faith once delivered to the saints" I must not base my belief upon hearsay. "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him" (Prov. 18:13). The Amplified N.T. reads, "He that answereth a matter before he heareth the facts..." John Locke said, "He who judges without informing himself to the utmost that he is capable cannot acquit himself of judging amiss."

My final thought is in the form of a question; "Where is the example of a congregation scripturally dividing for any other reason than for evangelistic purposes; or where is the scripture that permits it or authorizes it?" If a congregation is divided, and those who pulled away say, "It was not our intention to divide the church, but that is precisely what has happened" which is a confession of the effect, and not the cause. If such a group goes ahead and establishes another place for worship, rather than go back to the church from whom they separated, does the cause for which they pulled away in the first place, still exist? Does establishing another place for worship remove the "cause"?

I agree with Ronny Wade's reasoning in the April 1995 issue in his Querist Column, where he reasons that it is possible for a man to walk out of rank, in ways other than is mentioned in 2 Thes. 3:6-12. He lists men who cause division (Rom. 16:17). I also agree with Robert Milligan and E.G. Sewell, who limit separations in the body of Christ for only one reason — for evangelical purposes only.

Let those who are much more highly educated than this writer, and those who have a greater knowledge, show how can these things be!

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH - ACTS 2

By MARK DEATHERAGE

We often look to Acts chapter 2 to show the establishment of the church (I agree that the church was born in Acts 2), but I do not agree that the church was established on this day. The word established is to "cause to be long lasting." For anything to be long lasting there has to be planning and preparation involved.

If it were a business it would take a lot of preparation to choose what type of product or service would be rendered. Investigations would be made to see if there was a market for this service or product. If it were a marriage it would take time to develop the relationship that would ensure it, would be solid from the start.

It is no different for the Church of Christ. We can look into the Old Testament to the line of salvation and all the planning and preparation. The preparing of a people and a time so the most good could be gained, to prepare for the coming of the Christ! And I believe that we can all see and agree with this.

What we may not realize though is that just as a business, or a marriage, there has to be some work to ensure that it will continue to be a long lasting organization. All

the best planning, and the best product do not promise a business to survive. With the church we as individual members, as individual congregations, and as the church on a whole we must undertake the task of ensuring that there will be a future for the Church of Christ. This must be done for the world to have a place go to, for our children to cherish, and for the glorification of God!

But, what can we do to ensure the longevity of the church? There are many ways this may be accomplished. (1) We must always promote what is right according to the law of God. We must not allow my think so's, or your think so's, or anyone else's think so's to usurp the authority of God's perfect law. (2) We must fight the attitude: "it's been almost two thousand years since Christ made the promise, it will probably be another two thousand years before he comes back!" This attitude allows us to be lazy about the work that needs to be done. We do not have time to be setting back and taking it easy, there are souls being lost every day that may never have had anyone from the church speak to them about the truth. It is sad to think that so few will take on this responsibility, it is sad to think

that so many will be lost! (3) We must try to escape the mind set that is being thrown at us on a daily basis. That is the new trend that it does not matter what you believe, or what I believe. We are all going to meet in heaven someday. This is a false teaching that's trying to get into the church

today, and we have got to stop it now! It is already luring the world into a false sense of security, and it will do the same to the church if we will let it. The Bible is still in affect, and it can still be understood the way God intended.

“DON'T DELAY! CALL YOUR PSYCHIC HOTLINE NOW!”

By TONY MELTON

We are living in a society where people are searching for happiness and success in the wrong places. One such place is among so-called psychics. The advertisements say, “Don't delay, call now! Your personal psychic is waiting to talk to you. Pick up your phone and dial. For only \$2.99 a minute you can discover what your future holds. Happiness, love, money, work, friendship and success is only a phone call away.”

These same folks used to have a tent at the carnival and were called “fortune tellers.” Now they have a new name for a new generation-- “psychic.” It still falls under the same category no matter what you call it - “Black arts.” Psychics are nothing more than modern-day fortune tellers, mediums or spiritualists.

The law of Moses condemned participation with such individuals. Leviticus 19:31 says, “Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits, do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.” Again, chapter 20:6 says, “And the person who turns to mediums and

familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against the person and cut him off from his people.”

Those who became Christians in the first century realized that they had to give up magic arts, sorcery and witchcraft. In Acts 19:19, they burned all their books on these subjects which were of great monetary value. Also, the apostle Paul condemned Elymas the sorcerer, saying, “O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?” (Acts 13:10) The deeds of this man made him a child of the devil, because he was practicing ungodliness.

True happiness and success will never come to those who dabble in witchcraft and things that have their roots in the same. Happiness is based on salvation through Jesus Christ and on obedience to His commandments.—102 London Lane, Box 4-B, Healdton, OK 73438.

ELDERS IN CABLE RIDGE, MISSOURI

By JOE HISLE

On December 1, a beautiful snowy Lord's day in the Ozarks, I enjoyed one of the highlights of my preaching career. It was my great pleasure to assist the congregation at Cable Ridge in appointing elders. I have been associated with this congregation for over thirty years. During that time, my family and I have developed a very special place in our hearts for these brethren. They have a love for the gospel and for each other that is not seen everywhere.

This fall Bro. Don McCord held a meeting for these brethren after which he called me and asked why elders could not be appointed at Cable Ridge. This question caused me to ask myself why I hadn't thought of this myself. The sad answer was I had been convinced that elders were super-human, flawless Christians and I had decided there were no such animals in captivity! Brethren, elders are dedicated Christian men who meet the requirements that all Christians should meet with these exceptions: they are men experienced in religious matters who are the hus-

band of one wife with faithful children and they have the ability to teach the gospel. Look around your congregation, you probably have some men just like that.

The brethren were in complete agreement that Bro. Hugh Bentsch and Bro. Larry Thomas met the requirements to become shepherds over the congregation. With fasting and prayer these two men were ordained as elders. The congregation rejoiced in the appointment of these men. Their love for each other was obvious. I was greatly impressed with the unity shown in the decision to have Bro. Bentsch and Bro. Thomas as their elders. I believe the church at Cable Ridge has a great future to look forward to. They now have scriptural leadership as well as several young brethren who will become leaders in the future. My thanks to them for allowing me to be a part of this touching ceremony. May God richly bless the congregation at Cable Ridge, Mo.

HAWKINS - HUGHES DISCUSSION

By JOE HISLE

On the nights of December 2, 3, 5, 6, a religious discussion was held in Camdenton, MO between Bro. Doug Hawkins who is currently working with the congregation at Brumley, MO and Bro. Michael Hughes of the congregation in Camdenton. The topic under discussion was the

number of cups that can scripturally be used in the Lord's Supper.

On the first night Bro. Hawkins affirmed that “the New Testament teaches that a local congregation must use only one cup (drinking vessel) containing fruit of the vine in the

Lord's supper." Bro. Doug went straight to the heart of the matter by showing that the scriptures teach the use of "one cup" by command, example, and necessary inference. His arguments were concise, straight forward and irrefutable (truth is always irrefutable). This was all accomplished in a kind and most considerate attitude on the part of Bro. Hawkins.

In Bro. Hughes' attempt to deny the arguments of Bro. Hawkins he did as these brethren always do. Instead of meeting the arguments he began to hunt for some way to discount the fact that Jesus took a literal container when He instituted the Supper. In fact Bro. Hughes seemed to be confused on what he really did believe about the usage of the word "cup." He seemed to use whatever position the situation called for! He realized that Jesus had to have a literal vessel to contain the fruit of the vine so he said the cup was literal. Then he decided the cup was "always figurative," it was used as a metonymy to refer to the fruit of the vine yet of course you had to have a literal cup? Then he decided the cup was the fruit of the vine, but he said "the cup was subordinate to the fruit of the vine???" You figure it out!

When it came time for Bro. Hughes to affirm that the "New Testament teaches that a local congregation is permitted to use multiple cups (drinking vessels) containing the fruit of the vine in the Lord's Supper" he had no real affirmative because he could not find where the N.T. taught his practice. I did note two things about Bro. Hughes'

proposition. First, why is it that when you say "cups" to these brethren they always understand that you are referring to "drinking vessels" but when you say "cup" they understand it as the "fruit of the vine?" Secondly, why in this world will a brother affirm, "the N.T. teaches" and then fail to give one command, example or even a necessary inference where the scriptures teach their practice? I believe that Bro. Hughes was honest in doing the best that he could to prove his practice, the proof was just not in the N.T.

The discussion was well attended by our brethren as is always the case. By my count we had fourteen full time gospel preachers in attendance one or more times. Bro. Hughes had from twenty to thirty of his brethren there each night which I commend for their interest in the truth. I also appreciate Bro. Hughes' congregation for allowing us to use their facilities, they could not have been any more gracious. Bro. Hawkins and Bro. Hughes conducted themselves as gentlemen throughout the debate. You could not have asked for better conduct from these two men.

My thanks to Bro. Doug Hawkins for his zeal, knowledge, and ability in presenting the truth of God's word. I am thankful for young brethren like him. Thanks to Bro. Bruce Roebuck who made the very difficult job of presenting the charts look easy and thanks to the brethren of the church at Lebanon for their support of this work. Most of all, thank God for the TRUTH!

"BUILDING A BRIDGE TO THE 21ST CENTURY"

continued from page 1

scriptural authority. Many battles have been fought in this century as we have sought to keep the church pure—over issues like instrumental music, Bible classes with women teachers, and individual communion cups. More battles will have to be fought in the future. If history teaches us anything, it is that the 21st century will give occasion to further departures from the faith and the church's resolve to stand upon a "thus saith the Lord" will be tested and tried, probably in areas we can not now foresee. So, as we get ready to cross that bridge into the 21st century, let's make sure that all of our members, from the oldest to the youngest, see the need of abiding in the doctrine of Christ and not going "beyond the things which are written" (1 Cor. 4:6—ASV). If that isn't our commitment, we may very well lose in the 21st century what was gained and

accomplished in this century.

Lastly, we must encourage everyone in the Lord's church to cross this bridge together! We don't want to see anyone left behind. There is room for all of us to cross together; this bridge is strong enough to hold us all up. Hence, let's spare no effort to teach, exhort, and edify that we might cross that bridge with no precious soul left behind. Let's put a special emphasis on our homes and make our children a part of that number; this is one of the best ways to secure a bright future for the church in the 21st century (Eph. 6:4). Our resolve and commitment should be the same as that of Moses and the Israelites in Ex. 10:9; they refused to leave Egypt without taking their families with them. That should be our attitude as we cross over into the 21st century—"We're all going together and no one will be left behind, except those who refuse to go with us because they have lost their faith in Christ and His word.—215 Forest Hills Dr., West Monroe, LA 71291.

THE WORK OF ELDERS

continued from page 2

John reminded us of the greatness of His love in John 15. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (vs. 13).

He quickly reminds us of the manner in which we can reciprocate in kind for His kindness.

"Ye are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you" (vs. 14). "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (Jn. 14:15).

It is clear that we demonstrate our love for Christ by obeying His commandments, or by doing whatsoever He

asks of us. John penning these words later said: "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: And His commandments are not grievous." (1 Jn. 5:3).

Just here I wish to make a statement regarded by many as being radical, nonetheless, true. There is but one way we can show our love to God—this is the only way—there is no other way—it is this way alone, which is "obeying the commandments of Christ." If you disagree with this, please, my friend, reason with me upon the matter. I would enjoy hearing of another way, if such does exist.

There are many people who wish to show their love of God, yet want Him to wait until they are ready to do so.

Notice with me the following:

1. "And this is His commandment. That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ." ... (I Jn. 3:23). Believing on Christ is a command that must be obeyed.

2. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17:30). to change one's mind and alter the course of life is to be obeyed.

3. "...Who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." (II Jn. 7). Can a statement be more absolute? Confessing Christ is to be obeyed (Rom. 10:9-10).

4. "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." (Acts 10:48). Baptism being the dividing line between the church and the world must be obeyed unto salvation.

This writer is convinced that there are many who intend to show their love to God by complying with these commandments, yet for one reason or another, like the people of Luke 9, want God to wait on them, therefore make GOD WAIT.

MAKING GOD WAIT FOR OUR WORSHIP

It is in and by worship that we demonstrate our devotion to God, our respect for His majesty, awe of His power, enslavement to His love, and revelation for His being first in the entirety of our life. Jesus reminds us: "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth." (Jn. 4:24).

The disciples in the beginning of the church honored the teaching of the Apostles and gathered on the first day of the week "breaking bread" and other things in order to worship. (Acts 2:42).

"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto him, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. (Acts 20:7).

This assembling was not to be forsaken even when extreme circumstances prevailed. We read of the disciples in Jerusalem who were being persecuted; they were told not to forsake this assembling with the church.

"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).

Our times find disciples who would have that GOD WAIT while they work during the time others have gathered for worship, or have GOD WAIT while they are visiting with company, or have GOD WAIT because it has come time for their annual vacation, or have GOD WAIT because they feel somewhat bad having stayed up too late the previous night and getting up is such a hassle. Is it possible for a person to have the right attitude and place worship of the Most High, Holy, and ever to be Reverend God to such a place of inferiority?

On occasion, I have heard brethren discuss whether

various reasons to miss the assembly would be acceptable, or, how many services one can miss before he is to "be overlooked" for public participation in the worship as a leader. Such flimflam never is revealed in the scripture, because in those days a person was willing to lay down his life rather than disobey God, therefore, it would have been silly for one to even think of missing an assembly of the disciples to worship for the reasons we think burden us. **DON'T MAKE GOD WAIT DURING WORSHIP WHILE WE WHILE AWAY OUR TIME AT OTHER THINGS.**

MAKING GOD WAIT FOR OUR LIBERALITY

Laying by in store on the first day of the week is an avenue of our worship to God, but it as well demonstrates where our heart really is. In fact, where we place our earthly treasure is where we have placed our heart. Jesus said: "For where your treasure is there your heart will be also." (Mt. 6:21).

As disciples of the Lord, we are to care for the needy, and not fail to see that the richest blessing of all is presented to them, which is the gospel. Many who preach it are to be sent forth. This is accomplished by our liberality.

"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by Him in store. As God hath prospered Him, that there be no gatherings when I come. Again, every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: For God loveth a cheerful giver. (I Cor. 16:2; II Cor. 9:7).

How many are there who will give to nearly every cause more than to the Lord's? It might be the Heart Fund, Red Cross, Lung Association, Union dues. Or, it might be some amusements that are without merit or worth as far as eternity or salvation of one's self or others are concerned. Some spend more on a vacation than they give to the Lord's Cause in a given year. Is one's heart right, if such be the case? Really, where is a man's heart when his treasure is thus placed? Look above to what Jesus said, (Mt. 6:21).

Why is it brethren and sisters (as well as some of you who right now plan someday to obey Christ), we will contend for one way of salvation, one church, one way of setting the Lord's table, one way of making melody to the Lord, one manner of gathering to be taught, yet ANY WAY OF "LAYING BY IN STORE?" We practice any way, any amount is all right. Fellowship will not be extended to those who alter the table, but it is to those who are misers with their giving.

Again, why is it that this is the last step in growth and we are tolerant? One can be in the body of Christ 20 or 50 years, it be a known fact he is covetous, and nothing is said or done. Can one MAKE GOD WAIT FOR LIBERALITY? Must GOD WAIT UNTIL WE DECIDE TO BE LIBERAL? Lift up your head, brother or sister, the Lord will judge his people, "for God loveth a cheerful giver."

Of all those whom we make wait—DON'T make God wait.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHURCH DIRECTORIES

Order your 1996 Church Directories now, before they are all gone. We do not plan another directory until 1998.

Current directories are \$2.00 each plus postage. Send all orders to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808.



NEW BUILDING IN WICHITA FALLS, TX

Pictured above is the new building for the Crestview Church of Christ at 2111 Hwy. 79 South in Wichita Falls, TX. Brother Ronny Wade and this writer conducted a gospel meeting Dec. 4-8, 1996 and spoke here at the formal opening on Sunday afternoon. A host of well-wishers, including brothers and sisters from area congregations and 35-40 visitors from the community, filled the building at the final service. The building is a tribute to hard labor, economy and sacrifices on the part of the Crestview membership. These brethren are committed to evangelism and a firm stand against digression and liberalism in doctrine and are worthy of our support and recognition. Their meeting times are at 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M., Sundays and 7:30 P.M. Wednesdays. They extend a hearty welcome to all visitors.—Johnny Elmore.

CHURCH DIRECTORY CHANGES

NEOSHO, MO - Sunday 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Wednesday 7 p.m.

SPRINGFIELD, MO. (MISSION HILLS) - Sunday 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Wednesday 7 p.m.

LOCUST (LEAD HILL) AR - Sun. 10:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

PASSING IT ON

Passing It On is a book containing fifteen sermons and a short biography of brother M. Lynwood Smith's life and work. The book is printed on an excellent grade of paper and superbly bound and the sermons represent the best of brother Smith's preaching in his prime. In my opinion, they are excellent. Some priceless pictures are included also. This book probably will never be reprinted, but at this writing a good supply remains, and we are happy to announce that the costs involved have been completely paid, thanks to the help of many and the generosity of friends. That means that from henceforth, all proceeds will go directly to help brother Smith in his publishing endeavors or in whatever way necessary. One sister ordered a copy for each of her married children. We are hearing of people learning the truth by reading the sermons. Order one copy at \$21.69 (\$19.95 plus postage) or as many as five copies at \$99.75 will be sent postage-paid. Order directly from Lynwood at 2789 Loyd Star Lane N.W., Wesson, MS 39191 or from Pathway Books & Bibles, P.O. Box 1183, Ardmore, OK 73402—Johnny Elmore.

A NEW BOOK OF SERMON OUTLINES

Pulpit Treasures is the name of a new book of Sermon Outlines by 60 of our preachers. I have also included some outlines of E.H. Miller, Tom Smith, B.F. Leonard,

Tommy Shaw, Homer Gay, and Homer L. King. This book would be a fine addition to any library. Cost is \$10.00 per book. Send all orders to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808.

OPA MATERIAL

Send all material for the MARCH OPA to Don King in Fremont, CA.

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

LANKFORD-TAYLOR--On the evening of December 7, 1996 a large crowd of brethren, friends, and family gathered in the Arlington Church of Christ building to witness the uniting of James B. Lankford and Terry Lynn Taylor in holy matrimony. The setting was beautiful and the occasion was joyous to see these two Christians pledge their lives to each other for as long as they both shall live. Singers for the occasion were Jon Roodschild, Greg Harris, Aaron Risener, and Dana Lankford. The singing was beautifully done. James and Terry will make their home in the Dallas, Texas area. We wish them the very best in all their endeavors and may they always be strong in the Lord. I was honored to be asked to perform the ceremony. Especially since I have known Jamie and have been a friend of the family all of His life.—Roy Lee Criswell.

OUR DEPARTED

WOOD--Brother Virgil Wood of the Hartwell church near Huntsville, AR departed this life in Washington Regional Medical Center in Fayetteville, AR Dec. 13, 1996. At the time of his leaving he was eighty-four years of age. He was preceded in death by his wife, Freida, just three months before. He is survived by one son and three grandchildren. Virgil was a quiet man who went about his business without fanfare. He was dedicated to the Lord and His Church. His life showed it. No greater compliment can be paid any man. The writer conducted the final service.—Ronny F. Wade.

RATLIFF--Martha (Lydic) Ratliff was born December 22, 1935 in the village of Lovejoy, Pennsylvania. She passed from this stage and scene of action Thursday, September 19, 1996. She is survived by her husband, Denver Ratliff, her mother, Maranda Lydic, and one sister, Mildred Shopper, all of Akron, Ohio. She was preceded in death by her father, Harvey Lydic. Martha was a long time member of the Church of Christ. She was a member of the Mt. Pleasant Church of Christ at North Canton, Ohio. Martha was a very hospitable Christian lady that loved the Lord. She was a bright and shining star and an anchor in congregation. On Monday September 23, 1996 as a large number of relatives and friends gathered at the church building to show their love and to pay their respect for her, the writer was both humbled and saddened, to be able to fulfill her request which she had made to me some years prior, that I would officiate at her memorial service. A beautiful congregational singing was led by Floyd Harris, Jr. Mark Deatherage, one of our young evangelists, who had just moved there to work with the congregation, assisted with words of love and praise. Martha was laid to rest in a little

cemetery beside the church building. The writer endeavored to speak words of hope, comfort, consolation, and warning to those outside of Christ. Martha will be sadly missed by loved ones, friends, and all who knew her, especially my wife.—Eugene Lockard.

TATE--Johnnie Tate departed this life at the age of 89. He was a member of N. Fourth and Broadway Church of Christ for 66 years. He was a mainstay of this congregation in Wichita Falls, TX. Johnnie was a good bible student with an extensive library and a very personable individual. He was interested in lost souls. I am constantly seeing people who tell me that Johnnie had baptized them, and so many have experienced their fine hospitality. Johnnie in all of his prayers would look forward to Jesus' coming. Johnny leaves behind his wife of 66 years, Obara Fancher, one son and three daughters. Bill Harmon and Bill Floyd spoke at his memorial service and his three grandsons sang. The interment was at a local mausoleum.—Bill Harmon.

NOTE: Johnny Tate was one of the most influential men in helping and encouraging me to preach the gospel. He was one of the most studious I ever knew. He loved Bill Harmon and told me years ago that he asked Bill to preach his funeral. On Monday, Nov. 25, 1996 his request was honored. He was laid to rest in Wichita Falls, TX where he and Aunt Obara spent their adult lives. Through the years when they were able to recognize and talk with us, it was so enjoyable to visit with them. He will be missed.—Clovis Cook.

PRINCE--On November 12 at the Napoleon church building near Wedowee, Alabama we had the funeral of Bro. John Prince. John was the son of the late Gillis and Mattie Prince and was born June 21, 1935 in Randolph County, Alabama. He died November 9th, 1996. He was living in Ft. Walton Beach, Florida and a member of the Griffith Ave. church of Christ in Crestview, Florida. He is survived by his wife, Freida; three sisters and two brothers. The singing was so beautiful and sung by a quartet made up of John's cousins (the children of Bro. Calvin Prince). I felt it an honor to give Bible scripture and speak words of comfort to the family and friends gathered. And it was good to work with one of my friends of many years, Bro. Charles Hurst, who read the obituary, offered prayers and read a beautiful poem written by John. His body was laid to rest in the beautiful country graveyard next to the church building at Napoleon.—Miles King.

TURNER-- A large gathering of loved ones, brothers and sisters in Christ and friends shared in a memorial service for Billy Wayne (Bill) Turner. Bill was a victim of Lou Gehrig's disease. For some sixteen months he bravely fought this disease that finally overcame his physical body and took his life as day began to dawn Nov. 6, 1996 at the age of 60. He leaves to mourn his passing his wife of almost 38 years, Wanda. Three children were born to this union, Randy, Terry, and Jennifer who are all faithful members of the Lord's church. Bill was noted for greeting people with a strong handshake and, whether greeting or saying goodbyes, would state, "I am glad you got to see me." We are glad Bill touched our lives and we got to see him. We

look forward to hearing these words on the shores of eternity. Richard DeGough, Karl Modgling, and I attempted to say words of comfort. He was a member of the Turlock, CA congregation.—Bennie Cryer.

GREEN--Marjorie Lankford Green of Seneca, Missouri, was born September 22, 1916 and departed this life on October 8, 1996 after a six month illness. She had reached the age of 80 years and 16 days. Marjorie was a lifelong resident of the Seneca area, leaving behind a great company of friends, loved ones, and family in that region. Marjorie is survived by her husband, Arlie and six children, all of whom live within a few miles of Seneca. She is also survived by two brothers, two sisters, 16 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren. Many of the readers will be closely acquainted with at least some of Marjorie's kin. The churches in the Southwest Missouri area are aided greatly by the Green, Lankford, and Owens families. I was honored to have married one of Marjorie's granddaughters, and have been closely associated with the family since the early 80's. there are few families in this world who are closer knit than hers, as is evidenced by their choice of residence, and Marjorie certainly played a great part in creating that bond. They have a long-standing tradition of meeting weekly on Monday night. They call it "Green Night." I can't immediately think of any other family with such a regular tradition. Marjorie performed a great service for the church in that most of her offspring are faithful members. Grandsons served as pallbearers. Although feeling inadequate, I was privileged to honor her request and deliver a few words of comfort and scripture to the audience.—Dale Wellman.

ULERY--Phydella Lucille Ulery was born October 4, 1913 in Hamburg, Illinois and departed this life August 6, 1996 at the age of 82 years, 10 months, and two days. On August 4, 1934 she was united in marriage to Bro. Joe Ulery, who preceded her in death in 1992. To this union two daughters were born, Helen Marie Heidenreich and Mary Jane Benz. Phydella was a faithful member of the church at Mozier, IL, and was a daughter of the late Rufus and Cordia Crader, who were early members of the Church of Christ in that area. Phydella also leaves to mourn her passing five brothers and six sisters, four grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her. This writer endeavored to speak words of warning and comfort. Burial was in the Indian Creek Cemetery near Hamburg, Illinois overlooking the Mississippi River.—Roy Lee Criswell

HALL--Oda Ray Hall was born March 20, 1909 near Cassville, Mo. and departed this life November 5, 1996 at the age of 87 years, 5 months and 5 days. On June 12, 1937 he was united in marriage to Edith Elliott of Cassville. To this union two daughters and one son were born. Oda was a member of the church in Aurora, Mo. and was faithful to attend as long as his health permitted. He leaves to mourn his passing his wife, Edith of the home, the three children, two brothers, four sisters, four grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Oda was a type of person loved by all and will be greatly missed. The writer spoke words at the grave side at the IOOF Cemetery at Monett, Mo.

The family has our deepest love and sympathy.—Roy Lee Criswell

TURNER--Efton C. Turner of Monett, Mo. was born Sept. 15, 1909 near Cassville, Mo. and departed this life Nov. 23, 1996 at a Springfield hospital due to injuries received in an automobile accident. At the time of his departure he was 87 years, two months and thirteen days. On Sept. 10, 1933 he was united in marriage to Ruby Brown of Purdy, Mo. To this union two children were born. He was a faithful member of The Southern Hills Church of Christ in Aurora, Mo. He leaves to mourn his passing his wife of 63 years, Ruby, of the home; one daughter, Margaret Simms of Wichita, Kansas; one son, Jim Turner of Monett, Mo., one brother, two sisters, five grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. Efton was a kind man with a unique personality. He will be missed by all. I count it a privilege to have been asked by the family to conduct the memorial service. Bro. Irvin Barnes and Bro. Ron Alexander also assisted in the services. Burial was at the IOOF Cemetery in Monett, Missouri.—Roy Lee Criswell.

LAMKINS--Sister Flora Lamkins, the mother of our beloved Clyde Lamkins, preacher of the gospel for many years, departed this life Sept. 28, 1996. She was born Sept. 20, 1899, being ninety-seven years and eight days of age. She was married in January of 1919. To this union seven children were born. She was a member of the Church of Christ for many years. For years she met with the Winnipeg Church of Christ. In her latter years she met with the Church at Lebanon, when she was able. She was a hard working woman. She ran the Post Office, and the store in her community for approximately forty years. Her funeral was held in the Holman-Howe Funeral Home. A very large crowd came to pay their respects. This writer has known her for many years. She was laid to rest in the little cemetery by the church house in Winnipeg, Mo. I have been associated with Clyde for many years, as a friend and a fellow preacher of the gospel. This writer was asked to conduct the services. Our sympathy goes out to the family.—Clovis T. Cook.

ENNIS--Thelma Ennis was born at Phillipsburg, MO and passed away at the age of 71 on October 9, 1996, at Kansas City, KS where she lived most of her life. Thelma was a member of the church of Christ, having obeyed the gospel at the tender age of 12. She and her husband, Morris, attended worship services on Wednesday night, Oct. 9, with the Kansas Avenue congregation where they were members. On the way home Thelma complained of not feeling well and soon slumped over in the car. In spite of the fact that paramedics worked on her and then rushed her to the hospital the doctors could not save her. She passed away without reaching home. She and Morris had lots of friends, as could be seen by the many floral arrangements and over two hundred names on the guest register of people who came to show their respects to the family. Thelma was a loving wife and mother, and she loved the Lord. She leaves to mourn her passing her husband of 45 years, Morris L. Ennis, of the home; two daughters, Kathy Serber, of Harrisonville, MO and Malissa (Lisa) Ennis of Kansas City, KS; three sisters, Burnell Caffey

and Glennis Faust of Phillipsburg, MO and Neta Carden of Kansas City, MO; three grandchildren, Jacob, Dwight, and Darcie of Harrisonville as well as many nieces and nephews. I was honored to be asked to speak at the funeral service of this good woman. The beautiful singing was rendered by the same Christians who just a week before sang at another memorial service.—Paul O. Nichols.

WATSON--Lucille Watson was born April 6, 1914 in Texas and passed away November 22, 1996 at the age of 82. Lucille, also known as Nan by family and friends was a long time member of the church at Yuba City, California. Lucille was unable to attend worship due to poor health the last 15 years or so. Lucille is survived by a daughter, Ida Alexander, five grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild. One of her grandchildren is Rod Watson, one of our gospel preachers, and one of her great-grandchildren is Matt Hayes, an aspiring preacher. She loved the Lord and always eagerly prayed with me on our visits. Years ago Lucille asked me to conduct her funeral and I was honored to fulfill that request.—Greg Gay.

CRYER--A large gathering of loved ones, brothers and sisters in Christ, and friends shared in a memorial service for Billy Wayne (Bill) Turner. Bill was a victim of Lou Gehrig's disease. For some sixteen months Bill bravely fought this disease that finally overcame his physical body and took his life as day began to dawn Nov. 6, 1996 at the age of 60. He leaves to mourn his passing his wife of almost 38 years, Wanda. Three children were born to this union, Randy, Terry, and Jennifer, who are all faithful members of the Lord's church. Bill was noted for greeting people with a strong handshake and, whether greeting or saying goodbyes, would state, "I am glad you got to see me." We are glad Bill touched our lives and we got to see him. We look forward to hearing these words on the shores of eternity. Richard DeGough, Karl Modgling, and I attempted to say words of comfort. He was a member of the Turlock, CA congregation.—Bennie Cryer.



Roy Lee Criswell, Route 2, Box 2336, Cassville, MO 65625_ On Dec. 8th we were privileged to be with the congregation in Garland, Texas. It was a wonderful opportunity to be with these good Christians again. We were in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area that weekend to perform the wedding of James Lankford and Terry Taylor. The Lord's Work here in Aurora, Missouri still goes forward. This past Summer it was my good pleasure to baptize three into the Body of Christ. We are thankful for the power of the Gospel and those who are willing to obey the Lord. We have

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been saddened recently by the loss of two of our local brethren in death. They are greatly missed by all of us. Also we were very sorry to have Bro. Donnie Lamkins move away. Donnie is certainly a great asset to the church wherever he is. We here at Aurora enjoyed the gospel meetings held by Brethren Doug Hawkins, Wayne Fussell, and Reggie Kinser. Each of these brethren did an outstanding presentation of the gospel message. Please pray for us and the Lord's work here in our area.

Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808_ Nov. 14-17 we were with the church in Columbia, Mo. for an enjoyable meeting. We had good crowds and interest throughout. The church there is profiting from the presence and work of Bro. Reggie Kinser. Several families and individuals have taken their stand with them and added greatly to the interest and progress of the church. In early December we worked with Bro. Johnny Elmore in a meeting at Wichita Falls, TX. Large crowds greeted us each service. Some fifteen different congregations cooperated in the meeting. These brethren just recently completed a new building which is a compliment to the Cause of Christ in that area. January 10-12 we were with the Church in Neosho, Mo. for a meeting. Large crowds were present to help out each night. Though the weather was cold, interest was at a high level and the results very gratifying. The Lord willing we go next to Irving, Tx. Jan. 22-26; Lowery, Al. Feb. 19-23, and Weatherford, Tx. March 5-9. We look forward to working with these brethren for the good and advancement of the Lord's work.

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, Ok 74820, Jan. 7_ We had an excellent meeting in Covina, CA in November. Attendance was good, visitors from the community came to several services, and one young man was baptized. Delmer Lee surprised us the first weekend with his presence and was a big help to the services. It was a privilege to be with Don McCord. I always feel better from having been in his company. In December, Don Pruitt, Joe Hisle, and I held the annual anniversary meeting in Seminole, OK. We have been conducting this meeting for about fifteen years and this one was one of the best. We closed out the year by attending one day of the Preachers' Study in Oklahoma City and four days of the New Year Meeting, and I enjoyed every service. My sched-

ule for the first half of 1997 includes: Imperial, NE (March 2-9); Nashville, TN (March 12-16); Healdton, OK, Homecoming Meeting (March 28-30); Eldon, MO (April 6-13); Lexington, OK (April 20-27); The Odom, MO (May 4-11); Bridgeport, TX (May 15-18); West Monroe, LA (June 8-15); Ash Camp WV (July 13-20); Lee's Summit, MO (Aug. 2-17); and Chapel Grove, TN (Labor Day Meeting). We continue to request your prayers.

P. Duane Permenter, P.O. Box 80687, Midland, TX 79708, (915) 520-6508, Jan. 6_ What a spiritual feast to attend the meeting in Oklahoma through New Year's Eve. What an honor to attend and enjoy the incredible singing and preaching that is a part of this meeting. The young men did a super job on New Year's Eve and it was truly a privilege to sit at their feet and listen as they preached the old Jerusalem gospel. Lynwood did a great job in conducting the meeting, and his new song book for the meeting was excellent. Though we enjoyed both the study at 21st Street in Oklahoma City and the meeting held by Norman, it is even better to be back in West Texas at work in Midland. We recently had a restoration of a young lady who had been away for some time. Our crowd last Sunday was very good. We had some visitors from the community and the brethren who had been traveling arrived home. Of late, we were privileged to preach at the home and at Crescent, OK. Being in the home of Greg and Rachel Branch was enjoyable and to see many of our friends from California that were visiting. Please remember us in prayer as we continue laboring for the Lord. We send our thanks and praise to all the faithful brethren in every place. What a grand opportunity to serve our God among such people as those found in the kingdom. My prayer is that the Almighty will bless you.

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401_ Since last report, I assisted Ronny Wade in a meeting opening the new building for the Crestview congregation in Wichita Falls, TX, Dec. 4-8. I attended most of the study in Oklahoma City, Dec. 23-25, and most of the New Year's meeting, Dec. 28-31. I do not know how many people attended the meeting, but it surely must have been one of the largest. The Norman congregation did a great job of taking care of the meeting. I look forward to another great year of work for the Lord.

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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LEBANON, MISSOURI, March, 1997

NO. 3

ADORNING THE DOCTRINE (TITUS 2:10-12)

By J. WAYNE MCKAMIE

The Apostle Paul commissioned the evangelist Titus to set in order the Lord's church on the isle of Crete, an incredibly corrupt place. I would like for us to concentrate on Titus 2, where Paul is telling him what he will speak and what he will do on Crete. It is important that we understand what was to happen on that isle, for whatever was to happen there, is to happen in any place where the Lord's people are. The whole second chapter of Titus is a call for godly, consecrated living from God's people.

Paul gave us a tremendous task in this passage. He said, "teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world (2:12)," and that we should "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things" (2:10). We are to furnish, ornament and adorn the doctrine of almighty God. That is our purpose. That is the plan of God, that by living changed lives, we will be able to change other people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is not an easy job and I do not propose it to be.

THE BEAUTY OF THE DOCTRINE

First of all, I know that the doctrine of Jesus Christ is beautiful. I know it because Paul said, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things" (Rom. 10:15). That is not because of who they are, but because of that which they preach. It is the preacher's association with what he preaches that makes his feet beautiful. It is the doctrine that is beautiful, glorious, wonderful, and perfect that came to us from heaven, not the preacher.

The doctrine of Christ is beautiful and lovely within itself and is to be put on by people like us, as well as those Creteans of so long ago, as a garment. We are to furnish and ornament this doctrine for the world. Our conduct is to be a perpetual comment on Christ's doctrine and His religion. Our lives are to be a constant exemplification of the truth and power of the gospel. If this is not what it is saying, then I just do not understand the import of words at all. This is exactly what he wants us to do. Day by day we are to let the world know who we are and where we stand. God is glorified in obedient people.

THE ADORNING OF THE DOCTRINE

In Romans 1, the apostle spoke of a people, who when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God. They became vain in their imagination, their foolish heart was darkened. They professed themselves to be wise, but they be-

came fools. They changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into corruptible ways of corruptible man (cf. Rom. 1:21-23).

The responsibility is two-fold: to know God and to glorify Him as God. It is not enough to know God. We must also glorify Him as God. Everyone adorns himself in some fashion daily. Paul is saying, I want you to "adorn the doctrine of God your Savior." Now, how are we going to adorn the doctrine of God? I understand the responsibility. I understand the language. But, how are we going to accomplish that within our lives? I think that the main thing was to teach those who had been redeemed, those who had named the name of Jesus Christ, that they would furnish and adorn the gospel by the conduct of their daily lives.

WE ADORN IT BY DENYING UNGODLINESS

In verse twelve Paul says, "teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly." May I point out that we are not discussing the world. He said, "teaching us." That is God's people. This does not mean that we deny those things exist. How foolish it is for a person to take the stance that nothing evil is going on in the world. That is not what Paul is saying. The apostle is saying that evil is very much with us and no person that is rational is going to deny this. Evil is present, and Paul is saying that the grace of God teaches us that we deny ungodliness (those things that are unlike God), and worldly lust, and that we live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.

WE ADORN IT BY LIVING IT

The man who said, "I'd rather see a sermon than hear one day, I'd rather that someone would walk with me than merely point the way," had a good point. We really do not have a great deal of appreciation for those who just stand and point the way and say, "There's the way you really ought to go." "There's what you ought to do." What we want to see is somebody living those things and leading us in the ways of truth.

In Philippians 1:27, the Apostle Paul said, "Only let your conversation be as it becomes the gospel of Christ." Now notice the similarity to our title. He said, "let your conversation become the gospel of Christ." Paul is one of those exclusive writers. He said, "only" let your life be as it becomes the gospel. I get the distinct impression that we

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PUBLISHER
Don L. King

41931 Chadbourne, Fremont, CA 94539
Fax 510-651-3926

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER
Ronny F. Wade

P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808

EDITORIAL STAFF
Clovis Cook
Edwin S. Morris

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Bennie Cryer	Johnny Elmore
Barney Owens	Jerry Dickinson
Billy Dickinson	Kevin Presley
Carl Johnson	

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Editorial

ELDERS, THEIR AUTHORITY

By DON L. KING

We have often wondered why some congregations seem to be willing to get along without elders. There is no question that the qualifications eliminate many men from attaining the office. However, it is interesting to note that while some qualifications take years to acquire (faithful children, etc.) others would not. For instance, a man possesses the needed things to qualify except he isn't as hospitable as he ought to be. How long does it take one to change for the better and begin to demonstrate hospitality? How long to simply say to oneself, "I will control my temper beginning now," etc.

On the other hand, could it be that some of us are reluctant to submit to the authority of elders? Frankly, we have heard a few comments through the years that suggest that could be the case.

There is no question that elders possess profound authority within the boundaries of Scripture. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." (1 Timothy 5:17) None but the elders have such written of them. Their authority comes not from themselves, but from the Lord. Christ has all authority in the church, (Matthew 28:18) so it follows that when authority is delegated it has to come from Him. Through the apostles and the inspiration of the Spirit, the Lord set the guidelines for the authority elders have. Notice also, please, that it is not the "elder" but "elders" who have authority. The authority to "rule" is given to the plurality of elders in the local congregation. Together, and in no other way, they have authority from Christ to rule the congregation. As the fifth chapter of first Peter begins, Peter speaks to the elders (plural). In verse 2 it says, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking no oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;" In Hebrews 13:17 Paul wrote, "Obey them (note the plural-DLK) that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that there may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." Robert Milligan and other commentators say this refers to the elders or overseers to whom was given the duty of instructing the members as well as watching over and governing them. Notice also that we have a duty to submit to them. The Spirit said "...submit yourselves..." Milligan says, "If it is the duty of the Elders to teach, it is also manifestly the duty of the other members of the Church to receive their lawful instructions; and if it is the duty of the former to rule, it is equally the duty of the latter to submit to all their acts of discipline which are not in violation of the law of Christ." (pg. 380-381).

Hence, it is safe to say that the authority of the elders in the local congregation is given by the authority of Christ.

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: What is the meaning of death in James 1:13-15? If one spiritually dies, how may that person be restored to God? Must they be baptized again? (CA.)

Answer: The verse in question reads "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man: but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and sin when it is full grown, bringeth forth death. " There has ever been, on the part of man, an attempt to blame someone else for his sins. Adam tried as well as Eve. Today many blame God for their desires, actions, feelings etc. trying to justify their ungodly actions at the expense of someone beside themselves. James makes it very clear that no man can rightly say "I am tempted of God. " God does not in any sense tempt us to do evil. James also affirms that God is beyond the area of temptation. He is wholly removed from evil, hence cannot be touched by its influence. Nor does He tempt anyone. God does not thrust upon us, that which is completely foreign to Him. He may at times try and prove His people but never does so for the purpose of causing them to sin. The true source of temptation is revealed by James when he says we are (1) drawn away (2) by our own lust (3) and enticed. This is good reason for every Christian to be on guard against the weaknesses of the flesh, or any influence through friends or otherwise that might draw us away from that which is right. It is in such situations that lust is conceived and we are led captive by wicked influences into sin. The final step is death. When sin is full grown, it bringeth forth death. Spiritual death is understood here. The individual because of his sin is separated from God. The restoration of the individual may be accomplished by retracing his steps i. e. by coming back to God. The fallen individual arrived at his destination by forsaking God and his word. By allowing lust (evil desire) to draw him away into sin. Now it is necessary for him to repent of the sin, confess his sin, pray God for forgiveness thereby returning to God. Peter told Simon in Acts 8:22 "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. " The prodigal of Luke 15 returned to the Father confessing "I have sinned against thee and am no longer worthy to be called thy son." Though erring and sinful, he was still a son. So are we, when we

sin. We do not cease to be sons and daughters. We do cease to be faithful. Hence, returning to God does not require baptism or being born again. In Acts 19 we have a case of re-baptism on the part of some who had been baptized with John's baptism after the baptism of the Great Commission came into effect. Since the baptism of John was no longer effective, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19:1-5). When one today is baptized for the wrong reason (to please a friend, parent, etc., rather than obeying God, they need to be scripturally baptized). However, one who has been baptized scripturally need never be re-baptized for any reason.

Question: Does John 6:53-56 refer to the Lord's Supper? If so, and one forsakes the supper on an ongoing basis and dies spiritually, do they need to be re-baptized? (CA.)

Answer: The phrase "eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man" is a Hebrew idiom which denotes the operation of the mind in receiving, understanding, and applying doctrine or instructions of any kind. Jesus points out that just as the body lives temporally by eating bread, so the new life is nourished by feeding upon Christ in our hearts by faith. The idea expressed is "except you feed on Christ in your hearts and partake of His life, ye have no life in you." We accept the bread of life, our crucified Lord, by faith and obedience to His teachings. Thus, whosoever by faith trusts in the death of Christ "and is baptized into his death", spiritually partakes of his body and blood. When does one receive spiritual life? When he is born again. When is one born again? When he is obedient to the gospel. If one is baptized on Monday night, that person has spiritual life at that moment. He does not have to wait until the next Sunday when he communes to have spiritual life. If he did, and died before Sunday, he would be lost. Who would so affirm? Hence in the view of this writer, the text does not support the belief that the reference is to the Lord's supper. To so apply it, is to mis-apply it. We must admit, however, that one can absent himself from the celebration of the Lord's supper and die spiritually. When such occurs, the individual needs to return to the Lord, confessing his/her sins and be restored. To suggest that such a person needs to be re-baptized is to demand what the scriptures do not. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO. 65808.

SCRIPTURES THAT GAVE ME STRENGTH IN MY WEAKNESS

By BILLY ORTEN

Most of you know of my recent four and a half months in the Willis-Knighten Hospital in Shreveport, Louisiana, where I waited on the critical list for a new heart. The doctors warned my family that my chances of survival were very slim. "You do realize, Mrs. Orten," Dr. Futrell would end his consultations, "that Mr. Orten is very, very ill." Your prayers moved God to give me a new heart and new life, and I sincerely thank you for lifting me up before His throne.

Words are inadequate to describe the strength and comfort that the Word of God has given me during my sickness and the long, arduous journey of rehabilitation, which is still in progress. The word of God is the foundation of our faith (Romans 10:17). I emphasize this: God keeps His promises; He cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18). We must know His promises. Then when trials come, we can ask for His help, and he will not fail us. Our lack of knowledge of His word prevents us from receiving the many

blessings promised. If we hide God's promises in our heart, they will be with us to comfort and strengthen during precariously difficult times.

I can personally speak to you of this need. For weeks I could not speak. I could not write. I could not hold a Bible to read. I could not communicate to anyone in any way except to nod or shake my head; therefore, my only entrance into the word of God was through the verses I had already committed to memory. These scriptures in my mind were all I had of God, and they eased me through pain and difficulties and indignities I could never have imagined.

Our prayers are made much more effective by our knowledge of God's promises written in His Word. The Apostle James reminds us, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 3:16). For example, in verses 17 and 18, we read about Elijah's praying that God would not permit rain to fall on the land of Israel for three years and six months. What gave Elijah the confidence to pray such a prayer? Elijah knew that God had previously promised in His word that it would not rain if Israel forsook Him.

Elijah, believing the Word, knew God would keep His promise. Read this incident in Deuteronomy 28:23-24, "The heavens over your head will be turned to bronze, and the earth under you shall become like iron. The Lord will change the rain of the land to powder and dust; from the heavens it shall come down on you until you are destroyed." This was God's promise to Israel if the nation forsook Him and worshipped false gods. Israel had indeed left God's ways and was caught up in Baal worship, so Elijah knew God would keep His promise of judgments and turn the heavens to bronze, the earth to iron, and the rain to powder and dust. Many centuries later, the Lord's brother, James tells us Elijah was a man just as we are. He prayed the promises of God, and so can we. The power of God is mighty in us through His Word. It is through prayer that the promises in His Word are given to us. Paul's prayer for the Ephesians was "that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe." (Ephesians 1:18-19).

I would like to share some promises that sustained me when my own strength failed. The promise which I claimed over and over again is recorded in II Corinthians 12:9-10. There Paul tells us about his thorn in the flesh which, he says, he had pleaded with the Lord to remove from him. Instead, Christ answered Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Paul continues, "Most gladly therefore, will I rather boast of my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in my infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong." Paul tells us that he gains Christ's strength the most when he himself is at his weakest.

Brethren, I shall never forget the evening my lungs were shutting down. I was smothering, gasping for breath, struggling. A tube was inserted down my throat, choking me. I fought the ventilator until my hands had to be tied. As I lay there, gulping for air, overcome with panic, I said II Corinthians 12:8-10 over and over in my mind until a peace

and calmness came to me that I shall never forget. I could stop struggling, relax, and let the machine breathe for me. That this time when my own strength was completely gone, God's strength became perfect in my weakness. I went on the ventilator September 23. During the months following, there were many other pains and afflictions in which God's strength came to me, enabling me to endure.

The writings of David hold both wisdom and encouragement. Psalms 73:26 spoke to me, "My strength and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my rock forever." Human strength falters, but God's strength never fails. Another verse from David that supplied strength in my weakness is Psalms 55:22, "Cast thy burden on the Lord and He will sustain thee. He shall never permit the righteous to be shaken." David guarantees that God will bear both "thee" and "thy burden." What a glorious promise to my weak and afflicted soul! God will not suffer the righteous to be shaken, so we are always as safe as if we were already in heaven.

The Lord spoke to Israel just before they crossed the Jordan River into the land He had promised them, and His message is recorded in the book of Joshua, chapter one. In verse five, God says, "No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses so I will be with you. I will never leave you nor forsake you." In verse nine God continues, "Be strong and of good courage, do not be afraid nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." (While I knew this promise for us in Hebrews 13:4, "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be constant with such things as ye have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'" I can personally affirm that this promise is a powerful source of strength to a person whose own human strength completely fails. Sometimes we have to get to the end of our own resources before we turn to claim God's power.

Jesus Himself taught His disciples, "Whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14:13-14). I claimed this promise many times in my struggle to live. Some may feel, though, that this verse applies only to the apostles. Please consider I John 5:14-15, "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions we have asked of Him." With a promise as bold as that, no wonder the Apostle Paul urges in Hebrews 4:12, "Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Sometimes, quite sadly, our feelings of unworthiness prevent our asking for the help we so desperately need. Paul recalls times when he was abased, and hungry, and suffering need. He shares his enabling power: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). There can be no sickness nor trial nor affliction which we cannot face with Christ to strengthen us. Even death loses its terror when Jesus is the power in our life.

Living by faith is thrilling. What a joy to know that whether I live or die, Christ is with me and I need have no fear. To borrow Paul's words in Philippians 3:13, "I count not myself to have apprehended" spiritual maturity, but I

am certainly reaching forth with all my "heart, soul, mind, and strength" in this new life God has given me.—Route

3, Box 127, Marion, LA 71260.

THE PHILIPPINE WORK

By DON L. KING

On January 2 Brother Bennie Cryer and I made a trip to the Philippines to help and encourage the brethren. Bennie had made a number of trips with me in previous years and I looked forward to being with him again in this work. It was indeed a good trip in every sense of the term. We enjoyed being together but, more importantly, the work was profitable for the Cause of Christ. According to Brother Danao's count there were thirty-five precious souls baptized into Christ. I wish I could baptize that many a year in the United States! However, to see those results in only three weeks was truly wonderful. We also enjoyed meeting a preacher who has for many years worshipped in error. His honesty was such that when he had realized he was wrong, he gave up the innovations. We had asked that we meet with him for study which we were happy to do. He had a few questions about the Bible classes, etc. which we discussed with him, and he immediately made a confession of his sins and prayer was made in his behalf. As we understood it, he had been contacted by the Filipino brethren in Hawaii whom he had known before they left the Philippines and moved to Hawaii. They had made a trip back to the Philippines so that they could visit him and expose him to the Bible way of worship. He was helped to see the truth by their efforts and his own diligent Bible study for several months. Brethren, imagine what could be done if we had more who were willing to pay for an expensive plane ticket out of their own pockets in order to teach the truth to an honest man! Those Hawaii brethren, who are newly converted themselves, did just that. God be thanked for such brethren. By the way, they aren't

wealthy, they just love the truth. They want to see as many as possible be saved before it's too late. As a result of their selfless labors, a door may have been opened to many more who are also honest and obedient.

The work is showing maturity, as we see it. The congregation in Roas (where Brother Danao began the Philippine work in 1981) now has elders and deacons and extends financial help to native preachers as they are able. Native brethren are very poor and poverty hinders them at times. However, they have managed with very little help from us, to build their own meeting houses in many places. Two notable exceptions are going to be the large cities of Baguio and Manila. In both of these areas they will need financial help from the U.S.A. to even buy a lot, let alone be able to build.

There are a number of radio programs which have proven very effective. Also, Brother Danao is going to investigate the possibility of a television program this year. There are more than twenty native preachers who receive support from American brethren; and by and large, they have done an outstanding work. The brethren take care of their own problems. If scriptural discipline is called for, as it recently was, it is taken care of by the local congregations. Likely, the brethren will need our visits for a long time. Just as we are built up by gospel meetings in America held by visiting preachers, so they are also. It was a pleasure to work with Brother Danao and Bennie Cryer. Our heartfelt thanks to the Stockton and Fremont, CA congregations for sending us this year.—DLK.

ADORNING THE DOCTRINE (TITUS 2:10-12)

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have some control over that. I can decide to live a life that will become the gospel of Christ, or I can decide that I will not. But he said "only." Only let your conversation, that is, your way of living, become the gospel of Jesus Christ. In 2 Peter 3:10, Peter is discussing the doctrine of last things. He says, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." There is not anything more awesome to think about than this. He says, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" The word "conversation" again means "manner of living." Only live in that way.

WE ADORN IT BY EXEMPLIFYING IT

In I Timothy 4:12, Paul said to the young man Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers." I like that. Think about what is happening. Timothy is going out from the body of believers to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul is not saying

to him, "Timothy I want you to say to the preacher, "I want you to be an example of the body of believers from which you came." Evidently they were of such caliber, that he could say to anyone going out, you be like them. That is our goal, to be that kind of people.

THE RESPONSIBILITY GIVEN TO TITUS

Titus 2 reveals the tremendous task of the evangelist. He faced a people who were characterized as "always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies" (1:12). Can you imagine the responsibility that man bore? How would you like to be dropped on the isle of Crete, with this responsibility laid on your shoulders? That was a tremendous task and it reminds us that we do not have a monopoly on evil and ungodliness in the world today.

Paul tells him, in effect, "You are going to find a deplorable situation over there on that island. They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him. What you are going to hear over there are people who are going to sing, 'Oh how I love Jesus.' They profess to be great people of God, but 'in their works, they deny all they say.' You need to deal with that. What you are going to find over there, are people that are 'unto every good work, rep-

robate.' Nevertheless, 'you speak the things that become sound doctrine.'" Paul expects to have a totally different person in Titus, than what he has out there on Crete.

Paul's instructions included, "rebuke them sharply, and do not give heed to Jewish fables and the commandments of men that turn from the truth." He said, "unto the pure, all things are pure, but unto those that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure." He said, "but speak thou the things that become sound doctrine."

"The aged men, teach them to be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, charity and patience." Then he told Titus to preach to the women. "The aged women likewise that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, that they may teach the young women to be sober and to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discrete, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." "Young men likewise exhort to be soberminded" and "in everything show yourself a pattern of good works."

What is he saying? We can respond by living in an ungodly way. We can cause the very truth that we once obeyed to be blasphemed. It is important that they turn their lives around. Paul does not leave anything uncovered, does he? "In everything you show yourself a pattern of good works. In doctrine, you show uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, you have a sound speech that cannot be condemned, that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you."

Then he said, "Talk to the servants." You see, there were some servants that had responded to the gospel, and they need to be taught some things. "Exhort them to be obedient to their own masters and to please them well in all things, not answering again, not purloining (engaging in petty thievery)." You see the problems that existed in that place? He said, "not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared to all men. Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Titus, that is your job. What a tremendous task was laid on his shoulders.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH

The message that in Titus preached on the isle of Crete so long ago, still needs to be preached in America today. There is not a spot on this globe that does not need to hear this message. When we go contrary to the doctrine of Jesus Christ and do not adorn it, we rather do harm to it.

The world has always judged an institution by its members. Suppose you ask me about some particular doctrine of a religious group. I may not know a great deal about that doctrine, but I find myself drawing some conclusions because of some person that I have known who was a member of that organization. Now, whether we should or should not do that is not the question. The fact is that if we have known someone who was a part of that organization, we draw conclusions about the organization. This should not alarm those of us who are the people of God. I rather think that if we were living the lives that God would have us to live, we would rejoice in that fact. The world has always judged an institution by its members, and is judging the Lord's church by our lives.

In Matthew 5 is the familiar passage where Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt have lost its savor, it is good for nothing." How could He more vividly say that you have become salt, but if the salt loses its saltiness it is good for nothing? He puts us in our place, does He not? He also said, "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." What a beautiful people He expects us to be!

In 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, the Bible says, "But if our gospel be hid..." How deplorable! "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost. In whom the God of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not, lest the glorious light of the gospel of Christ should shine unto them."

In John 3:19 Jesus said, "This is the condemnation..." Now we are always hearing somebody say, "Here's the problem." Jesus said, "Here's the problem." "This is the condemnation, that light has come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." That's the problem. We need to accept that fact. Light has come into the world. If light had not come it would be a different thing. But "the Son of righteousness has risen with healing in his wings" (Mal 4:2).

In Ephesians 5:13 Paul said, "All things that are reprov'd are made manifest by light, for whatsoever doth make manifest is light." Jesus said, "You are the light of the world." How are we going to be the light of the world? Mr. Campbell once said, "I am but a speck upon a speck sailing through illimitable space." How true. That is where we are. We are but a speck upon a speck sailing through illimitable space. How can we be the light of the world? We cannot by ourselves. But with our Lord, we can be the light of the world. He insists upon it. He demands it.

In Hebrews 1:1-2, the Bible says, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." He goes on to say, "He is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person" (v. 3). Jesus is the light of the world. "Then spake Jesus unto them, I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (Jn. 8:12). The world should have seen the Son rise. Malachi said, "Unto them that fear Him, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. 4:2). The Son shall only rise through us as God's people. This is what Paul is saying to Titus, and to us.

We are not going to be the light of the world by ourselves. I do not have any hope of that. But I do believe that we reflect He who is the light of the world. Yet sometimes the smut of sin covers our lives till our reflectors do not reflect anything. It does not matter that Jesus Christ is the light of the world, nor that He walked the shores of Galilee, opened blind eyes, unstopped deaf ears, and did all those wonderful things. That does not matter, if we do not reflect His glory to the world.

In Ephesians 5:25-27, Paul said, "Husbands, love your wives." He commands it. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify it and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church." What the Lord wants is a glorious church.

What kind of church do you want? What kind of church do we want all over this country? What kind of church do you want your children to attend? What kind of church do you want your children's children to be a part of?

You spend your life thinking about your sons and daughters, wanting to teach them the way of righteousness. Deuteronomy 4 teaches that you should teach these things to your sons and your sons's sons. You want them to see the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ? It must come through our lives.

PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE CHURCH

Living a Christian life has been easy. I do not think that it was easy on the isle of Crete. I will guarantee it was not easy for Titus who had the responsibility of setting in order the things that were wanting and turning them around. It has never been easy to live a Christian life and it is not getting any easier. Great changes have occurred in our world, even during my lifetime. We are more in contact with the world than we have ever been. At least sixty per cent of our women are now in the work force. All of us are touching the world more than we ever have in our lives, and conversely, the world is touching us more than it ever has.

We have come to a time when we need to listen to Titus 2 very carefully. I fear what we are earning. We are learning to get along, which means, we are learning to stay silent and stay out of trouble. We are basically taking a defensive position and in doing so, we are about to give up as soldiers of the cross. The big lie goes unchallenged. The dirty joke is tolerated more that it ever has been in our lives. Have you noticed that low language is popular in high places? It is endorsed now even by some of our legislators. It flows from the pen of our editors. You can pick up the newspaper and see all of these things. Immorality has graduated from secret practice to public show, and if you do not believe that, sit down and watch television for half an hour. You will find it very difficult to proceed through a half hour without coming to believe it. Society openly advocates lust and licentiousness. The alternative lifestyle is not very alternative any more. It is with us.

Too often, we get jolting reminders of what is happening in this world of ours. The prodigal son does not have to leave home anymore. He can stay home and be a prodigal son. If indeed he goes into the far country and gets into the hog pen of sin, we just advocate building bigger and better hog pens and call them "home." This is not news to you, but we need to stop and think about what is happening in our world and our reaction to it.

I do not think that God's people are launching headlong into sin. I think we still try to avoid evil, but we really do not seem to oppose it as we once did. We are getting used to it. We are getting conditioned by it, and that is frightening. The church militant is becoming the church muzzled. The Christian life - and I deplore this - the Christian life is being looked upon today as a refuge for the weak, instead of an army for the strong.

THE RESPONSE OF THE CHURCH

What is our response? What should be our response? I see three things at least, that we can do. First, we can con-

form to the world and just let it roll on by. Second, we might flee from it. Finally, and hopefully, we can stand and speak the truth in love. Now I think we have to make a decision. I think the world is going to force us to make a decision. You are going to have to decide, as a Christian individual, what you are going to do. You are going to have to decide as a family, what you are going to be and what you are going to do as a family. You are going to have to decide as a congregation what you are going to do and what your response to this world and its evil will be. Let us talk about these three options facing us.

SHOULD THE CHURCH CONFORM?

First, I suggest to you that to conform to this world is suicide. It is absolute suicide for you, for your children, for your grandchildren and for your congregation. To conform is the easiest things to do. It is not too painful, because it happens ever so slowly. We mistake a stretching of our conscience for a broadening of our minds.

Sometime ago, I saw a study that was done during World War II, about men who were placed in concentration camps during the war, and the various types of prisons and camps existing then. They were discussing in particular those who were placed in solitary confinement, in dungeons. Such prisoners very seldom, if ever, saw the light of day. In reference to this study, one of the things that caught my attention was, that men who were imprisoned so long in that kind of darkness, often fancied the day was dawning. In their tormented minds, day after day after day, not knowing night from day, they would occasionally decide that day was dawning, that the light was coming, although there was no light at all.

The absolute horror of that, is that we can get so used to the darkness, that we think it is getting brighter. We can get to the place where we are not offended by anything, and say that there is no harm to things that are absolutely questionable. We are going through a desensitization process - we are being desensitized by this world in which we live.

There are some things that we do not have a right to get used to. Let me mention a few. You do not have a right to get used to brutality. We are being fed a big dose of it. We do not have any right to get used to violence and the irrational. We are being fed that every day as well. There was a time when sin shocked us. But the brainwashing goes on, until what was once amazed us, now amuses us. We now laugh at shady jokes, we allow profanity to be funneled into our very laps, and we are going along with it. Remember, we are not here to learn how to live in the dark. That is not why we are here. God never placed us here and said, "I want you to learn how to live in the dark." He wants us to be people of light, and He said, "only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel." In fact, in Ephesians 5:11, Paul said, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." We need to listen to Ephesians 5:11 and take heed.

SHOULD THE CHURCH FLEE?

The second thing I suggested that we could do, is to flee. But I do not believe this is in His plan at all. As God's describes the Christian soldier and the armor of God has given (Eph. 6; 2 Cor. 10; 2 Tim. 2), not once is any armor

given for our backs. We have all kinds of armor on the front, which teaches that soldiers of the cross need to advance over the fields of sin. Yet, He never prescribed one piece of armor for our backs. God does not intend that we flee, neither does He intend that we become a recluse.

When I was a very young preacher, I was in Missouri in a meeting. A brother asked, "Would you to go see a monastery?" I supposed that I would, and I remember going with him to a place I would not go now, because we had to walk across a rope catwalk stretched between two mountains in order to get there. Once we reached that monastery, we met one man who was over seventy years of age, whoever had been out of that place. His concept was that we should leave this world and form a commune somewhere, dedicating ourselves to God and living as a recluse. That is not what this Book is saying to us at all. The Scriptures say, "Go ye into all the world..." (Mk. 16:15). You cannot do that in a monastery. We are to reach out to all the world, and the world spoken of is the people in it.

In John 17, Jesus prayed, "I do not pray that they shall be taken out of the world, but to be kept from the evil that is in the world" (v. 15). One of the greatest concepts of Christianity is that we are in the world, but not of it. That is one of your greatest blessings and yet also one of your greatest problems, is it not? We wrestle with that. Now if you do not wrestle with that, I suspect you are not thinking about it. We are in the world. We live in it. We make a living in it. We function in it. We educate our children in it. All of these things have to happen, and yet at the same time, "you are not of it." It is not easy to maintain our equilibrium.

Let us return to Matthew 5 for a moment. Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth" (v. 13). That is an interesting statement, because salt preserves, tastes and stings. The virtue of salt is not that it is salt, but in the effect it has when it is used. So it is not enough to say that we are the salt of the earth. It is our effect that we have as salt, as we deal with this world in which we live. We need to be poured into the stream of life, to have an effect on people in the world. Salt works only when it is used.

Further, Jesus said, "You are the light of the world" (Mt. 5:14). You know, that is our business. Every once in awhile in the business that I just left, I would hear the teachers talking about one of those days when the kids were not there, and they would be saying how nice the day was. It was quiet around there and things were calm and someone commented that this would be a great business if it were not for children. But that is our business. You do not have a school business without children. We need to remember that we are in the light business. Jesus

said, "You are the light of the world." That is our business. If we do not like being looked at, and if we do not like being the light of the world, then we are in the wrong business, because that is exactly who we are and what we are about.

We will always be a reproof to darkness, as Paul said, "Whatsoever doth make manifest, is light" (Eph. 5:13). When you walk through the woods and kick over one of those rotting logs, little black beetles run off in all directions. They are sensitive to the light. They do not like light, and they scurry off to find another place of darkness. You have already observed, that when you walk through this world and kick over a few rotting logs, whether it be in the church or out of it, that people do not like it. But I submit to you, that we need to have the light shining in. We need to turn on the light! We are so afraid of being offensive, that we are not effective. We must deal with that concept. We are turning our lights down low. Oh, we are not going to turn them out, but we will turn our lights down so low!

I do not believe that the early Christians dimmed their lights to match the times. I do not see that in this Book. Whether they were in a dungeon, or on the streets of Jerusalem, or in the catacombs of Rome, they let their lights shine. Oh, it cost them! It costs to turn on the lights. You do not pay a dark bill do you? You have to pay a light bill! You get the dark free.

SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

The third response to our world that I suggested was to stand and speak of the truth in love. In Philippians 2:15-16, Paul said that we are to be "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life." Perhaps no verse in the Bible better sums up all we are to be and do than does this verse.

You will notice in Titus 1:3 that the apostle declared that He "hath in due time manifested his word through preaching which is committed unto me by the commandment of God our Saviour" (1:3). Paul also said, "the things that thou hast heard of me... the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). God intends His word to be preached and transmitted from generation to generation. It is through the preaching of His Word that His will is accomplished, and there is no greater privilege or responsibility known to man. We must speak the truth to the lost and be sure that our lives exemplify the message we preach. May God help us to adorn the doctrine. We can never do more; God forbid that we should do less!—1921 McKamie Rd., McGregor, TX 76657.

ELDERS, THEIR AUTHORITY

continued from page 2

We can all recall that in the Old Testament when God delegated authority to someone and the people did not heed it they were punished by God. Let us not be misunderstood. The elders have no authority to make any laws for the church. James 4:12 plainly says that there is only one law-giver. We know that is Christ. They have no authority

to make law nor change even one. Rather their place is to see that the perfect law of liberty, which has already been given by the Lord, is kept as perfectly as possible. In other words, they rule the local congregation under an umbrella of authority already furnished by Christ, our law-giver. Elders, for example, have the right to decide the best time for the congregation to worship on the Lord's Day, based on the conditions among the members, etc. However, they have no authority to decide the day of worship. That has

already been established by the Lord.

Some feel that the leaders have authority only over the public assembly of the church. However, that cannot be the case. Some matters outside the assembly must certainly come under their authority. Adultery, a member who is a liar, drunkenness, etc. would surely have to be dealt with by the elders. How could discipline be administered to members guilty of those and other sins except by the elders or those acting in such capacity? It appears to us that in all matters of Christian living and conduct, every member of the local church must be subject to the elders.

Again, let us not be misunderstood. When it comes to matters that do not pertain to Christian conduct or to situations in which our personal judgment is involved, the elders have no authority. Elders have no right to insist that one follow a certain trade in order to earn a living. They have no authority as to the style of home we live in, the make of automobile we drive, etc. It is simply not their

place to be involved in such things unless it in some way affects my Christian living, harms my influence and so hurts my work in the church. However, anything that endangers my soul or the church is their business and they have a responsibility to endeavor to help me.

All of this indicates one important fact. Yes, elders are the public leaders of the church. They take the leading role in all the public affairs. However, they also do a great work privately. In order to effectively serve the congregation as shepherds and overseers they must have a knowledge of the private lives of the members. In much the same way as shepherds are in tune with their flocks and can anticipate their needs, so are the elders with their flocks and can anticipate their needs, so are the elders of the Lord's church. Brethren, we need elders. That's the Lord's way. Let us work to develop such men among us and also be willing to submit to their authority.—DLK.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASSING IT ON

Passing It On is a book containing fifteen sermons and a short biography of brother M. Lynwood Smith's life and work. The book is printed on an excellent grade of paper and superbly bound and the sermons represent the best of brother Smith's preaching in his prime. In my opinion, they are excellent. Some priceless pictures are included also. This book probably will never be reprinted, but at this writing a good supply remains, and we are happy to announce that the costs involved have been completely paid, thanks to the help of many and the generosity of friends. That means that from henceforth, all proceeds will go directly to help brother Smith in his publishing endeavors or in whatever way necessary. One sister ordered a copy for each of her married children. We are hearing of people learning the truth by reading the sermons. Order one copy at \$21.69 (\$19.95 + postage) or as many as five copies at \$99.75 will be sent postage-paid. Order directly from Lynwood at 2789 Loyd Star Lane N.W., Wesson, MS 39191 or from Pathway Books & Bibles, P.O. Box 1183, Ardmore, OK 73402.—Johnny Elmore.

2ND ANNUAL SPRING MEETING JONESBORO, GA MARCH 22-30, 1997

Everyone is welcome to attend the above mentioned meeting. Don King will be conducting the meeting this year. For more information, please contact Don Snow, (404) 363-2081 or Dwayne Snow, (404) 362-9165.

NOTICE

The annual Fourth of July Meeting in Lebanon, Missouri will begin June 26, 7:30 p.m. and close July 3, with the 7:30 evening service. The daily services, 10:00 a.m. and 7:30 p.m., will be held in the Christian Life Fellowship Building. The building is located on East 32 Highway, one mile from South 5 and 32 Highway Junction. The meeting will be conducted by Evangelists Ervin Barnes and Paul Nichols.

CHURCH DIRECTORIES

Order your 1996 Church Directories now, before they are all gone. We do not plan another directory until 1998. Current directories are \$2.00 each plus postage. Send all orders to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808.

A NEW BOOK OF SERMON OUTLINES

Pulpit Treasures is the name of a new book of Sermon Outlines by 60 of our preachers. I have also included some outlines of E.H. Miller, Tom Smith, B.F. Leonard, Tommy Shaw, Homer Gay and Homer L. King. This book would be a fine addition to any library. Cost is \$10.00 per book. Send all orders to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808.

NEW CONGREGATION PRESCOTT, MI

Please note the following new congregation: 2719 E. Greenwood Rd., Prescott, MI 48756, (Ogemaw Co.). Take I-75 to Exit 202, go North on 33 about 2 1/2 miles to Greenwood Rd. Turn right, go through Skidway LK Building on left. Look for sign. Sunday 10:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Contact James Hensley, 2169 S. Beach Rd., Prescott, MI 48756, (517) 873-3605.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

Our time in Ft. Smith, AR will be ending 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, Ft. Smith AR 72908, (501) 648-0477. We also have time for meetings.

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

RICHARDSON-SMITH-- On the afternoon of December 21, 1996, Jerry Todd Richardson and Cassandra Marie Smith were united in marriage in a beautiful ceremony at the Mission Hills Church of Christ in Spring-

field, Mo. The house was full of family and friends to witness this joyous occasion, as Todd and Cassandra covenanted before God to be husband and wife for the rest of their lives. The setting for the ceremony was simply arranged, yet touching and appropriate. The singing was done beautifully by Todd's two sisters, Rachel Massey and Rebecca Basnett, and also brother-in-laws Grant Bassett and Tim Thomas. It was the privilege of this writer to be asked to perform this ceremony. I have known both Todd and Cassandra for a long time, and have the greatest respect of their faithfulness to the Lord. The couple will be making their new home in the Springfield area, and will be attending at the North Side as their home congregation. It is our prayer that their lives will always be directed in the will of the Lord, and that their home will be a place of hospitality, peace and safety. As the song suggests, "Lord Give Us Christian Homes!"—Wyn R. Baker.

OUR DEPARTED

PIPKEN--Kenneth Merle Pipken, August 23, 1942-December 27, 1996. Brother "Kenny" Pipken passed from this earthly life on December 27, 1996. At the time of his passing he was a little over 54 years old. Kenny had suffered with ill health for about eight years. Kenneth is survived by his wife, Bethel; two sons, Steve and Keith; and one daughter, Karie. He leaves behind many other relatives and friends, particularly the brethren in the Kansas City and Harrisonville, Missouri areas, where he and his family have lived, worked and worshipped for many years. Kenny and his family were charter members of the church that was established in Harrisonville, MO earlier this decade. I was called upon to speak words of consolation at the funeral in Harrisonville, and at the graveside in Long Lane, MO. Kenny was such a lover of gospel music, that he particularly requested before his passing that the ser-

vice be filled with song, and it was. Nearly a dozen beautiful gospel songs were sung at the services. Brothers and sisters from the Kansas City area, and from as far as California, were in attendance and assisted with the singing. We will miss Kenny very much, but our faith in God does not permit us to sorrow as the world sorrows. We trust that Kenny now enjoys the rest of the faithful in Christ.—Smith Bibens.

COMPTON--Earnestine Compton was born June 3, 1939 and passed away Jan. 14, 1997 at 57 years, 7 months and 11 days. She was a member of the Legal Church of Christ and is survived by her husband, Gene Compton; her father, Loyd Prince; two daughters, three sons, four sisters, four brothers and grandchildren. Earnestine was a Prince and many are members of the Church. She was laid to rest at the Pine Cemetery. I was asked to officiate.—Ed Bullard.

DeGOUGH--Leslie Mae "Pat" DeGough was born October 7, 1910 in Bee, Oklahoma. She died December 25, 1996 in Bakersfield, California, at the age of 86. Sister DeGough was married to Carl "Snooks" DeGough on July 3, 1931 in Arvin, California. He preceded her in death in May 1959. She is survived by three sons and one daughter: Willie Wayne DeGough of Clovis, Richard Lee DeGough of Hughson, Everett Ray DeGough of Bakersfield and Patricia Gail Brewer of Bakersfield. She is also survived by 40 grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The service was conducted by family members. Pat was a long time member of the church. She was truly a friend to all both young and old alike. She is sorely missed by everyone who crossed her path in life. Her influence will live on and on in the lives of her survivors. She truly gave us a heritage that we can strive to live up to. When the saints are called home we hope to see her there.—Darrell Brewer.



Don L. King, 41913 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, February 8--We just returned from an enjoyable trip to the Philippines with Bennie Cryer (see report elsewhere this issue) and it is wonderful to be at home. We plan to work with some of the young men at Fremont to help them learn to serve at the Lord's table, lead prayers, songs and teach in coming weeks. We are to be with the church in Joplin, MO (Leawood Village) Feb. 23-March 2 for a gospel meeting, Lord willing. We look forward to working among them again. It was a treat to preach twice at home after the overseas trip and we look forward to being at Atwater this coming Lord's Day. The brethren there are few in number, but very active in preaching the gospel elsewhere. We appreciate them for all they do. 1997 appears to be a busy year for us in meetings, etc. We need

your prayers. Our thanks to Brother Ronny Wade for putting out the February issue of OPA. Preaching brethren, the brotherhood needs to know your works. Please, send us your field reports as often as you can manage. Too, we always need timely articles from you on Bible subjects. We value them more than you know. Let us hear from you next month.

Richard DeGough, 1907 Tully Rd., Hughson, CA 95326--Since my last report I have kept busy in the work. Besides holding some meetings and preaching in the congregations nearby we have about four good studies going with one or more at a time. House to house work is effective when we have the opportunity to sow the seed of the kingdom. Last year several were baptized in the local area, and most of them young people who had no former connection with the church. The church here at home takes care of its own affairs and is at peace. We have capable men younger and older who teach in such a way that the church is edified. Along with my support the congregation helps in the support of other gospel preachers, and would like to do more if possible. I have heard some good preaching from several gospel preachers of late. I think this year will be even better for the cause than last year.

Brethren, if we will dedicate ourselves to the Lord and preach His word, in time, the increase will come. We were saddened by the passing of my mother, "Pat" DeGough. Her departing was peaceable and God was merciful. We thank all the brethren near and far who called, sent cards and letters, and words of sympathy to us as a family and as individuals. We will meet again in the other world for this is God's promise. May the Lord bless all my brothers throughout the world with health, happiness, and spiritual strength in this year as we endeavor to live for Him and preach His Word to a lost world.

Bennie T. Cryer, 2340 Sanguinetti Ln., #104, Stockton, CA 95205, February 5--The work here in Stockton continues on. We are sorely missing Bro. Granville Mahurin, one of our elders, who passed away Feb. 1. He was a true friend and fellow laborer. One young man was baptized last week and has already started reading the scriptures publicly. Another young man, baptized last November, gave his first lesson in an impressive fashion the last Wednesday in January. The Lord has truly blessed us. I accompanied Bro. Don King to the Philippines in January. I had not been since 1991. I was amazed at the growth in spirit, knowledge, and number. Our preaching brethren there have really been working. It was good to work with Don again in this effort and to labor with Bro. Danao. 35 people came forward to be baptized while we were there. We witnessed the beginning of another congregation and became acquainted with a new preacher that the church in Hawaii had been instrumental in converting him to the truth. I think this was the seventh time I travelled with Bro. King to the Philippines and I can truly say it was the best trip so far as fellowship and accomplishment were concerned. God bless all.

Kevin W. Presley, P.O. Box 1001, Opp, AL 36302 (334) 898-1301, January 10, 1997--With a new year of opportunity before us, we are looking forward to a good season in the work of the Lord. After many long months of contemplating, I have agreed to move to Earlytown, Alabama to labor with the church in this area when not involved in meeting work. Please note my new address and phone number. Leaving Southern Oklahoma, particularly the Ada congregation, was no easy thing to decide. I owe a tremendous amount of gratitude to the brethren at Ada for their faithful support and encouragement during my five years there. I know of no better place for a young aspiring preacher to be. I will always feel indebted to Joe Hisle and Carl Johnson for their example, wisdom and advice. I will miss all of the brethren there more than they will know! I have moved to L.A. (lower Alabama) to begin a weekly television program. I, and the brethren here, think it will accomplish a great amount of good. If everything goes as planned we will begin broadcasting on January 26, 1997 on WDHN-TV 18 (ABC) out of Dothan, AL. The brethren here have agreed to let me hold a full schedule of meetings throughout the year as well. Speaking of which, I will begin this spring on a busy note. My schedule so far for this year is as follows: London, KY, March 21-23; Blue Springs, KY, March 24-30; Hillcrest, MS, April 2-6; Wichita Falls, TX, April 20-27; Mt. Grove, MO, Summer; Greenville, S.C., June 8-15; Brodhead, KY, Summer; Gar-

land, TX, July 25-August 3; Lawrenceburg, TN, August 10-17; Walnut Grove, KY, September 21-28; Oakdale, CA, October 3-12; Burkhart, MO, November 26-30. I look forward to being in these and other places. The late newspaper columnist and southern humorist Lewis Grizzard used to say that there is something within every yankee making him desire to go to Panama City Beach, Florida at least once in his lifetime. Well, when you make your trip there as I did mine, don't pass through south Alabama without stopping in and saying howdy! On a serious note, I solicit your thoughts and prayers as I begin what I hope to be a profitable work in this area. May God richly bless the faithful!

Virgilio O. Danao, Sr., 23 R. Magsaysay St., Roxas, Isabela, Philippines; Tele. No. (078) 642-80-20; January 23, 1997--I am glad to report that thirty-five (35) precious souls from different places were added to the Lord's Church through baptism, as a result of the preaching of Bro. Don L. King and Bro. Bennie Cryer during their visit to the Philippines from January 3-21, 1997. The brethren who heard them preach were edified and strengthened in the faith. They also conducted Bible studies with prospects, especially in Baguio City, that resulted in four (4) baptisms there. We met personally Bro. Enrique Narag who has been a longtime preacher of the Christian Church in Pangasinan, but through the writings of Bro. Felipe Bayani and others, has been converted to the truth. After he made public his desire to follow the truth with us, we prayed for God's forgiveness in his behalf. Though he still needs to be more grounded in the faith, we are looking forward for a rapid expansion of God's Kingdom in that part of my country through his sincere and dedicated service for Him. I enjoyed, and felt blessed, to have the opportunity, once again, to work with Bro. Don L. King and Bro. Bennie Cryer, two dedicated and able servants of the Lord. The last time Bro. Cryer came to the Philippines was in 1991. His visit this year was indeed a renewal of a long time intimate camaraderie in His service. I sincerely salute them both, stalwarts of the faith. Generally, the Lord's work in my country is at present at peace, determined to move toward progress. At this start of the year, 1997, we are looking forward to a more zealous, unified, and exerted effort in the execution of our work in His vineyard, more souls won back to the fold of Christ, and more local congregations established! We do solicit your earnest prayers for us. (Please note the change of my telephone area code, from 076 to 078.) May Go bless us all everyday!

Jim Franklin, P.O. Box 573, Blantyre, Malawi, Africa, October 26, 1996--The year of 1996 will be one of the most unforgettable years of my life. Actually, events which have had profound effects upon Marlene's and my life began in November of 1995. First, there was the death of Bro. James Kalonga on Nov. 21, 1995. He dropped dead of a heart attack at a bus stage in downtown Blantyre. James was our night watchman. He was working here at the mission when Marlene and I arrived in May of 1991. He was not a member of the church at that time. However, within a year, after having begun to attend services regularly, he obeyed the Gospel. If ever any man demonstrated his faith, in both word and deed, it was Bro. James. He was faithful

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until death. I conducted his service. Second, our daughter's illness made it necessary for Marlene to return to the States to be with her. Marlene left Malawi the 3rd of December, 1995. Third, Sister Kasambwe, the wife of Bro. Kasambwe, who serves as translator as well as the preacher of the Gospel, passed away the 7th of December '95. She suffered a heart attack in the every early hours of the morning. A neighbor took her to the hospital in his automobile. However, she died before they could reach the hospital. Bro. and Sister Kasambwe have lived here at the mission since 1968. Davidson was converted by Bro. Roy Lee Criswell. Fourth, I made two trips to the States when it looked as if Rebecca was about to die. Because she fought so very hard to survive, she amazed her doctor by rallying both times. The third time, however, she was not successful. She passed away the very hour I was on my way to the airport to catch my flight home for the third time. This was on the 9th of July, 1996. Fifth, my co-worker, Bro. Davidon Kasambwe has had to undergo prostate surgery. The doctor had to make a large incision in the lower abdomen in order to correct Davidon's problem. This took him out of the work for over six weeks. Sixth, my father, James C. Franklin, Sr., passed away on the 13th of September. He died of a heart attack at his home in Porter, Texas. He was buried on the 17th. I was not able to return for his funeral. Seventh, Dennis and Nancy Smith came from Lusaka to purchase Chichewa song books and Bibles for the work in Zambia, and to visit Marlene and me as well. They planned to stay for only a couple of days. However, things changed very suddenly. Dennis became ill. This was the 11th of September. He ended up in a hospital in Johannesburg, South Africa, in a very critical condition. He was suffering from toxic reaction to the treatment he had received in Blantyre for malaria he had contracted in Zambia. His condition now is such that the doctors involved in treating him in Johannesburg have strongly advised him to return to the States for at least six months to recover. I remained in Johannesburg with Nancy and Dennis for four weeks. I left for Blantyre on the 15th of October. This was after Bro. James Orten arrived to assist Dennis and Nancy on behalf of the Edmond congregation. I was very pleased to see James. We took advantage of an opportunity which neither of us had planned, and that is to discuss face to face the work in Africa. How wonderful it is when brethren share the same basic concerns for the Cause of Christ and are willing for Christ to direct His work through the written Word. We mortals never know what will take place when a day begins. Even the most carefully made plans

are subject to change without notice—and that due to circumstances beyond our control. Plans we had made for meetings this year have not gone entirely according to our schedule. Even so, it appears the brotherhood has not suffered any irreparable damage. If my leaving were permanent, there would be problems. However, sickness and death are two things these people understand. Families here suffer both far more frequent than people in America. For example, yesterday I received word from Zimbabwe that one of our strongest preachers, Bro. Naison, that he has lost another son, the second to die in a matter of two weeks. I saw both of these young men in August. They appeared to be in perfect health at the time.

The meetings which I had scheduled in Mozambique were the ones scheduled at the time Dennis became ill. These had to be cancelled. However, those scheduled in Malawi were taken care of by my fellow Malawian preachers. You can be sure that I appreciate their interest and enthusiasm in the work. Circumstances this year have made it next to impossible for me to conduct studies for the preachers here in Blantyre. These studies must, and will be given priority next year—i.e. if God be willing. I am still planning on going to Zimbabwe in November to assist the brethren there in their work for one month. The Zimbabwean brethren are looking forward to the visit, and so am I. Brethren there have informed me that the work is spreading into areas where they have not been before. One place is the town of Victoria Falls which is located in the NW area of Zimbabwe on the Zambezi River. This, of course, is the location of one of the wonders of the world, the famous Victoria Falls. I am looking forward to things settling down in my life and moving on with the work of the Lord in Africa. There is yet so much to accomplish and seemingly so little time to do it. Please keep all the work in Africa in mind when you pray. We especially request that you think of Zambia. The suddenness of Dennis' leaving Zambia is a shock to him, to the Zambian brotherhood and the Edmond congregation. While I am writing this report, Bro. James Orden is in Luaska trying to take care of Dennis' affairs as well as to encourage the brethren. James has a tremendous responsibility resting upon him at this time as he sorts out problems and arranges the continuity of the work until Edmond can decide what they need to do. I know James will appreciate your prayers. In addition, please pray for Dennis and Nancy that all will be well with them. Our sincere thanks to all of you who care enough to support the wonderful work of the Lord in Africa. May the Lord richly bless the brotherhood at home.

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."

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"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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LEBANON, MISSOURI, APRIL, 1997

NO. 4

"LET YOUR YEA BE YEA"

By PAUL O. NICHOLS

The caption of this article is from Matt. 5:37. Jesus said "Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay..." And the apostle Paul said, "Providing honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men" (2 Cor. 9:11). Again, Paul writes to brethren and says, "Lie not one to another..." (Col. 3:9).

In years past "a man's word was his bond." In those days many a deal was sealed with nothing more than a handshake. People trusted one another because they themselves were honest and trustworthy. Greed, covetousness, and plain dishonesty have changed this. But it should not be so among Christians, the children of God.

In the business world contracts are required for almost any financial transaction except cash. A handshake will not do because most people cannot be trusted when money is involved. ("The love of money is the root of all evil..." 2 Tim 6:10). Terms of contracts have been strengthened in an effort to close "loopholes" and to force people to fulfill their obligations. In spite of all these efforts, individuals and companies look for justification if they decide they don't want to honor an agreement. And usually for a little money they can find an unscrupulous lawyer who can get them out of it "legally."

These are "perilous times" and we live in a chaotic world and even brethren cannot always be trusted to keep their word. I say this to our shame. What we as Christians must learn is that we are children of God and are required by the Lord to let our yea be yea and or nay, nay, and Jesus says, "for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." When we say "yes," we should mean yes. And when we say "no", we should mean no. People should be able to depend on us to tell the truth. After all, the Bible teaches us, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds" (Col. 3:9). Again, the apostle says, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another" (Eph. 4:25). And we have the warning, "...all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone..." (Rev. 21:8). When a Christian makes a promise people should know that he is going to do the very best he can to keep it. But sometimes brethren make promises to preachers, and preachers make promises to brethren and they do not live up to their word. This naturally creates distrust.

We now hear of contracts being made between brethren and preachers for a certain church work. And preachers

sometimes ask each other, "What kind of package do you have?" Having to sign a contract to force someone to keep his word certainly smacks of distrust, and I believe brethren would be hard pressed to find scripture which would justify the practice. Is it because the preacher distrusts the brethren, or do the brethren distrust the preacher? Or on the other hand is it mutual distrust? For shame!

Several years ago brethren at a certain place signed a contract with a preacher. Before the end of the contract period there was such a sharp disagreement that the brethren wanted the preacher to leave, but he refused and demanded full pay according to the terms of the contract before he would go. The brethren were hooked! They had to pay.

A contract is of no value if it is unenforceable. It is a legal agreement. If it is a legal agreement, then it is enforceable by law. But Christians are forbidden to go to law against other Christians (1 Cor. 6:1-8). Now, how can brethren enforce a contract with a preacher who fails to live up to his agreement? Or how can a preacher force brethren to do what they have agreed to do? Are they going to sue one or the other for breach of contract or seek punitive damages as is done in the secular world? Suppose a preacher under contract to a congregation falls under the condemnation of Romans 16:16,17 (causes division or offenses contrary to the doctrine of Christ), or Titus 3:10 (is guilty of heresy), but under the terms of the contract the church is legally bound or by moral obligation must continue to support him for a stipulated length of time. Or suppose the congregation discovers the preacher is covetous, or he becomes a railer, or is guilty of fornication (it has happened), but their contract binds them to support him for a certain time. How are the brethren going to justify using the Lord's money to support such an individual when they cannot scripturally fellowship him nor even socialize with him (1 Cor. 5:11 "with such an one no not to eat"). And if a preacher is so unscrupulous, what is to keep him from suing the brethren and forcing them to pay him?

Brethren, think about it! Why put the church in such a predicament? There is absolutely no scripture that teaches or justifies such a practice. If not, then it is an innovation and therefore wrong. If a congregation doesn't know whether the preacher they are getting is trustworthy or dependable, they need to find out about his reputation from

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PUBLISHER

Don L. King
41931 Chadbourne, Fremont, CA 94539
Fax 510-651-3926

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

Ronny F. Wade
P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808

EDITORIAL STAFF

Clovis Cook
Edwin S. Morris

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Bennie Cryer Johnny Elmore
Barney Owens Jerry Dickinson
Billy Dickinson Kevin Presley
Carl Johnson

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Editorial

THE WORK OF ELDERS, ETC.

By DON L. KING

For some time we have been writing about elders, their work, duties, qualifications, authority, etc. This month's piece will likely be the last for a while, at least. It may be that questions will come in which will require more at a later time. We would like to reprint a writing by J.W. McGarvey which is very good and, we hope, helpful. Under the heading, "How to be Shepherds," he writes: "The titles applied to the eldership are well chosen, and constitute an exhaustive classification of its duties. When the Elders learn how to be shepherds, how to be overseers, and how to be teachers, they have learned how to discharge all the functions of their office. We propose now to inquire how they may perform those duties which belong to them as shepherds.

All the duties of a literal shepherd, as understood by the people who gave the word its religious significance, are embraced in these three: 1. To keep the sheep from straying. 2. To lead them to water and pasturage by day, and back to the fold, when need be, at night. 3 To protect them against all danger by night and by day. The pastoral, or shepherd duties of the Eldership, as the nature of the title shepherd and the apostolic precepts both require, correspond strictly to these three.

First, then, in order to be a good shepherd, the Elder must exercise the utmost care to prevent individual sheep from straying away from the flock; and when one, as it sometimes will, eludes all vigilance and strays away, he is to be prompt and energetic in going out to search for it and bring it back. Jesus, with special reference to his own work in hunting up the lost sheep of the house of Israel, beautifully illustrates this duty by a parable. He says to those who condemned him for receiving sinners, 'What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine, and go after that which is lost till he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing; and when he cometh home he calleth together his friends and neighbors saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say until you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance.' What can be the meaning of this parable, unless is be that when a disciple strays away from the path of duty, the very first obligation of the shepherd, rising above all the obligations at that moment due to the faithful brethren is to go and hunt up, and try to win back, the wanderer?

He is to leave the ninety and nine, even in the wilderness and go. If a congregation were assembled on the Lord's day for worship, and the Elders, upon looking over their faces, were to miss one, and ascertain that he was absent in some frivolous company, or at home in an ill humor, or about to start out for the day on a pleasure ex-

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By *RONNY F. WADE*

Question: Does Psalms 51:5 teach that children are born in sin? (Mo.)

Answer: No it does not. The KJV renders the verse as follows: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Some of the later translations (falsely so-called) inject denominational bias into their rendition. **The Living Bible:** "But I was born a sinner, yes, from the moment my mother conceived me." **Modern Language Bible:** "Behold, in a sinful state I was born and in sin did my mother conceive me." Even the much celebrated NIV is misleading: "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." It seems evident, to this writer, that the intent of these translators is to advance their theories of inherited sin. Many commentators do the same, using this passage to prove (?) their particular denominational bent. **The Revised Standard Version** renders the verse: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." First of all in this passage David speaks of the condition of his mother, not himself i.e. "In sin did my mother conceive me." Secondly, he speaks of himself, "I was brought forth in iniquity." He did not say that he was born corrupt, or with a corrupted nature. The Bible says that people were born in a language Acts 2:8. This obviously did not mean that they were born speaking a certain language, but were born into a situation where a certain language was spoken. Likewise David was born into a world of iniquity. He was brought forth into a world where sin rules and prevails. To conclude that babies are born sinners is to conclude what is not taught in the Scriptures. In fact the very opposite is taught. Of Jacob and Esau it is said "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil. . ." (Rom.9: 11). These two were not sinners before they were born, but became sinners afterward. Ephesians 2:1-3 is another text often used to prove inherited sin, notice: "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Among whom also we had our conversation in times past

in the lust of our flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Some conclude from this verse that all people are born sinners, and are by nature the children of the devil. However, notice that Paul declares that the people here addressed had been "dead." They were not born dead but had died as a result of their "trespasses and sins." They were dead because they "walked according to the course of this world." These people were not born in sin but had become sinners as a result of their disobedience to God, which is the way we all become sinners. That is how Adam became a sinner. Adam did not inherit sin. If he did he had to inherit it from his father who was God. We know that cannot be the case. The scriptures teach that God cannot be tempted, nor does he tempt any man, but we are tempted when we are drawn away by our own lust and enticed (James 1:13-15). Hence, Adam sinned through temptation. If indeed infants are born in sin, as some claim, should they die, will they be lost? This is a question the advocates of hereditary total depravity do not like to face. In an attempt to avoid it, they assert that "elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ, through the Spirit, who worketh with and where, and how he pleaseth" (**Presbyterian Confession of Faith, Chap. 10: Sec.3**). Such an answer does not solve their problem, however. What about the non-elect infant? What happens should he/she die? Must they spend eternity in hell? Who can believe that such is the case, especially since Jesus himself said "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14). The truth of the matter is simply that infants are not born in sin. They do not inherit sin from anyone. Psalms 51:5 does not so teach, nor does any other passage in the Bible. It is a doctrine of man not of God. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.." (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808)

TURN RIGHT AT THE CROSS

By *EDWARD WILLIAMSON*

Beside a country road near my home congregation stands a large, stone cross overlooking a pair of graves. This cross is located adjacent to a crossroad, down one lane is a country church house, down the other lane are several dairy farms and residences. One could imagine that a person giving directions to a stranger looking for the church house, or one of the dairy farms might use the expression, "turn right at the cross" to describe how to reach their destination. Turn right at the cross, such a simple statement, yet so profound, because spiritually speaking that is what each of us must do.

The apostle Paul emphasizes this point in Galatians 3:1 when he writes, "O foolish Galatians! Who has

bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?" (All quotations from the **New King James Version**). If Paul were writing his epistle today perhaps he would ask we foolish Americans why we do not obey the truth. The purpose of preaching was, is, and shall ever be the clear portrayal of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. If the church forsakes the preaching of the crucified and resurrected Savior, someone or something else will fill the void and bewitch the lost.

An excellent illustration of the message of the cross took place in a revival conducted by a neighboring congregation recently. Several of the men of the

congregation had constructed a cross out of rough logs. This cross was coarse and heavy, made of old oak wood, and probably not unlike the cross which Jesus carried to Golgotha. When these men had finished constructing the cross they placed it right in front of the pulpit! When services began, this cross stood, looming in the front of the building. When the evangelist stood up to preach and took his place in the pulpit, the cross was in the way. You couldn't see the preacher for the cross. The best part of the sermon that evening was the fact that several times the preacher said "this cross is in the way". The message was two-fold: first, anytime a preacher stands up to preach, he ought to see his audience only through the cross, and secondly, everytime the congregation hears the word preached, they ought to hear the word through the cross. Let us never forget that it is the message of the cross which will save people from their sins, and it is the message of the cross that will keep people saved from their sins. Preachers and elders, how long has it been since the message of the cross was your message to the church?

The centrality of the cross can never be disputed. Jesus was crucified with two thieves, one on his right hand and the other on his left (John 19:17-19). Jesus was crucified in the center! This did not just happen, for Jesus the cross was always at the center. Consider His teaching in John 3:13, when he stated "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up", or in John 8:28, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of myself; but as My Father taught me, I speak these things." It is very interesting to note that when Jesus was lifted up on the cross, an unbeliever, a Roman centurion said, "Truly this Man was the Son of God!" (Mark 15:39). Jesus further spoke of the centrality of the cross when he exclaimed in John 12:32, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself."

The apostle Paul in numerous contexts wrote of the centrality of the cross. In First Corinthians 1:17-25, several important concepts are revealed. In verse 17, Paul warns that the cross of Christ can be made of no effect if the gospel is preached with the wisdom of worldly words. In verse 18, the cross is characterized as foolishness by those who are perishing, but as the power of God to those being saved. The similarities between this verse and Romans 1:16 cannot be ignored. In Romans, Paul states that the gospel is the power of God to salvation, in First Corinthians, he states that the message of the cross which saves us is the power of God.

These verses point also to the summation of the gospel in First Corinthians 15:1-4, where Paul quite succinctly stated that the gospel which saved was that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures. This gospel according to Paul was declared, preached, and delivered by the apostle, and received, stood in, held fast, and believed by the Corinthians. The centrality of the cross is once again demonstrated by the gospel which saves.

Paul further emphasizes in First Corinthians 1:22-24 that the preaching of the crucified Christ is a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks. So it is in our day, how foolish, how utterly ridiculous it is that someone should have to plead with rational people to

Accept the gospel! And to preach that the Savior was crucified on a cross? This is preposterous according to the world. But that is exactly what pleased God (1 Corinthians 1:21). The centrality of the cross! To those who are called, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24).

Paul repeatedly warned against the wisdom of man. In 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, he said that he did not come to them with excellence of speech, or wisdom. When Paul came to the Corinthians, he determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified! Why? So that their faith would not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. The centrality of the cross. Weakness, fear, and trembling, these are the words which Paul used to describe himself among the Corinthians. However, when it came to the message of the cross, Paul presented it in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. I like to hear good, powerful, scriptural preaching as much as anyone, but I would much rather hear a weak, fearful, and trembling servant of God deliver the message of the cross in power and Spirit than to hear a well-constructed exegesis utilizing the wisdom of man. And I believe Paul would share this sentiment. As he said, "But God forbid that I should glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Galatians 6:14).

Turn right at the cross, this is the central plea of the bible. How do we turn right at the cross? By being crucified with Christ, as Paul states in Romans 6:1-6. If we are baptized into Christ, we are also baptized into His death. But, as the gospel tells us, Jesus rose again the third day, likewise we rise to walk in newness of life. Our old man of sin is crucified with Him, the body of sin is destroyed, we are no longer slaves of sin, only by turning right at the cross.

As Paul told the Galatians, once we are crucified with Christ, we no longer live, but Christ lives in us (Galatians 2:20). It's not our life anymore, we belong to another. We belong to the Son of God. As new creatures in Christ we are commanded to walk in the Spirit. As Paul says, "And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with it's passions and desires." (Galatians 5:24). We are different, we must be different. That is what it means to turn right at the cross.

The results of turning right at the cross should be abundantly clear to all those around us. The walk and conduct of the Christian should be such as to draw a clear distinction with the world. A changed life with a new direction and destiny is the most powerful tool for the advancement of the church. The Philippians were instructed to become blameless and harmless, without fault in the midst of a perverse society. They were told to shine as lights in the world (Philippians 2:14-16). Turn right at the cross and let your light shine!

Sin is a human problem which has plagued the world since Adam and Eve, Paul in one of several listings of sinful activities stated quite emphatically that those engaged in such activities would not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10), but in the same passage he said, "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." These

Corinthians were no worse, or better than Americans today. They had turned right at the cross. Any person today, no matter how immoral, reprobate, or sinful can likewise be washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of Jesus and by the Spirit of God. This is the message we need to emphasize. The message that to many people is foolishness, that sinful man can turn right at the cross and be saved.

The apostle Peter tells us that when a person turns right at the cross their former associates think it strange, but as Peter says, "We have spent enough of our past

lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles. . ." (1 Peter 4:1-4). To Peter, we should live our lives for the will of God. The writer of Hebrews tells us that we should lay aside sin, run the race, and look to Jesus as the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:1-2). And Paul tells us in Titus, that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and looking for the appearing of Jesus (Titus 2:11-14). Each of these passages illustrate the results of turning right at the cross. Let us remember the message of the cross of Christ, for it and it alone will determine our eternal destiny.

ARE WE REALLY AT THE RIGHT PLACE?

By BRETT HICKEY

Many Christians would be shocked. They would be shocked to learn that some of their brothers and sisters - maybe even on the pew in front or behind them - actually wonder on Sunday morning if they are really in the right place. Those strong in the faith, convinced of the truth of the old-time gospel assume that all, but perhaps the newborn babes have the same confidence in the church. Then, seemingly out of the blue, that friendly face you have become so accustomed to is gone. The spot on the pew that might as well have had their name on it is now conspicuously vacant. What happened? Eventually you learn that they have left and are worshipping elsewhere. The leaders, elders or preacher have tried to initiate studies, but to no avail.

Sometimes there is really no solution. The soil was just not conducive to the gospel. They were offended by the word, or maybe their heart was elsewhere. Perhaps they were just choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

But when they are gone, concerned Christians cannot help but wonder, "Was there anything I could have said or done to make a difference?" or "Is there anything they could have done to insulate themselves from apostasy?" Sometimes, I believe the answer is yes! There are certain doctrinal subjects that when thoroughly studied and understood leave no occasion for stumbling. The distinction between the covenants, the marriage of faith and works, the role of baptism in salvation and the observance of the Lord's Supper are notable examples. One of these, thoroughly studied—even independently of the others—repels the honest heart from almost all religious counterfeits. If we—our family and those Christians closest to us— were only "able to comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" of one of these subjects we may have the needed insurance against a departure from the church of Christ. If we could pass this knowledge on to our family and those who occupy the pew across from us, it might make an eternal difference.

WHICH IS RIGHT?

Another issue, that carries the same weight is music in the church. Two Mid-Western college students, Ned and Fred, in their independent quests for the true church, happened to stumble upon different congregations that teach salvation exactly as it was found in the Bible. They were

both immersed within a few months of each other and were zealous for their respective causes. They met up in class and started discussing the newfound faith they had in common. They were members of the same church and obedient to the same gospel. They agreed to visit each other's services on alternate Sundays. After that first service, Ned told Fred that he enjoyed the sermon and that the services were uplifting. But he was puzzled. He asked Fred, "Why don't you have a piano or organ?" Fred responded, "Ya know, I never even thought about it." They were both aware of the Revelation warning (22:18,19) about adding it and taking away from the word of God. Ned said, "Fred, you know that the Bible warns against "taking away." If the Bible teaches the accompaniment of instrumental music to singing in worship and your church omits it, they are in the wrong and they are probably not in the right church." "Okay Ned, you're right! Our churches do worship differently, so they can't possibly both be right. But remember, that scripture cuts both ways. If the Bible does not teach instrumental accompaniment, you guys are adding to God's word and would be in the same dangerous position you say we would be in. Let's see what the Bible says!" (Ned and Fred located **Instrumental Music** by M.C. Kurfes to guide them in their quest.)

FACTS FROM HISTORY

Both men were surprised to learn that the objections of the conservative congregation were neither new or unique to the church of Christ. Historically, they learned that many of the denominational big-hitters and early reformers were vehemently opposed to instrumental music in worship. When asked his opinion, John Wesley said, "I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither heard nor seen." Among these were (Martin Luther himself), Methodists, John Wesley and Adam Clarke, stalwarts John Calvin and Theodore Beza of the Presbyterian and Congregationalist parties, and prominent Baptists Charles Spurgeon and Andrew Fuller. The annals of history concur with L.B. Wilkes, who said that in New Testament worship the "organ was not introduced by Lord God Almighty, but by Lord God the Pope." Both the **Chambers** and **New International Encyclopedias** credit Pope Vitalian with this daring departure in AD 666. Even with the pope's stamp of approval, it was not wholly accepted by Catholicism. Various popes argued against and prohibited its use after Vitalian's bold move. There was in

fact, such a long bitter controversy over instrumental music in the Catholic church that the celebrated Roman Catholic scholar, Thomas Aquinas, declares six centuries after its initial introduction. "Our church does not use musical instruments to praise God withal, that she may not seem to Judaize."

DIGRESSIVE JEWS

Meanwhile, Judaism is embroiled in the same controversy. Orthodox Jews are not content to carry the (burning/biting/embarrassing) guilt of this religious "hot potato." Instead, they accuse their digressive Jewish brethren of "imitating the Christians" by introducing instrumental accompaniment into synagogue worship. It is noteworthy that even the most liberal branch of Judaism (Reformed) never permitted instruments in their synagogue until 1818 in Berlin. Still, only non-Jews could play. When we see the parallel controversies over worship within the Jewish Synagogue and the Christian Assembly, it is striking that the word "assembly" used in Jas. 2:2 comes from the Greek word "sunagoge." The chronicles of Jewish worship up to the 19th century certainly offer no excuses for the innovation of instrumental music in the assembly of the Lord's church!

ALL OR NOTHING

There is still the tendency among some to run back to David of old to justify this worship novelty. They say, "Well, if it was all right for David then it must be okay for me." Oh, some Christians are content to live like Jews under the old law until it means no bacon on their breakfast biscuits and no shrimp in their seafood salad. Yeah, they make devout Jews until it turns their Saturday at the lake to an all-day living room lock-in. The church pianist happily assists in her rights through David's example until her husband uses David as an excuse to come home one day saying, "Pack your bags. We're moving to Utah. By the way, meet my second wife." Listen! What's good for the goose is good for the gander. James said, "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

Further proof that we should not follow David or anyone else to do evil is found in Amos 5:21-6:5. Adam Clarke reasoned from this passage this way, "If there was a woe to them who invented instruments of music, as did David under the law, is there no woe, no curse to them who invent them, and introduce them into the worship of God in the Christian Church?" Sound advice for Christians to consider. In conjunction with this admonition, we should heed Paul's somber warning to the churches of Galatia, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace."

AUTHORIZED OR UNAUTHORIZED?

In their attempted worship in Lev. 10:1-2, the sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, learned the hard way that God will not accept unauthorized worship or that "which he commandeth not." This principle is carried over into the New Testament. Jesus commands the apostles to teach the baptized believers "...to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." In Col. 3:17, Paul echoes these

sentiments. He says, "...whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." There is a definitive demand here for Christ's authority in every act of worship. Jesus assured the apostles that the spirit of truth would give them the complete revelation of his will (Jn. 16:13). Later, Paul says that through the Scriptures the church is "thoroughly finished unto all good works." Peter continues in 2 Pet. 1:3, "...his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness..." Plainly, the New Testament fully equips us with all the ingredients of authorized worship. Yet, can anyone find instruments or the instructions to play them within the Scriptures? If not, they are simply unauthorized additions!

THE NEW TESTAMENT ON MUSIC

By examining the twenty-seven New Testament books on church music, several compelling facts demand attention. Weigh the body of evidence for yourself: "And when they had sung a hymn Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God." "I will...sing unto thy name." "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." "Speaking to yourselves in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." "Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." "In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." "Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God...the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." "Is any merry? Let him sing psalms." The silence of the scriptures regarding instruments is overwhelming. With twenty-seven books worth of opportunities, neither Christ nor His apostles ever commanded or even suggested the playing of instruments in worship. At the same time, they repeatedly relayed the importance of singing praises to God with the fruit of our lips. This point is so easy to understand that it would take a preacher to make it confusing. Simply put, the Scriptures do not furnish instrumental music in worship, therefore it cannot be a good work.

GENERIC AND SPECIFIC AUTHORITY

Let's illustrate further how to distinguish what is authorized from what is unauthorized. Noah is told to make an ark out of gopher wood (Gen. 6:14). Was Noah free to build the ark out of oak, maple or cherry? No, because God had specified what kind of wood was to be used. Only gopher wood was authorized. If the Lord had said instead, "Build an ark out of wood," then Noah would have had generic authority to use his favorite wood, the most convenient wood available or the kind of wood he felt was best for the job.

Similarly, the Lord commanded that a lamb be offered as a burnt offering (Lev. 23:12). This logically excluded the sacrifice of a dog or a hog. Again, if God had requested simply an animal sacrifice, then the Israelites would have been free to offer any animal of their choosing. The Jews did not insist that God list every animal that was prohibited. Noah did not have to be told all the trees that could not be used to build the ark. The Lord's commands were not to be trifled with and they recognized that. They respected the silence of His word. They gave Him just what he asked for—nothing more, nothing less.—More later.—OPA.

“LET YOUR YEA BE YEA”

continued from page 1

people who know him. Does not the Bible teach to “know them that labor among you?” (1 Thes. 5:12). Paul said he did not need letters of commendation to the church at Corinth, nor letters from them (2 Cor.3:1). Why? They knew him and his work as others did, too. His reputation spoke for itself. But it is implied that otherwise letters of commendation would be in order.

Sometimes brethren use the poorest judgment when seeking a preacher to work with them. They select a man they know nothing about. Someone may have heard a sermon or two that appealed to them, or perhaps they liked his delivery. They may not know what he stands for — whether he tends toward liberalism, or if he is fanatic about some issues or loose on others, or if he is sound and is satisfied with a thus saith the Lord. They may not know whether he has a good reputation for honesty, or if he is one who pays his debts and his word can be trusted; or whether he is lazy, and other things are more challenging to him than the Lord’s work; or whether he is a troublemaker. They may get a person who plays church politics and handles the word of God deceitfully (2 Cor. 4:3), rather than one who will stand for the truth without showing respect to persons or being guilty of partiality (Jas. 2:9; 1 Tim. 5:21). One brother told me one time the congregation he represented was getting a certain preacher to hold a meeting. He said, “He can’t preach, but he talks a lot, and that is what people like.” And some brethren have been guilty of choosing a preacher because he can put on a good show in the pulpit, engaging in theatrics, complete with faces, flailing the air, reaching for the

heavens, or telling funny jokes to make people laugh. Fun and games is the order of the day with some Christians. Why, if a man should conduct his own business like some brethren do the Lord’s business, it would not be long until he would be bankrupt. That may be one of the reasons so many places where there used to be churches which worshipped in a scriptural way no longer exist. What a shame and disgrace! Oh, what a need we have for strong, knowledgeable, and faithful leadership. The apostle Paul admonishes, “Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord” (Rom. 12:11).

Some brethren may not know it, but the church cannot legally sign a contract with a preacher and claim him as an employee without meeting certain legal requirements, so I have been told. Some of these requirements are that you have to pay half of his social security, pay unemployment insurance, and workman’s compensation, and possibly his health insurance. And if the congregation does not do these things it cannot legally specify any length of time he can have off for meetings or vacations, nor specify what he must do in working with the church because it has to do with legal status. On the other hand, if the preacher is not an employee of the church, but an independent contractor, the congregation cannot even pay his health insurance. Brethren, it might be wise to check into legal ramifications before blindly signing contracts with each other when it comes to the work of the Lord.

The best way to do the Lord’s work is in the Lord’s way. “Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay” as we have always done in year’s gone by, and as the Bible teaches. We should trust one another to do what is right because we are Christians.—14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012.

THE WORK OF ELDERS, ETC.

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curSION, would they be pressing the teaching of this parable too far, should one of them immediately leave the house of God, and go to bring in that person? How much joy it would create among the saints on earth, and among the angels in heaven, if such a thing were done successfully and often! Should anyone, however, be unwilling to press the analogy to this extent, he must still admit that the nearest possible approach to this degree of vigilance can alone meet fully the demands of the shepherd’s duty.

Such reflections make it very painful to look abroad at the well known condition of many congregations—the sheep scattered far and wide through the wilderness, and the shepherds eating and drinking, or asleep on the ground. Oh, that we had some Jeremiah to lift up his voice against the unfaithful shepherds of the flock of God!

If such vigilance as we have named is needed in hunting up those who wander away, how much more is needed to prevent such wandering? The good Shepherd will endeavor to have as little of the former work to do as possible, by doing more of the latter. When the disposition of the wanderer is discovered, he will be prompt to counteract it. All this requires constant watchfulness and inquiry on the part of each Elder, and very frequent consultations of the Elders...

Secondly. We have already spoken sufficiently for the purposes of this treatise, on the second class of the shepherd’s duties. To lead the flock whither they should go, by going before, and calling them to follow, is simply to be an example to the flock, we have stated and endeavored to enforce in a former section.

Thirdly. The duty of protecting the church against foes both from within and from without, is not only implied in the title of shepherd, but specifically enjoined by Paul in a passage already cited more than once. He warns the Ephesian Elders that ravenous wolves would come in among them, not sparing the flock; and that schismatics would spring up within, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them; and says to them, ‘Therefore watch.’ They must watch, then, against these two dangers, and this makes the Elders the proper guardians of the church against false teachers and schismatics.

In order to discharge faithfully this duty, they must scrupulously avoid any action on their own part which would unnecessarily excite faction in the church, and when they find any man showing the slightest disposition to be a factionalist, they must bring to bear upon him promptly every good influence which can be devised to prevent the anticipated evil. They must also know every man whom they invite or allow to address the brethren at the meetings. They must deny this privilege to every stranger who comes among them unrecommended, and every man whom they

know to be a promoter of dissention and a teacher of false doctrine. A very small wolf in sheep's clothing can scatter a large flock of sheep, and a very feeble man in the shape of a Soul-sleeper or universalist can sometimes disaffect and ruin many souls; and a man who teaches nothing false, but aims at strife and division can often do more harm

than a false teacher. With a firmness, then, that knows no yielding, but with a caution and prudence which guards against unjust judgment, must the shepherd watch the door which opens into their folds." From **THE ELDERSHIP** by J.W. McGarvey.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW CONGREGATION MEETING IN VALLIANT, OKLAHOMA

On the second weekend of July, 1997, the church of Christ began meeting once again in Valliant, Oklahoma. The congregation began with a weekend gospel meeting with Brother William St. John preaching. Since we began there have been three baptisms and one restoration. Before the congregation began to meet, Brother John Tidmore baptized two women who are now meeting with the congregation. There have been several visitors who have attended the services and there is hope that more will be baptized in the near future. Two others who have been out of duty for several years have been visiting regularly with the congregation and it is hoped that they will soon return to their station of duty. One family from the cups and classes has been attending regularly on Sunday and Wednesday nights and it is hoped that they will soon take their stand for the truth. In October, the congregation held a weekend meeting with various brethren from the area speaking. There were nine different speakers from nearby congregations. Plans are underway for a week long meeting sometime this summer. Brother John Tidmore and Cecil Tidmore are to be commended for their faithful leadership in this effort at Valliant. Please remember the congregation and their work in your prayers. The congregation is meeting in the same building that it was in several years ago (On Highway 70). Also, If you know of anyone in this area, please send their names, addresses and phone numbers to John Tidmore, PO Box 1012, Valliant, OK 74764.

SIXTY YEARS

Brother and Sister Tim Dougherty of Riverbank, CA celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary October 12, 1996 with many family members and friends. The wedding date was October 15, 1936 near the city of Lodi, CA. In fact, Grandpa and Grandma are some of the original people in the church at Lodi. Many brethren may remember Tim and Lorene from the many fourth of July meetings they attended. Their home was always open to any in need of a place to stay especially preachers of the gospel.

While all their friends and loved ones could say many pleasant things about their life, the most valued memory that floods my soul is the fact that they have always loved the church, and made Christ the center of their life. They



presently reside at 6445 Fifth Street, Riverbank, CA, 95367. We should thank the Lord that we have many such brethren who have lived before us. Please join with me and thank them both for their faithful years of service to each other and the Lord.—P. Duane Permenter.

CHURCH DIRECTORY CHANGE

Dunnellon. FL. Citrus Co — Present meeting place is at the home of Ronald K. Hays, 25172 SW Chickadee Bl., Dunnellon, FL 32630, (904) 489-2520, 10 miles west of Dunnellon, off Rainbow Lakes Bl. area, Sunday 10:00 AM.

TULSA/BROKEN ARROW

In the directory, change afternoon services at Broken Arrow from 4:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Also, note that the congregation now meets in the new building recently finished. It is located on 71st St., one block east of 193rd E. Ave. in Broken Arrow exit onto 71st St off the Broken Arrow expressway.

BLESSED FOUNTAIN ON CD AND CASSETTE

A digitally mastered, a capella recording has been produced, using a mixed group of Christian Singers. With permission from M. Lynwood Smith, songs from the Blessed Fountain Hymnal were selected. This is NOT to be mistaken with Brother Permenter's tape set. Blessed Fountain, is available on Compact Disk for \$12.00 or on cassette for \$10.00. Shipping and handling included. Please make checks payable to Larry Bradford. Send requests to: Larry Bradford, 613 Buckaroo, Peculiar, MO 64078 or E-Mail address: BRAD4D@JUNO.COM

NEW MEETING TIMES

Please announce the new meeting times at Garland (Robin Rd.) TX effective April 6, 1997 - Sun. 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

Wilson-Frantz--On November 30, 1996, before an overflowing audience in Moore, OK, Brenton Wilson and Audra Frantz exchanged wedding vows. Brent is the son of Al and Sue Wilson of Glendale, Az. and Audra is the daughter of Grady and Doris Frantz of the Capitol Hill congregation, in Oklahoma City. It was a solemn and dignified ceremony, as they expressed their love and commitment to each other. Both are Christians, were raised in Christian homes, and desire to establish one of their own where God's word will direct them, and where they can be of a positive influence and asset to the Church. They will make their home in the Glendale area and worship with

that congregation. Our prayer is for a long and fruitful life. I was honored to officiate.—Rod Wilson.

McWilliams-Harrison--On the afternoon of January 4, 1997 a large crowd of brethren, friends and family gathered at the Leawood Village Church of Christ at Joplin, Missouri to witness the uniting of Shawn Paul McWilliams and Kristal Dawn Harrison in holy matrimony. The setting was beautiful and the occasion was joyous to see these two Christians united in love forever. We wish them the very best in all that they seek to do, and may the Lord watch over and keep them always.—L.A. Dahnke.

OUR DEPARTED

BAILEY--Sister Iva M. (Ike) Bailey passed away Monday, February 3, 1997, at the home of her daughter and son-in-law, Brother Jim and Sister Margie Stockam, at the age of 89 1/2 years. She was a long time faithful member of the Leawood Congregation that meets in Joplin, MO. Sister Ike had been in declining health for the past eight months as the result of problems that stemmed from a near fatal heart attack she suffered a few years ago. In addition to Sister Marge, she is survived by one sister, Fern Fields, three grandsons and five great-grandchildren. Sister Ike was preceded in death by one son, Billy, and her husband, William in 1948. Being a widow for 49 years, Sister Ike became a very independent person. She always felt it her obligation to care for herself and others in need and asked little in return. As the result, she held out to stay in her own home as long as she was able. Her greatest testimony in life is the positive influence she had on her family, relatives and friends in spiritual matters. Her friends recognized that she was a kind, gentle, gracious, Christian lady. Her son-in-law, Jim Stockam was not a Christian when he married Sister Marge. Through the influence of Sister Ike, Sister Marge, and others, Brother Jim learned the truth and obeyed the Gospel of Christ. Today he serves as a devoted, tireless worker, and Elder in the Leawood Congregation. Sister Ike's three grandsons are all faithful, talented members of the Lord's Church, who are the heads of Christian homes that are endeavoring to bring their children up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." Her body was laid to rest in the beautiful Ozark Memorial Cemetery in Joplin. Some of the most beautiful singing of "old time" you could ever hear was done by a group from the Leawood Congregation. It was my honor to be asked to assist Brother Oscar Morris, also an Elder at Leawood, in conducting the memorial services. She will be missed by all.—Ronald Lankford.

FULLER--Lloyd W. Fuller was born April 27, 1917 in Bedford, Iowa. He passed away January 6, 1997 in Rogers, AR. When he was very young, his parents moved to near El Reno, Oklahoma. Later, while attending Cameron College in Lawton, he met Lola Naomi Cummins. They were married July 6, 1940. For a time, he was an instructor at Oklahoma State College in Okmulgee. Following his tenure there, they moved to Broken Arrow where he worked for Telex in Tulsa. After retiring in 1981, they moved to Rogers. He obeyed the gospel in 1981 and was a member

of the 5th and Persimmon congregation in Rogers. He was preceded in death by two brothers and three sisters. Besides his wife, Naomi, he is survived by two sons and one daughter; six grandchildren, four great-grandchildren and three step-grandchildren. The writer was honored to officiate the service.—Jack A. Cutter.



Mark Deatherage, 180 Applegrove N.E., North Canton, OH 44720--As we are finding ourselves only in the middle of February, we are already seeing the Lord's Church prospering in this new year. We have reason to make joyful noise, as there have been two baptisms and restoration to the Lord in this new year. We have much work to do with many of these young ones. We of the congregation here in North Canton are still growing closer to God and to each other. The work is still going forward in this place, and we pray that it will continue. We have really enjoyed working with the good people here for the last 7 months, and we hope to continue to develop this loving relationship in the future. We have many who are ill. Please pray for us all, as we strive to do the Lord's work.

Douglas T. Hawkins, HCR 3 Box 203-C, Rocky Mount, MO 65072--It has been some time since I've reported to the O.P.A. Our work at home this winter has been very busy. Since the new year, we have conducted several home studies with both members of the church and outsiders. Both congregations that I work between continue to do well. I am thankful for every member of both congregations. We are anxiously looking forward to our meetings this year. Lord willing, we leave for Holyoke, Co. tomorrow (March 6) for a weekend meeting and then we will be in Knoxville, GA March 16-23. By the time you read this report, these meetings will be history, but at the time of this writing we are in eager anticipation of them and pray they will be beneficial to the congregations. I was able to hear Don King at Joplin on February 28. They had a big crowd that night. Don preached a good sermon on the rich man and Lazarus. Carl Johnson will be with us at Eldon April 6-13. We are looking forward to his time here. Our meeting schedule for '97 is as follows: Chestnut Ridge, Ky. (April 23-27); Harrison, AR (May 4-11); Mt. Home, AR (May 30-June 8); Brookhaven, MS (July 5-13); Pansey, AL (July 20-27); Henryetta, OK (Aug. 3-10); London, KY (Sept. 7-14); Montebello, CA (Oct. 12-19); Modesto, CA (Oct. 20-27). Come and be with us if you have the opportunity. As always, God bless the faithful. We solicit your prayers.

P. Duane Permenter, P.O. Box 80687, Midland, TX 79708, Feb. 5--Our service to ordain the new deacons in the church here in Midland was a great time of rejoicing for all the

congregation. Some from Odessa and San Angelo were present to witness the service. The culmination of these events is most due to the wisdom of our leadership through the elders, Art Oestmann and Al Baze. We continue to labor in our studies and visits. Since the work began in June, we now have five new people attending. Nearly all the brethren continue to work for the cause in this locality and no one person can take the credit for any good that we have accomplished. To God be the glory both now and forever! Of late, I preached at Andrews, Texas and will soon go to San Angelo, Texas. During April I am to be at Chapel Grove, TN. Please continue to pray for me and mine. May God bless the faithful all around the world.

Bruce Roebuck, P.O. Box 209, Mtn. Home, AR 72653, Feb. 12--1997 has begun with much excitement for Tanya and I. We have moved to work with the church here in Mountain Home. We look forward to a great work. Please note our new mailing address and our new phone number is 501-425-7928. If you're in this area stop and see us. We look forward to meetings in Birmingham, AL March 26-30, Beford, IN April 5-13, and Paris, TX May 23-25 for their Young Speakers Meeting. We would love to have you at any or all of these meetings. Please remember us when you pray.

Barney Owens, 8782 Meadowview Ln., W. Chester, OH 46069--It was my pleasure to attend the meeting which closed out the old year and began the new at Walnut Grove, KY. It was a treat to see some brethren I had not met before, and to make acquaintance with some I had not met before. This was the first time for me to be there at this annual gathering. Again I have been with the church at Wayne, WV. These have been my friends as well as brethren for many years, so, it is always good for me to have the opportunity to be with them. Plans are for me to assist the church at Manteca, CA in a series of meetings March 29-April 6. It has been awhile since I have been in that area, therefore, I am looking forward to seeing many of the faithful in Christ whom I haven't seen for a time.

Jack A. Cutter, 12321 E. 14th, Tulsa, OK 74128, Jan. 24-- It has been a lengthy time since I last reported. I haven't been able to do as much as I once did. I have major heart disease. Thankfully, it has responded to a controlled medical, dieting and exercise program. At this time, by-pass surgery isn't a viable option for me. Last year (1996) was a good year for the church at Broken Arrow. The congregation completed a new building. The building with its excellent location has provided us with several new prospects. The work has potential. In 1995 and 96, I worked with the Little Rock church on a limited basis. This work was blessed. Most of the goals set for the work were realized. Regrettably, with the increased demand for my time here, I have ceased helping the congregation in Little Rock. Please remember me when you pray. I need your prayers for the Cause and my health.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012--We are happy to report that things are going well with the church which meets at 79th and Kansas Ave., Kansas City. We are blessed with a number of men, both

old and young who are willing to do what they can in the public services of the church. We have several teachers and have recently gained two more. One of our young men gave his first full length lesson and did well. Also we have recently had two families to start meeting regularly with us and one of the men is a teacher. He is to give the lesson next Sunday night. Our attendance had increased at the Lord's day and evening services. We are still working to build up the midweek attendance. When people are used to "going to church" only once or twice a week it is hard for them to break that habit. Our weekly studies are producing improvement in different ways. To the Lord we give our thanks. May the Lord bless all our faithful efforts for the cause for which Christ died.—Received too late for earlier issue. Our apologies! OPA.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012--The work at 79th and Kansas Avenue, Kansas City is going well. The Lord is blessing the work and we give Him the praise. We recently have had ten new persons to start meeting with us. One is an excellent teacher and we are so glad to have him. Some of the younger men in the congregation are developing their abilities and becoming more useful in the services in different ways. We were happy to be with and have Dennis Smith preach for us recently and to see how well he is progressing since his close brush with death in Africa from complications of malaria. March 28 I am scheduled to teach in the annual study at Miami, OK. April 12-20 we are to be at Atwater, CA for a meeting, the Lord willing. Joe Hisle is to be with us at Kansas City for a meeting June 8-15. We look forward to it and report it now so people can make plans to come and be with us. The Lord bless His workers everywhere.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Drive, Fremont, CA 94539, March 10--We recently closed an enjoyable meeting at the Leawood Village congregation in Joplin, Mo. Crowds were very good throughout with cooperation from nearby congregations excellent. I lost count of the number of gospel preachers who visited, but we were glad to have them all. The brethren there are at peace and working. I enjoyed spending time with the elders who are rightfully respected highly. It was our pleasure to visit and dine in a number of homes while there. Hospitality is alive and well among these brethren. I stayed with Harold and Mary King (family) and could not have been better treated. We pray that good was done and that the Lord was pleased with the effort of all concerned. We look forward to being with the congregation in Jonesboro, GA March 22-30 for their spring meeting. We hope to see many of our friends there. Matt Trent preached two good sermons for us at Fremont yesterday. Matt is a fine young man who desires to preach and our prayers are for him to be successful. If you can use him, you won't be sorry. The home church is at peace and working. Pray for us.

J.W. Kornegay, Sr., 1543 Sid Mitchell Rd., Youngsville, NC 27596 (919) 562-9724--Dec. 30 and 31 we were privileged to be at Crawfordville, FL for the New Year's Meeting and see and hear a number of preaching brethren. Oyster Bay did a super job in hosting the meeting. We began a

gospel meeting at Dunnellon, FL Jan. 5-12 assembling in the home of Ronald Hays. We had good attendance, 25-35 each evening and 52 on Sunday. We had one restored, four confessions and two baptized. There are young folks in this congregation. Brother Ron is doing good in teaching. Two of the young men who made confessions can be of assistance in the service. Brethren from Jax, FL are of a great help and much appreciated. We were glad to have Bro. Larry Hays and family from WV present and helpful. He began the work of getting the church started while living at Hernando. Prospects for our Lord looks very good in this area. I've been holding meetings once a year for the past 6 or 7 years. They really need more room for a place to assemble. My wife and I were happy to stay with Sister Millie Tortellett who opened her door of hospitality to us during the meeting. We look forward to working with these brethren again for the good and advancement of the Lord's work. Praying always for His cause.

Brett Hickey, P.O. Box 6505, Ventura, CA 93003, March 10, 1997--We recently completed our second month in cooperative efforts with the Ventura brethren. What we lack in numbers, we make up for with love for the lost, each other and the truth. The congregation has absorbed our family and our new brother Rod smoothly. One of the challenges in any concentrated evangelistic effort is cooperation and mutual respect between the preacher and the rest of the local church. Another delicate situation involves the embracing of new converts. If the members fail to make the babe in Christ feel truly loved and needed as a member of the body, the convert's chances of spiritual survival become slim. So far, we are optimistic about our ability to meet these challenges. Our experience in Mountain Home tells us that hard work and the utilization of various methods yields the great harvest. Of course, the greatest soil is usually that of friends, family or other personal contacts. The diligent personal worker, however, can never be satisfied with those alone. Local media can be a great asset in a smaller community, but the cost in a larger city like Ventura can be limiting. Radiating out from our building in Casitas Springs towards Ventura we have delivered 1,000 doorhangers advertising our worship services and location. The doorhanger also offers a Bible Study Course by mail. We received a call from a Mr. Williams requesting more information about the church and the Bible Study Course. We have responded to that call with the first lesson of the 8-lesson course, a Scripture Reference bookmark indexing a number of interesting Bible subjects and a letter encouraging him to visit our worship services. If he does not complete the first lesson and request the second, we will follow up on Mr. Williams with a visit. We have improved the format of our doorhanger and have ordered another 1,000 to begin delivering next week. Along with the doorhangers, we will be passing out invitations to our upcoming meeting. We are hoping that the basic theme of Jesus, Rock Of Ages will interest those we are studying with and those that we contact in the community. We also expect support from the Bakersfield and Los Angeles area congregations. They consistently go out of their way to encourage the gospel efforts at Ventura. There are currently five congregations supporting the work at Ventura. For its size, Ventura provides a healthy portion

of our total needs. The other congregations involved include Planz Road and Brundage Lane in Bakersfield, Marion, IA, and Covina. Some of this support is temporary, so we are still looking for congregations interested in supporting an aggressive evangelistic effort in the states. We appreciate all the brethren who make concentrated evangelism possible in Ventura. We are pleased with the progress Rod, our newest convert, is making. He has no denominational biases which has facilitated his hearty acceptance of the truth. He has not missed any of our weekly studies, some of which have lasted over three hours. He is spending time with the members and seems content to be a member of the body. Judy, a student at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo was baptized last month by Aaron DeGough in the Pacific Ocean. The baptism was near Santa Barbara on their way home from church Sunday night. She seems like she has been a member for years. Santana Sanchez has been too busy with work lately to study with us, but his wife Jessica has made time to study with Louise, Wilda Egurrola and I. One of the barriers Santana has is his love for the guitar. He is partial toward instrumental music in worship. He knows we opposed it, but has not given us the opportunity to study with him about it in detail. We hope that our ongoing studies with Jessica will keep the door open with Santana. Jessica used to be a "Jehovah's Witness." She sympathizes with some of their doctrines, but she expresses no desire to go back. She seems to be progressing from the basic studies we have had so far. Chuy attended one study and was convicted of his need to be baptized. He insisted on waiting for a week. He said he needed to talk to his wife. He changed his mind after talking to a religious friend and has not been back. Raphael, a man in his early twenties, is a member of a non-denominational church in the area. He is zealous for the Lord and has studied with us numerous times. When we addressed briefly the various aspects of true worship, He was visibly and audibly irritated. He has had to work extra hours on his second job so we have not gotten together for a couple of weeks. He realizes that Catholicism is anti-Biblical, so I have loaned him the 1950's Stevens-Beevers debate on Catholicism. Our hope is that he will see that the powerful principles that expose Catholicism also reveal his worshipping errors. He promises to get together to study with us soon. John Wilber, a man in his late 50's, works with Rod and Raphael at Napa Auto Parts. They invited him to study with us about a month ago. He has come five weeks in a row and is enthusiastic about the studies. He, too, is free from denominational bias. He commented in our last study that a lot of lights are being turned on for him. He asks, by far, the most questions—to the point of apologizing for them. But all agree that his questions have been important and profitable to the group. John's college-aged son, Robert, came to one study. He recently obeyed the gospel at a local "cups" church. He had a lot going on with them and tells his dad he is too busy to make it to our study for now. After three or four basic studies on salvation, we started using George Battey's Vital Bible Doctrines study guide. He has some interesting approaches to various subjects that I think are very helpful. We also received, hot off the press, Raymond Fox's workbook on the church. It has a very professional appearance and covers all the basic questions the alien sinner and new Christian needs to know

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about the church. We plan to use it in the future, along with Rick Cutter's study entitled, *Are You Really Saved?* We were pleased with the response from using it at Mtn. Home. It is amazing how much good can be done by using the talents God gave us. Most of these studies developed because Wilda Egurrola, a devoted sister in her 80's talked the man cleaning her carpets into a study with Raymond Fox. This proves what great works a Christian can do in their later years. It also demonstrates that a woman can do great things without getting behind a pulpit and without leading a Sunday School class. One more thing, Grant Zane, a student at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo gave his first lesson this month. He did a fine job. We look forward to watching him grow in his presentation of the gospel. May the Lord continue to bless his faithful children.

Virgilio O. Danao, Sr., 23 R. Magsaysay St., Roxas, Isabela, Philippines, February 24, 1997--Ever since November 1996 up to the present, I have been helping and working with the Church in Catabban. This congregation seems to have been back to normal, and attendance during Sunday worship services continue to increase. Two were baptized on January 20th there by two of our preachers, one of whom took my place during their visit here last month; and another soul was baptized by me on February 2nd. During the last week of January, Bros. Pataueg, Libertino and I conducted personal Bible studies with prospects (non-members), and also with inactive brethren in Dammas, San Roque and San Miguel, places where we have local churches, in our efforts to "awaken" them in their deep spiritual "slumber." We found it successful. During our preachers seminar and meeting (Feb. 5-6), we — all preachers in my area, agreed together to do similar activities to what we had done, stated above, but with a wider scope. Each preacher is allotted one day for his area of assignment. Each preacher, together with the leaders and members of the Church will contact prospects and inactive members, and schedule the time of the day for us to go to their homes. All of us preachers go together to a scheduled place, and then we are divided into several smaller groups led and accompanied by a leader or member of the congregation visited. Our primary concern are both inactive and non-members. The local congregations

we already visited are Dammas, Mallig, Simprevia, San Placido and San Miguel. We are using my old jeep as our transportation. We are glad to receive reports that all of these churches have increased Sunday worship attendance — some of our in-active brethren started to go to church, and also some non-members. We plan to continue this effort until we are able to visit all congregations in my area, then we will begin from the start again. We pray and hope this will continue to be successful, bringing more lost souls back to the fold of our Lord Jesus in His glorious Church. Last Sunday, Feb. 16th, Bro. Santiago Lapena and I were called and used by our churches in Villamor and Mangandingay (both in the province of Quirino). We went there earlier. On March 2nd, I am scheduled to be with the Roxas Church. In addition to my work with the Catabban congregation every Lord's Day, I, together with the elders of the Roxas Church, also continue to serve Luna congregation in the afternoon, and Roxas everytime I am requested by her leadership to do so. Please pray for me, especially my health and the Lord's work in my country! Best wishes and regards to all the faithful everywhere!

Jerry Dickinson, 13803 Crosshaven, Houston, TX 77015, March 13, 1997--We have had our share (more than our share, really) of rain in the Houston area this winter and we are all eagerly looking forward to Spring. I am looking forward not only to Spring, but beyond that to Summer. March 26-30 I am to be in McGregor, TX for a Spring Meeting, and although I preach at McGregor from time to time it has been a bit since I have held a meeting there so I know I am in for a treat. April 17-20 we here at Deer Park are hosting the annual Spring Meeting in the Houston area during which we use local teachers each night. We have several speakers lined up each night and anticipate a great meeting as usual. My Summer schedule includes: May 24-25, Memorial Day Meeting at Jackson, MS; June 8-15, Hartwell, AR; June 18-22, McAlester (Blue), OK; June 25-29, Pleasant Hill, MO; July 13-20, Mt. Home, MO; July 27-August 3, Flintville, TN. Thank God that he has answered so many prayers offered on behalf of our sick brethren, many preachers included. May the Lord use us all in his service. May he make us all vessels of honor in his kingdom, now and at his coming.

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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PREPARING ONE'S HEART TO WORSHIP GOD

By BILLY ORTEN

"Five months and seven days have passed since last I walked through these heavy oak doors at Conway. Everything has changed so much," I remember thinking as Christy helped me up the steps for Lord's Day worship exactly three months after my transplant. Indeed, the year had changed from '96 to '97. The August heat had turned into February chill. Most of all, though, I had changed from that sick man who then faced the months ahead with fear and dread to a man who could now anticipate each day with renewed faith and a strong hope.

With pounding heart I stepped across the threshold to the strains of "Amazing Grace," the opening song. We had deliberately arrived late and thus missed the first prayer. We sat down on folding chairs in the vestibule behind everyone else, and I wore a surgical mask. (Dr. Hakim had given me permission to attend worship only if I took precautions to avoid contacting any infections. Being at risk because my immune system was functioning at less than 25 percent, I had agreed to follow Dr. Hakim's orders.)

I was trembling as heads turned and happy eyes welcomed me. Tears rolled down my cheeks as Joey smiled encouragingly and his two baby girls stared curiously at their Pappy whom they had not been allowed to visit. "Can you believe we're really here" Peggy leaned over and whispered to me.

The Lord's Day worship has always been very important to me as it is to all Christians. From the time of my obedience to the gospel in 1944 until the day I entered Willis Knighton in September of 1996, I could count on the fingers of one hand the number of times I had missed worship.

When I had checked myself into the hospital September 4th, knowing I was "banished" from home, family, and friends to live on Fifth Floor East until my transplant or my death, I felt the most intense loneliness I had ever experienced. I thought of John, who had also been banished to the rocky, barren island of Patmos in 95 A.D. for preaching about Christ. Located about twenty miles off the coast of Asia Minor in the Aegean Sea, Patmos had been used by the Roman government as a holding ground for criminals, and it was on this lonely, desolate island that John received the apocalyptic visions of the Book of Revelations and wrote in chapter one, verse ten, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." My empathy for John grew as this verse took on a new and more profound meaning

for me. During my hospital stay, there were times when I was too sick to realize what day of the week it was. However, when I was conscious and alert, my spirit was in communion with all my brothers and sisters as you worshipped. As I watched the clock from my hospital bed at 10:30 a.m., I thought of you as you began to sing. At 11:00 a.m., I was with you during the preaching. At 11:30 A.M., I communed with you in spirit.

In his commentary (Vol. VIII, p. 536), Mr. Ellicott says being in the Spirit on the Lord's Day is "a condition in which the mind is so caught up in the contemplation of things spiritual that it is abstracted from the immediate consciousness of earthly forms of life." John's body was there on Patmos, but his mind was elsewhere. It is likely that John's mind and spirit were with his brothers and sisters on the mainland as they came together for worship.

Brothers and Sisters, no sacrifice is too great for you to be present at the Lord's Supper. Maybe you can not know this until the opportunity has been taken away from you! Think about it! What a privilege we have to be present with the Lord! After instituting this memorial at the conclusion of the last Passover meal, Jesus said to his disciples, "I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom" (Luke 22:29-30).

What a privilege! Yet it is also a command. Look at John 6:56-57, "Then Jesus said unto them, 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in Him.'" Jesus is very plain. If we do not worship each Lord's Day, we are spiritually dead and doomed!

Read in Matthew 26, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples saying, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' And He took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, 'All of you drink of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins.'" Jesus clearly identifies the bread and fruit of the vine of communion as His body and blood. Brothers and Sisters, we need this supper to keep contact with the flesh and blood of our Lord. I emphasize this as I read again in I

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PUBLISHER

Don L. King

41931 Chadbourne, Fremont, CA 94539

Fax 510-651-3926

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

Ronny F. Wade

P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808

EDITORIAL STAFF

Clovis Cook

Edwin S. Morris

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Bennie Cryer

Barney Owens

Billy Dickinson

Johnny Elmore

Jerry Dickinson

Kevin Presley

Carl Johnson

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 *Editorial*

IS IT A LIFE OR NOT A LIFE?

By BARNEY OWENS

The following is an excerpt from the editorial page of **The Cincinnati Enquirer**, January 8, 1997.

Austin Daly was killed before he could be born, but his death changed Ohio law to recognize that an unborn child is a person, whose killing can be prosecuted for homicide. Now the first attempt to enforce Austin's law in Hamilton County, where it began, could change attitudes and save lives.

...As fate would have it, the first case prosecuted locally is a deadly auto accident involving allegations of criminally dangerous driving - similar to the head-on crash in August 1995, in which a 16-year-old girl, driving a stolen car at high speeds without a license, struck and killed Suzanne Daly and Austin just weeks before Mrs. Daly was due to deliver her son.

This time, a grand jury has indicted Tracie Alfieri, 23, of Mount Washington, on charges of aggravated vehicular homicide and aggravated vehicular assault. In a Nov. 27 crash that a police spokesman described as "road rage," Ms. Alfieri allegedly became angry at the way Rene Andrews merged into traffic, made obscene gestures, tailgated, then cut in front of Ms. Andrews' car and deliberately slammed on her brakes, forcing Ms. Andrews to swerve into a truck that was parked on the shoulder of I-71.

Ms. Andrews, 29, was seriously injured and is still recovering in long-term care. She was six months pregnant - her unborn child was killed.

The article also states:

The law was signed by Gov. George Voinovich in June... It makes it a crime to kill a viable fetus, and allows homicide charges for terminating a pregnancy at any stage (abortions are exempt).

INTENTIONS HERE

There are a few things which need saying to clear the air for reception of the points that shall follow.

1. There is certainly no wish to minimize the loss incurred by these prospective parents. There is no joy greater than that, unless it is the birth of a healthy child. Their loss is great and their grief is understandable and shared by everyone.

2. There is no intent to decide the case relative to reckless driving, which should not have been done.

3. The present purpose is not to decide the laws which regulate human beings who will not be governed by God's word. Society must have regulations and there are multitudes who will not obey God, so, by what rules are they to live? Paul showed that God allows the laws of men and ordains them for the purpose of maintaining civilization. Rom. 13:1-5. When men disobey or break the laws of those empowered, they can expect punishment. That is not to say that every law must be submitted to by Christians,

continued on page six

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Does Luke 1:48 teach that we are to worship the virgin Mary? (PA)

Answer: The verse in question reads "For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." This verse is a part of Mary's response to Elizabeth's statements in the preceding verses, often referred to as The Magnificat or The Virgin's Hymn. It is a beautiful piece of inspired poetry in which Mary details her joy, and gratitude for being chosen to fulfill a part of God's eternal plan. The prophecy that future generations would call her "blessed" was certainly true, and is an indication that she was fully aware of the import of what God was doing through her. To suggest from this that we are to worship Mary, is totally beyond the teaching of this passage. J.W. McGarvey remarks "Mary was blessed in her motherhood, Abraham in his covenants and promises, Paul in his apostleship etc., but none of these human beings are to be worshiped because of the blessings which they received. Rather we should worship God, from whom these their blessings flow." Mary was blessed for the role she played in bringing the Son of God into this world. However to suggest that because of this she should occupy a place equal to that of our Lord or God Himself, is without foundation in the scripture. Adam Clarke commented "All generations shall call me blessed...This was the character by which alone she wished to be known; viz. The blessed or happy virgin. What dishonor do those do to this holy woman, who give her names and characters which her pure soul would abhor; and which properly belong to GOD her Saviour! By her votaries she is addressed as Queen of Heaven, Mother of God etc.. titles both absurd and blasphemous." The doctrines of the Catholic Church regarding her perpetual virginity, being intercessor between God and men, and the object of worship for all men have no basis in scripture whatsoever, and should be rejected by all Bible believing people.

Question: What scriptures teach that miracles have ceased? (PA)

Answer: First of all a word about miracles in general is in order. People today, from time to time, refer to almost any event as a miracle. For example, when a person escapes from an accident someone will say "it's a miracle he survived." Or when an individual recovers from a serious illness one might remark "her recovery was a miracle." It is the belief of this writer that such statements, while sincere and well intentioned, are both misleading and mistaken. Such recoveries are not miracles at all, only the result of natural law and/or God working through such laws to bring

about the desired result. In Bible times a miracle represented "works of supernatural origin and character, such as could not be produced by natural agents and means." (Vine) Frequent mention is made of such events throughout the New Testament scriptures. When the church was established in Acts 2, the message of inspiration regarding salvation, God's plan for the lives of His people, etc. was vested in men. These men were divinely and miraculously empowered by the Holy Spirit with the message of truth. Before the end of the first century, inspiration was transferred from these men to a Book, the New Testament scriptures. The Book then became the source of instruction and an authoritative standard for making known God's will and way. During the period of time when the message was in men, all kinds miraculous signs were supplied by God to prove the authenticity of their message. These miracles provided these men with credible and acceptable evidence of the divine origin of Christianity. These powers were received in two ways. First of all there are two recorded instances of Holy Spirit baptism. (Acts 2: 1 and Acts 10:44-48) All other miraculous manifestations of power by the Holy Spirit were the result of the Apostles laying hands on someone for the purpose of imparting such gifts. These gifts were nine in number according to 1 Cor. 12:7-11. All the miraculous gifts of the first century were temporary. God never intended that they last forever, only as long as inspiration resided in men. Paul in 1 Cor. 13:28-31 declared them to be inferior to the "more excellent way," teaching that they would be removed when inspiration had been fully transferred to the book. (1 Cor. 13:8-13) The apostle's analogy of his childhood is designed to show that just as he grew to manhood from being a child, the church would also progress from its childhood state to one of full-grown maturity where such supernatural aids would be unnecessary. Do we have miracles today? No we do not. Can men today speak in tongues supernaturally? Can they heal the sick? Can they prophecy by the power of the Holy Spirit? No they cannot. Why? Because all such miraculous gifts and manifestations have ceased. Inspiration is complete. God directs us through his word. Note carefully in the verses cited above that Paul plainly declared that "prophecies would fail," "tongues would cease." When? When that which is perfect is come. When the perfect law of liberty arrived in its completeness, the need for such powers no longer existed. And "now abideth faith, hope, and charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity." (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO. 65808)

WHAT IS REPENTANCE AS TAUGHT IN THE BIBLE?

By P. DUANE PERMENTER

Jesus once said that unless we repent we will all perish (Luke 13:3,5). No one wants to perish or suffer eternal condemnation, yet some Christians do not understand this vital theme found within the Scriptures. What is repentance? What does the Bible teach relating to repentance?

Sometimes, to learn the truth about a particular subject in the Scripture, it is first necessary to discuss what people believe and then compare it with the inspired text. Several ideas about repentance propagated are not found within God's word. Before we look at the positive side (what the

Bible teaches) we are going to discuss what the Scriptures do not teach, that is, the negative.

For instance, individuals often call conviction repentance. Conviction of sin is imperative to first century Christianity. Those in the New Testament that repented were first convicted of their sin, yet this is not repentance. A person may have full understanding of what he or she may have done that is wrong and still never reach the point of repentance.

They define conviction as awareness or realization of sin. Notice what Jesus says the Holy Spirit would do when he came and inspired the apostles. "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: (John 16:8)." Jesus told the apostles that the Spirit would guide them into all truth, and this included a knowledge of their sins. James later depicted God's word as a mirror reflecting our true image. James commanded each of us to look into this mirror and see our true likeness. God's word can cause us to understand our ruined state if we are willing to listen and apply it.

Our Lord always meets the needs of the people with whom He was dealing. In fact, He continues to meet the needs of each lonely heart. Peter says that God has supplied all we need for life and godliness through His written word (2 Peter 1:3,4). The gospel of Jesus Christ can and will convict the sinner of his lost state, but is this what the Bible calls repentance.

For illustration, Peter and the other apostles had preached a powerful sermon in Acts the second chapter to the Jews. Evidently, Peter convicted these men of their sin, because, after the accusation of betraying and murdering the Son of God, they asked the question. What could they do to receive forgiveness? Peter said, "...Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins,; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38)." Conviction always precedes repentance, but an awareness of sin is not necessary evidence of repentance. While giving us a knowledge of what we are is a part of our spiritual need, this is not repentance.

Still further, others claim that being scared of eternal torment or being afraid of God's wrath is repentance. Though a godly fear is important, simply being afraid is not what the Lord wants. We should understand that there is a great difference between being frightened of the Almighty and reverencing His omnipotent name.

The preacher writes in Ecclesiastes 12:13, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep his commandments, for this is man's all." The same scribe records in other place, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge..." We need to have a wholesome fear of God's divine power. We must recognize that God expects us to obey His word. When we rise to the height or measure of human maturity that we no longer venerate Jehovah and His word, then we are in a very bad light.

Our Lord will punish the wicked, as He will reward the righteous. We must remember that though our Father is full of tender mercy; He will not punish those who disobey at the end of time. Living in respect of His will and power is different than simply being afraid or scared in time of tragedy. Often when a person promises to obey God under fire, he will forget those promises when diffi-

culties have ended.

We need a sincere reverence for His will under every walk of life both in the good and bad times alike. Fear or reverence is a part of the Christians' life, but just because a person acknowledges fear is no sign he has repented.

Someone else says, "Look at the sorrow exemplified in that persons' life. Surely this is a proof of repentance." The Bible speaks of two kinds of sorrow. Listen to Paul in Second Corinthians 7:8-10, "For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted, but the sorrow of the world produces death."

This apostle plainly says that godly sorrow leads to repentance. If godly sorrow leads to repentance, then sorrow cannot be repentance. Notice that the writer says worldly sorrow leads to death. This sorrow is only being sorry that someone has caught us. For instance, a man may be sorry that his embezzling scheme has been found out because now he has a prison sentence hanging over his head. Godly sorrow is not repentance by itself, but this kind of sorrow will lead one to the repentance that is necessary for salvation.

Others sometimes claim that reformation is a proof positive that repentance has occurred, and they conclude that repentance is reformation. Is this a faulty idea? Could it be that repentance is reformation of life?

Let us think about this for just a moment. A person may come to realize that his drinking is stealing away everything that is important to his life. He might even decide to reform his life; because, alcohol is destroying all that is valuable to him. Yes, it is true if a man repents of alcoholism he quits drinking. If a man repents of stealing, he will steal no more as the Bible teaches. Nevertheless, this is not necessarily evidence that he has repented. One may reform his life without ever repenting toward God for his sin.

John the Baptist once told the Pharisees, "Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance...." If a man steals another person's wife and repents, he will end the adulterous situation. The man who repents of sin will quit committing the sin. This does not mean that they can never tempt us again. While reformation of life follows a sinners repentance, this is not by itself repentance.

What is repentance? One of the best ways to illustrate this Bible principle is to read from a parable of Jesus. Notice in particular, Matthew 21:28-30, "But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' 29 'He answered and said, 'I wi.' not,' but afterward he regretted it and went.' 30 "Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go." The first son said he would not go and work. His will was not his father's will, so he refused his father's request. However, the Bible says he changed his mind, that is, he changed his will. Repentance is a change of will. I will serve God and no longer my own will. I will turn about face and live my life in reverence to Jehovah.

When God's word tells me about my sin, this causes me to be sorry because I fear His eternal wrath and power. I am sorry that I wronged Him, and my sin caused His Son Jesus Christ to die on Calvary. This godly sorrow will lead me to repentance and eternal salvation. This repentance will cause me to say God is the potter. I am the clay. I will follow the example of Jesus and pray not my will, but yours be done.

Repentance is absolutely necessary if I am to be saved. Will repentance be enough to save me in the end? NOT! Peter told the people in Acts Two that repentance and baptism were both mandatory. Ananias told Saul of Tarsus though he had displayed his repentance for three days by fasting and praying continually they must now baptize him to wash away his sins. Repentance was not enough in the days of the apostles, and it is not enough for sinners today.

What about the erring Christian? Peter told Simon in Acts eight that repentance and prayer were in order. Listen to the apostle in I John 1:9, concerning Christians who sin, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Repentance, confession and prayer are all necessary to restore the child of God.

When a person repents of sins, preceding this will be conviction, reverence and godly sorrow. The result of repentance is that one will reform his life. The pertinent question for all to consider today is: "Have I repented as the Bible commands?" Judgment is coming and each of us will give an account of sin of which we have not repented. King Jesus commands alien sinner and Christian alike to repent or forever perish from the presence of Almighty God.—P.O. Box 80687, Midland, TX 79708-0687.

EATING THE LORD'S FLESH AND DRINKING HIS BLOOD

By BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

John vi. 48, we find the words of the Lord, "I am the bread of life." The Lord adds the remark to the Jews, "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead." It had no power to perpetuate life only for a short time; but he continues, verse 50, "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die." It will be noticed that *his flesh* did not come down from heaven, and that bread which came down from heaven is that of which if a man shall eat he shall not die. Then he follows with the remark, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread" (which came down from heaven) "he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Here he uses the *flesh*, as that which they saw and dealt with in crucifying him metonymically, or a part of the whole. The Jews, however, understood him to mean his flesh literally, and so does the Romish church, and the Jews inquired, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" The Lord did not explain the matter to them, but added, verse 56, "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you."

They were looking at it in the literal sense, and did not see how they could eat his flesh, or how the eating of it could give life. The doctrine of transubstantiation had not yet been born, and the idea of the bread and wine being changed, in the ceremony of consecration, into the *real flesh and blood*, so that they could eat the flesh and drink his blood in the communion, had not yet entered into the minds of men. Nor did our Lord mean any such thing, but *he himself*, who came down from heaven, is that bread of

life which if a man shall eat he shall never die. But the *eating* is not literal, any more than the *bread* is literal or the *flesh*. We partake of that bread, or of him who came down from heaven by hearing of him, believing on him, and being united with him. In becoming his disciples, learning of him and following him in all things, we eat or partake of that bread, or of him who is the way, and the truth and the life.

He proceeds, "He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." See verse 54. He who believes on him, receives him, follows him, loves him and obeys him, in the sense he intended, eats his flesh and drinks his blood; but not in the communion any more than in the other parts of his teaching, or other appointments. In coming to Christ, and becoming his disciples, we are made partakers of him, of "the divine nature," and our salvation is in him. "My flesh is food indeed," says he, "and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, dwells in me, and I in him." Following him a little further on, verse 57, he says, "As the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eats me, even he shall live by me. This is the bread that came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he who eats this bread shall live forever." See verse 58. The eating is partaking of Christ, the bread that came down from heaven; this is done by faith, in receiving, following and obeying him; doing his commandments, that we may enter by the gates into the city, and have a right to the tree of life.--Selected from the **Book Of Gems**

PREPARING ONE'S HEART TO WORSHIP GOD

continued from page 1

Corinthians 10:16, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ."

There is a second way we partake of the flesh and blood of our Lord. (The context of John 6:63 shows that studying the Word of God is also partaking of His flesh and Benoit

Holloway talked about "Jesus, Our CEO," he focused on the leadership qualities of our Savior and urged us to react to every situation as Jesus would. Enthralled, I marvelled at the wisdom and self-control of Jesus in His confrontations with Satan and the religious "righteous" and the compassion of Jesus in His encounters with the lost, the tax collectors and prostitutes. I needed to be reminded of Jesus's life, for He came to earth not only to die for us but also to show us how we are to live here if we want to live eternally in Heaven.

"This is what I've looked forward to; this is where I've prayed to be!" I thanked my God as I sat there in the worship service, present in body as well as spirit February 9, 1997, as so very many of you had prayed so many times for me. Never before had being with my brothers and sisters meant so much to me! My joy overflowed when I was given the privilege of serving at the Lord's Table.

Brethren, I believe the entire service, especially the communion, was so special to me because of the preparation I had made for that occasion. Banished to Willis Knighton and deprived for so long, I had anticipated being with my Christian family for weeks. I craved this reunion with all my heart! Brothers and sisters, every Lord's Day worship should be just that special for us if we prepare our hearts for worship. Is this not what Paul writes to us in I Corinthians 11:28-29, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." We must get our minds right before we come to worship.

Sitting with each other and our Lord around His Table as we eat His body and drink His blood, remembering the pain and humiliation he suffered for us, should be the high point of our week. How can we prepare for such a great, holy occasion? We can get our minds on spiritual things before we come! Plan your work so that Sunday is a day of refreshment for your body, soul, and spirit. God made the Israelites rest on the Sabbath Day (Saturday). Brothers and Sisters, let us at least give Sunday morning to the Lord and our spiritual man. Sisters, leave part of the Sunday dinner preparation until you get back from church. Take the hours before worship to meditate on the Word. Be calm and rested and at peace in your mind when you come

to meet with the Lord. Brothers, lay aside the Sunday paper until later and spend the hours before worship in reading and prayer. Let us give ourselves some time away from the violence, greed, and immorality of Satan's Kingdom to do as the apostle tells us in Philippians 4:8, "Think on things that are true, lovely, noble, pure, just, and of good report."

A perfect ending to a perfect day was mine when I joined my brothers and sisters whom I had not seen in months at Fairview's evening worship. The eager, loving welcome of my spiritual family there was evident in the capacity crowd assembled. Again I sat apart. Again I was masked, but nothing distracted from my joy as Brother Glen Post solicitously assisted me into the pulpit for my 20 minute "victory" homecoming address. We cried together, not with the sadness of the months of "walking through the valley and shadow of death" but with the joy of reaching the other side, the joy akin to the joy of being reunited in Heaven. I saw proof of our discipleship in loving preparations made for my well-being, even to Brad Post's bringing my warmed car to the front door for my departure. "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death" (I John 3:14).

Why not make every Lord's Day as spiritually uplifting and joyous as February 9th was for me? We can do that by making special effort to prepare our minds. Try spending the hours before worship in quiet meditation and reading and prayer for just one month. See if the services can, indeed, become a greater blessing to you. As the recipient of your prayers and God's blessing of life, I urge that the Lord's Day worship service become the pinnacle of your week! I believe your whole week will be better.—Route 3, Box 127, Marion, LA 71260

IS IT A LIFE OR NOT A LIFE?

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because men may make laws that are contrary to God's will; then our choice is clear, "we ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29). But in this case, if the one who has violated the law must suffer, then so be it. Personal responsibility must be accepted.

4. It shall be shown that human laws are often (as in the case before us) inconsistent, contrary to scripture, and logically at odds with common sense, being at odds with one another.

5. We will observe what God thinks of life and our respect for it, as well as what men think of life and their disregard of it.

DID OR DID NOT THE PREGNANT WOMAN CARRY LIFE?

We might argue this for some time, but I choose to go to the scripture to see what may be learned there from. And the Bible does in a very simple, easy to understand way deal with this matter.

In the first chapter of Luke, we have the story of Mary's conception. She was informed of her cousin, Elisabeth, who had conceived in her old age, "and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren." (vs. 36). Of course, later Elisabeth bore this son who was named John

and, because he went forth "baptizing," was known as the "Baptist."

Mary went forth to visit her cousin, whereupon we are told, "And it came to pass, that when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb." (vs. 41). Then she said to Mary, "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, and that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy." (vs. 42-44).

Later on we are informed, "And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her house. Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son." (vs. 56-57).

Here are some facts presented for us:

1. Elisabeth was six months pregnant when Mary came to see her. Mary stayed about three months and returned home. It was then that Elisabeth bore a son. Therefore when Mary went to see Elisabeth she had barely conceived of the Holy Ghost.

2. At this time the son within the womb of Elisabeth leaped for joy of the mother-to-be of Jesus. So, the babe who was six months old had life—was a life.

3. Within Mary was the "blessed fruit," which was the cause of the joy of the babe within Elisabeth. Fruit or life, if you please. When is there life? Who can doubt that it is

at conception. It is "fruit" which is blessed of God, and especially so in this case, since it was the "only begotten fruit (son) of God."

WHENCE COMETH LIFE?

Again, the word of God is clear and easy to understand. On Mars hill the Apostle to the Gentile people declared, God "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." (Acts 17:25).

Man cannot create life. Man cannot make a living thing. The best man can do is preserve life. The worst man can do is to take life. When men comply with God's laws of reproduction, then life comes into existence. That which was not now becomes a reality. Mother Eve was correct in her announcement of which we read, "and Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I HAVE GOTTEN A MAN FROM THE LORD." (Gen. 4:1).

The people of whom we read in **The Cincinnati Enquirer** were absolutely right in their assessment of the case in thinking they have lost a life. Their affections were not misplaced. Those who are lacking such affection are unnatural and displeasing to God. Such may profess wisdom, but scripture declares differently, "Professing themselves to be wise, they become fools," Because they are without "natural affection." (Rom. 1:22,31).

WHO DESERVES OUR MERCY?

In these stories, surely the 16 year old girl who drove the stolen car at a high rate of speed, which resulted in the death of an unborn child, would not do the same thing if she could undo her deadly deed. Had she known the result, her course would not have been the same. And the hot-tempered tantrum which caused one driver to force another who had failed to share properly the highway, would likewise alter her affairs, if she only had realized what it would lead to. (I am not trying to take away their responsibility.) But as things stand there is about to be punishment of the severest kind. Should any mercy be shown? You be the judge.

On the other hand. One, or two people, who are well on the road to becoming parents, decide (that is the key word—decide) to seek a doctor or a clinic (known for such activity—promoting it), which will help them disallow the birth of this child. And a doctor with all the skill as his (or her) disposal, **INTENTIONALLY** destroys that which is living

within the womb of the mother. Should there be any mercy shown? You be the judge.

WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

Adolph Hitler's Nazi Germany was despicable, taking the lives of thousands of Jews; helpless people who came under his power. And there is evidence that he would turn his attention, had he been the victor, next to black people; then, it is anyone's guess who might have been next. It makes one sick to his stomach.

Who would have thought just a few years ago, that in the United States of America we would have laws that make it legal (as far as the government is concerned), right... for lives to be aborted just because someone does not want the child? Who would have guessed that the president of this great people would publicly promote such a thing?

And, now we have those who wish doctors to "assist" people in taking their own lives! Will we reach the place where, rather than "assist," doctors will "DECIDE" it is time for someone to do? If indeed, a life may be aborted because there is not money to take care of one after birth, why not destroy an old person who has exhausted funds needed for their care? In the name of **COMMON SENSE**, people, are we going to wake up?

MARTIN NIEMOLLER SAID SOMETHING MORE THAN POETRY

In Germany they came first for the communists and I didn't speak up, because I wasn't a communist. Then they came for the Jews and I didn't speak up, because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists and I didn't speak up, because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics and I didn't speak up, because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me and, by that time no one was left to speak up.

THE QUESTION OF CAIN

And the Lord said unto Cain, where is Abel thy brother? And He said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? (Gen. 4:9).

Did Cain think the killing of his brother merciful? We need to make our presence known wherever we are. Yes, I am my brother's keeper. Yes, wholesale abortion is sinful. Yes, to take one's own life, or that of another by assisting them in death, is wrong.—OPA.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

INFORMATION REGARDING EASTERN LABOR DAY MEETING WANTED

Brother Carl Diamond of the St. Albans, WV congregation is gathering information about the history of the Eastern Labor Day Meeting. He is especially interested in any input you might have regarding the following years: 1951, 54, 55, 56, 57,58, 60, 61, 63, 65,67, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 87, 88, 89, and 90. If you have remembrances or photographs or knowledge of who held the meeting and where it was held, please send to Carl Diamond, 722 Coal River Rd., St. Albans, WV 25177.

SULPHUR, OK ANNUAL CAMP MEETING

The annual 1997 Okla. Camp Meeting will start on June 26th and continue through noon, July 4th. The meeting will be hosted by the Sulphur Congregation as usual. The evangelists conducting the meeting this year will be Bro. Melvin Blalock and Bro. Murl Helwig. There are motels, RV parks and several bed 'n breakfasts in the Sulphur area.

The resort area around Sulphur continues to grow. There are also good motels between Davis and the Turner Falls Area, Pauls Valley, Ada and Ardmore. These towns are within 30 miles of Sulphur. We invite you to attend this great gospel meeting. Christians from all across America as well as other countries will be in attendance. Evangelists from various states will arrive ready to preach powerful, timely sermons.

We look forward to large crowds, good preaching and fellowship. Make your plans now to be with us. For further information: Bob Shepherd 1-405-622-3950; Don Stehr 1-405-622-5556; George Hill 1-405-622-279.—The Sulphur Brethren.

A NOTE OF THANKS FROM THE WADES

We would like to sincerely thank everyone for the many cards, letters, and especially your prayers during the recent and current illness of my wife, Alfreda Wade. On March 4, Alfreda entered the hospital for what we thought would be routine triple coronary by-pass surgery. Everything went well for five days or so at which time she developed blood clots in both legs which then went to both lungs. For several days the doctors kept her immobile and on blood thinner. We thought things were going well when she developed an allergic reaction to the blood thinner. At that time her body produced an antibody which in turn destroyed most all of her blood platelets, creating the serious possibility hemorrhage. Gradually, however, her platelets were rebuilt from a low of 7000 to over 158,000 and some twenty-two days after entry into the hospital, she was allowed to come home. Currently she is recovering at home, making a little progress each day. We went through some dark and anxious times. Your prayers sustained us. Without them we could have not made it. I thank God for modern medicine, a brotherhood of caring, loving, and praying people, and most of all for our heavenly father "who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." As a result of Alfreda's illness I have had to cancel and/or reschedule a number of meetings. I am grateful to all for their consideration during this very stressful time. May God bless you all, and please continue to remember us to Him who doeth all things well.—Ronny and Alfreda Wade.

OUR DEPARTED

PRESLEY--Brother Robert Eddie Presley was born March 3, 1901 in Crenshaw, Mississippi to Arthur and Nancy Presley and passed from this life on February 3, 1997. Brother Presley was raised in the Truman, Arkansas area and attended the Birch Grove School in Truman. He was married on August 8, 1921 in Caraway, Arkansas to Hassie Hilton, his wife of over 70 years who preceded him in death in 1991. He was also preceded in death by a daughter, Francis Prince in 1976. He is survived by daughters, Ovy Jackman of St. Louis, MO, and Maxine Barnfield of Bakersfield, CA; sons, Lewis Presley and Dobie Presley, both of Arkansas; Floyd Presley, Carlis Presley and Hollis Presley, all of Bakersfield; Troy Presley of Kansas and Vertis Presley of Oklahoma; brothers, Earl W. Presley and John Curtis Presley, both of Arkansas; sisters, Alma of Truman, Arkansas; 36 grandchildren, 70 great-grandchildren and 9 great-great-grandchildren. Brother Presley is the grandfather of Kevin Presley, a gospel preacher which most of us know. Brother Presley and his wife were both baptized into the Church of Christ in 1941 in Caraway, Arkansas. Both were faithful members of the Planz Road congregation in Bakersfield till their deaths. Brother

CHURCH DIRECTORIES

Order your 1996 Church Directories now, before they are all gone. We do not plan another directory until 1998. Current directories are \$2.00 each plus postage. Send all orders to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808.

A NEW BOOK OF SERMON OUTLINES

Pulpit Treasures is the name of a new book of Sermon Outlines by 60 of our preachers. I have also included some outlines of E.H. Miller, Tom Smith, B.F. Leonard, Tommy Shaw, Homer Gay and Homer L. King. This book would be a fine addition to any library. Cost is \$10.00 per book. Send all orders to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808.

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

ROE-CAFFEY--Earl Roe and Jean Caffey were united in marriage on Saturday, January 4. I have known both of these fine Christians for many years and was pleased to officiate at this special ceremony. Both the bride and groom have served the Lord faithfully through difficult circumstances, and we are all thankful they have found one another to share this stage of their lives. Terry and Becky Baze provided the lovely singing and many brothers and sisters in Christ were happy to attend. Jean will no doubt be missed by the congregation with which she assembled in Tulsa, but this new home is already an asset to us here in Tyler. We wish them the richest of God's blessings as they continue together the journey of life.—Randy Ballard.

Presley was a farmer in Arkansas before moving to Arvin, CA in 1952 where he continued to work in agriculture until he retired. Brother Presley was a man that read his bible every day, studied the *Old Paths Advocate*, studied sermon books by Paul Nichols, Lynwood Smith and others till the bindings and covers were worn out. He loved to worship God, and if he was physically able to be at the services of the church he would be there. One of the things that was inspiring about Brother Presley is that he was completely deaf since about 1970. But, that didn't hamper him in any way from worshipping God. He will be greatly missed. Brother Presley was laid to rest February 7th at the South Kern Cemetery in Arvin. Congregational singing was lead by brother Bob Smith which was beautiful. I considered it an honor to speak words of comfort and exhortation to those who gathered in memory of this good Christian man.—Terry W. Osburn.

PEEK--Doris Judene Peek left this life Oct. 28, 1996 after battling brain cancer for nine months. She was 65 years of age and attended the Harrodsburg Church of Christ all her life. She loved studying and reading her Bible. She wasn't afraid to let others know where she stood when it comes to the truth. She leaves behind her husband, Cloyd and two sons, Timothy and Andy; two daughters, Jan Deckard and Mindy McClintock and 13 grandchildren and

one great-granddaughter. Walter Hunter and her brother, Reg Kinser conducted her funeral. Please remember her husband and family in your prayers.

BAILEY--Hulan Ray Bailey was born November 23, 1937 in Klamath Falls, Oregon. He died Friday, March 7, 1997 in Fort Worth, Texas. He is survived by his wife, Sister LaVerne Bailey; one son, Hulan Bailey; three daughters, Sheila Polhamus, Hope Hertel, and Julie Davis; a father, Hugh H. Bailey; a sister, Patsy Sue Hale; and nine grandchildren. Brother Bailey was baptized in 1955 under the preaching of Brother Clovis Cook and was baptized in the Jacksboro, Texas lake. He was a member of the Lord's church for 42 years, being a church leader of the local congregation at Jacksboro. The chapel in the Fort Worth funeral home was filled to capacity with all his friends and brothers and sisters in Christ. It was a honor to hold the funeral service and speak a few words of comfort.—Steve Holt.

CANSLER--Vivian Cansler was born in Bowie, TX Feb. 5, 1917 and lived there most of her life except for a short time in Wichita Falls. Vivian's spirit went back to God who gave it Feb. 25, 1997 at the age of 80 years and 20 days. Vivian and her husband, Raymond Cansler who died in 1994 were charter members of the Church of Christ located at Fruitland, TX. Many preachers will remember them well because they shared the hospitality of their home. Vivian is survived by one daughter, Judy Henderson of Bowie, TX; one son, Jerry Cansler of Perrin, TX; 5 grandchildren, one great-grandson and one sister, Maverene Cummings of Bowie, TX. At her memorial, singing was by the Cook family and the writer was honored to speak words in memory and comfort to all those present. She was laid to rest in Brushy Cemetery next to her husband.—Bill Harmon.

BLOSS--Brother Sanders A. Bloss of Lavalette, WV passed away Saturday morning, December 28, 1996 at 6:55 a.m. in the circle of his immediate family at Cabell/Huntington Hospital in Huntington, WV. He was 76 years of age and was born in Wayne County, WV, where he called his home and worked as a cement finisher in the local community until he retired a few years ago. Sanders was a faithful member of the Lord's church and met regularly with the congregation at Garrett's Creek in Wayne, WV. Sanders is survived by his wife, Jewell of over 50 years; Lou Turner who has resided with Sanders and Jewell for many years in their home; two sons and their wives, Tommy and Judy Bloss, (attends Garrett's Creek) and Gordon and Karen Bloss, all of Lavalette; and one daughter-in-law, Loretta Bloss of Wayne, WV. He is also preceded in death by one son, Daniel H. Bloss (husband to Loretta) who passed away suddenly on March 11, 1995. Sanders was blessed with five grandchildren, Michelle (Bloss) Baker of Harrisonville, MO, Gregg Bloss of Lavalette, Tashonda Holland of Wayne, Jackie Bloss of Lavalette, Dennis Bloss of Lavalette; three great-grandchildren, Sarah and Daniel Bloss of Lavalette, and Joshua Holland of Wayne, WV. Sanders had a good and wholesome influence upon his family, and also to his community as a member of the Lord's church. He was baptized

into Christ by Joe Hisle on the evening of July 17, 1993 at Garrett's Creek, and was a faithful member of the Lord's church. His funeral was conducted on Monday, December 30, 1996, at 1 p.m. at the Reger Funeral Chapel in Huntington, WV in the midst of a large gathering of family, friends and brethren. His burial was in the Bloss family cemetery near Lavalette. Brother Dennis Osborn and myself did the honor of speaking words of comfort to the assembly, and the service was blessed with beautiful singing from the brothers and sisters of various local congregations. Brother Sanders will sorely be missed by all who knew him, yet the preparations he made for the day of his funeral has given us reason to believe that he today is in a much better place!—Wyn Baker.

LEE--Jackie C. Lee was born at Haskell, Oklahoma January 19, 1935 and departed this life February 17, 1997 at the age of 62 years. His father and mother were Robert E. Lee and Ima Wilson Lee, both of whom preceded him in death. Jack was a preacher of the gospel with strong conviction and courage. And I do not think I have known a person with deeper faith in God than Jack had. Like the Apostle Paul, Jack never married, but dedicated his life to preaching and studying the Bible with others. And in spite of his doing secular work he did what he could for the Cause of Christ which he loved. Jack was an humble Christian and never entertained the idea of being a great preacher in the eyes of the world. He was simply willing to serve the Lord and help people in whatever way he could. He was a good singer and an excellent song leader and was a great help in the gospel meetings which he visited far and wide, most of the time going by himself. I can't remember when I first met Jack and got acquainted with his family, but we became the best of friends. I baptized Jack at Modesto, CA and we studied together when he was preparing to make a preacher of the gospel. And he often accompanied me in studies in private homes, and was a great asset. He moved to Oklahoma and worked for Brother Bill Verner on the Big V Ranch outside of McAlester. Bill and Christine seemed to adopt him and make him a part of their family. In fact the Verner grandchildren affectionately called him "Paw Paw Jack." Jack loved where he lived and worked and chose to be buried in the little cemetery on the ranch just a short distance from his trailer home. He died after a brave fight with cancer which ravaged his body and finally took his life. He passed away with Bill and his son, David, holding his hands and surrounded by a number of friends and relatives. He leaves behind two sisters and a brother; Francis Randazzo of Fresno, CA; Shirley Russell of Lindsey, CA; Tom Lee of Jerusalem, AR and other relatives as well as a host of friends. It was my distinct honor to be asked to officiate at the funeral of this good friend of many years and highly esteemed brother in Christ. Wayne McKamie led the prayer and the singing was beautifully done by William St. John, his wife, son-in-law and another brother in Christ. Seventeen fellow preachers from different parts of the country gathered at McAlester for the service to show their love and respect for Jack. His last gesture of concern for the Cause of Christ was his request that his few earthly possessions be sold after his death and the proceeds be used for the good of the church in Mexico. He now awaits the resurrection in the midst of surroundings and people he loved.—Paul O. Nichols.



Douglas T. Hawkins, HCR 3 Box 203-C, Rocky Mount, MO 65072, April 8, 1997--I've been privileged to be in the audience of James Orten and Carl Johnson these past few weeks. Bro. Orten conducted a meeting at Lebanon the last of March and did a superb job preaching. His sermons were very timely and encouraging. Several in the congregation happily remarked about how much they enjoyed James and June during the meeting. Carl Johnson is presently here with us at Eldon. The meeting is going very well. We are having some outside visitors from the area and brethren from other congregations are coming to assist us in these efforts. Our meetings in Holyoke, CO and Knoxville, GA were delightful. We enjoyed the company of these brethren immensely. Our next meeting will be in Harrison, AR (May 4-11). Come be with us if you can.

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Dr., Ada, OK 74820, April 8, 1997--I am currently in a meeting at Eldon, MO and am enjoying it very much. This is my first time with this congregation and I am favorably impressed with it. It is a pleasure to work with Doug Hawkins while I'm here. Doug arranged for me to preach at the Brumley congregation Sunday night and I am also impressed with this new congregation. Since my last report I have also been in meetings in Imperial. We had no visible results during the meeting, but I believed some good was done. It is obvious the brethren worked hard to invite their friends from the community because we had visitors at almost every service. We also had an excellent meeting in Nashville, which resulted in one man being restored. I preached Friday night of the annual Homecoming Meeting in Healdton. This meeting has grown through the years and is an annual event to which I look forward. My immediate schedule includes: Lexington, OK (Apr. 20-27); the Odom, MO (May 4-11); Bridgeport, TX (May 15-18); West Monroe, LA (June 8-15); Ash Camp, WV (July 13-20); Lee's Summit, MO (Aug. 9-17); and the Labor Day Meeting at Chapel Grove, TN (Aug. 27-31). Please continue to remember us in your prayers.

P. Duane Permenter, P.O. Box 80687, Midland, TX 79708, April 7--The work here at home continues to progress. We have some attending both the services of the congregation and house to house studies that are potential converts to the Lord's cause. Some have confessed sins of late and the church continues to grow. The church at Andrews, TX recently hosted a special weekend study on the subject of "The Church Studying The Bible." Brethren from Midland and Andrews did the teaching. The topics were well researched and the crowds were quite good. Brethren from Lubbock, Odessa, Andrews, and Midland were present at the services to encourage and participate in the study of God's word. April 16th through the 20th I will be in a meeting at Chapel Grove, TN. May 9th through the 11th, Duncanville, TX; May 18th, Andrews, TX; June

15th through the 22nd, Stockton, CA; July 1st through the 4th, Sulphur, OK; August 8th through the 17th, DePaul, IN. Our meeting here in Midland will be July 20th through the 27th with Wayne Fussell doing the preaching. If you can attend the meetings at any of these places, we would enjoy seeing you. Please continue to pray for us and the work in Midland. Brother Alfred Baze is to go to Dallas, TX for tests April 9th. Brother Harold Taylor is presently in the hospital with heart problems. Please remember these brethren when you pray. May God bless the faithful everywhere.

Kevin Presley, Rt. 2 Box 166, Kinston, AL 36453 (334) 898-1301, April 6, 1997--The work here at Earlytown, AL is going well. Our television program is generating some response nearly every week. My meeting schedule has had me busy the past month. The results of each meeting have been gratifying and has left me looking forward to the others. I began Ada, OK this year, where their annual spring meeting was a great success. The crowds were off a bit, but the preaching on the part of several young men was the best I've ever heard at the meeting. Next, it was a pleasure to go to London, KY. Some of the largest crowds the congregation had ever had greeted us at each service. There were several digressive and denominational people there, and we trust the seed was planted. I just returned this past weekend from Hillcrest, MS. We had a wonderful meeting. The brethren there said the crowds were the largest to ever attend their annual spring meeting. The presence of the neighboring congregations was a real boost. The meeting closed with two baptisms and eight confessions. The brethren in all three places were a joy to be with. I leave today for Blue Springs, KY then to Wichita Falls, TX on April 20-27. After that I will be at Florala, AL, May 28-June 1; Greenville, S.C., June 8-15; Broadhead, KY June 22-29; and Mountain Grove, MO, July 13-20. If you can help us in any of these endeavors we would love to see you. May God bless the faithful.

Jimmie C. Smith, 5100 Rail Rd., Harrison, Ark., April 4--To my shame it has been about a year since reporting to the paper. Please take note of my change of address along with a change of area phone code to 870. In March we had a good four session singing school in Mountain Home, and enjoyed participating in the good study at Miami, Ok. Tonight we look to begin a weekend meeting at Aurora, Mo. and staying with the Criswells. I preached the funeral recently of sister Gussie Reddell, who was a charter member of the Highway Church of Christ. We're anxiously awaiting the return of the Dale Jones family to Harrison and their help in the congregation from Fayetteville (Wheeler). We've had enough move out so it is about time someone moved back home. Doug Hawkins will be with us the first two Sundays of May in our meeting, to which we fondly anticipate. Our prayer list has been long and active with seriously ill brethren. We're looking forward to being with the brethren in Bakersfield (Brundage) the first two Sundays of June. If the Lord wills, Cindy and Cullen will accompany me there. We pray for a fruitful summer of meetings throughout the brotherhood.

Brett Hickey, P.O. Box 6505, Ventura, CA 93003, April 1, 1997--We continue this month in our efforts to generate leads from cold-calling. We delivered 500 more doorhangers this month for a total of 1,500. We received a

response from a Korean lady named Mi Kyong Martin. We have had one study with her and hope more studies develop. She does not feel as comfortable with English as Korean which puts us at a disadvantage in "competing" with her Korean Methodist fellowship. While passing out fliers for the meeting I ran into a "Jehovah's Witness." Our conversation at the door led to a Bible study. It was evident that Wendell the Witness was not accustomed to this sort of study. Initially, we discussed the things that we agreed upon. He was pleased about that. He then tried to defend the name JW. We talked a little about Yahweh. Then I redirected him to the establishment of the church of Christ. Next, I proceeded to express my concerns with the New World Translation. I asked him who produced it? He said the scholars responsible for the NWT were too humble to take credit for their "great" work. I voiced my hesitancy to accept that explanation. When I got to Mt. 16:18, he started in on "hell". I described for him the background of the three Greek words. He said God was too loving to allow man to suffer eternally, so I asked him if God allowed his sinless Son to suffer in a human body, culminating in hours of excruciating pain on the cross. He said it was a stake, but he conceded the point I was making. I asked if it was reasonable for violent criminals to reject this sacrifice and yet, God not allow them to suffer more than physical death? At that point, he said he would like to talk more, but he was busy. I assured him that I would be back. I also ran across a couple of Mormons, who agreed to study some time. Sometimes we are hesitant to study with these people, but I know of a Mormon who was converted only three years ago, who is one of the more diligent members of her congregation. I also recently met an enthusiastic brother who once was a Witness. We cannot judge the soil until we have tried to sow the seed. Through the anointing of young David, Samuel learned the point Jesus made in Jn. 7:24, "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment." Louise called to invite two of the families she had met to the meeting. They said they had already received a flier about the meeting on their door and that they were interested. We have now distributed over 1,500 fliers advertising our meeting and intend to distribute another 500 before the meeting begins this Friday. I appreciate Louise and Lizzie for their help in passing out announcements for our meeting. Our lead list is gradually growing with the push everyone at Ventura is making. Eusebio and Naomi Bojorquez and their three children live in Santa Barbara. The Spanish-speaking church closed there a few years ago. They have been struggling to make the 40-minute trip to Ventura for worship. Naomi is dedicated, but her husband does not have as strong of a foundation. We have had several good studies with them and hope they can be restored. The Planz Road congregation in Bakersfield has asked us to preach for them every fifth Sunday. This gives us the opportunity of getting reacquainted and enables them to ask questions about the work. Last weekend we enjoyed the hospitality of the Brewer's and visits on various Bible topics. We were strengthened by attending Montebello's meeting with Michael Fox and Covina's meeting with Joe Lee Norton. Brian Elliott was in the area one weekend this month and preached for us. He presented an edifying sermon on Christian Maturity. I enjoyed hearing about the plans that Brian was implementing in reaching out to the community near Brundage Lane in Bakersfield. Raymond Fox was in the area this month and set up a study with Jessica and Santana

Sanchez on the Lordship of Christ. Jessica has been studying with us, but Santana has been "too busy" with work and playing the guitar at the 2nd Baptist Church. Raymond felt that their detailed discussion on instrumental music went well. That evening Raymond presented the same study to several others. It was well received. Raphael was there and conceded that vocal music was more spiritual. He offered no resistance as in the past. He continues to enjoy the Stevens-Beavers debate on Catholicism. Our work will bear fruit with Ralph in the long run. His wife has not attended any studies with us, but her family's background in a "cups" church should prove helpful as well. John Wilber continues to study with us every week. He and Rod talk about the Bible with those they work with. John attended services the past two Sundays, morning and night. He plans to continue coming. John's 29 year old son, Robert, recently obeyed the gospel at a local "cups" church. He finally got together to study with us again last week. We noticed the three gospel accounts and Paul's restorative account on the Lord's supper. He was struck by their consistency and simplicity. We noted Paul's warning that those who eat and drink in an unworthy way will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. We zeroed in on the difference between "do this" and "do whatever you want." We also took a cup and paper plate (as if it were a single loaf) and went through each of the accounts to see if we could do exactly what the Lord did with them. Then we tried it with snack crackers and dixie cups. The contrast was striking: The first method fit perfectly while making the second method match the four accounts was like trying to force a square block into a round hole. Finally, we noticed the three different bodies that pointed to the one, unbroken, undivided body of Christ. Robert's honest reaction was commendable: "I've been worshipping in error, haven't I?" I said that God was the judge and that we all have to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling." But since you asked me, I can tell you that I know I would be hazarding my soul by participating in a corrupted, man-made, substituted form of worship. He agreed that his congregation had been "adding to" the Lord's memorial and that he had sinned. He said he would not do it anymore. We prayed and rejoiced over his love for his own soul. We welcome him as a new member of the fold. We are encouraged to hear of the progress here and abroad.

Greg Jordan, 2633 W. State Rd. 340, Brazil, IN 47834, phone (812) 443-4022, March 24, 1997--On March 23, Irvin Barnes closed a meeting at the Pleasant Grove congregation. The meeting was a great success. There were four baptisms during the meeting. Keith Butt, Nick Glidden, Heather Scherb, and Rob Butt were all baptized into Christ. This was Irvin's first meeting since his illness. He did a great job during the meeting. We are thankful that he was able to hold the meeting. The meeting enjoyed other success as well. There were 23 visitors from the community. Lord willing, these will provide good leads for the work. Also, there were 41 visitors from surrounding congregations. It was enjoyable to have Barney and Stan Owens, Walter Hunter, Cecil Smith and Floyd Harris in our number. The work in this area has been well blessed. The work involves both the Pleasant Grove congregation and the Harrison and Blaine congregation. During the last twelve months, there has been a total of 10 baptisms (including those of this meeting). Eight of those baptized have

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been young men, whom we pray will become able workers in the Lord's Vineyard. Both congregations are filled with enthusiasm. There are several congregations that worship in error in this area. It is my goal to try to win as many back to the truth as we can. The harvest truly is great! Please pray for the work here that increase may be given to us that we may continue to grow in strength and in number.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012, April 4--It was a joy to be a part of the annual study at Miami, Ok and to see so many there. The subjects were chosen with care by the brethren of that congregation and they did a good job of conducting it. The Lord willing, I go back for a meeting in September. This weekend Wilma and I are scheduled to fly to California for a short meeting at Bakersfield (Planz Rd.) and a ten day meeting at Atwater. The Lord's work at 79th and Kansas Ave. in Kansas City is going well. Our attendance has increased over the last few weeks and the singing is outstanding. We have several capable teachers and our young men are taking more interest. They make announcements, lead singing, and prayer, and recently four of them taught at one service, three for the first time. Everyone was pleased with a job well done. Our next meeting will be with Joe Hisle, June 8-15. We look forward to that. The Lord willing, I will be in a meeting at Blue Springs, KY June 1-8. May the Lord bless us all as we labor for Him.

Gregory P. Gay, 7821 Saybrook Dr., Citrus Heights, CA 95621, April 7, 1997--Our work continues with the 64th St., Sacramento congregation. We have had 7 baptisms since the first of the year with several more prospects. One recent Sunday morning we had a crowd of over 60 with 15 outsiders in attendance. Several in the congregation make inviting people to church and studies a priority. Easter weekend was our annual Young People's meeting. We used 12 young men to address the theme of Blessings In Christ. Our crowd Friday night was over 200, the largest that older members could remember. Bennie Cryer was a special guest speaker on Sunday morning. Matt Hayes and Matt Trent helped with all the arrangements and made the appointments. These two young men are continuing to develop and are going to be fine gospel preachers. Terry Baze recently preached for us on a Wednesday night. Terry and Becky were out to record a new tape with Rod Watson and me. It will be available in the next couple of months. I recently held a weekend meeting at Yuba City on the theme of Personal Responsibility. Since the first of the year I have also preached at Auburn, Oakdale, Redding, and Ceres, all in California. I made a quick trip to Missouri the end of January to visit my mother and step-father and was glad to preach at Lee's Summit and N. Side Springfield. It was good to see so many friends from days gone by. I recently enjoyed two nights of Ryan

Connor's meeting at Placerville. That was Ryan's first meeting, he did a fine job. Ryan is planning to move back to California this summer and I look forward to spending time with him and having him accompany me on some studies. We have also recently enjoyed hearing Don Pruitt at Oakdale, Barney Owens at Manteca, and Lynwood Smith at Fair Oaks.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, April 10--We closed at Jonesboro, GA the last Lord's Day in March. The meeting was pretty well attended with several states represented. Folks from nearby congregations cooperated also. The last Saturday of the meeting we had a morning service with about four speakers. They all did a superb job. I was thrilled to hear the gospel preached so well and with such power. I stayed with Don and Josie Snow, as always. They are old friends and they took excellent care of me. There was one restored who had been away from the church for some time. We will be at home for a time now. Our studies with the brethren here seem to be productive of good. There seems to be a renewed sense of zeal for which we are thankful. The Lord willing, we are to be at Yuba City, CA this Lord's Day and at home the next. It is good to see the preachers sending in their field reports. Keep it up, brethren! Also, don't forget to send articles. We need articles of about 3 to 4 pages of double spaced, typewritten material. Your field reports should be about 1/2 page of double spaced material. If you will send them more regularly, it will be easier to keep the size down. Pray for the work.

James Hensley, 2169 S. Beach Rd., Prescott, MI 48756, (517) 873-3605-- It has been sometime since I last reported to the OPA. The work in mid-Michigan is going very well. We started a new congregation Sept. 8, 1996 in my home. Because of the difficulty of getting people to come to a private home, we rented a building with the option to buy. We now have five members and some visitors eery service. We sent out letters for help to buy and we wish to thank the few congregations for their response. We received enough help for a down payment and are going to fix it up as we can afford it. We wish to express thanks to the Pontiac congregation for the heating stove and to Ron Courter for six pews and a new pump. Also thank you to Ron Courter, Carl Solhein and Earl Willis of the Pontiac congregation for their help in the teaching here as well as Luther Rose from the Bear Track congregation in Beattyville, KY. We welcome any brother who would like to stop by and teach for us. I am the only male member who can teach. I know the work is going to be long and hard, but with the prayers of the brotherhood and most of all, the providential hand of God, we will be able to make it here. Pray for us and the work and may God bless his people everywhere. The address of the church is 2719 E. Greenwood Rd., P.O. Box 144, Prescott, MI 48756.

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."

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"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. 6

IS SATURDAY NIGHT COMMUNION MANDATORY?

By CARL M. JOHNSON

Occasionally I am confronted by brethren who insist the communion service must be observed on Saturday night. Recently a brother gave me an eight page pamphlet he received in the mail making this argument. The author's argument is based on his contention that Jesus was resurrected on Saturday night (according to the way we calculate time) hence, we must observe the Lord's supper on Saturday night. The writer says:

Some groups of us have made an exhaustive study of the resurrection moment of Jesus and the time to eat the Lord's supper...Know this for certain, Jesus did not resurrect on a Sunday morning. Jesus resurrected some six hours before Sunday begins...If, Jesus didn't resurrect on a Sunday morning, then where will we get our authority for a breakfast time, Sunday morning Lord's supper?

It is true the Jews calculated each day to begin at 6 o'clock in the evening. Moses says of the sabbath, "From even unto even, shall you keep your sabbath" (Lev. 23:32). When the passover feast was instituted, the Jews were instructed to begin at evening and to eat unleavened bread from the evening of the 14th day, the beginning of the 15th day of the month, and continue to the evening of the 21st day (Ex. 12:1-15). In the New Testament there are also statements implying the writers of scripture count days beginning with the evening. The demoniac who confronts Jesus and His disciples in Gadara is said to have been "night and day" in the mountains and in the tombs (Mark 5:5). Paul says he spent "a night and a day in the deep" (2 Cor. 11:25). Although Paul lived in a Roman world he maintained his Hebrew tradition of expressing time.

The writer of the pamphlet argues that since Jewish tradition calculates the first day of the week to begin at 6 o'clock in the evening on our Saturday, and Jesus arose early upon the first day of the week, Jesus must have arisen shortly after 6 o'clock Saturday evening.

Although the writer is correct in his understanding of how the Jews calculated the time of the day, he is badly mistaken in his conclusion about the time of Jesus' resurrection.

Mark clearly establishes the approximate time of Jesus' resurrection. He says the women came to Jesus' tomb "very early in the morning on the first day of the week... at the rising of the sun" (16:2). The phrase "very early in the morning" is translated from the Greek word **proi**. The **Analytical Greek Lexicon** defines this word to mean "in the morning, early...; the morning watch, which ushers in

the dawn, Mar. 13:35" (355). Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich say the word means "early, early in the morning" (732). Thayer defines the term as "early, pertaining to the morning" (554). Of course Mark makes the meaning of the word "early" unquestionably clear in verse 2 when he adds, "at the rising of the sun."

Later, Mark uses the identical Greek word **proi** to establish the time of Jesus' resurrection, "Now when Jesus was risen early (**proi**) the first day of the week..." (16:9). Marshall linear Greek-English New Testament translates this phrase, "And rising early on the first day of the week..." (215). Putting verses 2 and 9 together, Mark shows the expression "early on the first day of the week" does not refer to a time shortly after 6 o'clock Saturday evening, but rather the expression refers to a time around sunrise.

The other evangelists agree with Mark's time frame. Luke says, "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre..." (24:1). John adds, "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre" (20:1). The expression "yet dark" means it had been dark for some time and was still yet dark. Such a statement could not have been made if the women had come shortly after 6 p.m. Saturday.

Matthew's parallel account is the only statement offering any difficulty. He says, "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre" (28:1). Some people argue that Matthew is saying the women came to the tomb late on the sabbath day. If that is what Matthew is saying, the women must have made two trips to the tomb, one late on the sabbath and one early Sunday morning, or Matthew contradicts the other gospel writers. It is unlikely, however, that the women made two trips to the tomb. If the women came to the tomb late on the sabbath, they did not rest on the sabbath as Luke 23:56 reports they did.

The only way Matthew's account harmonizes with the other three evangelists is to understand his phrase "in the end of the sabbath" to mean "after the sabbath." The NIV translates the verse "After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week..." This translation is supported by W.E. Vine (312); Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich (606); and

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PUBLISHER

Don L. King

41931 Chadbourne, Fremont, CA 94539

Fax 510-651-3926

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

Ronny F. Wade

P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808

EDITORIAL STAFF

Clovis Cook

Edwin S. Morris

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Bennie Cryer

Barney Owens

Billy Dickinson

Johnny Elmore

Jerry Dickinson

Kevin Presley

Carl Johnson

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Editorial

UNITY

By DON L. KING

The very night in which He was betrayed, and at the close of what some call His "valedictory" sermon, the Lord prayed a remarkable prayer. This is found in John 17. In verse 21 Jesus prayed for unity. Verses 20 and 21 read: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

This prayer is popular with many who seek unity.

Denominations love to recite this prayer in a vain effort to prove that all denominations should work together. We have often found it amusing to hear some television preacher remark that Jesus wanted all the churches to work together and quote his words in verse 21 as though Jesus had denominationalism in mind when He said it! First of all, denominations did not exist for many hundreds of years after His prayer. He obviously could not have had them in mind. Second, the denominational preacher makes such a statement and then goes right on with his work of promoting his particular church over any other. One might wonder if he really believes what he is preaching.

If the reader will look carefully at verses 20 and 21, it will be noticed that Jesus predicates the salvation of the world upon the unity His people, thus placing Christian unity upon a platform of very high importance. In fact it would appear that unity is virtually responsible for the success or failure of the gospel itself. However, who are included in His prayer for unity? As we mentioned above, this passage is very popular with those who seek unity. In fact, it seems to be most popular with those who seek unity by compromising Biblical principles. It is often quoted by an erring brother in Christ as he hides us for refusing to accept his doctrines of individual cups, bible classes, instrumental music, etc.

But did the Savior pray for the unity of all believers? No. Nor did He pray for unity among His followers, or denominations or for all professed Christians. Someone says, "Didn't He pray for those who believe on me?" No he didn't pray for that either. He prayed for all who believe on Him "through their word." That is, through the word of the apostles. Beyond those of that class he did not pray. What is the point? Simply this: a doctrine, a faith, some wild idea, etc., which is not obtained through the word of the apostles will never bring us into the unity for which Jesus prayed. On the other hand, those who claim their doctrine, base their teaching, etc. on the word of the apostles (the Word of God) will enjoy unity because they will all agree. They will be one.

As the apostle John considered the many miracles of Jesus, he wrote: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written that ye might believe that

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Why did God require blood in his sacrifices? (Tx).

Answer: Alexander Campbell was correct when he said "the history of sacrifice is the history of atonement, reconciliation, redemption, and remission of sins." Even though the scriptures do not furnish us with an account of the origin of sacrifice, we know that it doubtless is as old as the fall of man. Abel's offering, a sacrifice of faith, was accepted by God. Since faith cometh by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17), we can only conclude that God had communicated His wishes to man prior to this event recorded in Gen. 4. In order to understand the rite of sacrifice, one must understand the demands of justice regarding payment for sin i.e. the life of the transgressor. Sacrifice, then, is "the solemn and religious infliction of death upon an innocent and unoffending victim, usually by shedding its blood" (Campbell, *The Christian System* p. 21) By all rights, the transgressor should be put to death for his/her sins. However, God in his mercy allowed a sacrifice to be offered in place of the sinner, thereby granting life and forgiveness. Under the law of Moses these sacrifices were usually animals, but were ineffectual in that they could not take away sin. (Heb. 10:4). They merely prefigured or pointed to the coming of Christ who would be the perfect and final atonement for sin. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." (Heb. 9:12) In Heb. 9:22 we read "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without the shedding of blood is no remission." Why the shedding of blood? The answer, I believe lies in the fact that "The life is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." (Lev. 17:11) The shedding of the blood of an innocent victim satisfied God's demands regarding atonement for sin. Since the life was in the blood, the animal died and thus became a sacrifice for the sins of man. We have already noticed that the blood of these animals could not take away sin. The shedding of the blood (death) of Christ accomplished what the blood of animals never could — the complete forgiveness of sin. Jesus in his death became our covering (atonement) for sin I Jn. 2:2, 2 Jn. 4:10. Regarding this Campbell makes the following observation: "It is a curious and remarkable fact, that God covered Adam and Eve with the skins of the first victims of death, instead of their

fig-leaf robes. This may have prefigured the fact, that while sin was atoned or expiated as respects God by the life of the victim, the effect as respects man was a covering for his nakedness and shame, or his sin, which divested him of his primitive innocence and beauty, and covered him with ignominy and reproach." We finite mortals may never understand why God in his infinite wisdom chose to do things the way He did. It is not ours to question. We can, however, rejoice in the fact that He has provided for our forgiveness and made reconciliation a reality.

Question: What are the scriptural considerations in the location of a church building? Could you list them in order of priority? (Mo.)

Answer: It should first of all be noted that church buildings are authorized under general rather than specific authority. In Heb. 10:25 we have the command to assemble, hence the necessity for a place to assemble. Church buildings are an option, not a command. We cannot expect, then, to find in the scriptures a list of considerations for the location of a meeting house. That is a matter of judgment. It would seem to this writer that when brethren consider the location of a building the following things should be taken into account: Does the church want to locate in an area where there are no members, thus providing a base from which to preach the gospel to new people? Or do we want to locate in an area convenient to existing members? Before serious consideration can be given to an exact location one of the above choices needs to be made. In every situation it seems to me that brethren should be careful to locate the building in a place accessible to all; a neighborhood that is advancing rather than deteriorating; one that offers potential for the future. It has always been the feeling of this writer that our buildings should be neat, clean (both inside and out), and modest in appearance. Extravagance is out of the question. It has always bothered me when brethren are quick and generally ready to carpet the building, pad the pews, landscape the grounds with little discussion or hesitation, but when it comes to mission work or the support of a preacher they haggle and argue for hours. Could it be that our priorities are out of order? If our object and goal is the spread of the gospel and service to God, the church building will become a means to an end. Nothing more, nothing less. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808)

"LET HER BE COVERED" (INSIDE AND OUT!)

By KEVIN W. PRESLEY

Since the commencement of humanity, God's arrangement for headship and authority has remained the same. "I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." When the Father created man from the dust of the earth and gave him the breath of life, he saw shortly thereafter that it was not good for man to be

alone. He created the woman as a suitable help for Adam. In Genesis 3:16, when God cursed Eve for her transgression he declared, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and they conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." One would be gravely in error if he thought that God made woman inferior to man, or thought of her

as a lesser creation. In fact, God has exalted the place of woman far above the estimate of our world today. However, society and many in the church have a corrupted view of the role of women.

First of all, God created man and woman differently. He gave them separate characteristics, roles, and responsibilities, which he never intended on being exchanged or negated. I Timothy 2:11-15 says, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."

On this premise, the Apostle Paul bases his argument concerning the necessary covering in prayer for women. "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. FOR THIS CAUSE ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels," I Corinthians 11:8-10. The word in verse 10 for "power" means authority." God has not deprived woman of any spiritual right so far as his relationship to her is concerned. She may "come boldly before the throne of grace" on equal footing with man. She may teach someone else in a private setting (not in a public sphere or in an assembly of the church). Although she has a different environment in which she is to operate (privately) the woman has the same spiritual obligations as a man. She must carry out these responsibilities, however, in the spirit and demeanor of a godly woman. She is to remain modest inwardly and outwardly in so doing. "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, WITH SHAMEFACEDNESS AND SOBRIETY; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But WHICH BECOMETH WOMEN PROFESSING GODLINESS WITH GOOD WORKS," I Timothy 2:9-10. In I Corinthians 11:3-16 and I Timothy 2:9-10, Paul is discussing what women are to be on the inside and how that is to be exemplified on the outside. One is to emanate from the other.

In I Corinthians 11, Paul is teaching that long hair on a woman is that which gives her the right to pray and teach, but yet still show her subjection to and man. Verse 5 says, "But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head (man)..." Verses 13-

15 go on to say, "Judge in yourselves; is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?... if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering." In other words, it is not right for a woman to pray to God without that covering on her head which is long hair. But shame on the woman that forgets what her long hair and modest apparel is for and what it signifies.

Long hair does not by any means give a woman the right to supercede her God-given sphere of activity or authority. Long hair does not give a woman the right to case aside the feminine qualities of shamefacedness and sobriety. Long hair does not give a woman the right to henpeck her husband and rule the roost, so to speak.

Listen to the characteristics that long hair and modest apparel are to be indicative of! Chastity (Titus 2:5) which means to be "chaste, clean, innocent, pure"; Shamefacedness (I Tim. 2:9) means "downcast eyes, and bashfulness towards men"; Sobriety (I Tim. 2:9) speaks of "soundness of mind, self-control"; Godliness (I Tim. 2:10) means "piety and devoutness"; Submissive (Eph. 5:22) means "to subordinate...to obey, subdue into";

Some of our sisters need to learn the REAL lesson behind Paul's instruction. Uncut hair and modest apparel is to emanate from a submissive and meek spirit and demeanor. Does the Bible teach it is sinful for a woman to cut her hair and dress in an immodest fashion? Absolutely, unreservedly, I can say YES! However, it is no less a sin for a woman to shuck her inward covering and her inward sense of modesty. In fact, let me go so far as to say, that if she thinks like talks like, and behaves like a domineering, overbearing, worldly woman, she might as well stop sending a hypocritical message to the church and the world, and look like a worldly woman.

Sometimes we comment on some sister in the church who we feel is making spiritual progress because she stops bobbing her hair and wearing pants. However, may we never forget that she's making progress if and only if she is exemplifying the inward characteristics that make such a change of appearance meaningful and significant.

I can't think of a better way to make the point than in the way I heard one preacher so poignantly put it. He said, "Sister, you may have hair so long you can sit on it, a dress so long that it looks like you just stepped off a wagon train, but if you've got a long tongue to match, you're not saved!"—P.O. Box 1001, Opp, AL 36453.

INTEGRITY JOB 2:1-10 (3), (9)

By MARK DEATHERAGE

Job having lost every material blessing, (which is more than we can comprehend) and all his sons and his daughters in chapter 1. Then we find in chapter 2, Satan being allowed to come and afflict Job for the second time, and this was based on the statement in verse 3, And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. God proclaims to Satan that Job is still holding on to his integrity. Satan this time is allowed to touch Job's flesh. Causing Job to be put the test in every conceivable way,

then only to have his wife ask in verse 9 "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die?"

The question we have to ask ourselves is this very question: Are we still holding to our integrity? But what does integrity really mean? Integrity means to be completely honest, this is how Job won respect of God (verse 3). Being completely honest means, quiet simply, we do what we say we believe. This is the very manner in which we will win the respect of God as well. God is looking for the people that will proclaim Him as Lord and King in every aspect of our lives not just in words but in

deeds as well. Every avenue of our lives makes a statement. It tells those that are around us (our friends, neighbors, co-workers, family and our God) what we believe. We that have the boldness to stand up and say that we are Christians, but are not willing to live it, we are living a lie.

The society that surrounds us; they are looking for something that they can trust in. They are asking; Are you for real? Can I trust what you're saying? Christians bear the responsibility of demonstrating unquestionable character before man and God! It is a sobering thought to realize that we may be the only Bible the world ever read. The way we live our lives may give licenses to those living around us for what may be acceptable or unacceptable behavior. Do we realize what we do, or possibly what we do not do may be leading others astray? Do we realize that if we are leading others astray that we ourselves are missing the mark. I am reminded of a couple spoken of in the New Testament, in Acts chapter 5: 1-11. This is the story telling of Ananias and Sapphira as they lied to the Holy Ghost. It was not wrong to keep part of the money they received for the land, but it was wrong to lie, and while God does not deal as quickly today as He did back then, He still takes it very serious when we begin to tell lies! (the same is true

about heavenly matters)

Members of the Church are called on to demonstrate Christ in their lives by exemplary conduct in every area of life. The overcoming of sins in the lives of Christians was proof of the redeeming power of Christ. The sins which the community clearly identifies and challenges (Galatians 5: 19-21) "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, (:20) Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, (:21) Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." This is a list of categories for every sin that may overcome us. Christians are expected to adopt a new life style that is appropriate to their commitment to Christ. Realize that the world is watching. Realize that God is watching!

Are we still holding to our integrity?

Sometimes we can fool those that we go to church with. Sometimes we can fool the ones we work with. We can even fool ourselves. But we can never fool our God.

HOUSEHOLD BAPTISMS

By BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (SELECTED FROM THE BOOK OF GEMS)

It is claimed that whole households were baptized, and that these must have included infants; as, for instance, the following:

1. Lydia and her house. All that is said of Lydia is found in two verses, Acts 16:14,15, and the passage contains not one word about an infant, or a child of any sort. It is stated that "she was baptized and her household." But it is not stated that she was a married woman, that she had any children, much less that she had any infants; and, therefore, there is nothing here about any infant baptism.

2. The next household mentioned is that of the Jailor, Acts 16:33. "And they--Paul and Silas--spoke unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his straightway. And when they had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house." Here are two things stated of these that can not be said of infants. They spoke unto him--the Jailor--the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. The Jailor rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. Here it is asserted of the household that they rejoiced, believing in God. The word of the Lord was spoken to them, they

rejoiced and believed in God. This can not be said of infants.

3. The next case of a household, which we shall mention is that of Cornelius, Acts 11:14. Here, however, is conclusive evidence that there were no infants, for the angel said, "Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall tell the words whereby thou and all they house shall be saved." Infants are not *told words whereby they are saved*. Those who practice infant baptism do not tell them words whereby they are saved. Those who practice infant baptism do not tell them words whereby they may be saved, and to not believe they are saved in or by baptism.

4. There is but one other household mentioned in the New Testament, in connection with baptism. That is "the household of Stephanas." 1 Cor. 1:16. In the same letter we find one thing affirmed of this same household that can not be affirmed of infants. "They have *addicted themselves* to the ministry of the saints." 1 Cor. 16:15. This is a thing infants can not do.

There were, then, no infants in these households, and nothing particularly strange about that. The writer has baptized many household and never baptized an infant.

IS SATURDAY NIGHT COMMUNION MANDATORY?

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the *Analytical Greek Lexicon* (207). Thayer translates the phrase to mean, "the sabbath having just passed, after the sabbath, i.e. at the early dawn of the first day of the week--(an interpretation absolutely demanded by the added specification "as it began to dawn...") cf. Mark 16:1 (471).

The writers of the gospels agree unanimously that the women came to the tomb about sunrise Sunday morning.

Since Mark uses the identical expression to point out the time of Jesus' resurrection, we must conclude Jesus arose from the grave at early dawn Sunday morning.

If we must commune at the precise time of Jesus' resurrection, the communion would have to be observed around dawn on Sunday morning and not just after 6 o'clock Saturday night. I have found no teaching in the Bible, however, that mandates our observing the communion at the same moment of the day as Jesus' resurrection. On the contrary, Luke says simply the disciples came together to break bread "upon the first day

of the week" (Acts 20:7).

As mentioned earlier, the first day of the week, as that expression occurs in the New Testament, begins at 6 p.m. Saturday and ends at 6 p.m. Sunday. If the Lord's supper is observed any hour during that period, it will be observed on the first day of the week. Whether you insist on observing the Jewish mode of keeping time, or whether you follow the Roman method and figure the beginning of Sunday at midnight, the sides can agree upon as being the "first day of the week."

UNITY

continued from page 2

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." (John 20:30,31) Notice now, the faith by which we may have life through His name is received "through their word" (John 17:20) This is the only way we may come into the unity for which He prayed. Folks, your doctrine has to come from the word of the Lord! That's what the apostles preached. No wonder Paul wrote: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17) It won't do to claim a new revelation. It won't work to tell us that the Holy Spirit is leading you to believe this or that with your heart. We want the unity Jesus prayed for. We will move mountains to have it. But it will have to come from a faith founded

In my judgment, we have the scriptural right to observe the Lord's supper anytime after 6 p.m. Saturday, however, we do not have the right to bind our preference upon others and require them to go along with us. When we compel others to conform to our preference we make a law where the Lord has not made one. To cause trouble over such personal preferences is to cause "strife, seditions, and heresies" (Gal. 5:20). 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820.

upon a thus sayeth the Lord. If you wish us to accept your cups, classes, instrumental music, centralized funds, orphan's homes, human creeds and names, etc. we are going to insist on scripture for them. We can't have the unity Jesus prayed for in any other way. If we are to be expected to fellowship those who worship in ways not found in the scriptures, give us book, chapter and verse for it. Don't tell us that the idea of one cup, for example, is only "your interpretation." Have we learned so much that we must interpret the word "cup?" That doesn't require interpretation, my friend. That requires obedience. Just imagine a fellow standing before the Lord in judgment and saying, "Lord, we would have done what you commanded, but we couldn't understand the word cup! Think on these things.—DLK.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OUR SINCERE APOLOGIES!

Several of you have asked about obituaries you sent us that have not appeared. We have a large list presently and we are trying to get them in as quickly as possible. Actually, we wished to use the entire list last month and instructed the printers accordingly.

However, a space problem arose and some were not printed. We are very sorry! Lord willing, they can get them all in this month.

A word to our preaching brethren: please remember that in many cases only a very few of our readers will know the names of all the sons, daughters, aunts, uncles, nephews, etc. When you prepare an obituary for the OPA, delete those names for us if you can. In a few cases, the notice may be about a preacher who has travelled the brotherhood or someone else that for some reason is well known. In such cases, the readers would, of course, appreciate a more complete listing of some family members. In any case, try to keep it brief so that we are not forced to edit for you. Sometimes, we have to do this in order to save the space. We appreciate your patience. DLK

CHURCH DIRECTORY ESCALON, CA

Please replace Randall Lee's name and address with Roger Nelson, 2836 Robirds Lane, Riverbank, CA 95367, (209)869-0755

FIFTY YEARS TOGETHER

Zade McClure and Rekel Isaacs were united in marriage

on January 13, 1947 in Somerset, Kentucky. Fifty years later, on January 13, 1997, a host of family and friends gathered at the Renfro Valley Museum Building in Renfro Valley, KY to congratulate this fine Christian couple on an enduring relationship. Zade and Rekel have lived in the Mt. Vernon, KY area for most of their lives and have been members of the Blue Springs Church of Christ for many years. Zade is known throughout the community for his stand for the truth and his fine character. He and Rekel reared five children. They have 13 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren. I hope you will join with me in wishing them many more years of happiness. - Kevin W. Presley



NOTICE

The annual Fourth of July Meeting in Lebanon, Missouri will begin June 26, 7:30 p.m. and close July 3,

with the 7:30 evening service. The daily services, 10:00 a.m. and 7:30 p.m., will be held in the Christian Life Fellowship Building. The building is located on East 32

Highway, approximately one mile from South 5 and 32 Highway Junction. The meeting will be conducted by Evangelists Irvin Barnes and Paul Nichols.

OUR DEPARTED

COBERLY--Maude Coberly of Pauls Valley, OK was born Nov. 5, 1911 and departed this life April 10, 1997. She is survived by three sons, L.J., of Moore, OK; Gary, of Duncan, OK, and Orval of Altus, OK; one daughter, Thelma Shannon, Oklahoma City; two sisters, four grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. Sister Coberly was a faithful, long-time member of the church at Wynnewood. I felt honored to be asked to speak at funeral services on April 12 from Wooster Funeral Home in Pauls Valley.—Johnny Elmore.

SCRIBNER--Nora Scribner, a member of the church at Ardmore, OK for many years was born Oct. 15, 1915 at Gordonville, TX and departed this life April 29, 1997. She was preceded in death by her husband, Walter, in 1991. I was asked to speak at graveside services May 1st at Hillcrest Cemetery here in Ardmore.—Johnny Elmore.

KINSER--Eugene D. Kinser, was born October 14, 1908 and died March 15, 1997. He was 88 years old when he departed this life. In his own words he was blessed abundantly by our God and Creator. Although he never preached from the pulpit he had a tremendous appreciation for the gospel. He loved to hear the Word of God presented in a plain, straightforward manner so he always did his part to support and encourage those who preached it. For many years he recorded the sermons of our preachers at various meetings. Often he would spend hours listening to some of the hundreds of sermons he had accumulated on tape. Having grown up in his home I came to know him well. Therefore, I can say with certainty that he not only loved to hear the gospel, he did his best to live by it. In the 43 years that I knew him the Word of God was his guide. Gene Kinser was never a wealthy man, but worked hard all of his life to provide a modest living for his wife and children. He was an honest man, a many of many talents who could do almost anything. And so, he spent a lot of time and effort working around the church building and helping others free of charge. Over the years he gave much to many people. To me, one of his children, he gave more than words can tell. But of all the things he gave the most precious and meaningful gift of all was the privilege to grow up in a home where God, His Word, and the church were exalted. His many friends, brethren, and members of his family will certainly miss him. His funeral was conducted by Walter Hunter and myself.—Reggie Kinser.

BOWER--Martha Bower was born July 8, 1906 in St. Joseph, Missouri to John and Johanna Niewiadomski Kniola. She passed away March 27, 1997 in Modesto, California at the age of 90 years plus. She is survived by two brothers, John and Henry, who live in St. Joseph, Missouri. She came to California in 1940 and resided in Modesto since 1947. Martha became acquainted with the

gospel and obeyed the same under the teaching of brother Paul Nichols. When her second husband died Paul preached his funeral, and Martha in studying with Paul obeyed the gospel in the mid seventies. She was a member of the congregation in Modesto on Santa Rita Ave. for several years before she was admitted to a home for care. Martha had no children. She was raised a Catholic, but put it aside to become a Christian, being added to the Lord's Church. She loved to be at the services and never kept the members who picked her up waiting. She was loved and cared for by a concerned people in the church at Modesto. The Rod Wilson's and the Jessie Worsham's deserve special mention for their personal sacrifice. Brother Rod Wilson was to conduct the memorial service, but due to circumstances behind his control was not able to be there. Myself, along with the help of two good brethren, Larry McElroy, and Gilbert Wilson did our best to speak fitting words. Martha was buried in Acacia Memorial Park in Modesto California, awaiting the resurrection of the just.—Richard DeGough.

FISHER--Johnnie Lee Fisher, a native of Texas, passed away on February 14, 1997. She was 74 years old. With sadness that always comes when we must say our earthly goodbyes, a large crowd of loved ones and friends gathered to pay tribute to this godly woman. Johnnie had been a member of the Church for about 55 years. She was a faithful member of the El Cajon congregation in San Diego. She will always be remembered as a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, friend—but above all as a steadfast Christian. She exerted a powerful influence for good and touched so many lives with her warmth, humor, and hospitality. She was preceded in death just this past summer by her husband, Marvin Fisher, one of the beloved elders of the El Cajon congregation. They exemplified martial fidelity and devotion. They have been married 56 years. Johnnie leaves one son, Walter; a brother, J.W. Jones; 3 grandchildren; 3 great-grandchildren; and 2 nephews and a niece whom Marvin and Johnnie raised as their own children. She was loved and admired by all who knew her. Brethren Fred Lay, Elias Rodriguez, Chris Allen and Don Webber shared the honor along with this writer of conducting the service. She truly was a woman who professed godliness (I Tim. 2:10). Larry Lay.

CARTER--Velma, Aunt "Kidd" was born December 28, 1916 in Paoli, Oklahoma to Authur and Cora DeGough and passed away February 11, 1997 in Bakersfield, California. She came to the Arvin area in the spring of 1930 and remained there until her death. On October 22, 1934 she was married to John Fontaine Carter and to this union three sons were born. She is preceded in death by her husband, John, and a son, "Jay." She is survived by two sons; two brothers and one sister. There are 8 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren as well as numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and friends. She lived in Arvin, California for almost 68 years. Velma obeyed the gospel in 1937, and

in the early forties learned the truth in worship to take her stand with the faithful church. She remained faithful until the end of her life. She was the last member of the church in Arvin to live in that town. When the congregation decided to disband she worshiped at the congregation in Bakersfield on Planz Rd. She was a talented woman and could see the humorous side of nearly any situation. She was always doing what she could to cheer others up even when she labored under a heavy load of sadness. She was plain spoken, and you never wondered what she believed on the Bible or any subject. I loved her and will miss her, as will her children and her brethren. She was uncomplaining in her suffering, and her many anxieties that she endured, which may I add were many. She never came home from the hospital where she underwent bypass surgery. As her nephew, I lived with her and Uncle John for several months when I attended high school in Arvin. There was never a difference made by them in their children and myself. I was treated as if I was their son. She was laid to rest in the small cemetery a few miles West of Arvin next to her husband. It was her request to me several years ago to conduct her memorial service. I was honored to fulfill that request. May God bless her memory among all that knew her. Some day we will meet again, for this is God's promise to the faithful.—Richard DeGough.

HAWKINS--Lois Holt Hawkins of Youngsville, NC lived all her life in Wake County. She passed away February 3, 1997 at the age of 77 years. She is survived by her daughter, Margie Forrest of Raleigh, NC; two sons, Larry and Darvey of Youngsville, NC; four grandchildren and three brothers. Sister Lois was preceded in death by her husband, Roy Hawkins. She was a long time member of the Church of Christ and preachers always found an open door of hospitality in the Hawkins home. She was a loving mother and homemaker. A large number of relatives and friends gathered to show their love and respect for her. Sister Lois was laid to rest beside her husband at the little cemetery beside the church building at Falls of Neuse Rd., Raleigh, NC. I felt it an honor to speak words of comfort to the family and friends assisted by my son, John, who read the obituary, offered prayers and read a beautiful poem written by a granddaughter.—J.W. Kornegay, Sr.

MAHURIN--It is with a heavy heart that I write this report about the passing of Bro. Granville Murl Mahurin, one of our elders here in Stockton, CA. Granville was 74 years old having been born in Garfield, Arkansas January 11, 1923. He died February 1, early in the morning, at home where his wife of 50 years, Arlene, and their two children, Linda and Dennis, and other loved ones faithfully cared for him until he breathed his last breath. Granville obeyed the gospel in October 1947. He immediately began going to studies with preachers and helped lead many people to Christ. He was selected as a deacon in the church here and in 1979 was ordained as an elder. He faithfully discharged his duty as an elder until the pain in his body became so great he could no longer go.

Granville helped raise scriptural church government in the brotherhood to new heights and blessed the church here with his wisdom and knowledge. He was one of the best of fellow laborers and had a unique way of communicating God's word to others especially in a one on one situation. His family, consisting of three generations all of whom are faithful members of the Lord's church, (and I might add, a 4th generation that already started), will miss him. The congregation will miss him, and I personally have lost a close friend and brother. A huge crowd came to his funeral where Rod Watson directed a group of singers in singing Granville's favorite songs. Jimmy Winchester, his nephew that he loved so much, and I attempted to speak words of comfort and hope. He was buried near the bodies of so many of the Stockton congregation's members. What a joy the resurrection day will be when we are reunited with such men.—Bennie Cryer. NOTE: It is indeed sad to have to face that Bro. Granville Mahurin is gone. What a loss to the church. His absence will be felt for a long, long time. I considered him a great friend. He was an uncle of my wife, Pat. The family will also miss him. He was one of those men who was often quoted and will continue to be for a long time. How comforting to realize that what we loved is yet alive and we anticipate a wonderful reunion on some great morning. Our prayers go out for Arlene and the family.—DLK.

MORROW--Sister Vida Cenona Hale Morrow was born in what is now Oklahoma, April 23, 1900, to Susie Eudora Lewis Hale and Rufus Booker Hale. She died at Hemet, CA Jan. 15, 1997, in her 97th year. Up until almost the end, Vida was clear-thinking, a joy to be with, strong in the faith. In November last, she attended every service of Carl Johnson's meeting at Covina, CA. One of her last Saturdays was spent preparing a meal for her Southern California grandchildren. If you never sat at Vida's table, you missed something special down here. At Altus, OK in 1921, she was married to Floyd Wilson Morrow. At the time of his passing in 1977, they had been married 56 years. What an example, one of many! For a long time before his death, Floyd needed almost constant care. Vida, from early morning until late at night, saw that he got just that. To their union were born four children: Floyd, Jr.; Tom Frank, whom Vida buried in 1994, with such exemplary faith and resignation; Robert (Bob); and Sue Franklin. There are 13 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren surviving; also two sisters survive: Wilda (Bill) Egurrola, and LeeWana Larson. As a small child of eight years, Vida became very sick; her father learned of a physician in Munday, TX who might know what to do, so by way of train and surrey, to Munday they went for help. That physician knew what to prescribe. He was Dr. G.A. Trott, not only a noted physician, but preacher and writer as well. Vida obeyed the gospel at 14 in Gunter, TX by being immersed by Bro. P.C. Key. As a young wife and mother, she was a member of the church at Frederick, OK when G.C.

Brewer introduced individual drinking vessels. He is known by his own admission, for introducing this innovation into churches of Christ. Vida, in her nineties, was heard to say, "I am living proof that drinking from one cup on the Lord's Table won't hurt you." If I could make one compliment for Vida Morrow, who is worthy of so many, it would be, "she was a woman of the Book." The Morrrows moved to CA in 1932, where they identified themselves with congregations meeting at Montebello, and Siskiyou St., Los Angeles; in later years at Covina, Turlock and Manteca. On Saturday, January 18th, a beautiful day

at graveside, Rose Hills Cemetery, Whittier, a host of us assembled for Vida's funeral, planned in part by her. Gerald Rowland led the congregational singing. One of the songs was "I'll Be A Friend To Jesus." Vida had first sung this song over 80 years ago at a singing school near Hollis, OK. The school was taught by J.W. Dennis, who wrote the music to the song. Prayers were led by Brethren Alan Bonifay and Larry Lay, younger preachers for whom she had highest regard. It was this writer's honor, privilege and responsibility to officiate for Vida. I shall always treasure this honor bestowed.—Don McCord.



Barney Owens, 8282 Meadowview Ln., W. Chester, OH 45069- Our meeting for the spring has concluded with Cecil Smith. It was good to have this young man preach the Gospel in our presence. We hope we can have him again in the future. Recently I was privileged to be with the congregation in Manteca, California. The crowds were large and interest seemed good. Four young people obeyed the Gospel and were baptized into Christ by brother Melvin Lee. While there I visited with Brother Alan Bontifay, whom I have know for some years, but never had opportunity to be with—a joyful experience. Also attending the meeting were several preachers, among whom were Bennie Cryer, Frank Harris, and Richard DeGough. June will find me with the church at Columbus, GA, 8-15. July 6-13 I shall return to Sentinel, OK. If near, please try to be with us. Pray for mine and me.

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73402, May 6-March 23-30, I was at Washington, OK for my first meeting this year. We had good crowds and one restoration. April 16-20, I was at the Flournoy-Lucas congregation in Shreveport, LA for a series of studies and spoke there once. We heard Kevin Presley at Crestview congregation in Wichita Falls, TX twice, and Tony Melton once at Davis, OK. We look forward this month to having Billy Dickinson with us May 23-25, and the fourth Sunday singing here on that day. I expect to be at San Angelo, TX June 1-8, Duncanville, TX July 6-13, and Aurora, MO Aug. 1-10.

Doug Hawkins, HCR 3 Box 203-C, Rocky Mount, MO 65072, May 2, 1997- We just closed a very enjoyable meeting at Chestnut Ridge, KY. The meeting was well attended by folks from the area. The congregation at Chestnut Ridge has made tremendous strides in the last few years with the cooperative help of Bro. Ovie Baker. The congregation is steadily growing in size, grace, and favor. We pray for their continued success. I want to say a word of commendation about Bro. Ovie Baker because it's men like him who aid the cause of Christ immeasurably without any remunera-

tion (pay) or recognition. For the last ten years, Bro. Baker has driven approximately 30 miles one way to help the congregation at Chestnut Ridge on Sunday mornings. In that time, he has shouldered a majority of the teaching responsibilities, has conducted a weekly 15 minute radio program on the local station, has baptized several, has been instrumental in the restoration of many others and has visited a great number of people in that local area. Ovie, may God bless your efforts richly and crown them all with success. In the short time I have preached the gospel, I have had the privilege to meet and be acquainted with a number of men in our brotherhood of this same sterling character. I wish I had the space and time to commend you all individually by name for your sacrifice of time, talent and treasures in your area for the cause of our Lord. Always remember, "your labor is not in vain in the Lord." If I have spent time working along beside you, you know I'm thinking of you right now. God bless you!!! We begin a meeting May 30th in Mountain Home, AR. Pray for us as we for you.

Roy Lee Criswell, Rt. 2, Box 2336, Cassville, MO 65625- The Lord's Work here in this part of Missouri continues to make progress. During the month of February it was my privilege to baptize two more precious souls into Christ, these two being our two oldest grandchildren. This makes a total of five that have been baptized here in Aurora since last fall. At the present time all three of the young men have begun leading songs. During the latter part of March this year I was happy to have the opportunity to conduct a short meeting at Scotland, Arkansas. We had good crowds each service and we greatly enjoyed the visit and hospitality of Bro. Miles King and his wife, Johnette. We were happy to have James and Dixie Lankford to make the trip with us. In early April we were happy to have Jimmie Smith and his wife, Cindy in our home. Jimmie conducted a weekend meeting in Aurora and did some outstanding preaching. Lord willing our next meeting will be Aug. 1st thru Aug. 10th here at Aurora with Bro. Johnny Elmore. We would love to have all who are in the area to come and hear Johnny and worship with us. Please remember the Lord's work here when you pray.

P. Duane Permenter, P.O. box 80687, Midland, TX 79708, May 8- We are looking forward to our meeting at Stockton, CA with excitement. It will be a year since leaving California June 9, and we are looking forward to seeing many friends and loved ones during the meeting. Our hearts

are saddened that Granville Mahurin will not be there. He was a great influence in my life for many years, and I will enjoy meeting him in heaven along with many other saints who have gone before us. The meeting at Chapel Grove, TN was truly a pleasure. I enjoyed making my stay with Ronald and Joan Long. The attendance was good and some outside interest was evident during the meeting. The brethren did a fine job in preparing for the meeting. It was my honor to be asked by the elders at Chapel Grove to help them in this way. I appreciated having Johnny Fisher and Paul Walker attending during the meeting. We continue to labor here at Midland teaching them publicly and from house to house. Please continue to pray for our work and growth. May God bless the faithful everywhere.

Bruce Roebuck, P.O. Box 209, Mtn. Home, AR 72653, May 10- The work here at Mountain Home continues well. Three people have been baptized here this year. These baptisms were due mainly to efforts of the brethren to convert the lost. Our radio program and newspaper article is still gathering interest. We are looking forward to our meeting with Doug Hawkins the first week of June. It has been good to hear Doug, Tony Denton, Wayne McKamie, and Carl Johnson in meetings in the area. In March we were with the brethren in Birmingham, AL for a five day meeting. We enjoyed and appreciated their fine hospitality. In April we were in Bedford, IN for a week. While there we stayed in the home of the Andy Peek family. They have become special people to us. The meeting there closed with five confessions and one baptism. We were blest with a full house every night. It was especially good to spend time with the many preachers of that area. Next we are bound for Paris, TX May 23-25, Lord willing. We plan to be in Brodhead, KY June 22-29, Cassville, MO July 20-27, and Bandy, KY September 21-28. If you are in the area we would be glad to see you. May God bless the faithful.

Bennie Cryer, 2340 Sanguinetti Ln. #104, Stockton, CA 95205, April 8- Our work in Stockton continues. Gene Youngblood was ordained as an elder March 16. Rod Watson just held us a good singing school. We can recommend him highly for this kind of work. We are looking forward to a meeting with Duane Permenter June 15-22. I being a meeting with the Fremont congregation May 11. I am looking forward to being with them again and especially to working with Bro. Don King once more. I am also looking forward to attending a part of the Fourth of July annual meeting at Lebanon, MO. From there we go to work with the Chapel Grove congregation in a meeting July 6-13. We have recently attended meetings in the area conducted by Don Pruitt, Barney Owens, Paul Nichols and Lynwood Smith. Since last reporting, in addition to working with Stockton, I have preached at Olivehurst, Yuba City, 64th St. in Sacramento as part of one of their special meetings where Greg Gay is now working with them, and Lodi, where we had special studies on the ordination and work of an evangelist. They invited me to have a share in the ordination of Roger Boone, who grew up in that congregation, May 4th. Roger and his family are planning to move to Lusaka, Zambia in August to further the cause in that area. We pray God's blessings upon them and the

Edmond, OK congregation that is overseeing that work.

Kevin W. Presley, Rt. 2 Box 166, Kinston, AL 36453 (334) 898-1301- This past month has been a rewarding one in the Lord's work. It was a pleasure being back with the brethren at Blue Springs, KY for a meeting. We had really good crowds and the level of interest was encouraging. We had a number of visitors from the community. The meeting closed with three baptisms and one confession of fault. Two of those baptized were a husband and wife, who had been baptized into the Baptist church within recent weeks. Also, it was a real treat to hold a meeting for the Crestview brethren in Wichita Falls. This was my first visit to that area and I enjoyed it immensely. Due to the hard work of several members including Brother and Sister Cox from the Olney congregation, we had outside visitors at every service. We witnessed one confession of fault. Also, it was good to have preaching brethren, Johnny Elmore and Steve Holt. I appreciated the fine hospitality of Charles and Jan Goodgion. I have a few weeks at home now with my next being at Florala, AL, May 28th-June 1st. This meeting is going to be in coordination with our television program which continues to generate interest in the area. It was good to preach for the brethren at home (Earlytown) today. We had good crowds in spite of some illness among the members. Continue to pray for us.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Court, Bonner Springs, KS, May 2- We are happy to report that the Lord's work is going well at 79th and Kansas, Kansas City and it is a real joy to work with these good people. We are looking forward to our meeting June 8-15 with Joe Hisle, April 7-9, we were at Bakersfield, CA (Planz Rd.) with the congregation we helped to establish in 1963. Next we were in a meeting April 12-20 at Atwater, CA. We began this church over fifty years ago. It was a happy time for us to get to be at these places and to be with so many we have known and loved for so long. In the last meeting we had people come from a dozen different congregations. Several preachers came at least once. It was a joy to be associated with Richard DeGough who works with the church at Atwater part time. We spent several nights with him and Glenda, dear friends of many years. We made headquarters with Johnny and Diane Broughton and enjoyed their hospitality. Please pray for Johnny in his fight with cancer. He is a stabilizing force at Atwater and has been for many years. We were glad to get back home and to resume our work at Kansas City. My next meeting will be at Blue Springs, KY June 1-8. I always look forward to being with this congregation. Don't forget the Lebanon Annual Meeting, June 26-July 3. Brother Irvin Barnes and I have been asked to direct it this year under the auspices of the Lee's Summit congregation. We are expecting a large attendance. Why don't you plan to come and enjoy the good preaching and the fellowship of saints from all over the brotherhood?

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr, Fremont, CA 94539, May 12- We enjoyed being with the church at Escalon, Ca recently for Lord's Day morning and evening. Too, it has been great to be home for a time and to work with the brethren here. The studies with the younger men continue and we are seeing more involvement on their part for which

we are thankful. Several of the older brethren are participating as well and a good spirit is prevailing. Bennie Cryer began our meeting yesterday and it is good to have him with us again. Lord willing, we are to begin a meeting at LaGrange, GA May 31st continuing through June 8. We look forward to a good meeting. The time of the 4th of July meetings will soon be here and we look forward to that as well. A word to our fellow preaching brethren: We want you to send us your field reports! Many of you are doing so. The brethren everywhere look forward to reading about your work. The field reports are generally the first part of the paper to be read. Please, send them! Please, keep them brief! A report should be about a half page of double spaced and typed material. If you will send them often, it will be easy to keep them brief. We also want your articles. Again, double space and typewritten. Try to keep them to about 3 to 4 pages in length. If they are longer, it may be some time before we can fit them in. May God bless all of us.

Joe Hisle, Rt. 4, Box 188, Ada, OK 74820- It has been too long since I have written to the OPA. I have had a good winter here at home and am now busy with my schedule for this year. I have already been to the congregation at Jasper, TN for a meeting. It was most enjoyable and I especially enjoyed the hospitality of Bro. and Sis. Sherman Long. I am glad to have had the opportunity to get to know them better. A special thanks to the congregations who helped support this meeting with their presence. The next effort was with the church at Chouteau, OK. Here I made my home with Cale and Melissa Green. Let me tell you it is a sure sign that you are getting old when you now stay in the homes of the children that you first knew as babies when you were staying in their parents homes! So it was with Cale, I have stayed in the home of his father and mother, Frank and Yvonne, on many occasions. Cale and Missy were as hospitable as one could have asked for. Following is the remainder of my schedule: Harrisonville, MO, May 4-11; Turlock, CA, May 21-25; Kansas City, KS (Kansas Ave.), June 8-15; Bandy, KY, July 13-20; Kenai, AK, July 27-Aug. 3 (why not plan a vacation for Alaska and visit the brethren there); Corsicana, TX, Aug. 10-17; Earlytown, AL, Sept. 10-14; Washington, OK, Sept. 21-28; Blue Springs, KY., Oct. 5-12. If you are near these areas I will appreciate your support. Please pray for me and my family.

Brett Hickey, P.O. Box 6506, Ventura, CA 93003, May 1, 1997- Since we first arrived in Ventura, we have looked forward to our first meeting here. We feel like the meeting was a great success. Our primary concern was outsider attendance. Although we always hope all promises to attend materialize, we were pleased that we had eleven outsiders over the weekend. We were also encouraged with the support some from area congregations gave. Orie Mansfield and F.W. Morrow came from the Covina congregation for the whole weekend. Scott Smith came as well. David and Teresa Mackey came from Montebello. The Planz Rd. congregation in Bakersfield gave us the most help. Over ten of their members made the two hour trip to assist us. While passing our fliers for this meeting, I also met a pair of Mormon "Sisters" who were out pros-

elytizing. After brief introductions, I asked them if they would like to study sometime. They refused and then asked if I would like to study sometime. I agreed. Two weeks later they set up an appointment. Louise and I prepared together for the study. I was called away and Louise went ahead with the study. They refused to respond to the blatant contradictions in the book of Mormon. She ably exposed the Mormon lie. Their favorite response was, "We just don't feel the Spirit here." When Louise confronted them with their use of water in the Lord's Supper instead of grape juice, they said that it was too difficult to get in to their churches in Africa. Louise did not let them off the hook. I consider myself blessed to have a wife that can defend it publicly. This month we board a train to central Missouri where we'll assist Doug Hawkins in his evangelistic thrust into the Camdenton community. Services will be nightly under a big tent. We look forward to getting better acquainted with the local brethren and seeing good friends from Mtn. Home, AR who plan to visit. Our studies with Robert on the Lord's Supper have led to studies with Mason and John French. Robert's preacher has declined all invitations to study the subject. Mason is a preacher from another cups congregation. Interestingly, Mason works with the congregation that Louise's family worshipped with before learning about the Lord's teaching on the subject. Louise's dad was one of the leaders who did a bulk of the preaching. The first two hours of our study were largely unprofitable due to Brother Mason's frequent interruptions. To avoid a shouting match, I deferred to him as an older brother until I felt the truth was being clouded. Then I reminded him that I had allowed him to control the discussion so far and now would like to be allowed to make some points without interruption. From then on, the study seemed to be profitable. In this first study, Brother Mason made three glaring objections that we intend to highlight in our study next week. Early on, he suggested that he didn't think it necessary to use Greek in our study. He protested vehemently when I began to outline the history surrounding the issue. Both of these objections are out of character for a preacher from the church of Christ. Both are used to demonstrate denominational departures from God's word. I asked him if he ever preached against instrumental music. He said they were never in the church. I said that was my point about individual cups and multiple crackers. Brother Mason's reasons for avoiding the Greek and the testimony of history are obvious. They expose his position. His third vigorous protest was over the Passover in Ex. 12, before I even read or commented on one verse. Again, what Brother Mason is so hesitant to concede, namely, that the scriptures teach only one lamb (or loaf) per house of worship to represent the body of Christ is vividly portrayed in that chapter. We are to study together again on the same subject next week.

Billy D. Dickinson, 215 Forest Hills Dr., West Monroe, LA 71291, April 10- Thus far I've conducted two meetings this year. In February I was at Deer Park, TX. It was easy to detect among their members a renewed sense of zeal and optimism for future growth. Their attendance has probably doubled in size in the last several months. The Chuck Morris family, formerly of Arlington, TX, is now meeting with them, as well as my parents and my brother,

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Jerry and his family. Also, Wesley Sears moved home the weekend of my meeting. We had a full house most of the services and support from the nearby churches was excellent. In March I held a week's meeting at Edmond, OK. This congregation is blessed to have two dedicated and experienced preachers laboring among them; how rewarding it was to be with James Orten and Edwin Morris! They are also blessed with a fine group of young people who love the Lord and who possess such a sweet disposition. This was perhaps the best meeting I've conducted in a while, from the standpoint of readiness for the meeting and each member doing their part in inviting someone to attend. The first part of the meeting I resided with Dale Ayers and his family; they are wonderful people and I enjoyed getting to know them better. When several young people from elsewhere arrived for the final weekend of the meeting, Dale and Susan gave many of them a place to stay. I also enjoyed staying with James and June Orten the latter part of the meeting. It added to the meeting for my wife, Judy, and daughter, Mandy, to come that last weekend, along with Carolyn and Wendy Elliott. This year is blessed with an abundance of gospel preachers and the presence of Bill Davis, Doug Edwards, Bob Orear, Vance Ayers, and Dennis Smith added to the meeting. I want to say that it was especially good to see Dennis and Nancy Smith; my first opportunity since their return to the States. Dennis seems to be gaining strength daily. In fact, when we went walking at a mall for exercise, I could hardly keep up with him! The meeting ended with three confessions of faults. I preached at Jackson, MS on March 23 and after the service a young man (20 years old) expressed a desire to obey the gospel. After returning to Jackson the following Tuesday and having a study with him, I baptized him into Christ. The month of June promises to be a busy one this month for our area. Wayne Fussell is to be at the Conway congregation June 1-8 and our meeting with Carl Johnson is June 8-15. I am also looking forward to conducting meetings at Ardmore, OK, May 23-25, and Goshen, OH, July 19-27.

Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808
May 20 - February 19-23 we worked with the church at Lowery, AL, which resulted in eleven confessions of faults. It is always a pleasure to return to Lowery and labor among the people there. They are very special to me. This was the first place I visited when as a young man I started traveling with Bro. Homer Gay. Due to my wife's illness I was unable to hold the meetings I had scheduled for March and April. We thank those brethren who have been so considerate in allowing me to reschedule, where possible, the work we had planned. Special thanks to David Smith who conducted the meeting at Linville, OH in my stead, and

the brethren there for their willingness to work with him. May 4-11 I was with the church at Walnut Grove, KY. The meeting closed with three baptisms, two restorations, and four confessions of fault. May 14-18 we were in Kansas City, Mo. (85th) for a good meeting. One was restored to duty. Mike Criswell works here and is esteemed highly for his dedication and ability. The Lord willing we go next to Weatherford, TX May 28-June 1, Bunner Ridge, WV June 8-15, London, KY June 16-22, Marietta, GA July 12-20, and Piedmont, AL July 27-Aug. 3. Please continue to remember us in your prayers.

Felipe A. Bayani, 94-371 Ikepono St., Waipahu, HI, April 17 - I thank God for giving me the privilege to preach the gospel of truth to my kins, friends and others in the Philippines. It is our hope that all of them will be snatched out from sins of errors. I am already home in Hawaii. I am glad to find the church has done its work in worship and teachings throughout the leadership of brother Tomas and two of my sons-in-law. The brethren are so glad and encouraged upon knowing the results of my trip. On our first Sunday in the Philippines, we have our worship service in the house of my sister and her family (they are in the Christian Church) After the service, we invited their preacher, Andres Oloraza, for a Bible study and he did not object our invitation. Our topic is concerning the use of one bread and one cup in the institution of the communion. After much discussions, I invited him to attend the Preachers' meeting (I am one of the lecturer) of the Church of Christ. He came, and during the meeting he admitted that he is in error and accepted the truth. He is now one of the preachers of the Church of Christ. We visited three congregations of the Christian Church, where I preached when I was still with them. Although they are somewhat reluctant to receive us, I have a chance to explain why I left the Christian Church and be able to teach them about the truth. One congregation showed a positive reaction, but they want to learn more, before making a decision. We visited the brethren in Isabela, our province, help them and one was baptized. On our last week, we went to Bro. Enrique Narag's (the converted preacher of the Christian Church through my writings) place where he started preaching, as a result, there were 15 souls baptized. There were the first baptisms in this place. Worship services on the Lord's day had been started in the house of one of the members. My wife taught them how to prepare communion bread. Pray for these new congregations to grow spiritually and numerically, also to their preachers to be always firm in the faith. Brethren, without your support, these should have not been accomplished. The Lord bless you for the continued support to the work in Hawaii and other places where we could expand our works. Thank you very much.

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."

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"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. 7

YOU ARE STANDING ON HOLY GROUND

BY PAUL O. NICHOLS

The title of this article is taken from the incident recorded in Exodus 3:5 when God spoke to Moses while he was shepherding Jethro's sheep. He was transfixed by the scene before him — a bush on fire but not consumed. While standing in amazement, he heard the voice of God command that he remove his shoes because he was on holy ground".

Today if there is ever a time when a man is on "holy ground" it is when he is preaching Christ and Him crucified. Qualifications are specified. The inspired writer says, "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" (2 Tim. 2:2). Peter demanded, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). Preaching and teaching the word of God is a serious matter. The pulpit is no place for frivolity and merrymaking. Theatrics and foolishness are as out of place in the pulpit as a cowbell in a musical concert, and beneath the dignity of a faithful representative of the crucified Christ. No man has a right to profane the pulpit while representing the Saviour of the world. Cuteness and slang may provoke a laugh from the less spiritual, but the more serious disciple of Jesus demands sincerity and evidence that Christ lives in us (Gal. 2:20). Prurient interest may be elicited from the carnally minded with certain Bible subjects unless a preacher chooses with wisdom the words he uses to teach the people. Paul lets us know, "...It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" (Eph. 5:12). A preacher of the word of God ought to have enough judgment and good sense to know what is appropriate and what is not. One does not have to resort to "gutter talk" or the expressions of the unconverted to put over a lesson, even about immorality; or any other sin, for that matter.

When the apostle Paul came to Corinth he determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ, and him crucified (1 Cor. 1:2). This man of God realized although he had the inspired gospel he could handle it in a wrong way and thus nullify its effect. He said he was sent to "preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect" (1 Cor. 1:17). He did not rely on "excellency of speech or of wisdom" of men (1 Cor. 2:1). He said, "Seeing we have such hope we use great plainness of speech" (2 Cor. 3:12). Paul also reminded the Thessalonians, "But as we were allowed men but God,

which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know....nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others..." (1 Thes. 2:4-6). He considered it a privilege and honor to preach, as he called it, "the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (1 Tim. 1:11, 12).

Preaching the word of God was so important the apostle Paul and others wanted to be sure they did it with the right attitude and in the right way. Paul writes, "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, not handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor. 4:1, 2). They knew "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21). And they realized "if our gospel be hid it is hid to them that are lost" (2 Cor. 4:3). These men were aware as we ought to be, "He that winneth souls is wise" (Prov. 11:30). No wonder he wrote, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus our Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake" (2 Cor. 4:5).

With no stretch of the imagination can one who is an honest student of the Bible believe that Christ, Paul, or one of the other apostles would resort to the use of some of the antics of some modern day evangelists — using the pulpit for a political platform, or putting on a performance to entertain the frivolous or worldly minded "fun and games crowd", resorting to theatrics, or using cute or slang expressions, or pithy sayings in preference to quoting scripture. And using plainness of speech does not justify a preacher in the use of language that is offensive to the sensitive ears of the virtuous in the guise that he is preaching the truth. There are proper ways of saying things without resorting to innendos or language that is suggestive. And brethren have a right to demand better of a gospel preacher. In conclusion, may I remind all of us who preach the saving gospel of Christ, it is a wonderful privilege and a great honor for us to be allowed to represent Christ in the world. Let us do it with dignity and with all seriousness. For when we are in the pulpit we are truly on "holy ground."—14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012.

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PUBLISHER

Don L. King
 41931 Chadbourne, Fremont, CA 94539
 Fax 510-651-3926

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

Ronny F. Wade
 P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808

EDITORIAL STAFF

Clovis Cook
 Edwin S. Morris

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Bennie Cryer	Johnny Elmore
Barney Owens	Jerry Dickinson
Billy Dickinson	Kevin Presley
Carl Johnson	

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Editorial

THIS AND THAT

By DON McCORD

Objectionable Sermon Language — Preachers must preach on modest apparel (I Timothy 2:9) modesty both in dress and demeanor for women as well as men. We must remember there is a way to do it without being offensive, our choice of words objectionable. To preach with objectionable language is inexcusable, whether from the pulpit or in private. We can preach on illustrations and expressions. This is sinful. Paul preached on modesty and was in no way objectionable in the way he expressed himself. We dare not preach otherwise.

We can preach boldly against "fornication, adultery, uncleanness, lasciviousness" (Gal. 5:19) and not give a lecture on the so-called "sex education." Paul preached against such practices and did not so lecture. We should emulate him. Preaching otherwise is uncalled-for. It does matter what is preached; it does matter how it is preached. We can preach sound doctrine without being so embarrassingly explicit that we defeat a noble purpose. We thusly sin ourselves and cast a pall of humiliation over our captive audience, and this is the Lord's House. We can preach the truth, the gospel about any issue pertaining to sound doctrine and not offend, I am thoroughly convinced. I find that brethren and sisters appreciate what is called "hard" preaching when it is in love; preach to me, preacher, but don't embarrass me, offend me, whip me, beat me; you please get the truth, in all of its boldness and plainness over to me, in all of its doctrinal soundness; to do otherwise, you defeat your purpose, and turn me off. You might be surprised how many in your audience feel likewise.

Preachers and Meetings - I read and hear such as this too often these days — the reasons some of us preachers do not have many meetings, and are not known far and wide, is because when a preacher is known for being hard on sin, immorality, ungodly living, he becomes "unpopular," and brethren won't call him for meetings. This has unfair implications to say the least. One implication is that the preachers who hold lots of meetings are lax on sound doctrine, and in preaching truths that are needed. I do not believe this. Another implication is that many brethren just call preachers who are lax on sound doctrine to preach for their respective congregations. I do not believe this either. My experience is that the sounder in doctrine you are, the harder you are on sin as a preacher of the gospel, the better brethren like it. Good for them!!

"Big Meeting" Time - Again, summer is here with gospel meetings in many places a highlight of the year in the Kingdom; this is the way it ought to be. Some of the meetings will be "big meetings" - 4th of July, Labor Day. I for one believe in them, promote them, and wish I could attend all of them. When we speak of them, where is our emphasis? This is my point here. Almost without exception, when we speak of "big meetings," our emphasis is on numbers. How many were there; how big was the

continued on page seven

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Is it wrong to invest money in the stock exchange? Is this gambling? (CA)

Answer: In an article in the July 1992 issue of the **Old Paths Advocate** brother Johnny Elmore gave the following definition of gambling taken from the Encyclopedia Britannica "the betting or staking of something of value with consciousness of risk and hope of gain, on the outcome of a game, a contest or an uncertain event whose result may be determined by chance or accident or which may have an unexpected result by reason of the bettor's miscalculation. All elements of the definition are essential." Gambling creates an artificial risk in which the many take from the few. No goods, labor or services result. Gambling is immoral, destructive of character, and born of greed. Some, in an attempt to justify gambling argue that all of life is a risk. Such things as walking across the street, or driving down the highway etc. all involve risk. In financial matters they point out that buying a piece of real estate, believing that its value will appreciate, is a gamble. Some have even declared that farming is a gamble since one doesn't know if the crop will make. Hence, they conclude it is all right to buy a lottery ticket or play cards betting on the outcome. All such reasoning is fallacious and false for the following reasons: It is true that farmers assume a risk when they plant a crop. However, there is effort on their part to produce tangible results through their labors. In gambling no such effort exists. There is no doubt that there is risk involved in buying and selling stocks. Just as there is risk involved in buying a house for re-sale hoping the price will appreciate and turn a good profit. When one invests in the stock of a company, that person has a stake in the company. If the company is successful and profitable, the stock will appreciate. If business turns bad for whatever

reason, the company's value will decrease creating a loss for the investor. There is no artificial risk created in such situations. If the business goes bad all lose. If business is good all profit. In some situations, the individual may even receive a dividend, which is paid to him because he is part owner in the company. As part owner the individual assumes all the risks associated with such a business venture. Stocks, bonds, mutual funds etc. all fall under the umbrella of legitimate investment vehicles and are not comparable to betting at the card table, ball game or lottery store.

Question: Do you contend that it would be alright to prepare juice for the communion from grapes with tomatoes added for enrichment? (AR)

Answer: No, I do not. The juice we prepare and use for the communion should be what the Lord used. The cup taken by Jesus in Mt.26:27 was not empty. It contained the fruit of the vine. (Mt.26:28) The word "fruit" is from a Greek word meaning "offspring, progeny, fruit, produce." (Robinson p. 141) The liquid in the cup used by Jesus was grapejuice, produced by the grapevine. There is no grapevine on earth that produces a mixture of grapejuice and tomato juice. Enrichment or liquid consistency is not the question. What the Lord used and authorizes, however, is. The pure blood of the grape cannot remain the pure blood of the grape if it is mixed with tomatoes or tomato juice. That is not what the Lord took, and we should not take it either. Neither did the Lord use fermented wine. There isn't a vine that produces alcoholic wine. Such wine is the product of fermentation, and is nowhere authorized for use in the Lord's Supper. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811 Springfield, Mo. 65808)

PAGES FROM THE PAST

By DON L. KING



Pictured from left to right: Ronny Wade and Homer L. King

The picture shown on this page was taken in July 1961 at the 4th of July meeting in Sulphur, Oklahoma. Shown standing near the left front of the tabernacle are preaching brethren Homer L. King and Ronny F. Wade. Brother Wade was just twenty-five years of age. Brother King was sixty-nine. One was young in preaching while the other was almost finished. This was Brother King's last 4th of July meeting as an active gospel preacher. In March of 1962 he suffered a severe stroke which made it impossible for him to preach again. Though he lived to be over ninety-one and prayed regularly that he might be able to return to the field, it was never to be.

When this picture was recently given to me, we thought it would be interesting to publish articles written by these brethren about the time the picture was taken. Brother King's article was in the November 1960 OPA. Brother Wade's appeared in March 1961. They are both good writings and worthy of reprinting. We hope you enjoy them.—DLK.

“WHOSE GLORY IS THEIR SHAME”

By RONNY F. WADE

I am sure that you recognize the above words as coming from Paul. Phil. 3:19, “Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” Dr. MacKnight translates the verse as follows: “Of these evil labourers the end is perdition, because their God is their sensual appetites, which to gratify is the object of all their actions. Nay, so profligate are they, that they glory in things which cause shame to them, and mind earthly things only, without any regard to the other world: So that ye should not imitate them.” W.E. Vines defines the word “shame” as follows: “signifies that which should arise from guilt.” We see from the above, that the thought expressed by Paul is this: these people were engaged in things that were shameful, but they were glorying in that shame. A sad condition indeed. However, there are many religious people today that practice things forbidden by the Word, and glory in them. Let us notice a few.

“Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a SHAME for a woman to speak in the church” (I Cor. 14:34-35). Now that is plain enough isn't it? Paul said they are commanded to be silent. But today in many religious bodies they glory in their women preachers. They laugh the Apostle of God to scorn for being so old fashioned. Some even brand him a “woman hater.” And then with nothing but human reason and worldly wisdom as their guide they brush aside a divine injunction and GLORY IN THEIR SHAME. Paul said it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church, do you believe it brother? Hear him again: “Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence” (I Tim. 2:11-12). From the above, does it befit anyone to glory in their women preachers and teachers? I will tell you brethren, if I belonged to a group of people who allowed women to preach in the pulpit or in some side room I would be so ASHAMED of my SHAME that I would do something about it. Some brethren try and evade the plain teaching of the Apostle by claiming that it does not apply today, or by saying that the elders have the right to give a woman permission to teach. If that be the case I presume an elder could give a woman the right to transgress any other plain command. No, a thousand times no! Brethren, wake up. You who practice a system that will allow a woman to do something Paul said for her not to do—change your ways,

and return to the Bible. I will close this portion of my remarks with MacKnight's translation of I Cor. 14:40 “Let all things be done decently and in order in your religious assemblies: the spiritual men avoiding envy and strife; and the women being silent.”

Next we would like to notice a scripture in I Cor. 11:6 “For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.” If you continue reading you will find that the Apostle comes to these two conclusions 1—It is a SHAME for a woman to be shorn or shaven, and 2—It is a SHAME for a man to have long hair. This is a touchy subject, I realize. Some of my good brethren disagree with me on it, however, I feel compelled to mention it at this time. It has actually gotten to the point that some sisters in the church GLORY IN THEIR SHAME. It is amazing how many women cut their hair today and think nothing about it. Let me tell you, sisters, everytime you cut your hair you disobey a divine commandment. It is a SHAME for you to do it. Here is something for you to think about: In Cor. 14:35, Paul said it was a SHAME for a woman to speak in church. In I Cor. 11:6, he said it was a SHAME for a woman to be shorn or shaven. The word “SHAME” in both places is from the same Greek word and means the same in both places. Now, sisters, if you can cut your hair, tell me why you cannot teach????? Think about it. If it is a shame to do the one it is a shame to do the other. Don't GLORY IN YOUR SHAME!

For our last thought let us go to Rev. 3:18, “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the SHAME of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see.” It will not be long now until summer, and with it people will start pulling off their clothes. May the Lord help us to learn that nakedness is a SHAME, and when people run around without enough clothes on it is shameful. But did you know, many people GLORY IN IT? In fact it appears that some see just how much they can pull off. Notice I Tim. 2:9, “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.” May the Lord help us all to adorn ourselves modestly.

In conclusion let me say this: May we never be guilty of claiming glory from those things, that are actually a shame to us.—OPA 1961.

WALKING WITH GOD

By HOMER L. KING

The basis of this short article is found in Genesis 5:22-24, thus: “And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: **** And Enoch Walked With God, and he was not, for God took him.” Enoch walked with God, not merely for a day, a week, a month, or a year, but he walked for

three hundred years, and as a result of his walking with God, God took him. The word walk is a verb that denotes action - it is not a sitting posture, but one of moving, travelling, advancing. There are many words of action that describe the Christian life, as we may find in the New Testament, but we are concerned primarily with one of

them, namely the verb "walk."

Turning now to Paul's statement to the Phillippians (3:16-17), which reads: "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example." Notice that Paul instructed the brethren here to "walk by the same rule." The word "rule" means "a standard or guide; maxim or precept; government; law or regulation; cannon" - Webster. Thus, we are told how to walk, so as to please God, for He has given the standard, the guide, or the law. Notice, too, that Paul said in this connection, "let us mind the same thing." The only way this can be for a group of individuals, is for all to adopt the same rule, the same standard, guide, law, or regulation. We shall never be able to all walk together, in unity, so long as we assume that we have the liberty to each of us make our own rule, our own standard, guide or regulation, for there would be about as many human rules as we have individuals, hence we would be walking in many directions, standards, or ways. There is but one way for us to have unity here, and that is for all of us to discard our ways, our standards, and our guides, then all adopt and follow the Lord's guide or standard, which is, of course, the New Testament Scriptures as our only rule of faith and practice. Bible readers know that God has not given man the liberty to make his own standard, or are there as many standards as we have denominations in the world, so as to accommodate the new idea of some preachers that there are Christians in all churches, which would necessitate as many ways of salvation and as many standards of living, the worship, and of the work of the church, as there are denominations in the world? What standard did these people in the denominations obey to become Christians? Can a human arrangement substitute for God's divine arrangement? Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Do you tell Jesus, that error will make us free? How dare you! Paul said, "Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."

May we notice the how to walk. There are many references in the New Testament, telling us how to walk so as to please God as follows: Positively speaking we are to "walk in the newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). He is to "walk after the Spirit" or "by the Spirit" (Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:16). We are to "walk in Jesus the Lord" (Col. 2:6). To have fellowship with God we must "walk in the light, as he is in the light" (1 Jno. 1:7). The child of God is to "walk becomingly (honestly, KJV)" (Rom. 13:13). Second Corinthians 5:7 tells us that we are to "walk by faith." Those called by God are to "walk worthily of the calling" (Eph. 4:1). It is God's will that His children "walk in good works" (Eph. 2:10), as well as "in love" (Eph. 5:2), "in

wisdom" (Col. 4:5), and "in truth" (2 Jno. 4). The Apostle John also said that Christians should "walk after his (God) commandments" (2 Jno. 6). If we say we abide in Him then we "ought to walk even as He walked" (1 Jno. 2:6).

How we may not walk: Not only are we told how to walk, but there are some ways we must not walk. Hence, we look at this verb "walk" from the negative point of view, which shows that the Christian is not to walk, "not in revelling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy (Rom. 13:13). Therefore, we are not able to "walk after the flesh" (Rom. 8:4), or "after the manner of men" (1 Cor. 3:3). We are not to "walk in craftiness" (2 Cor. 4:2). The child of God is not to "walk by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7). Paul admonished Christians not to "walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of their minds" (Eph. 4:17). Finally, Christians are not to "walk disorderly" (2 Thess. 3:6).

Conclusions: It is obvious from the above many references regarding the verb, "walk," that we do not have a "do-nothing" religion, for the Christian is presented as being in action. How great is that field of action! We have many unworked fields waiting for men of action. The "Macedonian call" comes ringing in clarion tones upon our ears to "come over and help us, not only across the water, but here in our own land. There are portions of America where we have never gone. How can we sit idly by while those calls continue to disturb our ears (or do they disturb?) and our hearts? I am convinced by my experience in the past six months among the churches, that there is the crying need for faithful gospel preachers who will give full time to "walking" with God, not sitting. Now, I do not wish to be misunderstood as advocating that part of the nation to another. I believe that a preacher can "walk with God," and yet labor in one state, one county, or one city, but we need to be walking. There needs to be some "going." We must not neglect the work already begun. We must not let it die. Who will go into Belgium, into Mexico, into Africa, or into the various New England states?

As we contemplate the how to walk, may we be willing to walk so as to please God, thus by the same rule, minding the same things. Not by a rule or set of rules you want to make to suit your fancy, for then we cannot "all walk by the same rule" - we cannot walk in unity, and I would like to walk in unity, in fellowship, and in light, with my brethren. I must insist that if we walk together, we will have to walk by the same rule, "walk in the good way, ask for the old paths, and walk therein," that we may "find rest" for our souls (Jer. 6:16), and so long as I am able to walk, it will be in those old paths. I am fully and firmly committed to the divine rule, and "I shall not be moved." OPA 1960

"CALL JESUS, LORD, AND BE SAVED (?)"

By VIRGILIO O. DANA, SR.

"Regardless of your religious affiliation, if you sincerely believe and call Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, you shall be saved," a preacher of a denomination announced in his radio program. But I honestly and humbly disagree! I will share with you why I make such a statement.

At the outset, since Jesus is believed, recognized and acknowledged by almost all God-fearing people today, (and so they continue to pray and call Him as their Lord and Saviour) let us go to Him and ask Him this question: "Lord, is it true that if we sincerely call on you as our Lord and

Saviour, we will be saved?"

Through His written words, Jesus answers us; listen, for He says: "Not every one who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven'" (Matt. 7:21). It is obvious, clear as crystal, that not all who call Jesus as Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, or be saved. However, we are told by Him to do the will of His Father in heaven. The point is: If we call Him, Lord, and at the same time do His Father's will, we will be able to enter the kingdom of heaven.

In our quest for truth, accompanied with our honest desire to be saved, we then go to the Father, and ask him, "Lord, we are told by your Son, Jesus, that when we pray and call Him, Lord, we are to do your will to be able to enter your kingdom. We request you, we pray, please tell us your will."

In Matthew 17:5, the last part of this verse, we read His answer. Our Father in heaven tells us, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased. Hear Him." What is the will of the Father? For us TO HEAR HIM, or be in total subjection to Him, His only begotten Son.

Our desire to be saved motivates us to go back to Christ, and again we ask Him, "Lord, we went to the Father and inquired of Him His will for us to do, so that when we pray and call you Lord, Lord, you will grant us the privilege to enter into the kingdom of heaven. But He told us to hear you. So, we came back to you."

Then immediately our Lord says, "But why do you call Me, Lord, Lord and do not do the things which I say... If you love Me keep my commandments" (Luke 6:46; John 14:15). This is where the problem lies, because although we call Him "Lord, Lord", we, sometimes, do not want to do the things He tell us to do.

Many honest God-fearing people unknowingly come short of this. Their great belief in Christ as Lord and Saviour of all, clouded their understanding, and so they miss one important thing that should go together with faith! To obtain salvation, one should let faith and obedience go together. Arithmetically, faith plus obedience equals salvation ($F + O = S$). In James 2:24, 26, we read: "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only... For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." Paul adds, "And having been perfected, He (Christ - vod) became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him"; (Heb. 5:9). But obedience demands works —doing what one is told to do. The essence of this, therefore, mandates us to do the commandments of Christ to prove we really love Him, and we are in total subjection to Him, because we want to be saved. And so, this encourages us to ask a follow-up question of Christ, "Lord, what are your commandments? Please, tell us the things that lead to life everlasting."

Of course, there are many commandments of Jesus Christ. But since we are interested in His command that leads us to life, listen to what He says, "Enter by the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which LEADS TO LIFE, and there are few who find it" (Matt. 7:13-14; emphasis mine —void). ENTER BY THE NARROW GATE is a positive command of the Lord. But why

enter? Because this way LEADS US TO LIFE. And we are interested with this way —gate, door,— because the moment we are in it, we have obeyed the command of Christ, and at the same time complied with the will of the Father in heaven, so when we pray and call Jesus, "Lord, Lord," He will grant us the privilege to enter into the kingdom of heaven, and be saved!

But still we are confused because of the existence of doors, or ways! So, again, we ask the Lord, "We do not know which way to follow, because there are so many ways before us. Which way, gate or door, are we to enter?"

And the Lord replied, 'Most assuredly I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All whoever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enter by Me, he shall be saved...' (John 10:7-9). We should not be confused! For Christ clearly declares He Himself is the door —the way. And He told us to enter by it in order to be saved, and have life.

"But Lord, how can we come to you if you are the door," we perhaps would reason out immediately. "In the first place, you are no longer here with us physically, for you have already ascended to heaven; and secondly, even if you are here on earth, how can we personally and possibly walk into your physical body?" Of course, we did not understand the Lord when He said, "I AM THE DOOR." The Bible clearly teaches us about the two bodies of Christ: First, His physical body —Who was born of a woman, grew as a man like us; nailed at the cross; buried, but in the third day rose from the grave, and ultimately ascended to heaven. Secondly, His spiritual body, which is the Church. Paul wrote: "And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to His Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him Who fills all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23). Also, read Colossians 1:18, 24.

Which of these bodies of Christ is the door, or way, we are commanded to enter to have life and be saved? If we can not walk into His physical body, especially that He is no longer with us physically, obviously, we are commanded to enter "the door", "the way", His spiritual body, the Church. But to be able to walk into His spiritual body, we must become members of the Church, through our humble obedience to Christian baptism. Once we are members of the Church, we have obtained the promise of salvation, because Christ Himself is the saviour of His spiritual body, which is the Church (Eph. 5:23).

In short, the moment we become members of the Church, we obeyed Christ's command, and at the same time complied with the will of the Father in heaven, and so when we call Jesus as Lord and Savior, He will surely grant us the privilege to "enter into the kingdom of heaven", or bestow on us the promise of salvation. Furthermore, Jesus said, "If you abide in Me, and my words abide in you ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you (John 15:7). To abide in Christ means to be in His spiritual body, His Church; and to abide in His words, also applies to our complete —without reservation, nor addition and subtraction— humble submission to all the laws and ordinances of the Church of Christ.

Sincerely believing and calling Jesus as Lord and Savior is not at all a guarantee for salvation. True, this is one of the prerequisites. But we have to completely submit ourselves to Him, for this is the will of His Father in heaven.

And as already pointed out, to completely submit ourselves to Christ means to become faithful members of the Church, the ONLY WAY that leads us to heaven. Entering and following another door, or way, is a very dangerous spiritual

option, for Christ Himself warns, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber" (John 10:1).

THIS AND THAT

continued from page 2

crowd? We are too concerned about numbers. They impress us, sometimes depress us. When the crowds are big, we are up; when they are small we are down. This ought not to be. How often is it that we hear such as this, not very often! How about the preaching, singing, praying, but I hear how big or how small the crowds are, the numbers. I contend this is the wrong emphasis. Let us put the emphasis where it belongs whether the meeting is what we may call a "big meeting", or a "little meeting" in some little out-of-the-way place where dear brethren struggle constantly to keep the faith, keep the meeting house doors open, and save the lost. Let us place the emphasis where it belongs for spiritual betterment.

Division - divorce, remarriage - In the 1960s, remember that decade of decadence? — A division occurred that should have never happened, as is true of all divisions. Having lived through this, and as I look back, I conclude there was fault on all sides; I am willing to accept any blame due me in this matter. We are now and will likely to the end of the age reap the whirlwind. Apparently, some thought a division on divorce and remarriage would take care of an admitted problem. We have seen with our own eyes that such was not and is not the case. On all sides, yes, on all sides, there is more divorce and remarriage, broken homes, than before. So, those who do not believe Matt. 19:9 applies, and those who do, are divided yet, and for no scriptural, logical reason. Even the scourge of AIDS has invaded both sides; isolated, but nonetheless invaded. There is nothing right about all this; the division has resoundingly backfired; no justifiable excuse or reason can

be cited. Those responsible must stand guilty before God and man!

AIDS and the communion cup - For years some have been afraid to use one cup in the communion as the Scriptures teach, using a sanitation argument supposed. It was tuberculosis, the common cold, flu and now AIDS. Let it be remembered, no one gets AIDS at the Lord's Table; no one need fear the cup in this respect. As part of my classroom curriculum in the public schools, it is my responsibility to teach young people about AIDS and the HIV virus responsible. "The Great Body Shop," approved and adopted, is our study guide; I conclude this brief, pointed, revealing quote: "saliva kills HIV." The reader can draw your own conclusion. I for one am tired of the flimsy, baseless, worn-out supposed argument that diseases are spread by the use of one cup on the Lord's Table. Sheer nonsense!! The Lord would not set us an example, and punish us for following it. God knows what He is doing! When will men ever learn that?

Division to solve our congregational problems - We seem to have the mistaken idea that when problems arise in the congregation the thing to do is divide and start somewhere else. This was never recommended, suggested, commanded in the Book. When Paul was advising, rebuking, admonishing about all the troubles at Corinth, he never mentioned dividing to those people as a way to solve their problems. When Christ wrote the letters to the seven churches (Rev. 2, 3), where there were problems, he never recommended dividing; He did tell them consistently to repent; He did threaten to remove the candlestick (lamp stand); that is, cease recognizing them as one of His. Could the lamp stand be removed, and we do not know it? Serious thought, indeed!!! — Box 1773, Covina, CA 91722.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHURCH DIRECTORY HOUSTON, TX

SUNSET HEIGHTS—Larry Ballard and Harvey Hammonds. Change Area Code from (713) to (281).

LOOKING FOR A PREACHER

Spring Valley CHURCH OF CHRIST, Wayne County, West Virginia (near Huntington, WV). Is looking for a preacher to work with us. He would be expected to: participate in the teaching, hold studies, help rescue the backsliders, help upgrade the teaching, support the services with his presence, help the church to grow in general. All other things will be negotiable. All who are interested should submit a resume to: Spring Valley CHURCH OF CHRIST, %2907 Rt. 75, Huntington, West Virginia 25704.

FREE SONG BOOKS

The congregation at 79th and Kansas City, Kansas City, KS still has a large number of song books that we are will-

ing to share with others just for the cost of shipping. We no longer need them ourselves, and we would be happy to see that they are being used by others. We have already shared some with brethren in Hawaii, Oklahoma, and Tennessee. If you are interested just write and let us know how many to send and what title. Please send an alternate title in case we do not have the first one you specify.—Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012.

THANK YOU!

I would like to thank the brotherhood for the concern shown to my family and myself. My health suffered drastically after picking up an amoeba in Russia. I have nearly died three times in the past year because of a weakened immune system. However, because of the many prayers on my behalf, I am still alive and have had some improvement. There are many things we have to deal with on a daily basis, but our hardships have been lessened by the love of the many brothers and sisters in Christ who are always willing to give their help when it is needed. Please remember us when you pray.—Gary D. Weaver.

MEET BRO. ANTHONY BROCKETT

The congregation of the Church of Christ in Ada, Oklahoma would like to announce to the brotherhood that Bro. Anthony Brockett has entered into the evangelistic field. Bro. Anthony was willing to give up his job as a high school teacher to give his life to the preaching of the gospel on a full time basis.



Anthony is married to the former Tina McBride. They have two young children. Tina and Anthony have been married for over five years.

Anthony is 26 years old, having been a lifelong member of the church at Ada. He has been a congregational teacher for about 12 years as well as having considerable preaching experience for other congregations including holding gospel meetings. It is his desire to find a congregation that has a will to work and can use his help.

If your congregation is in need of the services of Bro. Anthony Brockett either for a gospel meeting or in an extended located work he can be reached at (405) 436-2331 or Rt. 6, Box 348, Ada, OK 74820.

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

Cating-Harris - On the evening of May 30th, a host of friends and relatives gathered in the beautiful backyard of Dave and Jewell Bowlan to witness the marriage of Jimmy Cating and Bretta Harris. Jimmy is the son of Elsie Hawkins of English, Indiana, and Bretta is the daughter of Jerry and Beverly Harris of Norman, Ok. It was a special treat for me to officiate this wedding because of my friendship with all of the parties involved. It has been my privilege to worship with Jimmy and Elsie in the Marengo, Indiana area for four years and see him develop into a fine gospel preacher. I also count Jerry, Beverly, and Bretta as good friends having known them for several years. It is a real blessing for our world when two Christians unite in marriage. A Christian couple exudes light in a world full of darkness. The singing was beautiful and done by Greg Pruitt, Greg Harris, Aaron Risener, Michael Howard, Johanna Gibson, Kelly Ayers, Anita Kuchera, and Lisa Smith. May God bless their new home, and may it be a refreshing oasis in this desert world of sin—Doug Edwards.

OUR DEPARTED

BLAKELY - On April 12, 1997, Brother William H. Blakely of the Eastside Church of Christ in Rolla, Missouri departed this life less than 24 hours after going to the hospital. He was 55 years of age. His departure reminds us of the uncertainty of life and the importance of being faithful unto death. He had been a faithful member of the Lord's church for less than two years. He and his wife, Charlotte, after learning the Truth, left digression and began meeting scripturally in their home. Soon, they

began driving to Rolla, one of the closest congregations, some 1 1/2 hours away. Shortly after that, they moved to the area to be nearer the place of worship and the brethren. They were there nearly every time the door was open. Bill's "hunger and thirst" for the Truth and his willingness to abide by it, was an encouragement to the whole congregation. He had suffered for some time with illness (M.S., diabetes), yet was always ready to do what he could in service for the Lord. Bill is survived by his wife, Charlotte, of 32 years, two daughters, Angela and Christine, one son, Billy, and two granddaughters. He will be greatly missed by his family and all the brothers and sisters in Christ who were blessed in knowing him. The writer conducted the service, assisted by Bro. Ron Alexander. His body was laid to rest in the Wishon Cemetery. This is a beautiful little country cemetery just down the road from the church building.—Gary D. Weaver.

FULLER- Bro. Evans Fuller departed this life May 14, after a long illness of lung cancer. He was a faithful member of the Madison St. Church of Christ here in Athens, AL. He continued to teach at the worship services until he was no longer able to attend; then he would talk about the great God we serve, and how he looked forward to the time that he would cross over to the other side. His faithful wife, Shirley was so great a help to him; and others that gathered around his bed side at his death was able to clearly see their love for each other, and their hope in Jesus of being together with all the faithful in eternity. His funeral was at the Peoples Funeral Home, with Bro. Kirk Parker leading the large crowd in singing, and the writer tried to speak words of comfort to the family.—Bobby Pepper.

CAMP- Mary Morgan Camp was born January 9, 1912 and departed this life May 28, 1997. Mary was a longtime member of the Sanderfer Road Church of Christ here in Athens, AL. She loved the church, and would always be an encouragement to those that would come to visit her. She is survived by two sons, Buddy O'Neal, Michael O'Neal of Birmingham, AL, and one daughter, Mitzi Millsaps of Destin, FL; 7 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Funeral services were at McConnell Memorial Chapel here in Athens, AL. It was a honor to speak words of comfort and exhortation to those that gathered in her memory.—Bobby J. Pepper.

ROY- Sister Dorothy Roy passed away April 27, 1997 in Bakersfield, California, being 83 years of age. She was preceded in death by her son, Haskel, and her husband, Bill Roy in the early sixties. Her son was Dorothy and Bill's only child and passed away at the age of 37. Dorothy leaves several nieces: Doris Fox, Sylvia Hines, Deloris Oxford, Katherine Pannell, Sue Ledford. Also nephews: Earl Hanna, Darrel Garison, Tom Leeds, Jim Leeds; a brother, Edward Leeds of San Leandro, CA. Dorothy was in declining health for several years, having two heart operations. She was an inspiration in so many ways to members of the church. Her faithful attendance to every service of the church and gospel meetings, her stand for the right in worship and work. She was uncomplaining in her suffering, patient in enduring, optimistic in everything

important to us as Christians. She loved to hear the gospel preached boldly without fear or favor. A special tribute to Brenda Terwilliger for allowing Dorothy to live in her home the last years of her life. This writer endeavored to speak words of tribute about her, and warning to those present. I was asked years ago to speak at the memorial service of this good woman. Brethren and friends were present to pay respect for her. She is buried in the Shafter Cemetery near Shafter, California awaiting the resurrection day.—Richard DeGough.

OFFILL - Viola Geneva Offill was born June 26, 1915 at Burnett, Texas, and departed this life April 9, 1997 in Eugene, Oregon. She was 81 at the time of her death. On August 13, 1933 she was married to Frank Offill in Johnson City, Texas. He passed away April 8, 1987. They had lived together as husband and wife for those many years approaching their 54th wedding anniversary. She is survived by four sons: Bobby and Dennis, both of Springfield, Oregon; Billy, of Tangent, Oregon; and David of Eugene, Oregon; eight grandchildren; sixteen great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren. A son, Carlon, and five grandchildren died previously. In 1931 she obeyed the Gospel when she was 15 or 16 years old, being baptized into Christ in a rock tank at Dripping Springs, Texas. As far as my human knowledge is concerned, she died as a faithful Christian with her name written in the book of life. She lived in Bakersfield, Calif., for 25 years before moving to Oregon in 1975. In Oregon, she lived in Cottage Grove, Albany, and Springfield. As a homemaker, and while she raised 5 boys one and one grandson, she worked making dresses and doing alterations. Her children tell me that she was always busy with what she considered were the most important things in life. Those things were the church and her home. These were her priorities. The boys didn't have to tell me that. I knew it by my own association with her. In having known her, she has been a blessing and an encouragement to my life. But, her life makes me think of the scripture: "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her" (Prov. 31:28). She is missed by her family, by the church, and by others who also loved her. The writer conducted services at the Major Fredericksen Funeral Home in Springfield, Oregon April 11th, 1997.—Gayland Osburn.

TAYLOR - Edith Irene "Renie" Taylor was born May 29, 1917 at Leonard, OK and expired at Midland, TX May 26, 1997. She had been a member of the church for more than sixty years, and many of her family members are faithful to the Lord's church, as well. Her good husband for more than sixty-one years, A.B., and seven children survive her. She was blessed with a host of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. We will miss Renie at Midland quite extensively. The influence this pious woman wielded will be felt for many years. Her son, Harold Taylor, plans to become an elder in the near future. One of our deacons at Midland is married to her granddaughter, Pam Brickey. Kevin Taylor, another of her grandsons, is a teacher for the church at Midland. Her life was truly a testimony of what a godly mother should be. Resembling Hannah of old, she loved the Lord with all her being and shared that love with her family. May God be with Brother Taylor

who is left behind to grieve her departure. It was my honor to speak a message to a great host of people gathered to praise her memory. Please remember the Taylor family in prayer.—P. Duane Permenter.



Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808, June 4 - Just returned from a very enjoyable meeting in Weatherford, Texas. One was restored to duty. It was good to have preaching brethren Melvin Blalock, Joe Norton, and Aaron Risner present for one or more services. I made my home with Truman and Jean Evitt, friends of long standing, who were kind and generous in their care of me. The Lord willing we go next to Bunner Ridge, WV June 8-15, London, KY June 16-22, Marietta, GA July 12-20, Piedmont, AL July 27-Aug. 3, Red Oak, TX Aug. 10-17, and Ozark, MO Aug. 18-24. We look forward to all these meetings. Alfreda continues to make progress, for which we thank God. Continue to remember us to the Father.

Douglas T. Hawkins, HCR 3 Box 203-C, Rocky Mount, MO 65072 - We just closed a very enjoyable meeting in Mt. Home, AR. The meeting closed with two confessions, a restoration, and a baptism. It was very enjoyable to spend the week working with Bruce Roebuck. He continues to do a great work in that area. He is certainly worthy of our respect as a dedicated preacher of the gospel. I very much appreciated the hospitality of Darryl and Lucy Haun. They are very dear friends. All the people in Mt. Home have become so dear to us. This year was our fifth meeting. It's just like going home now. Brett Hickey and his family were with us in May to hold a mission meeting in Camdenton, MO. There were several outside visitors at the meeting of which one seems very interested in studying further. Brett did some great preaching, and we certainly esteem and appreciate him for his work sake. Recently, I heard Alan Bonifay at Buffalo, MO. He too did a great job preaching on recognizing and overcoming temptation. After the fourth of July meeting, we begin a busy month of meetings. We leave for Pearlhaven, MS to begin July 6th-13th. From there we will go to Pansey, AL July 20-27th. Come be with us if you can. Pray for us.

Bennie T. Cryer, 2340 Sanguinetti Ln. #104, Stockton, CA 95205, June 9 - We enjoyed working with the Fremont, CA congregation in a series of meetings April 20-27. There was one confession of faults. It was a pleasure to work with Don King in another effort. We enjoyed the hospitality of the Weldon Offill home while there. The

several studies we have here in the Stockton congregation continues. Our meeting with Bro. Duane Permenter begins June 15 and goes on through the 22nd. We are looking forward to this meeting and being with Duane again. We begin a meeting July 6 at the Chapel Grove congregation in Tennessee. It will close the 13th. We are sorry to hear that Leo Burns, one of the elders there, is not doing too well healthwise. Pray for him and his wife, Bernice. May God bless all of you.

P. Duane Permenter, P.O. Box 80687, Midland, TX 79708, May 30 - The meeting at Duncanville was delightful and I appreciated seeing friends from other places attending. Brother Tommy Turner of late baptized his daughter, Ramie here at Midland. It is gratifying to see godly parents guiding their children to the Lord and then seeing them obey the gospel. Sister Renie Taylor recently passed away after a few weeks in the hospital. She and her husband, A.B. were married for more than sixty-one years. They have lived here in Midland for nearly all their married life. I enjoyed attending the last two days of the New Testament Study in Irving, TX. We commend and appreciate the brethren for all the hard work that they put into the study at Irving. Our work continues to progress here at home. It is genuinely a privilege to labor and work among such commendable people. May God bless the faithful everywhere. Please remember us when praying.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012, May 29 - We are looking forward to our meeting at 79th and Kansas Ave., Kansas City, KS with Joe Hisle which begins June 8. We are expecting visitors from various places. The Lord willing, I leave for Blue Springs, KY the day after tomorrow to begin a meeting on Lord's day. Wilma recently had gallbladder surgery, her seventh operation. She is doing fine, but is not able to travel yet. I am looking forward to working with the Lee's Summit brethren and Irvin Barnes in the annual Lebanon, MO meeting June 26-July 3. We are expecting large crowds as usual, wonderful singing, sound gospel preaching, and good Christian fellowship. If you attend you will return home spiritually uplifted. Why not plan to come? The Lord bless the faithful everywhere.

Don McCord, Box 1773, Covina, CA 91722 - The church here does well; not as well as we ought to be doing. We have sweet peace; among our faults and failings, dissension is not one of them. Matt Trently lately baptized one of our young men. When thinking of promising young men in the pulpit, do not forget to include Chad Sampanes. Brady McCord here is one of the best in expository preaching that I know; his life he lives everyday as husband, father, son, is an inspiration. Forgive please if a bias may show—not intended. I have lately benefited from hearing Raymond and Michael Fox at Montebello. Of late it has been my privilege to preach at San Marcos, Orange and El Cajon in this state. In April, it was my privilege and joy

to hold a meeting at Fossil Creek, Ft. Worth, memorable for me. What an exemplary congregation! Making my home with Lloyd and LaRue Cox was unforgettable joy for me. What a group of young people! My next will be Spring Valley, W. VA; Houston, TX; Golden, OK. Here, our next meetings will be with Billy Orten, Don King, James Orten, et al. Johnny Fisher enroute to Oregon preached to us commendably Wednesday night. What a worthy man! Larry Lay continues to preach for us, a blessed man with such a faithful wife, sons and parents. Taylor Joyce, with all of his eloquence and sincerity, preaches for us June 1. I am still so grateful to brothers and sisters who let me do what I love to do best, try to preach the everlasting gospel. The rumor reached me that I had "retired" from the pulpit; no, not as long as I have strength, sense enough, and somebody to listen.

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820, June 2 - We just closed an excellent meeting here at Ada with Allen Bailey. The meeting resulted in two baptisms and several confessions of faults. Since my last report I have conducted meetings at Eldon, MO, Lexington, OK, Odom, MO and Bridgeport, TX. The meeting at Eldon was my first time there and we had a good meeting. We had excellent attendance from the community and surrounding congregations. I stayed with Doug and Lori Hawkins during the meeting and enjoyed them very much. I have known Doug since he was about ten years old and it's gratifying to see the excellent preacher he has become. The Lexington meeting was also a good one. The brethren there are old friends of ours and it was a pleasure to be with them again. The same can be said for our meeting at the Odom. I enjoyed my stay with Jim and Jessie Howard. The Odom possesses great potential for growth right now with a good crop of young people and the infusion of re-dedicated, talented members. I enjoyed the meeting at Bridgeport also. James and June Vannoy obviously did a lot of work to get the folks from the community to attend the meeting, and with the exception of the first night our crowds were very good. My schedule for the new few months includes: West Monroe, LA (June 8-15); Ash Camp, WV (July 13-20); Lee's Summit, MO (Aug. 9-17); Chapel Grove, TN (Labor Day Meeting-Aug. 27-31); Mountain Home, MO (Oct. 5-12); Kansas City, KS (36th & Everett—Oct. 15-19); Lodi, CA (Nov. 1-9); Orange, CA (Nov. 10-16); and Seminole, OK (Dec. 5-7).

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, June 12 - We closed at La Grange, GA on June 8. I enjoyed the meeting as much as any I can recall. Crowds were pretty good through the week and built to a nearly full house by the week end. I stayed with Alton and Florence Bailey, as always, and couldn't have been treated better. It was good to be with them again. We were invited into a number of homes for meals and appreciated the hospitality at each place. We were glad to have Kevin Presley for one night and perhaps other preachers as well. Thirty-

seven years ago I went to La Grange with my father when he did the preaching. I made friends which have lasted to the present day. We were thankful that two made confessions of wrong during the meeting and pray that lasting good was done. We look forward to going back in two or three years. It will soon be time to leave for the 4th of July meeting. Lord willing, we will visit the Lebanon, MO meeting before going to McAlester, (Blue congregation) and Muskogee, Oklahoma for meetings. It was our pleasure to be at both places last year and we appreciate the invitation to go back. The church at home is at peace and doing well. Our younger men are improving as teachers and song leaders. We are thankful for them. Remember us when you pray.

James C. Franklin, Jr., P.O. Box 573, Blantyre, Malawi, Africa - There seems to be no let up insofar as the work in this part of Africa is concerned. Only physical and financial limitations hinder us here. I arrived back in Blantyre on the 14th of this month after spending three weeks with the brethren in Zimbabwe. We visited congregations in the areas of Harare, Beatrice, Gokwe and Karoi. There were 46 baptisms: 22 in Harare, 5 in Beatrice, 5 in Gokwe and 14 in Karoi. As previously reported, I am trying to assist the work in Zimbabwe in addition to the work in Malawi and Mozambique. This we will probably do until arrangements are made for some congregation to be responsible for the work and send someone there. We have had some responses to our appeal to the American brethren for financial assistance for the Zimbabwean preachers. There are a few more details to work out with some about the support. But, as soon as everything is settled, we will make a full report to all brethren concerned. If the Lord be willing, we will begin our studies for preachers and leaders in Malawi and Mozambique the 2nd of May. There are twenty-two meetings scheduled. We have tried to arrange to conduct these studies in the different districts so that all congregations can be represented. In addition to these special studies, we will continue to hold gospel meetings with as many congregations as we possibly can. As in the past, we will be giving preference to newly established congregations. Of course, we will also try to encourage those who have been meeting for years because we certainly do not want to see the work start diminishing. Rains were very heavy in our area of Africa during the normal rainy season. While rains have been good for crops in most areas, it has been devastating in dambo areas and low areas like the lower Shrine River Valley. Here the river and its tributaries overflowed, wiping out crops and sending people living in villages on the banks of the streams running to higher ground. High ground was too far for some. Some drowned. Crocodiles followed the water away from the main stream of the river. They killed cattle and goats that were stranded by the water. They also took a toll on humans. Most of the people they consumed were those who had drowned. But, this was not always the case. Standing in or near the Shire can be fatal.

Such is life in Africa. There have been many deaths recently in Malawi. A large number of families in the church have lost loved ones. Among those who have lost members of the family is Bro. Stephen Kasenda and his wife. They lost their only son, Arnold. He was thirty-two, married and the father of two children. At the present time, there is a strike taking place by civil servants who are demanding a 300% increase in their salaries. Government hospitals are shut down and people are being refused treatment, no matter how sick they may be. People are dying for lack of treatment. Until next report, may God richly bless.

Brett Hickey, P.O. Box 6506, Ventura, CA 93003, June 3, 1997 - Our trip to central Missouri was a spiritual boost for Louise and I. Doug and Lori Hawkins extended to us and half-a-dozen others, "hospitality without grudging." Our respect and admiration for them as a team grew even more from our stay. The tent meeting in Camdenton was one of many attempts in the region by Doug and the Lebanon congregation to tap into communities where there is no faithful church. They have been having three to five tent meetings every summer. They must be considered a success as outsiders attend every meeting. We must have meetings to strengthen our members, but if we are going to preach to the lost, we may have to complement our usual meetings with some of these old-fashioned methods. Doug could not possibly arrange this type of meeting on his own. Several brethren from Lebanon contributed their time and expertise to set the tent up and to insure that services went smoothly. Congregations, like Lebanon, with an unselfish desire to spread the gospel even (and especially) when it does not benefit their number directly, are to be commended. These congregations are the ones making the difference here and abroad. Cold, wet weather worked against us a couple of nights, but our main goal was realized—alien sinners heard the gospel. I counted six non-Christians, but there may have been more. A young Baptist couple attended, a couple from that believe there are prophets today, a lady who used to belong to the Worldwide Church of God, and a lady who came with a brother from the area. Hopefully, the gospel seed will sink down into honest hearts. Clovis Cook preached Wednesday night as we were at Cable Ridge. We are thankful the Lord has blessed him to be so strong for so long. It encourages younger preachers to see older preachers go the distance. Clovis and Wilma came several nights. Ron Alexander came a couple nights. Jim and Nellie Hickey spent the final weekend with us. As promised, a number of people came from Mtn. Home to see us and to support our efforts. Area congregations showed their interest as well. In fact, we had such a good turnout Saturday night that Doug and Lori had to sit on a quilt on the ground. It was good to get better acquainted with brethren in the area. We were privileged to preach at Brumley, Lebanon, Niangua, Lee's Summit and Cable Ridge during our stay. We were able to spend a considerable amount of time with A.C. and Glenda

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Brockman. They made us feel like we were their own children. When we returned to Ventura, we learned that Brother Brancato was recently rushed to the local hospital because of internal bleeding. In their efforts to save Bob, the doctors had to give him eight blood transfusions. Thankfully, a successful surgery appears to have remedied that ailment and Bob seems to be recovering slowly, but surely. Your continued prayers are appreciated. Our second study with Mason French was at least more orderly. At the outset, he apologized for his repeated interruptions during our previous study. He said he did not realize it until his son brought it to his attention. That was a respectable admission, but it was little consolation as it appeared that he was not any more open to the lucid Bible teachings on the Lord's Supper than he was before. Brother French had a serious challenge in keeping his grammar straight. He expressed strong disapproval at my comparisons between the metaphors: "This (loaf) is my body", "This (f.o.v.) is my blood" and "This cup is the N.T." He said that I erred in omitting the phrase "in my blood" on the third metaphor. He proceeded to take the object of the proposition (blood) from "in my blood" and turn it into the predicate noun (N.T.) that renamed the cup. In other words, he tried to splice I Cor. 11:25 to read: a) "This cup is my blood"; or, b) "This cup is the new testament and my blood." As the well-read Bible student knows, there is no such scripture in the entire Bible. I pointed this out, but he never fully conceded the point. One of the most fundamental truths was missed once again. We must obey the Lord's command "This do." So, we must find out how the communion was instituted in order to duplicate it. Division is prolonged because brethren contend that the word "cup" is always used figuratively in the Lord's Supper. Greek scholars say this conclusion on several counts. Bro. French explains correctly that "cup" could not be a literal container in the phrase "drink this cup". So it refers, by metonymy, to the contents. He then hastily concludes that the "cup" must always be used figuratively.

Of course, he had no grammatical authority to back up his theory. I explained that each time a word is used we must determine by the context whether it is literal or not. For example, a man calls his wife to tell her the mechanic is doing work on his car. He says, "He took the radiator out of the car." The wife asks, "Why?" He responds, "The radiator was boiling." The comparisons between the man's radiator and the cup in the Lord's Supper should be obvious. Both are used twice in the same context. In each narrative, the key word is used once literally and once figuratively. This brother acted like he could not see it. But how could you miss it...unless you just did not want to see it? Following the Lord's example need not be complicated. We hope the planted seed will germinate and bring forth fruit. I have interacted with another cups preacher and several members of his congregation. They appear to be more open to a rational investigation of our differences. We will have more to say about them next month. I have also met members of the "Los Angeles Church of Christ." Brethren generally know them better as products of the "Crossroads Movement." We have had brief Bible discussions about our differences and expect to have formal Bible studies develop soon. Most of them have not been members more than two or three years. This advantage may be balanced out by their structured "accountability" to one another. Last month we mentioned the request from forty people for Bible studies by mail. The impact of studies with one inmate has produced a domino effect across North and Central Arkansas. Of the studies sent out, four courses were returned "no longer here." Evidently, they were released or transferred. Of the remaining thirty-six, seven are still studying. One individual is already working on Lesson 3. Considering how fickle these men can be, we are excited with 20% participation. These fellas have written, almost without exception, lengthy letters explaining their circumstances. We are writing them back to encourage them in their resolve to live better lives, hopefully as Christians.

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. LXXI

LEBANON, MISSOURI, AUGUST 1997

NO. 8

"WHAT I HAVE WRITTEN I HAVE WRITTEN"

By JERRY DICKINSON

The above words are the words of Pontius Pilate, the Roman Procurator under whose auspices Jesus was condemned to death. No less than six times during his various interviews with Jesus, and his discourses with the Jewish rulers who had brought Jesus before him, Pilate declared the innocence of the Lord.

"I find no fault in this man," was Pilate's pronouncement. Six times he told them that Jesus was not guilty of the charges they had hurled against him. Again and again Pilate sought a way to let Jesus go. He had him flogged and then brought Jesus out before them, bloodied and humiliated, with his forevermore famous declaration, "Behold the Man!" He offered them a choice between Jesus and a murderous rascal named Barabbas and they chose Barabbas.

"What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" the befuddled Pilate asked, and the instant and deafening reply was, "Crucify him, crucify him!" "Why? What has he done?" asks Pilate, obviously dismayed by their persistent clamor for the death of a fellow Jew that many claimed to be a prophet.

"If you let this man go," they shouted, "You are not Caesar's friend!" That did it! Whatever else Pilate was he was a politician and when he heard that last shout he relented, called for a basin of water, and after washing his hands he declared, "I am innocent of this man's blood. See ye to it!" How much more Pilate must have been dismayed when the answering cry was, "Let his blood be on us and our children!"

Now, whenever the Romans crucified a criminal they would place a sign or placard over the head of the man condemned. On the sign was written the name of the criminal and the crime for which he was being put to death. On the placard nailed above the head of Jesus Pilate wrote, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews." The inscription was written in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Latin was the official, legal language of the Empire, Greek was the universal language of the day, and of course Hebrew was the language peculiar to the Jews. In all three languages - the legal language of the Empire, the language understood by all people who could read at all, and in the religious language of the Jews - it was asserted that Jesus was the king of the Jews.

Quite naturally, this sign infuriated the Jewish rulers who had sought his death. They ran back to Pilate and demanded he change the inscription. "Write not, the king

of the Jews, but that he said I am the king of the Jews." "What I have written I have written," was Pilate's succinct and terse reply. It is almost as if Pilate were saying, "You men have pushed me and pushed me until you coerced me into condemning this man against my better judgment. Don't push me anymore. You better get out and leave me alone. What I have written I have written - and I will not change it!"

Pilate's words are memorable and have a quality of finality to them. If looked at from different angles, moreover, there are lessons applicable and essential for us, even now, in these words spoken by a Governor of Rome two thousand years ago.

1. BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WRITE:

"See that you walk circumspectly," says the Apostle Paul, "Not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil." (Eph. 5:15,16) The word circumspect (or circumspectly) means to be extremely careful, strict, and cautious. "Walk circumspectly," says Paul, or as one translation renders it, "Be strictly careful about the life you lead." I like that! You are writing a book - the book of your life - so be careful what you write.

In II Cor. 3:2,3 Paul tells the Corinthians, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart."

Whether we realize it or not (or whether we like it or not) we are writing a letter (an epistle) every day that is read of all those who know us. Be careful what you write!

Pilate wrote more than what he wrote on that placard placed above the head our blessed Lord. He wrote the story of his life - a story of a man who was given the opportunity of being noble and courageous enough to release Jesus as justice and his own conscience demanded, but the story he wrote is one of cowardice, irresolution, and ignobility. For two thousand years all men have read the writing of Pontius Pilate, a man whose name will forever live in infamy. Beware - and be careful what you write!

2. BEWARE OF STUBBORNNESS:

Really, it was stubbornness that precipitated Pilate's pointed declaration, "What I have written I have written." The Jewish rulers were asking him to change what he had written and if effect he replies, "What I put on that sign

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PUBLISHER

Don L. King
 41931 Chadbourne, Fremont, CA 94539
 Fax 510-651-3926

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

Ronny F. Wade
 P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808

EDITORIAL STAFF

Clovis Cook
 Edwin S. Morris

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Bennie Cryer	Johnny Elmore
Barney Owens	Jerry Dickinson
Billy Dickinson	Kevin Presley
Carl Johnson	

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Editorial

"EVER LEARNING"

By DON L. KING

Over the last number of years a situation has developed which is likely as dangerous as any device Satan has invented. He has been pretty much unsuccessful in drawing away followers of Christ by denominationalism or even digression in its raw and obvious forms. Brethren are simply afraid to accept that which is easily seen to be wrong. Many have conscientiously avoided the obvious forms of worldliness and open sin being unwilling to place their souls in danger of Hell. Satan has however, been pretty successful in enticing us to fill our lives with so many things (many of them harmless in and of themselves) that many have lost the desire for a thorough Biblical knowledge. Some are content to go through life with very little actual Bible knowledge choosing rather to learn other things. Even our preaching too often fails to deal with the materials we once thought we simply couldn't do without: that fundamental and Bible doctrine of the Church of Christ. As a result, we are faced with a real problem in some places. Many church members are woefully lacking in Bible knowledge.

Some sisters in a few places have difficulty realizing the danger of the teaching the Bible or Bible related topics, in public places that are still not the usual public assembly of the Church. They reason that if it is not the Church assembly on Lord's Day, etc. they are free to do as they please. Is this the case? No, indeed.

"Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach nor usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." (I Timothy 2:11,12). Most of us would understand this to refer to the public assemblies of the church and it certainly does, but does it stop there? The general context of the chapter indicates the retiring and submissive role of Christian women. The word teach in Timothy 1:11,12 is translated from the Greek *didasko* which, according to Thayer, means: "absol. a. to hold discourse with others in order to instruct them, deliver didactic discourses: I Tim. 2:12." Others define it "to teach or speak in a public assembly," etc. This would forbid a woman from teaching in any public situation be it radio, television, newspaper, church bulletin or paper, crowd on the street corner, the church or any circumstances where the public is either involved or gathered together. Acts 18:26 harmonizes with that. When Aquila and Priscilla taught Apollos it was in a private and informal capacity. The record plainly says "...they took him until them..." She didn't organize a study and gather a lot of people together or write an article about it for some journal to be published throughout the land. No, she and her husband simply took this man "until them" and taught him the way of the Lord more perfectly.

It has not been God's design for Christian women to take the leading role in anything outside of the home. It would have been unthinkable in New Testament times for

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Who were the first people in the Bible of color? Were Adam and Eve white? Was the Ethiopian Eunuch black? (Ga.)

Answer: In Acts 17:26 Paul says "And he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation." J. W. McGarvey remarks "The statement in verse 26 is an incidental assertion of the unity of the human race; and it accords with the Mosaic history. To deny it because we find some difficulty in reconciling it with the present diversities in the types of men, is to deny an assertion of the Scriptures, not because of what we know, but because of what we do not know; for if we knew the whole history of our race, we should doubtless know the causes of these varieties, and the times in which they came into existence." (**New Commentary on Acts**) McGarvey makes three very important points (1) all men are descended from a single ancestor, (2) there is great diversity existing among men, and (3) our inability to fully understand the causes of this diversity does not in anyway negate the truth that we are all of "one nation," "one blood," "one family." We must remember that the Scripture says "Eve was the mother of all living," Gen. 3 :20. Hence, we all can trace our ancestry back to Adam and Eve. Were Adam and Eve white? I don't know. The Bible does not say. **The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia** points out that various conjectures have been put forth as to the root meaning of the Hebrew word, from which Adam is translated, including "ruddy-one, earthborn, and creature." A similar Hebrew word "adhamah" is closely connected with the name Edom, meaning "red." It is unclear whether this refers to the redness of the soil or the ruddiness of the man. Some have speculated that Adam may have had a red or ruddy complexion. But that is mere speculation. Apparently it was not important to God that we know the skin color of our first parents. After the great flood of Gen.7 Noah and his family left the ark. In chapter 9 we have the account of Ham seeing his father's nakedness and his two brothers Shem and Japhet covering their father with their faces backward that they saw not their father's nakedness. When Noah awoke from his wine he said "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." In Chapter 10 we have listed the generations of Noah's three sons. From these three men have descended the human race as we know it today. How do we account for the diversity existing among the peoples of the world? It would seem that the answer lies in the genetic predisposition possessed by these three individuals coupled with heredity, climate, environment, etc. Anthropologists say there are two outstanding points about race: "(1) Very few human beings belong to a pure stock. Most men are mongrels, racially speaking. (2) Most human characteristics ascribed to race are undoubtedly due to cultural diversity and should be regarded as ethnic, not racial." (**The Nature of Prejudice** by Gordon W. Allport.

p. 107) **The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia** states on p.1324 "As Shem means "dusky," or the like, and Japhet "fair," it has been supposed that Ham meant, as is not improbable, "black." This is supported by the evidence of Heb. and Arab., in which the word *hamam* means "to be hot" and "to be black," the latter being derived from the former....Of the nationalities regarded as descending from Ham, none can be described as really black. First on the list, as being the darkest, is Cush or Ethiopia. . ." From this it would appear that of the descendents of Noah's sons those most likely to be dark skinned were the descendants of Ham. Some have mistakenly concluded that the curse placed on Canaan teaches the perpetual servitude of the Negro or black man. Such an idea led to the justification of slavery in the minds of many a little over 100 years ago in this country. This conclusion, however, is wrong and unwarranted. The sin was committed by Ham, but the curse was placed upon Canaan, his son. It was not placed on Ham's other sons: Cush (Ethiopia), Mizaim (Egypt), nor Phut (Put). It was fulfilled in the days of Joshua and later Solomon, when Canaan's descendants, the Canaanites, were partly exterminated and partly reduced to slavery (Josh. 9:23; Judg. 1:28; Kings 9:20-21). "It is generally agreed that the Canaanites were not black. In the main, they moved into Asia Minor and at least as far east as the Tigris and Euphrates valley....Other descendants of Ham went south into Africa, but not the Canaanites....since the terms of the curse were fulfilled with regard to the descendants of Canaan only, the Negro is not included within the compass of the curse, and the curse has no relation to the color of the Negro's skin." (**The Bible and Race**, by T. B. Matson p. 1 12-1 14) Was the Ethiopian Eunuch black? We do not know. McGarvey leans to the notion that he was a Jew, born in a foreign country, rather than a Jewish proselyte. If this is the case he may have been light skinned. If he was native Ethiopian by birth, he may have been dark skinned. The beauty of this narrative, however, is that the writer says nothing about the color of this man's skin. It was not important to the incident, not important to God, and should not be important to us. When an individual obeys the gospel and becomes a Christian, he is my brother in Christ regardless of the color of his skin. He has equal access to the forgiveness of sins, the throne of grace, and every blessing of heaven whether he is white, black, brown, red or whatever. He has every right to worship in any church building in this or any other land, without discrimination of any kind, and any brother or group of brethren who seek to take that right away from him are every bit as wrong as the man in James who had respect of persons based on riches. (James 2:2-9) The signs in front of our buildings read "Everyone Welcome." If black people, poor people, Asian people, or Latin American people are not welcome, then we need to change the way the sign reads. I have no doubt that there will be some in heaven who were black skinned on earth. They won't be black in heaven nor will others be white. Color will not matter then; it should not matter now. We all need to search our hearts and divest them of every vestige of prejudice

that would, in any way, cause us to discriminate against one for whom Christ died. Remember we are all descended

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

ARE WE REALLY AT THE RIGHT PLACE (Pt. 2)

By BRETT HICKEY

The Lord did not leave us a long list of "thou shalt not's" to guide us in religious matters. When Noah orders materials for the ark (Gen. 6:14), the priest singles out an animal for sacrifice (Lev. 23:12) or the church selects music for worship, God expects us to follow any specific instructions given. The Christian who sees fit to reverence God and respect the scriptures' silence can readily distinguish between authorized and unauthorized music. If Jesus or the apostles would have given only the generic command to offer music, we would be at liberty to sing, to play or do both. If they had given the specific command to play, we would all be dutybound to tote an instrument to worship. But, since the apostolic commands are limited to singing, any musical alternatives are excluded.

"PSALLO" IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Frustrated in their attempts to find authorization for instrumental music in our English Bibles, some have gone to the Greek hoping to find refuge. Unfortunately for those desperate to defend their position, there is no contradiction between the Greek and English. Instrumental enthusiasts make their final stand on Eph. 5:19. They take the phrase, "singing and making melody in your heart" to be the equivalent of "sing and play." The Greek falls way short of the miracle these folks are looking for. Remember, the Greek word *psallo* here translated "making melody" is found four more times in the NT. Three of those times it is translated in the Authorized Version "sing" and once "sing psalms." Thayer's *Gk. Lexicon* authenticates that rendering: "in the NT, to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song." This quote carries added weight because Joseph Henry Thayer had a natural bias in favor of the instrument. His Congregationalist brethren advocated instrumental accompaniment. What is the point? Dr. Thayer did not sacrifice his scholarly integrity to appease the permissive disposition of his denominational allies.

Again, *Vine's Expository Dictionary* says that *psallo* "denotes, in the NT, 'to sing a hymn, sing praise.'" The phrase, "in the NT," is emphasized, first of all, because the New Testament is precisely where this search should be confined. In addition, it highlights an "oversight" made by entertainment-oriented Christians. In an attempt to soften the blow struck by these highly reputable sources, instrumental music advocates, in some debates and writings, shamelessly omit the words "in the NT" when they quote these authorities. This removes the intended distinction between the New Testament meaning of *psallo* and more primitive meanings. It also steers the unsuspecting audience away from the Bible truth.

M.C. Kurfees, in his exhaustive work, *Instrumental Music*, presents E.A. Sophocles (not to be confused with the author of Greek tragedies in the fifth century B.C.) as the most compelling authority on *psallo*. Sophocles, a lexicographer born in Greece, was also Harvard Professor of Greek for thirty-eight years. The distinguished Professor specialized in the study of the Greek classics written be-

tween 146 BC and 1100 AD. He studied the diverse Greek writings of nearly six hundred secular and religious authors. His work and scholarship were so well respected that after his death Professor Joseph Henry Thayer was entrusted by the President and Fellows of Harvard in 1887 to oversee the publication of a Memorial Edition of his Greek lexicon. His research of Greek literature in the Roman and Byzantine periods revealed that in those time periods *psallo* was only translated "to chant, sing religious hymns." Since these same periods fully envelop the years in which the New Testament was written, it is safe to conclude that the Greek, like the English New Testament, offers no defense for the Christian seeking to justify instrumental music.

WHERE DID OUR WORSHIP ORIGINATE?

As we investigate any aspect of congregational worship, it is important to inquire about the origin of that act of devotion. The most shameful and unacceptable type is described as "will worship" in Col. 2:20-23. Will worship is offered when we take it upon ourselves to substitute our personal preferences for the Lord's explicit commands. Thayer defines will worship as "voluntary, arbitrary worship, i.e. worship which one prescribes and devises for himself, contrary to the contents and nature of faith which ought to be directed to Christ." Cain committed this grievous sin when he offered a bloodless sacrifice in Gen. 4. Nadab and Abihu succumbed to the same temptation in Lev. 10. Apparently from the same principle, Amos rebuked those who invented to themselves instruments of music.

VAIN WORSHIP

While will worship is self-prescribed, what Jesus classified as vain worship in Mt. 15:9 is actually will worship made popular. Jesus said, "...in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." This worship was vain, or worthless, because its origin was not from God, but men. Although not responsible for initiating new doctrines, these people blindly accepted the modern ideas of man over the less palatable, but pure, word of God. Simply put, the Lord takes it personal when He addresses a subject in the New Testament and mere men take the liberty of correcting or "improving" upon His will. Perpetuating by consent the use of man-made mechanical music in the house of God falls under this category. Be not deceived; the Lord will not accept such trifling with his commands.

TRUE WORSHIP

The indifference many men demonstrate toward the particulars of worship indicates their ignorance of, or rebellion against, in the words of Christ. He says acceptable worship is contingent upon man's willingness to meet certain standards. He told the Samaritan woman, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit

and in truth." What is truth? We learn from Jn. 17:17 that the word of God is truth. So, to prove that our worship is sanctioned by God we must find it in the Book of books. We cannot worship in spirit without worshipping in truth. How can we pretend to approach God with reverence, if we have not cautiously examined our practice in light of God's word?

ARE INSTRUMENTS IN WORSHIP SINFUL?

Really, this is the bottom line. If there is no sin, there can be no penalty. In this two-party study, the facts demonstrate that instrumental music in worship originated with man and not God. This, however, was not necessary to eliminate accompaniment as a viable option. Those advocating a capella music need only demonstrate that the playing of instruments in worship would be an unwarranted gamble. At the close of Romans 14, Paul issues this warning against playing games with our souls: "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." In other words, when

we think, "It may be right", or we are simply not positive it is wrong, we do not have the green light to go full speed ahead. Rather, this scripture should serve as a warning, especially in our worship, that we should "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good." To ignore the whispers of conscience is to make shipwreck of our souls.

So, how do we acquire faith on this subject? How can we be sure our music is to God a source of pleasure and not disdain? Paul gives the answer in the same book: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." One more time we are directed back to scripture. So, if we are choosing between that which we know is taught in the New Testament and that which is uncertain, we must always do that which is steadfast and sure. David Lipscomb was right when he said of this verse, "The idea that man can act on his opinion in the service of God is the root of all erroneous practices in the religious world." Using the same standard we arrive at the same judgment, using instruments in the assembly is an unwarranted waste of time, energy and money and is a senseless hazard to the soul.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE MEAN BY INSPIRATION?

By DUANE PERMENTER

Answering this question should come within the capability of every Christian. Regretfully, many disciples probably could not answer this serious question. Listen to Paul in Second Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...."

In the above passage, the Bible refers to the concept of inspiration. Most of us have heard or used this word from time to time. For instance, sometimes a person will say, "The cheerleaders were an inspiration to the football team!" After an eloquent sermon is delivered the preacher be told, "That sermon was inspiring." What we obviously mean is that the sermon was motivating and greatly uplifting.

Is this how the Almighty used the word inspiration in the Bible? What did the scribes of the New Testament mean when they wrote the word inspiration? One way to decide what Bible writers mean is by using a Bible dictionary.

The apostles originally wrote the New Testament in Greek. Since most of us do not read Greek, it helps to go to a Greek dictionary to learn the meaning of a Bible word when it was first written. In Strong's Greek dictionary he defines inspiration as, "divinely breathed in." In other words, God literally breathed his thoughts into these men.

No wonder the record tells us in 2 Peter 1:21, "For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried by the Holy Spirit."

When God said He inspired men, this was more than inciting one to higher levels of accomplishment or excitement. Our Lord literally guided these men writing the New Testament. The apostles were writing down what was in the mind of God.

Further, consider this question: "Were the writers guided only in the overall content, or is every word from God?"

Paul, the apostle, tells us in his letter to the Ephesian church that he received his spiritual knowledge by revelation (Ephesians 3:1-4).

His knowledge was directly from God. In other words

Jehovah God laid it upon his heart. He plainly says in the text that we can have the same knowledge simply by reading his words. So, we can understand the revelation of God by reading the words of the apostles.

Think about this as we read from the same author in First Corinthians 2:9-13. "But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, or ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.' 10 God But has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual." Paul plainly tells us the Spirit of God supplied the words. Not only were the thoughts inspired, but Almighty God breathed the very words that men wrote in the Bible.

The revelation of God is found in the book we called the Bible. First the Lord gave it to the apostles, and they in turn wrote it down for us today. Not only were the thoughts inspired, but God supplied every word written by the apostles and prophets of the First Century church.

Peter also corroborates our conclusion in Second Peter 1:3,4, "As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 of by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

Jehovah God has provided a means of knowing His

will through the Bible. He expects us to be as those of Berea and receive His word gladly. The people of this ancient city searched the scriptures daily to make sure what the apostles and prophets were teaching was God's word (Acts 17:11).

Almighty God literally breathed into the writers of the

Bible what He wanted them to write. We must diligently search the scriptures for within them are the words of life. God has given us a book that portrays His very mind, and that my friend is the Bible.—P. Duane Permenter, P.O. Box 80687, Midland, TX 79708.

I WILL NOT BE MASTERED BY ANYTHING! 1 CORINTHIANS 6:12

By RYAN CONNOR

On the cover of the May 5, 1997, issue of Time Magazine is the headline: "HOW WE GET ADDICTED . . . and how we might get cured." This article results from a confession made by one of the Big Five cigarette makers in the United States. Just last March, the Liggett group admitted "not only that tobacco is addictive, but also that the company has known it all along." In this seven page article we are told that scientists are discovering the chemical secret to addiction, as well as the answers to some important questions: Why do some people become addicted to alcohol, cocaine, nicotine and other addictive substances, while others do not? Why do some people become alcoholics and junkies, yet on the other hand, some may experiment with drugs and alcohol and never get hooked? Time reports that today's scientists have the answer: "What ties all these mood-altering drugs together, they say, is a remarkable ability to elevate levels of a common substance in the brain called dopamine." This brain chemical called dopamine is associated by these scientists with feelings of pleasure and elation. They say that "Dopamine can be elevated by a hug, a kiss, a word of praise or a winning poker hand - as well as by the potent pleasures that come from drugs" (p. &9).

While this article is mildly interesting I neither have the time nor the desire to delve into all the details of this new scientific discovery. It is really not new to anyone that drugs alter the chemicals in the brain. What is striking about this article is that now scientists are beginning to understand how addiction works, and that drugs and alcohol truly are addictive substances.

I am neither a doctor nor a scientist. Therefore, the validity (or lack thereof) of what these doctors and scientists are saying is not for me to decide. It may all be very true. What I do find reprehensible in this article are the wanton conclusions of these scientists.

Dr. Nora Volkow of the Brookhaven National Laboratory in New York says, "Addictions a disorder of the brain no different from other forms of mental illness." J. Madeleine Nash, *Time Magazine* reporter agrees, stating, "Americans tend to think of drug addiction as a failure of character. But this stereotype is beginning to give way to the recognition that drug dependence has a clear biological basis." She admits, "Such speculation is controversial, for it suggests that broad swaths of the population may be genetically predisposed to drug abuse" (p. 70).

Listen to what these people are saying! The idea that a person is "predisposed" is as close to saying that a person is determined to become a drug or alcohol abuser from the time he or she is conceived in the womb as anyone can get. (You see, it's not your fault that you became an

alcoholic or a junkie - you were just made that way) This reporter goes on to say, "Genes and social forces may conspire to turn people into addicts but do not doom them to remain so" (p. 71). As one reads through this article he sees that people today are set on finding a way to shift the blame. (It's not your fault - don't worry about it - you're just a weak human being that never had a chance against today's social pressures with your bad addiction-prone genes)

I am not denying that a person's genes and chemical make-up influence how he turns out. I am denying, however, the absurd notion that you and I are unable to do anything about that outcome. We do not have to become drug addicts. We do not have to become alcoholics. It may be that we are tempted by these things. We may even be more or less prone to become addicted to these things, but we can nevertheless abstain from drugs and alcohol. And we must.

We must be like the Apostle Paul, who said, "I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Cor. 6:12). The NIV renders it, "I will not be mastered by anything." We must make the whole-hearted decision to stay clear from all and any form of drugs and alcohol. We can refuse to surrender and not be "mastered by anything."

The Apostle Paul states, furthermore, in 1 Corinthians 10:13, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (NKJV). While pseudo-science may seek desperately for excuses, God's Word declares that Christians are able to bear all that may overtake them. Right in the middle of this verse of Scripture Paul says, "You are able." Why are we able? We are able because of the "mercies of God" (Rom. 12:1), the "riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering" (Rom. 2:4). There can be no doubt that God is at work for His people today (cf. Jas. 1:2-5; 1 Pet. 1:5, 6). The reason that Christians are "able" is that we have a faithful God, "who will not allow" us to be tempted beyond what we are able. God just won't allow it!

Does this mean that we live above sin, incapable of being tempted to sin? Of course not. We can and will be tempted. The tempter came to Jesus (Mt. 4:3), and he will come for us (1 Pet. 5:8). Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that when we are tempted we have the free-will choice either to follow our own desires to the conception of sin and the death it brings (Jas. 1:14, 15) or to countermand our desires and discover the way to escape. In order to find the way of escape we must search the Scriptures (1 Cor. 10:10, 11) in the light of our circumstances and apply

what we find in the Scriptures to the situation at hand. The Scriptures teach that whenever we sin, no matter how small we may consider the sin to be, we have freely chosen to commit it, for we could have just as freely chosen to overcome the temptation. The way is often "narrow and difficult." Nonetheless, we are able.

The bottom line is that the Lord has established the order of things under the New Covenant in such a way that those who serve Him ARE ABLE TO OVERCOME. Jesus was asked by His disciples, who then can be saved? He looked at them and said, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Mt. 19:25, 26). The Revelation expresses eight times that the blessings and

promises are for "him that overcomes" (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 21:7). Heaven awaits those who overcome. Therefore, we must get our minds set on the goal. We must, as Paul said, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:11, 12). There is a baffle going on for our souls. Will we overcome? Or will we despise the riches of God's goodness? The choice is ours.—8743 Algonquin way, Orangevale, CA 95662.

"WHAT I HAVE WRITTEN I HAVE WRITTEN"

continued from page 1

stands as written. I will not change it! Get out of here and leave me alone! What I have written I have written."

Stubbornness in defense of truth can be a good quality, but stubbornness for stubbornness sake can end only in misery. I personally know of husbands and wives (in the church) who have not been on good terms for years and their attitude is, "What I have written I have written. Let him apologize to me. Let her crawl on her hands and knees to me. I am not apologizing. I am not making the first move for reconciliation. Not me! What I have written I have written!"

How many dear friendships have been forever severed because someone is too obstinate to just say, "It was my fault," or, "I am sorry for my part of the problem." Too often our stubborn pride prompts us to defiantly vow, "I'll never apologize for anything. What I have written I have written." Beware of a stubborn will and obstinate spirit; misery and woe is its only fruit.

3. ACCEPT WHAT GOD HAS WRITTEN AS IT IS WRITTEN:

"What I have written I have written," is a statement God has made, in more or less the same words, over and over again. We are admonished not to add or detract from what God has written all through the Bible. (Rev. 22:18,19; Duet. 4:2; Josh. 1 :7) Paul praised the Corinthians for keeping the ordinances as he had delivered them to them.

(I Cor. 11:2) And Paul again admonishes the church at Corinth to "learn" not to think of men above that which is written.

Interestingly, Paul says we must "learn" to prize and cherish that which is written (God's Word) above any man or any opinion of any man. May God give us the wisdom and determination to learn that lesson. It has to be held beyond dispute that if men in the past had valued God's Written Word above the opinions of men there would be no divisions among professed Christians over such uninspired items as infant baptism, instruments of music in the worship services, women preachers, splitting the assembly into classes to teach, individual cups and crackers in the communion, children's church assemblies, Christian rock 'n roll bands, bowling alleys in the basement of the church, ad infinitum. Why not just accept what God has written as it is written - nothing more, nothing less, and nothing else.

4. FORGET PAST WRITINGS:

The statement, "What I have written I have written," demonstrates another lesson we would all do well to learn, and that is to leave behind and forget our past writings. Whatever mistakes you have made in the past - forget them and move on. When I say forget them you understand, I am sure, that I mean after you have corrected the mistake (if it can be corrected) and found forgiveness in compliance with God's will, then forget those things which are behind and press on. Those are, after all, the sentiments and words of the Apostle Paul in Phil. 3:13,14 where he writes, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Let me get a little personal here, if I may. You made mistakes in raising your children? Ask God to forgive you and move on. You cannot undo what is done - you cannot unwrite what is written. Press on, and ask the Lord to give you the opportunity to do for your grandchildren what you did not do for your children. Whatever mistakes we have made with our spouses, our families, or others let us seek forgiveness, correct the mistake when possible, and then move forward. After all, what I have written I have written, and I cannot unwrite it. Let us, with Paul, press on for the prize before us in Christ Jesus.

5. YOU WILL FACE WHAT YOU HAVE WRITTEN SOMEDAY:

According to one tradition Pontius Pilate, sometime after his encounter with Jesus, fell into disfavor with Caesar and was exiled to an island where he and his wife eventually committed suicide. Before he died, however, an old friend of his came to visit. The friend asked Pilate if he remembered the trial of Jesus while he was Governor of Judea. According to the tradition Pilate told his friend that he did not remember Jesus or the trial his friend referred to.

How could he not remember? Perhaps he had condemned so many other innocent men that Jesus' case was just one of the many this Roman Procurator had forgotten. Or perhaps he had, consciously or subconsciously, blotted from his memory any recollection of this case which so disturbed his conscience at the time.

However true it is that Pilate did not remember Jesus, one thing is certain: he will be reminded of it some day! There is coming a day of judgment when, as John pictures it in Rev. 20:12. all the dead, small and great (Pilate will

certainly be in the crowd) shall stand before God. The books will be opened, including the book of Pilate's life - and yours and mine - and everyone will be judged according to their works.

Pilate, on that day, will come face to face with what he has written. So will you. So will I. When the Lord opens our book on that day what will he read? Thank the Lord that even when we write the wrong things in life we can appropriate the blood of Jesus in such a way as to blot out

what we have written and start all over.

Once we start over, however, let us be strictly careful what we write, so that all who read our lives (including the Lord) can decipher our love for God, the Lord Jesus, his church, and the souls of men. May we have so lived our lives that when we come to the end of the road we will neither be afraid or ashamed to declare, "What I have written I have written."—Jerry Dickinson, 13803 Crosshaven, Houston, TX 77015.

"EVER LEARNING"

continued from page 2

such to occur. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians he said, "Let your woman keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, (notice Paul is not concerned with their teaching, but with their learning, and that in silence) let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." (I Corinthians 1:34, 35). When any event is in progress where the public comes together as a result of a planned, announced and executed invitation and the Bible is taught, (or Bible related subjects) I am opposed to women being involved in speaking and/or asking questions.

I suppose in most cases the problem is simply the result of folks wanting to accomplish good. They seek opportunity to teach the Bible. That's all fine but we need to realize that the teaching of the Word of God is one of the express purposes of the public assembly which is regulated by I Corinthians 14. It is my understanding the assembly is for the following reasons at least: 1. To teach the word of God, Acts 22:26. 2. To consider spiritual things, Acts 15:6 (the context indicates the brethren were also

present). 3. To convince unbelievers, I Corinthians 14:24, 25. 4. To feed milk to babes in Christ (I Corinthians 14:24,25) and edify all so that the strong may get the meat they need, (I Corinthians 14:31). 5. To build up the church and teach so that edification or a learning process may occur, (I Corinthians 14:69-26). All this transpires as we worship God in accordance with the regulations set forth by the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians chapter 14, in the public assembly.

Many years ago, someone decided that because the home was not doing the job God intended it to do in the teaching of His word they would devise another institution (unauthorized) to teach the children. The Sunday School was born and it was Scripturally opposed by Godly brethren who insisted it only supplanted the church and the home in its role. It is always a mistake, and sin, to devise a place and way to do God's work which He has not authorized in His Word.

We are not opposed to women teaching where God allows. In a private and informal setting women may be (and need to be) Scripturally involved in teaching according to Titus 2:3,4. However, the practice of arranging some kind of place and time in order for women to teach, whether by a private individual or the church, is a practice foreign to the Scriptures—DLK. From June 1989 by request.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BACK IN PRINT AFTER ALMOST 200 YEARS

That is right. After almost two hundred years the book, **Social Worship Of The First Christians**, is back in print. You may have this very historically significant volume by ordering today. First published in 1805 by James Alexander Haldane it quickly ran through two printings, and has not been reprinted until now. This book greatly influenced the young Alexander Campbell who had come to Glasgow to study at the time. This book is significant because it represents an attempt at this early date to "get back to the Bible." The Haldanes contended for weekly observance of the Lord's Supper, congregational form of government and many other truths that had been lost in sectarian denominationalism at that time. As you read you can see their journey from error to truth beginning. At the time of its writing Haldane still held to infant baptism, but just two years later he gave it up and was himself immersed. Thanks to Brother Howard Sharp, who put the book on disc and Ronny Wade who oversaw the printing, this book

long since lost is now made available to the reading public by our brotherhood. Send all orders to Howard Sharp, 3957 Villa Court, Fair Oaks, CA 95628. The price per book is \$10.00 plus postage. Postage is \$1.25 per book. Order several today before the supply is exhausted.—Ronny F. Wade.

CHURCH DIRECTORIES

There will not be a new directory until next year. I have a few of the latest ones left. You may order them by writing to me at P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808. Price is \$3.00 for one directory and \$2.00 for two or more. I pay the postage.—Ronny F. Wade.

SERMON OUTLINE BOOK

I still have a few copies of the sermon outline book, **Pulpit Treasures**, comprised of outlines by our preaching brethren. The book contains outlines by most of the preachers currently preaching. Also included are outlines by E.H. Miller, James R. Stewart, Homer King, Homer Gay, Tommy Shaw, B.F. Leonard and others. This book is excellent for men who teach or young men just beginning to teach. Order yours today. Send all orders to Ronny F. Wade,

P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808. Price is \$10.00. I pay the postage.

PLEASE ANNOUNCE

The Rogers, Arkansas congregation is pleased to announce that its new building is nearing completion. NW Arkansas has experienced tremendous growth in the last several years fueled by companies such as Wal-Mart, Tyson and JB Hunt that have corporate offices located here. The congregation at Rogers also has been blessed with growth and has had this new building in planning for several years now. The Church has been meeting in its current location at 5th and Persimmon for almost 30 years and has simply outgrown the old building. The new building is located at 2022 S. 13th St., Rogers, AR. The building is expected to be completed in mid-August with an opening meeting scheduled with Carl Johnson August 20th through 24th.

Directions to the building from Highway 71 Bypass are as follows: From Highway 71 Bypass take Exit 64 (also marked Champions Drive or Highway 94 East). Proceed East on New Hope Road (Highway 94 East) for 2.8 miles and turn right onto 13th St. The building is located on 13th St. a 1/2 mile south of New Hope on the right. If you are planning to visit the area for business or pleasure please plan to worship with us! For more information please contact Bennie Nichols at (501)-986-9220 or Kent Crouch at (501) 273-3305.

PLEASE READ

We would like to thank Brother Jim Hickey for the great amount of work he does with the radio programs going out to the world over International shortwave (WWCR, Nashville, TN). It reaches millions each broadcast around the world. Jim does two programs in English airing at 10 a.m. (1500 UTC) Saturday on 15,685 MHZ and at 1:30 p.m. (1830 UTC) Sunday at 12,160 MHZ. He also does a program in Spanish once a week at 4:30 p.m. (2130 UTC) Fridays. Our thanks to Brother Hickey and the congregations who help support the work. If you have questions, please feel free to contact: Church of Christ, Council Hill, OK, c/o Robert Hill, Rt. 1, box 76B, Morris, OK 74445.

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

DICKINSON-LANKFORD - On June 7, 1997, before a host of family, brethren and friends, Jason Bradford Dickinson and Christina Ronelle Lankford were united in holy matrimony at the Leawood Village Church of Christ in Joplin, MO. The beautiful singing was provided by Greg Harris, Charles Barnes, Stephen Middick, and Brian Osborn. Also, Katherine Randolph, a friend of the groom, was a special soloist for the occasion. The ceremony was beautifully arranged and reflected the dignity and sanctity of the marriage relationship. Both the bride and groom were raised in strong Christian homes. Christina is the daughter of Ronald and Carolyn Lankford of Joplin, MO and Jason is the son of Jerry and Judy Dickinson of Houston, TX. May the Lord bless them with a long and fruitful marriage as they travel life's road together! Jason is my nephew and I considered it a special honor to officiate in

the exchanging of vows.—Billy D. Dickinson.

GREER-BURKHART - Before a small gathering of friends and relatives, Roy Greer of Lebanon, MO was united in marriage to Donna Burkhart of Seneca, MO on June 14, 1997. Both Roy and Donna lost their spouses to death a few years ago. This union has engendered a renewed sense of liveliness and happiness for both of them. We wish them many happy years together.—Doug Hawkins.

RAMSEY-VANNOY - On the afternoon of June 7, 1997, in a lovely candlelight ceremony, in Corsicana, Texas, Steve Ramsey and Sarah Vannoy were united in holy matrimony. The setting was beautiful and joyous, with many friends and loved ones there to wish them well. The singing was beautifully done by Jon Roodschild, John Morris, Aaron Risener and Patricia Wilson. Steve is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Ramsey of Joplin, Missouri and Sarah is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Vannoy of Corsicana, Texas. Both Steve and Sarah are strong Christians. They both were brought up in Christian homes and they understand the value of a Christian home. They plan to make their home in Joplin, Missouri. Steve plans to devote his life to preaching the gospel, and Sarah plans to help him in this goal. (At this writing he is in Russia with Jimmy Vannoy working at Tambov and Michurinsk.) Sarah is my granddaughter and I was especially honored to do this ceremony for them. Our prayer is that they will have long and useful lives together in God's service.—James Vannoy.

MORRISON-GARDNER -- Bryan Morrison and Megan Gardner were united in holy matrimony on June 6, 1997, before a large crowd of witnesses in the Nineteenth Steet Church building, in San Angelo, Texas. Bryan graduated with honors from Angelo State University and is coaching athletics and teaching math in high school, while Megan is continuing to pursue her degree as a physical therapist. Most importantly, however, they are both sincerely devoted Christians. I have known Megan for several years and Bryan for most of his life, and was honored to be asked to officiate the ceremony. May God bless this new home and help them to keep their vows of lifelong love and loyalty.—Carl M. Johnson

OUR DEPARTED

BULLOCK -- Sister Ivalene, beloved wife for 50 years of Ernest Bullock and dear mother of G. Keith Bullock and Kathryn Porath, grandmother of Jay and Todd Bullock and Neil Carder, departed this life on the evening of May 26, Memorial Day, at 9:25, at the age of 74. "Ivy", a sister of Alice Hansel, Mary "Renee" Nicely, Elsa "Tip" Mink and the late Rosa Prewitt, was a member of the Lord's church for 46 years, attending the Greater Hamilton congregation in the Cincinnati Ohio area. Richard Nichols and this writer sought words of comfort to share before a vast assembly of people who gathered in tribute to this dear friend and sister in Christ. The singing was of wondrous beauty as the voices of a selected few blended

together the songs which were among the favorites of Sister Bullock and the family. While she is sorely missed here, Ivy is comforted in Abraham's bosom awaiting the resurrection morning, at which time we will all meet the Lord in the air and ever live with Him. May the Lord extend His favor upon the Bullock family, and all others who share in the likeness of this sorrow.—Bill J. Ferguson

BLACKBURN -- Aud Lee Blackburn was born April 7, 1905 in Hagerville, Arkansas. He died June 23, 1997 in Healdton, OK at the age of 92. A daughter, Freda, preceded Aud in death last year. He is survived by: his wife Vera of the home, a son-in-law, Cullas Webb of Norman, two granddaughters, one grandson, one great-granddaughter, one stepson, Bill Blevins, one stepdaughter, Betty Allen, six step-grandchildren, and twelve step-great-grandchildren. Aud is best described as "a people person." I always looked forward to seeing him when I preached in Healdton. He was a source of encouragement to me and seemed happiest when he was in the company of his

brethren and friends. We shall certainly miss Aud, and we extend our sincere sympathy to Vera and the family.—Carl M. Johnson

MORRIS -- Brother Ronald G. Morris was born October 4, 1926 and departed this life July 1, 1997 after an extended illness with Lou Gerig's disease. Ron loved the church and he loved to sing songs of praise to the Lord. He and his wife, Beryl, had enjoyed fifty-one years of marriage. Since his retirement they spent their winters in St. James City, Florida. There, they worshipped with the Slater Road Church of Christ at North Ft. Myers. They spent their summers in Pennsylvania and worshipped at both Indiana and Lovejoy, PA. He is survived by his wife, Beryl and two daughters, Mary Lou and Louise, and five grandchildren. Ron will be sadly missed by all who knew him. It was an honor for the writer to have been asked to speak words of comfort, hope and consolation to the family and the large number of relatives and friends who had gathered in his memory.—Eugene Lockard.



Barney Owens, 8782 Meadowview Lane, W. Chester, OH 45069 - The summer continues to offer opportunities to work and worship with those from whom distance has made it possible. I look forward to continuing to be in meetings with congregations at Paris, TX July 18-27; Knoxville, GA Aug. 11-17; Birmingham, AL Aug. 20-24. If there is the slightest possibility for you to be with us make plans to help. Your prayers will be helpful and are always desired.

Douglas T. Hawkins, HCR 3 Box 203-C, Rocky Mount, MO 65072 - Our mission meeting in California, MO that was held June 16-21 was attended by six outsiders. Ron Alexander and I preached in turn throughout the meeting. It's always enjoyable to be with Bro. Ron. He's a great man and he does a tremendous amount of good in our area and elsewhere in the brotherhood. My thanks to the Lebanon congregation for their continued support and foresight in preaching the gospel in central Missouri. We begin a meeting in Henryetta, OK Aug. 3. Come if you can. May the Lord bless you.

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, July 8 - We enjoyed hearing Billy Dickinson in a short meeting here May 23-25, climaxing with the fourth Sunday singing. June 1-8, I was at San Angelo, TX in a meeting for the first time. The brethren spared no expense to advertise. I enjoyed being there and we were thankful to baptize a young family man. We enjoyed being able to attend some of the great meetings at Lebanon, MO and at Sulphur, OK and speaking at Claxton in Missouri on June 29.

I expect to be at Duncanville, TX June 20-29 (correct date) and at Aurora, MO Aug. 1-10.

Brett Hickey, P.O. Box 6506, Ventura, CA 93003, July 8 - Here in Ventura, we currently have a number of studies ongoing with members and non-members. We are blessed with several talented young men who desire to be preachers, teachers or elders in the church. We have initiated studies with them to work toward those specific goals. Seeing Jimmie Smith and family in his meeting at Bakersfield (Brundage Lane) was a great blessing. Both sermons we heard were powerful. Jimmie has always been good to provide valuable wisdom and encouragement in the work of the Lord. I suppose we will always consider them some of our dearest friends. I enjoyed very much the opportunity to preach at Planz Rd. in Bakersfield. It was great to have several outsiders both services. Brother Brancato's health has improved drastically. We appreciate all the prayers on his behalf.

Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808, July 6 - Since last reporting I have held meetings at Bunner's Ridge, WV and London, KY. In West Virginia we were privileged to work with Richard Bunner, who has been in this area for a number of years. We had visitors from several churches in the state as well as a number of places in Pennsylvania. One confessed faults. Next at London, KY we enjoyed good crowds and cooperation from surrounding churches. The last weekend we were blessed with the presence of Roy and Melba Karr from Temple, GA and Harlan and Annie Howell from Birmingham, AL who drove up just to help us out, which we greatly appreciated. Brother Brad Post was with me during both these meetings. He is fast developing into a preacher in his own right. On the way to London we got to visit with Don McCord briefly who was in a meeting at Spring Valley, WV. It was good to see him and enjoy his company. The meeting at Lebanon was good this year, as usual. Several from various places gathered to sing, pray, and study the bible. It was an enjoyable time. The Lord willing our

schedule for the near term is: Marietta, Ga. July 12-20; Temple, Ga. July 21-22, Piedmont, Al. July 27-Aug. 3; Red Oak, Tx. Aug. 10-17; Ozark, Mo. Aug.; 18-24, and Ft. Worth, Tx. (Fossil Creek) for the annual Texas Labor Day meeting Aug. 29-Sept. 1. We look forward to seeing many of our friends at these meetings, if the Lord wills. May God bless all His people everywhere.

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820, July 9 - We heard some excellent preaching and beautiful singing at the Sulphur Fourth of July meeting. Melvin Blalock and Murl Helwig did a superb job. My last meeting was at West Monroe, LA. The brethren designated this meeting as a homecoming and it turned out to be a genuine revival. We had very good support from surrounding congregations, visitors from the community, and brethren who used to live and worship in West Monroe, who came back for the meeting. It was a pleasure to work with Billy Dickinson during the week and also to visit one day with Billy Orten. Phyllis and I are to leave this week for a meeting in Ash Camp, WV. The remainder of my meeting schedule includes: Lee's Summit, MO (Aug. 9-17), Rogers, AR (Aug. 20-24), Chapel Grove, TN (Aug. 27-31—Labor Day Meeting), Mountain Home, MO (Oct. 5-12), Kansas City, KS (Oct. 15-19), Lodi, CA (Nov. 1-9), Orange, CA (Nov. 10-16), and Seminole, OK (Dec. 5-7). Please continue to mention us in your prayers.

P. Duane Permenter, P.O. Box 80687, Midland, TX 79707, (915) 520-6508, July 7 - The meeting at Stockton was well attended by many different congregations from various places in California. Many preachers were also present and we very much appreciated this. Some from the community also attended one or more times during the meeting. The brethren worked hard for the meeting, and it was a great encouragement to me and my family. The young people who came to the meeting were truly an inspiration; we were excited to see so many come. California churches in that part of the state are blessed with many fine young Christians. May God bless them with many years of service. Here in Midland it was a pleasure to help a young couple in obedience of the gospel recently. We had been working with Josh and Crissie for several months and on the morning of July 1, we baptized them into Jesus Christ. The work continues to grow and many people are involved and working for which we are immensely grateful. Another family has started attending regularly with us and last Sunday the mother, Deanna made a confession for being away from the church. While attending the Sulphur meeting, the singing and preaching this year was again enjoyable. It was a pleasure also, to hear the many young men on the morning of July 3. Please continue to pray for us. May God bless the faithful everywhere.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539 - My apologies for the paper being late this month. We were away in meetings. Unfortunately we will be likely be late next month also. After that, we will be back on time. We should mention also that we are reprinting editorials from 1989 in this issue and next by request. It was a pleasure to attend the last three days of Lebanon's 4th of July meeting. Good crowds were present at all services.

From there we went to McAlester, OK (Blue congregation) for a weeks' meeting. A number of preachers came one or more nights which helped us out a great deal. Two made confessions of wrong. We enjoyed visiting our good friends and brethren including the Bill Verner's again. We also enjoyed holding a meeting at Muskogee while in Oklahoma. Good crowds were made possible by several nearby congregations attending each night. Several preachers also attended and it was good to be with them all. One confessed wrongs. We especially enjoyed the hospitality and being with Jack and Jackson (family) while there. We go next to New Salem, MS August 1-10. We ask your prayers as always.

Kevin W. Presley, Rt. 2 Box 166, Kinston, AL 36453, (334) 898-1301, July 10, 1997 - It was good to labor at home with the brethren at Earlytown for most of May. I appreciate their faithful support, as always. At the end of May I enjoyed being with the brethren at Florala, AL for a meeting. The congregations throughout the area were good to support the meeting. It was good to have Bro. Ricky Martin and his family there for one service. In June I was privileged to work with the Greenville, S.C. brethren in a meeting. We had good crowds with one confession of fault. We had visitors from North Carolina and Jonesboro, GA. I then went to Brodhead, KY where Bro. Bruce Roebuck and I worked together in a series of meetings. It is always a pleasure to work with my good friend, Bruce and to be with his family. This little congregation has about 20-25 members. One night, however, the brethren counted 99 people in attendance. We were especially glad to have the Howells, all the way from Birmingham, AL and the Karrs from Temple, GA. Also, the Lore's from St. Albans, W Va. made the lengthy journey to be with us. We witnessed five confessions of fault. I enjoyed taking in four days of the Lebanon meeting. A few weeks ago, Bro. Lynwood Smith held us a great meeting at Earlytown. The preaching was some of the best. The brethren in this area love Bro. Lynwood which makes me feel right at home. It is always a pleasure to spend time with him. Lord willing, I leave tomorrow for Mountain Grove, MO and then on to Garland, TX. My August schedule will take me to Lawrenceburg, TN (August 10-17) and then to the TX Labor Day meeting. I have a busy schedule for the remainder of the year. I always appreciate your prayers.

Bill J. Fergerson, 9631 Wildbrook Ln., Cincinnati, OH, 45231, June 9 - We recently (May 16-18) concluded our first annual Young Speakers meeting at the Hamilton congregation. Brethren Dustin Peek, Bill Ledford, Deron Smith, Aaron Risener and Jimmy Cating did an outstanding job presenting the Word of God. The singing was wonderful and the crowds were more than anticipated. In fact, next year we will have to seek another facility in which to have the meeting. The final service concluded with several other young men, each bringing a 5-7 minute talk, all of whom did very well. We look forward to the meeting next year. Our meeting in LaGrange, GA was wonderful. There were many who had traveled a distance to attend the meeting, to whom we are grateful. It was an honor and a treat to stay in the Alton Bailey home. While much concern over Brother Mark Bailey's condition in Texas ne-

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cessitated in Sister Bailey going to be with her son, Brother Alton extended the warmest of hospitality; and though his thoughts and concerns were also in Texas, he did a fine job seeing to the needs of the meeting. The brethren in LaGrange treated us wonderfully. We also had meetings recently in Pontiac, MI and Spencer, IN - both of which were great and the hospitality couldn't have been better. And visiting with respective preaching brethren, Ron Courter and Floyd Harris, Jr. was a treat. In the last several months, intermittently with these meetings, we have preached one or more times at Bandy, KY, Huntington (18th St.), WV., Bedford, IN, West Chester and Goshen (Dallasburg), and N. Canton, OH. My next meeting is in North Canton, Ohio, August 6-10. Here in the home area in the past year there have been several baptisms, to which we give God the glory. While we have a few more young men beginning to take part in the worship, and all of whom are worthy of words of commendation, I must mention one older (respectfully) man who at one time denied the existence of God. He is now a brother in Christ. He was baptized into Christ last summer in a meeting by Brother Ronny Wade. Presently, almost a year later, he is leading songs, prayers, and publicly reads the scriptures. Once a month, on the third Wednesday, we have an "All Speak" night, where any brother who wishes to prepare and give a sermon can do so. The intention of such a practice was to encourage those who aspired to teach, and give them an opportunity to develop and utilize their abilities. Our Brother has participated in this and is doing a fine job and has expressed an interest in giving a "full length" sermon. I have always believed in the power of God's word and its ability to change people's lives in many respects - and we all have such occasions we could talk about; but never, until this past year, have I personally seen it change an atheist into a new creature in Christ Jesus. It is absolutely one of the most remarkable things I've ever seen! The Word is indeed "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth"!!

Joe Hisle, Rt. 4, Box 188, Ada, OK 74820, June 17 - If the first quarter of my schedule is any indication of the remainder of the year it is going to be a good year for meetings. Since my last report I have been in: Harrisonville, MO. This is a new congregation south of Kansas City that is really doing well. I found the brethren to be active in the Lord's work. Bro. Wyn Baker works with these brethren and is doing an excellent job. We had good support from congregations in the area and even more importantly visitors from the community about every night. It was a pleasure to stay in the home of John and Glenda Pruitt. Turlock, CA was the location of the Memorial Day meeting in California. I appreciate the brethren there for asking me to hold

this meeting. This is the first meeting of this kind that I have been a part of in California and it was a treat. Brethren came from all over California and as far away as Texas, Oklahoma and Missouri. The congregation at Turlock is to be commended for such an effort. The brethren and sisters went all out to feed and house the visitors. They did a great job. You cannot appreciate the effort and expense of one of these "big" meetings unless you have had the responsibility. Bro. Richard DeGough works with these brethren. His good influence is apparent. I made my home with Richard and Glenda. I could not have asked for a more hospitable place to stay. Kansas City, KS (Kansas Ave.) was next. This was like a reunion. I had not been in this area for about 28 years. Many of the brethren that I first met in the old 10th and Ray location were there. It was really good to renew old acquaintances. The meeting was well supported by local congregations as well as the community. Bro. Paul Nichols is working with this church. His efforts are producing fruit. I appreciated the opportunity to stay with Paul, Wilma, and Cheryl in their home. Needless to say, they know how to treat the preacher. The meeting closed with five baptisms and two confessions of fault. I would like to include a special thanks to my preaching brethren who attended these meetings. I am always glad to have fellow preachers in the audience. Following is my schedule for the summer: Bandy, KY, July 13-20; Kenai, AK, July 27-Aug. 3; Corsicana, TX, Aug. 10-17. Please pray for me and my family.

Christ Will Come

But that Christ will come--"that same Jesus"--as literally as he has seen go up into heaven from Mount Olivet, we entertain not one doubt. That the dead will be raised and pass the final judgment, after which the wicked will go away into everlasting punishment--into the fire of gehenna, where the worm dies not and the fire is not quenched, at the same time that the righteous enter into life eternal--we entertain not one doubt. These are clear and awful matters to set forth and enforce on me, and not theories about these great matters. Is it true that a man may "lose his own soul?" that a man may be "cast into hell?" that "both soul and body" may be "destroyed in hell?" that wicked men "shall go away into everlasting punishment?" that they may be "tormented day and night, forever and ever?" Is it true that God "has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained; of which he has given assurance to all men, in that he has raised him from the dead?" Beyond all question, it is true. In raising Jesus from the dead, God has given assurance to all men that he will judge the world in righteousness. The assurance that God will judge the world in righteousness is the reason for repentance. He commands all men, everywhere, to repent, because he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness.

--By Benjamin Franklin

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."

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"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. LXXI

LEBANON, MISSOURI, SEPTEMBER 1997

NO. 9

THE PAUL PROBLEM

By CARL M. JOHNSON

A friend recently attended a wedding at a Christian Church in Texas and was startled to find the preacher officiating the ceremony was a woman. He asked incredulously, "In view of what the Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12 about women keeping silent and not being permitted to teach in the church, how can anyone take a woman preacher seriously?" How indeed? The feminist movement has had a tremendous impact upon our society, however, and it is causing many churches to reconsider the role of women in the church. There are even some churches of Christ who are contending that women should be allowed to lead in public prayer, singing, teaching, and should be allowed to serve as elders. This current trend reminds me of the old Bob Dylan song of the rebellious 1960s, "The Times, They are A Changin'." Religious leaders advocating changes in the traditional roles of women are forced to deal, however, with the teachings of Paul. Christine Wicker, Religion columnist for the **Dallas Morning News** says:

Those who want equal treatment for women in the Christian church must deal with what has been called "The Paul Problem." Nobody who takes the Bible seriously can ignore the old bachelor's many pronouncements concerning a woman's place. "Women should be silent in the churches." "Woman [was created] for the sake of man." and "Wives, be subject to your husbands" are but a sampling (12 October 1996).

Wicker says a new book by S. Wesley Ariarajah, **Did I Betray the Gospel? The Letters of Paul and the Place of Women**, sheds light on "The Paul Problem." Some years ago, Mr. Ariarajah, deputy general secretary of the World Council of Churches, began trying to persuade churches to help women in their fight for "equal rights." His book sheds no new light on the so-called Paul Problem, but is the same tired, hackneyed approach that has been used for years by many protestors, including some churches of Christ, to explain away the words of the Apostle.

Vilify Paul

The first stratagem used by Paul's critics is to attack him personally. He is called "the old bachelor" or "the old woman hater." It is implied Paul was a bigot and his teachings about wives and women are the result of a personal vendetta against them. This approach is as old as Paul's ministry itself. The Judaizers who dogged Paul's missionary travels attempted to discredit him by saying

he wasn't really an apostle and that he was taking advantage of the churches for personal gain. Much of Paul's letters to the Galatians and Romans, and his second letter to the Corinthians are devoted, consequently, to Paul's vindicating himself as an apostle, defending his means of supporting himself, and defending the very gospel he preached.

Paul Versus Jesus

Another effective ploy of Paul's critics is to position Paul's teaching- against the teachings of Jesus as though they are conflicting. Ariarajah notes that the risen Christ first appears to a woman, Mary Magdalene, and that He instructs her to go and tell others. Then he adds:

If Jesus assigned to a woman the task of telling the disciples of his resurrection, who are we to prevent women from this primary calling? If Paul can claim apostleship because Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus, then Mary has an even greater right (**Dallas Morning News**, 12 Oct. 1996).

Ariarajah's logic is egregious. Paul did not claim his apostleship simply because Jesus appeared to him on the Damascus Road, but Paul's apostleship was based upon Jesus' specific message that He had chosen Paul to be an apostle and that there were many things Paul would have to suffer for Christ's sake (Acts 9:15-16). Jesus gave no such message to Mary Magdalene.

Paul Versus Paul

One of the most popular methods of discrediting Paul's teaching, however, is to place Paul at odds with himself. When Paul's teachings mentioned above are cited, critics will often respond, "Yes, but Paul also says in Galatians 3:28, 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.'" It is argued from this passage that God makes no distinction between men and women who are Christian and consequently there are no distinctive roles for either gender in the church. Again, this logic is absurd. Context is an important principle in the study of the scriptures. Passages should be studied in the context of the Bible, in the context of the book, and in their immediate contexts. The correct interpretation of any passage will not conflict with the whole Bible, the book, or the immediate context. If an interpretation contradicts any other passage, or is out of harmony with the purpose of

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PUBLISHER

Don L. King
 41931 Chadbourne, Fremont, CA 94539
 Fax 510-651-3926

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

Ronny F. Wade
 P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808

EDITORIAL STAFF

Clovis Cook
 Edwin S. Morris

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Bennie Cryer	Johnny Elmore
Barney Owens	Jerry Dickinson
Billy Dickinson	Kevin Presley
Carl Johnson	

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Editorial

WOMEN TEACHERS

By DON L. KING

We believe there are a number of church members who fail to understand the principle taught by Paul in I Timothy 2:11, 12 and I Corinthians 14:34, 35. As a result some are unable to see the dangers involved in women either teaching the Bible or Bible related subjects and perhaps asking questions in some public situation other than the public assembly of the church.

Paul said, "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." I Timothy 2:11, 12. The word "teach" is from the Greek Didasko meaning, "...to hold discourse with others in order to instruct them, deliver didactic discourses;... I Tim. 2:12." (Thayer page 144)

Why is the woman placed under this prohibition? Look at verses 13 and 14: "For Adam was firmid formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." It appears, then, that the reason women are not be public teachers of the Word of God goes all the way back to Eden. She woman was led astray and then led her husband away also. She will not be allowed the position whereby she may do so again. Paul didn't teach this because he disliked women. To charge him with such is foolishness. These are simply the facts and we must accept them as facts.

The Lord has, however, created a place for women to teach His word and all good things: The home. Paul said the woman is to "...guide the house..." (I Timothy 5:14). That is her realm and she is required to teach there. This is obviously how Timothy received his early training and knowledge as Paul indicated in 2 Timothy 1:5 where he gave the credit for Timothy's faith to his mother and grandmother. (Timothy's father was a Greek, Acts 16:1). But the woman is forbidden to teach as one might in a church service nor is she even allowed to ask questions if the situation be public. She must ask her question at home. So says Paul in I Corinthians 14:35.

The problem arises when brethren, failing to understand these principles, create a situation where the public is gathered together, called to order and Bible subjects or related topics are either being taught or discussed. They reason since this is not a church service per se, the women can teach or ask questions and no harm done. Paul would not allow women to each period in a public way, and they had to wait until they got home to ask their questions. It matters not whether it be in a camp setting or any other place. If it is public and in a public setting the woman must not be involved in teaching the Bible or asking questions of the one who is teaching while the setting is still in public. No amount of explaining can do away with the prohibition of the Apostle Paul.

A Christian woman has a tremendous responsibility at home. There, in that sacred setting, she will undoubtedly

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Why do the majority of the congregations meet in church buildings instead of members' homes; since that is the example given in the New Testament? (AR)

(Acts 2:46, Romans 16:5, I Corinthians 16:19, Philemon verse 2, Colossians 4:15).

Answer: The command to assemble, Heb. 10:25, necessitates a place where the church can assemble. It is true that in the early days of the church many of these assemblies took place in homes or private dwellings. First Corinthians 14:23 and 11:20 both speak of the church coming together in one place, without specification as to location. The meeting in Acts 15 apparently was not in a private dwelling. To assume, therefore, that churches only met in homes or that churches could only meet in homes is an assumption without biblical foundation. The place of meeting is incidental to the meeting itself. Jesus loosed the place of worship in John 4:20-21 "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship. Jesus said to her, Women, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father." It should be noted that not all the above verses, cited by the querist, refer to churches meeting in someone's house. In Acts 2:46 the scripture speaks of "breaking bread from house to house." While some have applied this "breaking bread" to the Lord's Supper, I do not believe such an application is correct. McGarvey points out that "the breaking bread" mentioned in this verse is not the breaking of the loaf of verse 42, but refers to common meals of which they partook from house to house. This is evident from the connection: breaking bread from house to house, they received their food with gladness and singleness of heart. It was that breaking of bread in which they received their food, which was not done in partaking of the emblematic loaf." The real underlying question that needs to be addressed, however, is "what is an example?" Is every incident recorded in the New Testament an example for us to follow? If not, how may we determine the difference? If these passages that mention churches meeting in homes are not examples, what are they? First of all, to argue about when an example is binding is to misuse the word "example." Webster defines the word example as "a pattern, a model, an illustration of a rule or precept."

An example illustrates a rule or command, thus becoming a model or pattern for carrying out that command. Incident is defined by Webster as something "occurring accidentally, casual, that which happens beside the main design." It is a mistake to say that an example is an incident or vice-versa. Such is a confusion of terms. It would also be a mistake to speak of an example that is not binding. If something is an example, it illustrates a rule or command, and is therefore binding. We must, therefore, decide whether or not an event is (a) an example illustrating a rule or precept, or (b) a casual incident. Illustrations for applying the rule are: in Acts 8:38 "They went down into the water" illustrates the command to baptize. Philippians 4:16 "Ye sent once and again unto to my necessity"; 2 Cor. 11:9 "that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied"; 2 Cor. 11:8 "I robbed other churches taking wages of them" all illustrate the rule "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should all live of the gospel" I Cor. 9:14.

These passages further show that in support of gospel preachers funds are to be sent from the congregation directly to the preachers. Acts 20:7 illustrates "when" (the first day of the week), the disciples observed the Lord's Supper. Hebrews 10:25 contains the background rule for that assembly. "They all drank of it", or "out of it" Mk. 14:23 illustrates the command "drink ye all of it" Mt. 26:27, and serves as an example of how we drink the fruit of the vine when observing the Lord's Supper. In Acts 27:38 we read "They lighted the ship and cast out the wheat into the sea." Here is an incident with no background precept, principle or command. Hence it is not an example of anything for us today, but merely a happenstance that occurred beside the main design. The same is true of the scriptures cited by the querist where churches gathered in some home to worship. There may have been a number of reasons why they did so. Some have suggested that public places were hard to come by. Others that such public gatherings would only agitate the leaders of the political system under which they lived. One thing is certain, they did not meet in private homes because of a biblical command. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808)

SOME SURPRISES IN THE WAY GOD DEALS WITH ME

By BILLY ORTEN

In the spring of 1996, I was diagnosed as having cardiomyopathy, a deterioration of the heart muscle. I was told the ejection rate of my heart was down to 15% or less, and it would continue to worsen, and it did. When Dr. Hakim informed me that the only treatment was a heart transplant, I was not ready to receive the news. Objecting I said, "I will need time to think it over." His reply was, "Maybe this program is not for you." It took some rapid changing on my part and resolute persuasion to convince Dr. Hakim to place me on the waiting list. "You must be totally committed to the program and willing to follow

our directions completely in order to be admitted," he warned. I did not understand his reasons for that statement at the time, but now I do. Today I follow his directions because of my complete trust in him as a physician and surgeon.

After being placed on the list, there were times I had doubts. "What have I allowed myself to get into?" I questioned, "Is there really no other way? Don't they have a pill they can give me that will make me all right?" I was not ready to accept the drastic change I knew was going to take place in my life. What I wanted was a "quick fix,"

something that would make me well again but allow me to go on living my life as I had always done.

The reason I am sharing this experience is that this same attitude is found in the spiritual realm. Most people are looking for a "quick fix" for their spiritual condition, a spiritual pill that will suddenly make them all God expects them to be, yet allow them to go on living as they always have. Not many people are interested in self-denial nor in the study of God's Word, without which no one can ever be transformed into the image of Christ. Some expect a "religious experience" which suddenly changes them from a carnal to a spiritual person; however, maturity as a Christian comes from perseverance and growth in day to day living.

I have been surprised many times at the way God directs my life. He does not work like I expect Him to. Even in hearing my prayers, His answers are often not what I expect. Has God worked in your life like you thought He would? Has your life unfolded in the way you expected? For most people, it has not.

I would like to share with you some unusual ways God deals with us in this life. I have chosen an incident in the life of the patriarch Jacob to illustrate these surprises. As recorded in Genesis 32: 22-32, Jacob is in serious trouble. He is on a mission to meet Esau, his twin brother, and he is afraid. Even though Esau has promised to kill him and is heading his way with four hundred men, Jacob wants to go home so badly he is willing to take a chance. Esau has reason to want to kill Jacob because Jacob had already tricked him twice. He had tricked Esau into selling his birthright and later he had tricked their father into giving him the blessing that was intended for Esau.

It is night, and Jacob has been praying for reconciliation with Esau when suddenly a man leaps onto his back and wrestles him to the ground. Jacob does not know who the man is; he probably thinks it is Esau or maybe a bandit who preys on travellers passing along the road. One thing for sure, he does not think it is a friend. He does not say, "O joy, a friend of mine has leaped upon me and is mugging me." The Bible says Jacob's assailant is an angel, a messenger of God sent in answer to Jacob's prayer. But Jacob does not know that. Jacob's first surprise is to learn that the man who wrestled him to the ground is not an enemy but a messenger of God who has come to bless him.

When I stop to consider this, one of my greatest surprises is to realize that some of my greatest struggles have been with God. Don't misunderstand me. God loves me and seeks only my good. Satan is my enemy who wants to destroy me. However, my human will often rebels at what God tells me to do. Maybe I should say that my greatest struggles have been with the Word of God. Even though my mind tells me that all of God's commands are for my good, my human will often rebels against them. It has been easier for me on many occasions to say "no" to Satan's temptations than to say "yes" to God's commandments. I have wrestled with the commands to love my enemy, to do good to those who hate me, and to pray for those who spitefully use me and persecute me (Matt. 5: 44). My human spirit has wanted to rebel against the teaching of Paul to submit my will to others (Eph. 5: 22), especially when I felt I was more in the right than

they. It has not been easy for me to "give in" to a weaker brother because he says my liberty offends him (Romans 14: 15, 20, 21). Sometimes forgiving one who has injured or insulted me is harder for me than abstaining from fleshly lusts (Mark 11: 25-26). These are but a few examples.

Are you wrestling with God about some of his commands? Remember what the apostle James says in James 4: 7: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you." Notice the wonderful things that happen when you bow your will in submission to God: (1) It becomes easier to resist the Devil; (2) God and you have a closer relationship.

The second surprise in the way God deals with me is that I sometimes try to get rid of my greatest blessing. Jacob does in Genesis 32. He wrestles with the angel who has come to bless him. Somehow in the midst of the struggle, Jacob realizes the angel is a messenger from God. Jacob now clings to the angel. He sees now as a blessing what he had tried to rid himself of. I have been surprised to find out that some things I wanted the Lord to change have turned out to be for my good. I have prayed for the Lord to bless me as He sees my needs. But what I really meant was, "Lord, give me what I think I need." What the Lord knows I need and what I think I need are not always the same. Sometimes our most difficult times have a blessing wrapped up in them. Faith is not the ability to change the circumstances, but the ability to stay calm amid the circumstances.

We need to look closely at what Romans 8: 28 says and what it does not say. It says, "All things work together for good to them who love the Lord." It does not say "all things are good," but rather that God takes all things in our life and makes them work for our good. Are you struggling with a burden, a health problem, a domestic problem? Have you suffered a great loss? Faith is the ability to trust God to work all these things for your good. For example, eighteen weeks in the hospital followed by twenty weeks in rehabilitation has taught me a lot about patience, and my sickness has led me to believe even more strongly in the power of prayer. I have felt the love of the church locally and over the entire brotherhood as people expressed their concern through prayers, cards, phonecalls, letters, visits, and financial help. People freely gave their labor, some even driving great distances, so that my house might be ready for my return.

The third surprise in God's dealings is that good and bad run on parallel tracks, and they often arrive at the same time. Look at Jacob again. He gets what he wants. He is able to meet Esau and be reconciled to him, which is what he has prayed for. He also gets a blessing from the angel. However, though the angel eventually blesses Jacob, during their struggle the angel also "touched" the socket of Jacob's thigh so that the Bible says it is "wrenched" (Gen. 32: 25). This injury causes Jacob to limp the rest of his life. (I imagine his thigh hurt him almost constantly, especially when the weather changed.) Though Jacob does get mostly good from this encounter, he also receives some bad.

This is also true in my life. Most of my life I have been thankful for many blessings; but at the same time, I have always been struggling with adversities. I keep thinking one day I will get "all my ducks in a row" and "all my

boards nailed down." Then, nothing but good things will come to me. I will sit back and relax and enjoy the good life. However, right now it is not that way. At times like these I am tempted to think I will just pull back and wait until the bad times are over, and then I will begin to live. However, someone once wisely said, "Life is what happens while we are getting ready to live." There will always be some difficulties in our lives. God wants us to trust in Him, not in our circumstances.

Remember, our weakness is God's opportunity. Paul also had a difficulty that troubled him sorely. He prayed

earnestly for God to remove it, but God said, "No, Paul, my grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (II Cor. 12: 9). Brothers and Sisters, let us dwell continually on Paul's resolution in verse ten: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak then I am strong." Any adversity that results in our receiving an added measure of God's strength is a blessing in disguise. —Rt. 3, Box 127, Marion, LA 71260.

FULFILLING OUR INDIVIDUAL DUTIES TO THE LOCAL CHURCH

By T.E. DENTON

Subsequent to applying the term "body" to the local church in my first debate with Lewis Hale (concerning the scriptural number of loaves in the Lord's supper), brother Hale denied that there was biblical authority to do such. He then challenged me to produce at least one passage to prove that the local church may be referred to as "a body." Due to that incident, I began to think that since a 67 year old preacher was unaware of this biblical fact, and since there are practices becoming more prevalent among us portraying this same unawareness, I became convinced that it isn't only essential to be cognizant of this teaching, but Christians must also be especially cognizant of its implications.

New Testament Terms of the Local Church

The Term "Body"

Grimm's lexicon (perhaps better known as Thayer's) says that the word "body" in passages dealing with the church refers to the "number of men closely united into one society, or family . . . of the church" (#4983). The way I responded to brother Hale's challenge was to produce First Corinthians 12:27. Here, after illustrating unity by the use of a physical body, Paul told his readers—the church at Corinth—that they constituted "a body." (Note the lack of a definite article in the original.) Even Lewis Hale's own brother Lipscomb in his commentary on this passage wrote . . .

The "ye" referred to the membership at Corinth as a whole. They constituted the body of Christ. Not a part of it, but the body complete and entire, within itself a complete body of Christ. To another church Paul says: "In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit." (Eph. 2:22.) The Bible clearly recognizes each separate congregation as the body of Christ, as builded together for a dwelling place in the Spirit. So that God in his Spirit dwells in each distinct and separate church. The church is the body of Christ in the community in which it is situated.

(Also see Vine's on the word "body" in this verse.) Furthermore, in First Corinthians 10:17, Paul wrote, "Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf" (NIV quoted due to its accuracy of translation in this verse.) How do we partake of one loaf? Each Christian in the local assembly breaks off a piece of bread and eats it. And, since the universal church neither does nor can partake of a loaf of

bread, then Paul was obviously referring to the local church when he said, "we . . . are one body"; in other words, as Alford put it, "we, the (assembled). . ." (Alford's *Greek New Testament*).

The Term "Building"

Grimm wrote that the word "building" in passages dealing with the church refers to "a body of Christians, a Christian church" (#3619). (Of interest might be the fact that it's the same word translated "edifying" (where we get our word "edifice") such as in Ephesians 4:12 and 16.) To the church at Corinth Paul said that her members constituted "God's building" (First Corinthians 3:9); likewise, to the Christians in the church at Ephesus he said, "you also are being built up together for a habitation of God in the Spirit" (2:22).

The Term "Church"

Grimm said the word "church" properly refers to "an assembly of Christians gathered for worship" (#1577), and Bauer used such terms as "meeting" and "congregation" in order to define its various shades of meaning. When Jesus was speaking of church discipline, He placed it, not in the context of the universal church, but in the context of the local church: "If he (the impenitent one) refuses to hear them (the two or three who urged repentance), tell it to the church" (Matthew 18:17a). Furthermore, it's clear Paul took it for granted that Christians in any given area would meet together steadfastly: for example, to the Christians at Corinth he wrote, "When you come together as a church" (First Corinthians 11:18) and "The whole church comes together in one place" (First Corinthians 14:23); in other words, it was a mutually understood and agreed upon rule that in Corinth there would regularly be "an assembly of Christians gathered for worship," just as Grimm said.

The Term "Flock"

Grimm said the word "flock" in passages dealing with the church refers to "a group of disciples . . . of bodies of Christians (churches)" (#4168). When Peter was giving some instructions to elders, he wrote, "Shepherd the flock of God which is among you . . . being examples to the flock" (First Peter 5:2-3). Paul once called together the elders of the local church in Ephesus and told them to "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.... For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among

you, not sparing the flock" (Acts 20:28-29).

The Term "House"

Grimm said the word "house" in passages dealing with the church either refers to "the family of God, of the Christian church" in general or to "a body of Christians (a church)" (#3624). (It's related to "habitation" in Ephesians 2:22.) In what may be referred to as the hub (or central passage) of First Timothy, Paul said to Timothy, "I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God" (First Timothy 3:14-15). Paul's concern wasn't teaching Timothy how to (morally) conduct himself as a member of the universal church or as a Christian, but instructing him regarding how he should deal with local church problems as an evangelist in Ephesus. In this letter he dealt with various teachings in connection with the work of the local church such as women teaching publicly (2:11-12), the qualifications of elders and deacons (3:1-13), and supporting widows and elders (5:3-17). Concerning these and many other issues, he exhorted Timothy to teach them to the local church (4:6-13).

Implications Concerning the Preceding Terms

Prior to noting the implications of teaching that the local church is indeed a body, let's notice the very crucial and related instruction of First Corinthians 12:15-17: "The body is not one member but many. If the foot shall say, 'Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,' is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,' is it therefore not of the body? If the whole were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling?" The vital truth of this passage is, each member of the local body is essential (w. 14-16) because each member serves a critical function in it (v. 17). The following implications demonstrate this truth.

"Body" Implies the Need for "Nourishment"

In Ephesians 5:29, Paul reminded us of an axiom: "No one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it." The word "nourish" here means "to nourish up to maturity . . . to nurture, bring up." The only other place it's used in the New Testament is in Ephesians 6:4 where Paul said, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but 'bring them up' in the training and admonition of the Lord." So, applying this spiritually to the local church, its members will nourish and cherish it, and the concept behind the word "nourish" would then concern teaching, a responsibility that each member of the local body possesses. God has placed men such as teachers in the local body for its edification (Ephesians 4:11-16) because it's only in the local sense that such teaching can and is expected to be accomplished (First Corinthians 14:23 and 26). Furthermore, all members of the local body admonish one another through singing (Colossians 3:16).

On the other hand, for the nourishment of the local body to be effective through teaching, there is the necessity for its members to be present for that teaching that they may grow together as a unit (body) in the same direction: Paul once said to the local church in Corinth, "you can all

prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged" (First Corinthians 14:31). In fact, as a young teacher, I've often been reminded that the general attitude should be to desire to listen more than to talk. James wrote, "Be swift to hear, slow to speak" (1:19). Related to that idea, think about how often many teachers today receive instruction: if we've become "itinerant teachers," we've thereby cut deeply into our opportunities to listen to our home church teachers (or any other teachers for that matter) and grow along with the other members of that home church.

So, the local body of which we're members needs each and everyone to be present at all its scheduled meetings that they may fulfill their respective duties in its nourishment which leads to growth; they have no such responsibility to anyone else's home church.

"Flock" Implies the Need for "Supervision"

When we think of a flock of sheep, we immediately think of the need of a shepherd—someone to watch over it. The same demand applies to the local church. Consider this: elders are commanded to oversee their flocks, the local churches (Acts 20:28), and we often contend against the notion that elders may preside over a plurality of churches. Likewise, we often contend against the practice of elders frequently absenting themselves from their flocks. The rhetorical question has then been asked, "How can elders oversee that which they cannot see?" Well, now consider the concept of that question in its inverse: suppose that all the members, except the leaders or elders, of every church within a 100 mile radius went to a different church each Lord's day every month. In such a case, the leaders of those churches wouldn't be able to lead very effectively, if at all. Further, the question arises concerning whose flocks the elders or leaders would be overseeing. Such violates the very principle that elders cannot oversee that which they cannot see, and it would make it impossible for any leader to discharge his duty. This may be illustrated with the seven churches of Asia (Revelation 2-3). It's clear that each church consisted of certain individuals because each group was specifically described with its respective problems: one lukewarm, one immoral, one dead, etc. If this weren't true, then when the people in attendance at any one of those churches received its letter, the rebuke of the letter would have been totally irrelevant to them. Why? Because on one Lord's day the church meeting together at one place may have been lukewarm while the next Lord's day a number of the lukewarm may be somewhere else leaving the majority then gathered zealous. What a predicament! But, is it much different today?

"Building" Implies the Need for "Maintenance"

One of the major things anyone does with a house or some other building he owns is to spend time and effort maintaining its integrity. Since the local church is considered "a building," then it must also be maintained, and the primary way this is accomplished is through teaching. Who would be more capable of knowing what needs to be taught on in the local church than its own members, especially its own teachers? If there are any

“repairs” that need to be made in the local church respecting such things as general edification, exhortation, or comfort, who is expected to administer it? The answer is . . . those who know best what it needs—its local members and teachers: Paul wrote to the local church in Corinth that “he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men” (First Corinthians 14:3).

On the other hand, what if a teacher has spent a considerable amount of time preparing a talk that he really believes will benefit his home church in a specific area, then, when he arrives at the church building, he discovers that those he thought his lesson would benefit the most are absent? Well, in most cases, that speaker won’t be able to speak on something else in hopes that he can use the planned lesson when his desired audience is present. Remember, Peter exhorted us to “be courteous” to one another (First Peter 3:8), and one of the most courteous things a Christian can do for a teacher is to be present for and attentive to what he has to say.

“Church” Implies the Need for “Support”

A church is an autonomous institution, and all institutions must not only have a committed group of people in order to exist, but money as well. Related to that idea, think for a moment about the contribution: what usually happens when someone who belongs to one local church worships with someone else’s local church? He places his contribution into the treasury of the church he’s visiting. There are at least two dilemmas which transpire in such a case. Firstly, in most cases, such a person has very little knowledge, if any, of how his money will be spent. Secondly, if such a person visits other churches regularly on Lord’s day mornings, he’ll likely feel somewhat odd (just as he should) about taking part in the decisions of his “home church.” Why? Because he has put little or no money into its treasury and therefore little or nothing into its work.

“House” Implies the Need for “Togetherness”

The most wonderful thought behind the word “house,” as Grimm noted, is the concept of “family”; this concept alone ought to have a great impact on us since we’ve all had some experience in what a family is or at least have an idea of what one ought to be like. It’s a sad situation when someone feels ashamed of his own family, but far worse is it when Christians feel ashamed to invite people to visit their home church due to what appears to be a lack of interest among its members. Suppose someone I’ve been working on for a long time finally decides to visit the church, and I’m not there the day he comes. What effect would that have on that visitor? Since I would probably be the only link between him and the church there, his lack of seeing me will likely have a very negative effect on him; consequently, it’s in the interest of the church and its work for its members to work diligently toward decreasing the chances of that occurring.

Speaking of the family atmosphere that should prevail, something that many folks really appreciate is when someone comes to them when they’ve been gone and genuinely says, “We missed you. Are you all right?” And, for those who think that it’s no one else’s business where they’ve been, they need to be reminded of this family oriented relationship— since we’re a family, and since this

family has leaders, that’s incentive enough for someone to express concern about where another has been for at least two reasons: (1) his or her absence tends to hinder the work of the local church, and (2) non-attendance could indicate a spiritual problem that we may be able to help resolve. If Christians (including preachers) would put themselves in the mind-set which says of their local, home church, “This church is my family, my home,” we would experience more growth and see more dedication to the home church. Otherwise, we simply spread ourselves too thin for much good.

Conclusion

It’s evident from the entire tenor of the New Testament Scriptures that each Christian must identify himself with and be identified with some local church, his own church. (Some may not approve of that wording, “his own church” or “my church,” but if Paul could refer to the Gospel as “my Gospel,” perhaps due to how personal it was to him [Romans 2:16, 16:25, and Second Timothy 2:8], why can we not do the same with reference to the church?) So, the question becomes, “What is it that makes someone a member of a local church?” Just to get us started on making our own lists of criteria concerning what makes us members of a local church or creating for ourselves our own home churches, here are some suggestions.

(1) A home church is the one where its members place the majority of their contribution. If one is a regularly attending member, this enables him to feel as much a part of the work of that local church, at least monetarily speaking, as anyone else who gives the bulk of his money there. If one is a man active in business meetings, this enables him to feel as much a part in the decisions of that local church as anyone else who gives the bulk of his contribution there.

(2) A home church is the one where members are familiar with one another as if they’re family. If one is a regularly attending member, this enables him to know, to a considerable extent, the needs and desires of his “family” members in order to comfort and exhort them (see Hebrews 10:24-25). If one is a teacher, this enables him to know, also to a considerable extent, the needs and desires of his “family” members in order to make proficient judgments concerning what to teach.

(3) A home church is the one where members attend most of the time. If one is a regularly attending member, this, as a member of the listening audience, enables him to grow right along with the other members of his family as a unit (a single, entire body) and in the same direction. If one is a teacher, this enables him to know what to teach about without unnecessary repetition of what was just taught on recently by someone he failed to hear due to his absence. If one is a “service arranger,” this enables him to know who to ask to take which leading role so as not to be unnecessarily repetitious in that area either. (By the term “most” I mean to refer to around 90% which represents 140 out of 156 meetings a year [if a congregation meets 3 times a week], leaving 16 times to be away!)

(4) A home church is- the one where members can feel comfortable with inviting non-Christians to visit their church knowing that those non-members have reason to expect to see them there if they were to visit.

With all that has been said in mind, what good is

someone to the church he calls "home" if he or she lives in the area of one church but attends another many miles away? In many such cases, he or she is hurting the growth of the universal church as well as the local one since such usually indicates to the community that "That church has problems." Furthermore, if such a person doesn't avoid attending because of problems but for some other reason, he still needs to consider the import of the preceding point numbered "4."

A preacher for a 'liberal' branch of the church of Christ named Stanley Sayers once wrote, "Consistency is absolutely necessary if the local congregation is to go forward. Inconsistency will deplete its strength, sap its vitality, discourage the total membership, and kill all drive

and initiative. And what some take for a lack of numerical growth may easily find its answer simply in a plague of absenteeism! People are . . . staying home or perpetually leaving town. Surely, we need to give this matter more and more grave attention" ("Congregational Loyalty," **A Drink from the Deeper Wells**). Well, let's conclude by noting Paul's words to the local church in Rome: "As we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another" (12:4-5). (Incidentally, the word "we" here is obviously employed by Paul in the same way it was in First Corinthians 10.)—Fort Smith, Arkansas, 72908-9258.

THE PAUL PROBLEM

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the book, or does not fit the immediate context, the exegesis is wrong. The issues Paul deals with in Galatians are: "Is it necessary for Gentiles to be circumcised and to keep the law to be saved?"; and "Can Gentiles enjoy full fellowship?" The context makes clear that Paul is not contradicting and invalidating his own teaching about the respective roles of men and women, (nor about slaves and masters, cf. Philemon and Onesimus) but he is teaching that regardless of our earthly roles we are children of God and and enjoy full fellowship by virtue of our faith in Christ (Gal. 3:26-29).

A New Hermeneutic?

The so-called new hermeneutic is also being exercised today to counter the God-given roles of men and women.

According to Professor D.R. Dungan, sacred hermeneutics is the science of interpreting the scriptures. A form of the word "hermeneutic" was used by the people of Lystra (in Asia Minor) when they called Paul "Hermes" (Hermes, in mythology a god who was the messenger or herald of the gods), because he was the principal speaker (Acts 14:12. So anyone who explains a matter is a Hermes.

The new hermeneutic, however, which is rapidly gaining in popularity among many churches of Christ, is really an effort to discount the Bible and explain away its teachings. This approach is result-oriented, that is, men have sought out a new hermeneutic, or a new way of interpreting the Scriptures, because they are seeking to justify particular positions which they can not establish by applying the Bible as pattern authority. Thus a new approach must be found that will lend itself to the desired conclusions. This theory argues Christianity should be fluid and adapt able, and that we may alter certain aspects of the gospel format in order to conform to the cultural motif of our day. This approach makes a distinction between what the New Testament meant to the first century saints, and what it means to us today. For example, Ariarajah argues that Paul's ancient letters are directed toward specific situations and should be taken only in that context, and that if Paul were writing new letters today, his teachings about the roles of men and women would be totally different. Can Ariarajah possibly

be right? Did Paul place such restrictions upon women solely because of the culture in which they lived? Was Paul merely accommodating an unenlightened, hostile environment, stalling for time and keeping prejudice to a minimum, until he could teach them the gospel? Absolutely not.

There are three NT contexts where the apostle discusses the distinctive roles of men and women in the church (1 Cor.11:2-16; 14:33-35; 1 Tim. 2:8-15). A summary of these passages reveals Paul's inspired reasons for feminine subjection are based upon the creation (1 Cor.11:7-9 14:34; 1 Tim. 2:13) and woman's deception by Satan (1 Tim. 2:14). "Culture" is not a factor in these contexts. Paul argues further that we should resist the sinful influences of culture when he admonishes the Romans to be not "conformed to this world," but rather be "transformed by the renewing of your mind" (12:2).

Conclusion

Every movement in society will to some degree, eventually make its presence felt in the church, and the feminist movement is no exception. Those pressing the feminist agenda would have us believe Paul's teachings about the role of women keep them chained to a position of inferiority. It would be easy in this age of "political correctness" for church leaders to succumb to such rhetoric and conform to the world about us. It requires greater vigilance and effort in this day not to be "conformed," but rather to be "transformed." A proper understanding of Paul's teaching concerning the distinctive roles of men and women does not imply there is a natural distinction between men and women in ability, worth, or value. Women are not inferior to men anymore than Christ is inferior to God, citizens are inferior to the President, or church members are inferior to elders. The differentiation is purely a matter of function, assigned tasks, and sphere of responsibility. The issue facing the church today, consequently, is not "what shall we do with the teachings of the Apostle Paul?" The real issue is, "are we willing to fit ourselves into God's arrangement for men and women?" If we refuse to accept God's will in this matter, it is then we are confronted with "The Paul Problem."—1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820.

WOMEN TEACHERS

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be the greatest influence for good her children will ever

realize. No one can ever take her place there. She can literally mold those little ones into the way they will likely be for the rest of their lives. They will never forget her

guidance. That is the Lord's way of providing for the teaching of little ones. If the home fails, it is wrong for us to organize an unscriptural setting or place for women to teach children or anyone else. What is needed then is teaching about the home rather than supplanting the means God has provided. His way is always best.

Paul said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Timothy 3:16, 17. Where in the Scriptures are we furnished with any place for a woman to teach except in a private and informal manner? If it be a good work it must be furnished by scripture, where is it? Peter said, "According as his divine power hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and vir-

tue. 2 Peter 1:3. According to Peter we are given everything we need for eternal life and godliness by the divine power of God. If so, it is the scripture. It is in that which is written. Where are we given the plan to organize any thing or place for the Word of God to be taught except either in the church (public) or home (private).

Brethren, that not only excludes Sunday Schools and/or Bible classes, but everything else you care to trot out. If you want to go camping go ahead. If you want to go fishing, fine. But don't try to create an atmosphere where women can teach and ask questions in a public situation. It 's wrong and God's principles which Paul taught in I Timothy 2:11, 12 and I Corinthians 14:34, 35 are trample underfoot and no doubt about it.—DLK - From 1989 by request.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEET MATT HAYES

Please meet Bro. Matthew Hayes. Matt was ordained as an Evangelist on the evening of July 30, 1997 before a large crowd at Yuba City, California. Matt is the son of Jack and Debbie Hayes of the congregation. Matt comes from a long line of faithful leaders in the church. His father and grandfather are deacons. His other grandfather, Sonny Watson, was an elder until his death, and Matt's uncle, Rod Watson is one of our preachers.



Matt and I have worked together for a couple of years since he expressed a desire to preach. Matt is 23 years old, has completed two years of college, and was successfully holding a job at Hewlett Packard before leaving to preach full time. Matt is engaged to Kristi Gamble, daughter of Fred and Donna Gamble of Auburn, CA. An April, 1998 wedding is planned. Matt accompanied me to Russia last summer and has been with me on numerous studies and visits here in the area. Matt has also spent time studying with Glen Osburn and Allen Bailey. Matt is now working full time with the Placerville, CA congregation. Matt's address is 350 Pleasant Valley Rd., Space 42, Diamond Springs, CA 95619. Phone 916) 291-9294.

It was a very special moment when Matt was ordained by the Elders and Deacons of the Yuba City congregation. Other preachers in attendance included Bennie Cryer and Rod Watson. I was privileged to preach that night on the theme of "My Son in the Faith." Matt is like a son to me and I am glad, along with the Yuba City congregation, to recommend him to the brotherhood.—Greg Gay

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

Gibson-Hudzik—On the afternoon of June 14 Kimberly Hudzik and Jacob Gibson exchanged their vows and dedi-

cated themselves to one another in matrimony. This commitment was made before a host of friends, family, and brethren in Dallas, Texas. Kim is the daughter of Randy and Phyllis Hudzik of the Duncanville, TX congregation and Jacob is the son of Jack Gibson of the 21 Street congregation in Oklahoma City. The young couple will make their home in Oklahoma and worship with the brethren in Edmond. It was my honor to be invited to this special event and to preside in the ceremony.—Brian Burns.

OUR DEPARTED

CASE -- Mrs. Clara Smith Case was laid to rest on July 10, 1997 at the New Salem Cemetery in Mississippi. After staying in the Brookmanor Nursing Home for several years because of a debilitating stroke, she peacefully passed from this life on July 8th at the age of eighty-three years. The great legacy she leaves is that every one of her three children are faithful members of the church. She will continue to be desperately missed by family, loved ones, and friends.—Doug Hawkins.

LUM -- Sister Evelyn Mae Roddy Lum was born April 1, 1924 in Ada, OK. She departed this life at Porterville, CA June 5, 1997, at the age of 73, due to cancer, which she fought courageously. Toward the end, LaVern, her husband of nearly 54 years, spent many hours caring for her and making her comfortable; the family graciously attesting to his. Evelyn also leaves one son, Jimmy (Sherry); two daughters, Carolyn (Jack) Jones, and Shirley (Al) Grijalva; one brother, three sisters, seven grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren. Evelyn was baptized into Christ at the age of 14 at Mt. View, OK. For over 40 years, the home of LaVern and Evelyn was a hospitable gathering place for numerous preachers, and many family gatherings. This writer will never forget this gracious lady, whose kindness, sweetness was and is a blessing. Her deeds are eulogy. It was an honor bestowed to be asked by this exemplary family to preach the funeral to a large gathering of loved ones and friends, brothers and sisters in Christ, in Porterville, June 9, 1997 where the Lums have been long-time members of the church, and where LaVern has preached the gospel, there and other places, too. Hope springs eternal; some sweet day we will meet again; the

hours hasten on. Bro. Roger Scott, Sr., long-time friend of the Lums and this writer, commendably led the songs, in beautiful congregational singing.—Don McCord.

STRAIN -- Sister Ester Strain was born November 13, 1915 at Harrodsburg, IN and passed away June 18, 1997 at Bloomington, IN at the age of 81. She was the wife of Brother Bob Strain known far and wide for his contribution to the spread of the gospel through the printed page — tracts, Bible Correspondence Courses, Periodicals, etc. which he printed for brethren from various parts of the brotherhood, mostly free of charge. Ester was truly his helpmeet, without whose cooperation and contribution he could never have accomplished what he did. They were two of the most hospitable and generous persons I have ever known. Their home was always open to visitors. Ester was a true Christian lady, having obeyed the gospel under the preaching of Homer L. King, who baptized her during a meeting at Harrodsburg in May 1930. She worked for the U.S. Postal Service for many years and was the Postmistress at Harrodsburg for most of those years before she retired. She is survived by one son, Deward Strain, of Harrodsburg; two daughters, Doris Powers, of Harrodsburg, and Darlene Anderson of Searcy, AR; six grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Robert H. Strain, and one grandson. She was an unusual woman in many ways and it certainly was an honor to be asked to officiate at her memorial service. She was laid to rest next to her husband in the local cemetery close to where she worshipped and where she lived. — Paul O. Nichols.



Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, Aug. 12 - I was at Duncanville, TX July 20-29 where we enjoyed being in a meeting and seeing old friends. We enjoyed being with several preaching brethren, including Melvin Blalock, Aaron Risener, and Gerald Hill. My grandson, Clay Harrison and I were at Aurora, MO Aug. 1-10, where we enjoyed staying and working with Roy Lee Criswell. We had some very good crowds, at times, and saw preaching brethren Doug Hawkins, John Anderson, Dan Wissinger, Stan Elmore and Ronny Wade, among others. I look forward to being home for a while, then to Huntsville, AR Oct. 5-12.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, August 12 - We just returned from an enjoyable meeting at the New Salem congregation near Brookhaven, MS. Crowds were outstanding throughout. Other congregations cooperated very well and some came from out of state. This is Lynwood's home congregation and we enjoyed being with him again. We couldn't have been treated

WALKER -- Ethel Hawkins Walker was born July 31, 1896 in Edmond, Oklahoma Territory and departed this life July 12, 1997, just 19 days short of her 101st birthday. Sister Walker was baptized at Blue Grove, TX at the age of 14, and was a long-time member of the church at Wynnewood, OK, until moving to Oklahoma City in 1995. She loved the church and was always present at services until health problems prevented it. She is survived by two nephews, J.N. and Foy Hawkins, and a niece, Wauree Chilcoat, all of Oklahoma City. I considered it an honor to be asked to speak at the funeral from the church building on July 14.—Johnny Elmore.

VAN STAVERN -- Bonnie Pearl Van Stavern was born March 9, 1930 in Phillipsburg, MO and departed this life July 31, 1997. She was married to John J. Van Stavern Oct. 25, 1946 at Berryville, AR and was a member of the church at Moore, OK. Survivors include her husband, of the home; her mother, Ruby Ruebush, and a sister, Berniece Carr, both of Springfield, MO; two daughters, Rhonda, of Oklahoma City, and Kim, of Del City; one son, Rod, of Shawnee, OK; four grandchildren and one step-grandchild. Services were conducted by the writer and Jimmy Cutter from Ireland Funeral Home in Moore Aug. 4, 1997. Bonnie was a faithful and devoted wife and member of the church and she will be missed. She and John, Jr. were some we worked with in our early labors in Springfield, MO. We pray that those who mourn will be comforted.—Johnny Elmore.

nicer than we were. One was baptized for which we are thankful. We are glad to be home for awhile now. We hope to be of help here. It will soon be time for the California Labor Day meeting and we have always enjoyed that. We look forward to having Don McCord hold us a short meeting August 21-24. We always need your prayers.

Douglas T. Hawkins, HCR 3 Box 203-C, Rocky Mount, MO 65072, August 1, 1997 - We just closed two very enjoyable gospel meetings. Our first meeting was in Brookhaven, MS with the Pearlhaven congregation. The meeting closed with two baptisms and two confessions of fault. While there we enjoyed the generous hospitality of Mike and Chris Smith. Mike was an exemplary man having the cause of Christ genuinely at heart. He truly stands for what is right and has "a mind to work?" During the meeting, we enjoyed the company of preaching brethren Lynwood Smith and John Smith. John is in the process of moving to Brookhaven from Knoxville, TN and will be a tremendous asset to the churches in that area. Our second meeting was in Pansey, AL and closed with one confession of fault. The crowds were very encouraging throughout the meeting. We sincerely appreciated all the help from the area congregations. It was especially good to have Chris Enos present at virtually every service. Chris aspires to preach the gospel and has moved to Alabama to pursue that ambition. He's living and working with Bro. Kevin Presley who is laboring with the Earlytown congregation. The churches in that area are cooperatively sponsoring Bro.

Kevin's television program that airs out of Dothan, AL. The brethren are really excited about the effort. Several commented about how much they enjoy Kevin's program. Our next meeting will be in London, KY Sept. 7-14. God bless all.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012, July 30 - We had a good meeting in June at 79th and Kansas Ave., Kansas City with Brother Joe Hisle doing the preaching. There were two confessions of faults and five baptisms. We had good attendance and cooperation from other congregations with some outside interest. The annual meeting at Lebanon was an inspiration. I enjoyed working with Irvin Barnes and the brethren of the Lees Summit congregation. We are able to have 45 preachers and nine young men to speak, and other brethren participated in other ways. It was my privilege to speak at Kenai, Alaska July 13. The church building was about full that Lord's day. Many of us were just visiting and chose to worship there on that occasion. There were twelve in our party, some of whom were not members of the church. All seemed to enjoy the service. We were glad to see and visit with my nephew, David King, and his family, as well as others who live at Kenai. Brother Keith Daniels and his wife opened their home for all for potluck service which was very enjoyable. My brother, Ray and his wife, Wilma, and C.E. and Leola Blanton from California were at Kenai for worship and we had a nice visit with them at the Daniel's. The Lord willing my next meeting will be the Eastern Labor Day Meeting at Brazil, IN Aug. 27-31. We hope to have good attendance there. May the Lord bless us all in His work.

Irvin Barnes, 3218 E. Farm Road 88, Springfield, Mo. 65803, July 27, 1997 - My thanks to all for your prayers, correspondence, and calls during my illness. I was diagnosed a year ago with a possible brain tumor and Parkinson's disease. Tests revealed that I had suffered two light strokes along with diabetes and pernicious anemia. Tumor was ruled out. Doctors are uncertain about the Parkinson's. I still suffer episodes of severe fatigue, muscle stiffness, and short term memory loss. These problems may or may not improve with time. I held a meeting at Pleasant Grove, Indiana in March. We had wonderful crowds with visitors at almost every service and four baptisms. I stayed with the Darrel Butt family who cared for me royally. I enjoyed working with Greg Jordan who lives and works in the area. Work done ahead of the meeting by Greg and others, contributed largely to the success of the meeting. It was my privilege to help with the Lebanon meeting this year. It was an honor to work with Paul Nichols, whom I have always admired and appreciated. We were overjoyed when Billy Orten gave the last sermon of the meeting. We were also very thankful that Dennis Smith and Gary Weaver were able to be present and preach during the meeting. Several have contacted me concerning tracts. I am out of most titles. We expect to reprint this winter. If so, notices will be sent to the churches listing in the directory.

Bennie Cryer, 2340 Sanguinetti Ln., #104, Stockton, CA 95205, August 11 - The church in Stockton is pro-

gressing. Duane Permenter held us a gospel meeting in June. He did a fine job with his preaching and the community, local area congregations, and the local membership provided the largest audiences each evening of any meeting like this we have had. The congregation was truly blessed by it. After the meeting we traveled to the Lebanon Fourth of July meeting and thoroughly enjoyed it. From there we went to the Chapel Grove, Tennessee congregation for a meeting July 6-13 where we had large crowds each service. The brethren there had prepared well for this meeting. There were four confession of faults and one was baptized after the meeting closed. This is truly a working congregation. We enjoyed staying in the home of Leo and Bernice Burns. Leo is one of the elders in this church and right now is suffering serious afflictions healthwise. We need to pray for him. We also visited in the home of Billy and Peggy Orten July 19-20 and preached at the Conway church. We also visited Wayne Fussell's meeting in Midland, TX while on the way home. We are back in Stockton now and looking forward to beginning our studies here again. Bro. Virgilio Danao and his family are now living in Hawaii for awhile. He will be working with Bro. Bayani in strengthening the congregation there and also with the hope of starting new congregations in the area. The Stockton church has been working for two years to obtain a visa that will permit Bro. Danao to go back and forth to Hawaii and other places where he is needed. Stockton is sponsoring his trip along with several other congregations who are helping with his expenses. Pray for the work over there and if your home congregation is interested in helping with these expenses you can write us and let us know. Pray for the work as we all together work the Lord's plan.

Kevin W. Presley, Rt. 2 Box 166, Kinston, AL, 36453, (334) 898-1301, August 8, 1997 - Things are well here at Earlytown, AL except for quite a bit of sickness. We found out last week that a time slot has been secured on WTVY Channel 4 for our T.V. program. This is a much larger and more watched station than the one we have been on. We look for good things to come from the transition. It was my pleasure to hear Bro. Don King at New Salem, MS and Barney Owens at Paris, TX as of late. They both preached good sermons. I enjoyed being with the brethren at Mt. Grove, MO and Garland, TX in July. At Mt. Grove we had a profitable meeting with three baptisms and three confessions of fault. One of the baptisms was an 89 year old man that Bro. Ron Alexander had visited with. Ron assisted him in his obedience one afternoon during the meeting. We had good crowds with some 15 congregations represented and several community visitors. It was good to have preaching brethren Clovis Cook, Don Pruitt, Clyde Lamkins, and Ron Alexander at one or more services. I made my home with Lyle and Velma Harrison which I very much enjoyed. I look forward to another meeting there. In Garland, TX we had no visible results and the crowds were slow at the start, but by the end of the meeting the building was nearly full. The congregation has suffered some numerical loss in the past few months due to other works beginning in the area, but those brethren were good to support the meeting. I was glad to see several preachers with us such as, Aaron Risener, Miles King, Bob Johnson, Hulio Rodriguez, Gerald Hill, and Jimmy Vannoy. It was also good to have James

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Lankford and family from Anderson, Mo with us on the last weekend. I made my home during the meeting with Jamie and Terry Lankford and their son, Markham. I appreciate their friendship and their hospitality. Lord willing, I leave today for Lawrenceburg, TN. It has been a while since I have been here and am looking forward to it. In September, I am scheduled to be at Galey, OK (Aug. 31-Sept. 7), Beartrack, KY (Sept. 17-21), and Columbus, GA (Sept. 26-28) and Oakdale, CA (Oct. 5-12). Pray for all of those who faithfully preach.

Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808, July 11 - The meeting at Marietta, GA was most enjoyable. Ricky and Jane Martin were gracious hosts. I was happy to have Brad and Luke Post with me in this meeting. These are two fine young men who aspire to preach the gospel. On Sunday night, July 20 and the fol-

lowing Monday and Tuesday we preached at Temple, GA. This was the beginning of their meeting with Dennis Smith who was unable to arrive until Wednesday. The next few days we spent in Lawrenceburg, TN visiting our dear friends, Leo and Bernice Burns, preaching there Wednesday, July 23. Leo has been sick of late and is currently undergoing treatment for kidney problems. Please keep him in your prayers. Next we were at Piedmont, AL for a meeting which resulted in three baptisms. This is a strong church with capable leadership. Our stay in the home of Charles and Martha Hurst was enjoyable as always. Currently we are at Red Oak where we began yesterday. We look forward to a good meeting. The Lord willing we go next to Ozark, Mo. Aug. 18-24, Ft. Worth, Tx. (Fossil Creek) for the annual Texas Labor Day meeting, then to Brumley, Mo. Sept. 14-21. Please keep us in your prayers.

PRINCIPLE LAW

BY GLENN ARNETT

Principle law is not called by that name in the scriptures, but is one of the three definitions from Strong's Greek translation of the word law. We can only conclude what law is being referred to by the context in which it is used. The word principle is translated from Strong's dictionary 746. arche, ar-khay'; from G756; (pop. abstr.) a commencement, or (concr.) chief (in various applications of order, time, place or rank);—beginning, corner, (at the, the) first (estate), magistrate, power, principality, principle, rule. Strong translates law; 3551. nomos, nom'-os; law (through the idea of prescriptive usage), gn. (regulation), spec. (of Moses [includ. the volume]; also of the Gospel), or fig. (a principle);—law. We learn from this that law in prescriptive usage could be referring to, the law of Moses, the Gospel or law of Christ, or principle law. Since this law is called a principle law from the definition of principle we conclude that it preceded the law of Moses and the Gospel. Since this law relates in order, the beginning, in time, first estate, and in rank, power or rule, it is obviously the law of sin that began with Adam. Paul makes this clear in (Romans 5:12 KJV) "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Since death is the result of sin as long as sin reigned death would reign. How long did death reign? Death reigned from Adam until the resurrection of Christ, (I Corinthians 15:21-22 KJV) "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

This being true the law of sin dominated man under the law of Moses. (Romans 3:20 (KJV) "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall be no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Man is dead in sin until he is in Christ. All who are not in Christ are in the flesh and are by nature children of wrath, (Ephesians 2:1-3 KJV) "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:" "Where in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:" "Among whom also we all our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh or his natural state, (Romans 7:1 KJV) "Know ye

not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? Also, (Romans 7:5 KJV) "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death."

We did and get into Christ through baptism, (Romans 6:3-7 KJV) "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:" "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." "For he that is dead is freed from sin." After we are baptized into Christ we are delivered from the law of sin and are to serve God by the law of Christ, not the law of Moses, (Romans 7:6 KJV) "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." Paul said he wanted to do good under the law of Moses, but he was captivated or dominated by the law of sin, (Romans 7:22-23 KJV) "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:" "but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is my members." Now those who are in Christ are led by the Spirit are free from the law of sin and death by the law of the Spirit of life which is the new testament. (Romans 8:1-2 KJV) "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Through obedience to the law of Christ we are dead to the law of sin that we might live into God. (Galatians 2:19-20 KJV) "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."—1445 S.E., N. St., Grants Pass, OR 97526.

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. 10

WHAT DOES 1 TIM. 2:11-12 TEACH?

By JOHNNY ELMORE

For a good many years now, we have understood that 1 Tim. 2:11,12 forbids women teaching in an assembly of the church, including what some have called "Bible classes." Quite clearly, this passage prohibits women being preachers or public teachers in the church, but is it not more inclusive as well? It would seem that some are of the persuasion that so long as the teaching is not in an assembly of the church, it is permitted. If true, women could teach or preach the Bible on the radio, on the street corner, in a restaurant or to a group of church members assembled for Bible study.

Paul wrote: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Tim. 2:12). Here the apostle gave two negative commands concerning women. He used the word "silence" before the first negative command, and he also used the word "silence" after the second negative command. He preceded the command, "But I suffer not a woman to teach" with the first use of the word "silence." So, wherever 1 Tim. 2:11,12 applies, women must be in silence. They are to learn, not teach.

The second negative command, v. 12, is "Nor to usurp authority over the man." This command is also followed by the word "silence." To what does the second use of the word "silence" refer? Does it refer to teaching? No, Paul has already settled that with the first negative command. It refers to the second command, "Nor to usurp authority over the man." Women must be silent in any activity that would involve exercising dominion over the man wherever this command applies. Therefore any activity that would involve them in exercising dominion over men, such as leading prayers, singing, or presiding at the Lord's table, must be avoided.

Some have tried to limit this teaching to the assembly, however, Paul has in view "men praying every where" (v. 8), and then refers to women with the words "in like manner" (v. 9). Are we to understand that women are to dress modestly "with shamefacedness and sobriety" only in the assembly? And then are we

to understand that women may teach or preach on the radio, on the street corner, to a group assembled for Bible study, or in a restaurant or some other public place, just so long as it is not in the assembly? Remember, if 1 Tim. 2:11,12 does not apply to these situations, 1 Cor. 14:34,35 will not prohibit it.

Ellicott comments on the Greek word for "learn," *manthano*, and states that it is "in antithesis to *didasko*." On the subject of Christianity changing the primal relationship of women to men, he also states: "While it animated and spiritualized their fellowship, it no less definitely assigned to them their respective spheres of action; teaching and preaching to men, 'mental receptivity and activity in family life to women.' Neander. **Planting**, Vol. 1, p. 147 (Bohn). What grave arguments these few verses supply us with against some of the unnatural and unscriptural theories of modern times" (Ellicott, p. 52). Thus, the role of the woman is "in antithesis to" or in contrast to being a teacher. Thayer defines *didasko* as "to hold discourse with others in order to instruct them, deliver didactic discourses," while *manthano* is defined as "to learn, be appraised." Ellicott also says, "Every form of public address or teaching is clearly forbidden as at variance with woman's proper duties and destination" (Ibid.)

Alford states on 1 Tim. 2:11-12, "Let a woman learn (in the congregation, and everywhere: see below) in silence in all (possible) subjection (the thought of the public assemblies has evidently given rise to the precept (see 1 Cor. xiv. 34); but he carries it further than can be applied to them in the next verse): but (the contrast is to a suppressed hypothesis of a claim to do that which is forbidden: cf. a similar de, 1 Cor. xi 16) to a woman I permit not to teach (in the church (primarily), or as the contest shews, anywhere else..." (Alford, p. 319).

Think about the outstanding characteristics of Bible classes and Sunday school, and then think of what we have when Bible studies, closely resembling church assemblies, are arranged by the leadership of the church and all of a certain age or class are invited and it becomes a platform for women to do some teaching. The supposed "desire for teaching" becomes a forum for these women to air their views and "show off" their Bible knowledge. Think about this, brethren! If we can have a young people's group in a home or somewhere else, can we have an old people's

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COMING IN
NOVEMBER!

Front Page Article
by Jerry Cutter on
When Does The
Lord's Day Begin?
Don't Miss It!

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PUBLISHER

Don L. King
41931 Chadbourne, Fremont, CA 94539
Fax 510-651-3926

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

Ronny F. Wade
P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808

EDITORIAL STAFF

Clovis Cook
Edwin S. Morris

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Bennie Cryer	Johnny Elmore
Barney Owens	Jerry Dickinson
Billy Dickinson	Kevin Presley
Carl Johnson	

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Editorial

THINGS TO CONSIDER

By DON L. KING

In this issue of *Old Paths Advocate*, we have several topics under consideration. Johnny Elmore has written an excellent piece on 1 Timothy 2:11,12. This passage is often misapplied by those who seek to justify their women teachers in Bible classes. They maintain a woman is only forbidden to teach over the man and that she may teach in a Bible class provided she doesn't do that. We maintain that she is forbidden to teach (publicly) and she is also forbidden to "usurp authority over the man." We asked Brother Elmore to deal with the grammar here and expose the truth. Read it carefully. It is truly amazing what "notions" people get when they are determined to have their way over God. Brethren, we have some among us who do not understand these Bible principles. What a shame.

Brother Alan Bonifay begins a series on angels (at least two articles) and "guardian angels" in particular. Yes, we are aware that some believe in these. Brethren for whom we have great respect and in whom we have confidence will differ with us, perhaps. Nevertheless, we believe Alan's articles are worthy of prayerful consideration. Angels have long been a topic of huge interest for me. I have always wanted to preach about them. However, there has always been a great obstacle in my way. Much of what one can find about them and their feats is in the Old Testament. We all know about the angel and Balak; we know that two angels came to visit Lot in Sodom, etc. But, what about now? Do angels come here on earth today and do anything for us? Where is the passage teaching such? You ask, "Do you not believe in angels?"

"Of course, we do." However, it appears to this writer that their efforts for me (today) are in heaven. Speaking of the creative Christ, Paul said: "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him." (Colossians 1:16) It is our understanding that principalities, powers, etc. refer to the various orders of angels. In other words, angels seem to be a part of that "invisible" creation.

Yes, angels are of great interest. However, it is very difficult (perhaps impossible) to nail down exactly what they do for us today. Some who believe in "guardian angels" assert they save us from injury, etc. What a wonderful thought! However, how can one thus explain the loss of brethren in horrible car accidents, etc.? Do they only help at certain times? Is it possible that only certain Christians have such to watch over them? Does God pick and choose which of His children have this sort of "secret service" to protect them? Who can believe it?

Then, the subject of the good confession is making the rounds now. Some say we ought to ask the person who is about to be baptized to confess that "...Jesus is Lord,..."

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: My question for you is twofold: (1) where do you find the scripture or scriptures to justify the practice of public confession by an erring brother, (2) before he may take part in the worship service? (La.)

Answer: There can be no forgiveness without confession. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" I John 1:9. The issue before us is, when is the proper time and place for Christians to make confession of sins? Do all sins require a public confession before the church? Are there any sins that require such a confession? In determining the answer to these questions as well as those asked by the querist, we must take into account what the Scriptures have to say about this very important subject. In Acts 8 we have the case of Simon who had obeyed the gospel under the preaching of Philip. His profession prior to his obedience was that of a smooth-sayer or sorcerer. When Simon witnessed the transference of spiritual gifts by the laying on of the apostle's hands, he tried to purchase this power with money. Peter rebuked him "Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money...for thy heart is not right before God." Here is a clear example of a member of the church doing a wicked thing. Peter does not tell Simon to confess his sin before the congregation, but rather says "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee." It would appear that the Apostles, Simon, and God were the only parties involved in this matter hence it was treated by Peter as a private matter with Simon being told to "repent and pray God." Had Simon not repented and confessed his sin, he would have been lost. By any stretch of the imagination can anyone envision Peter using Simon in the public services of the church to teach or pray as long as he continued in his sin? Surely not. Repentance and confession were necessary for forgiveness. Today many Christians sin privately. They should repent and pray that God will forgive them. There is no scriptural precedent for anyone coming before the church to confess a private sin. Such a practice should be discouraged rather than encouraged. In Matthew 5:23-24 we have a situation involving two people where one has sinned against the other. The proper procedure is for the guilty party to go to the one wronged and make amends. "First be reconciled to your brother, then come and offer your gift." In Matthew 18 Jesus says "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone." In both these passages, we have a private matter between two people. Such matters are to be settled between the parties involved. No mention is made of either individual going before the church to make a confession at this point. In fact in the case of the latter verse Jesus says "If he hears you, you have gained your brother." The private problem

has been privately solved. We should note here that in such a case if the offending brother decides to make a confession before the church, without going to the brother he has offended, he has failed to do what the Scriptures command him to do. On the other hand, if the offending person refuses to repent when approached by the offended party, he is instructed to take one or two more with him that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." If he refuses to hear them, then Jesus instructs "tell it to the church." It now becomes a public matter. The church knows about the situation, or sin involved. If the offending party refuses to hear the church, he is to be rejected. Suppose, on the other hand he listens to the church, what course of action should be taken? According to I John 1:9 he must confess his sin. Since the church is aware of the sin, it reasonably follows that the church needs to know about his repentance and confession. If he failed to repent and confess, could the church, knowing about his sin, continue to use him in the services? Surely not. Every private sin should be repented of and confessed to God privately. Sins between individuals need to be handled among the parties involved and should not be brought before the congregation. Public sins, however, are another matter. Those sins about which the church has general knowledge should be dealt with in such a way that the church is aware of their solution. Does this mean that one has to walk down the isle and make a confession before he can be forgiven? Not necessarily. One who is guilty of any sin should repent of and confess that sin as soon as possible. There is certainly no scripture that teaches one has to wait until the next church service to do so. However, the church should be made aware of the resolution of the sin. But what happens when one is guilty of publicly sinning in a congregation, but instead of making things right in the church where the sin occurred they go to a near-by congregation to make a confession? The same rule should apply: one can repent of and confess sin at any time, however, the church where the sin occurred needs to be informed by sinning party that he has repented of the sin, and asks their's and God's forgiveness. With reference to using people in the public worship services of the church, such participation is a privilege. To use someone whose past or present conduct is questionable is without doubt unwise. To use someone whose public sin has not been corrected, is not only unwise but wrong. There are many scriptures that teach we should "know those who labor among us", and that wicked people should be withdrawn from (ICor.5). To imply that a congregation doesn't have the right to demand repentance and confession, on the part of the erring before they are used in the public worship services, is to ignore all such scriptures. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808)

VERBAL CONFESSION OF CHRIST

BY GEORGE BATTEY (REPRINTED BY REQUEST)

Until recently most of our brethren agreed that a verbal confession of faith in Christ was a necessary step of salvation. Also, until just very recently, the kind of confession that should be made was widely agreed upon. But times are changing and even the most fundamental doctrines of salvation, like verbal confession, have been questioned and attacked.

Two vital questions have been posed and they are valid questions that deserve answers: (1) Does the Bible require a verbal confession of faith in Christ in order for the alien sinner to be saved and, if so, (2) What does that confession consist of?

The scriptures commonly used in times past to prove the necessity of verbal confession are one by one being attacked and eliminated. For example, Matthew 10:32-33 has commonly been used to prove the necessity of verbal confession, but this passage cannot be used to prove the point, we are told, because that passage encompasses more than a one time verbal confession; rather it envisions a confession lasting throughout one's entire Christian life. Acts 8:37 has also in times past been used to prove the necessity of verbal confession, but this too is now rejected as being a spurious text that does not even belong in the Bible. The NIV, NRSV, RSV, and ASV relegate the verse to a mere footnote although acknowledging that some manuscripts include the verse.

If we can ever agree that verbal confession is even necessary, the next question is: What shall the confession consist of? Commonly our brethren would appeal to the confession made by the eunuch, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37), but as mentioned above, that passage has been eliminated from the discussion. In place of this standard confession comes a relatively new confession based on the NIV rendering of Romans 10:9, "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Thus, some are now taking confessions which consist of, "I believe that Jesus is Lord." The difference between these two confessions is significant because confessing that Jesus is Lord is not the same thing as confessing that He is the Son of God.

IS A VERBAL CONFESSION NECESSARY?

Beginning, then, with the first question at hand: Is a verbal confession of faith in Christ a necessary step in the conversion process for the alien sinner? The Scriptures indicate yes. Jesus taught repeatedly that faith in Him was necessary for salvation.¹ Moreover, before one can be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), he must believe first. Jesus plainly said in Mark 16:16, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved." It is sinful to baptize someone who does not believe in Jesus.

But the next most logical question is: What is it about Jesus that must be believed? Concerning John the baptizer, Jesus taught that men should believe that he was "more than a prophet" (Mt. 11:9-11). If Jesus said this about John, how much more could it be said about Jesus Himself? Jesus is "more than a prophet" and men must believe this to be saved. But how much more than a prophet was He

and how much more must be believed about Him before one can be baptized and be saved? To the Jews Jesus said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM" (Jn. 8:58). The name "I AM" was the name of God Himself (Ex. 3:14) and when Jesus said this it was obvious that He was claiming equality with God. The Jews understood exactly what He meant and immediately took up stones to kill Him (Jn. 8:59). The point is, Jesus required that men believe in His deity. Very pointedly Jesus said to the Jews, "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (Jn. 8:24). The word "He" in this passage has been added. Literally, the Greek NT reads, "If you do not believe that I AM, you shall die in the sins of you." In other words, men must believe that Jesus is the divine Son of God and unless they believe this they are not fit candidates for baptism and salvation. Thus, the thing which must be believed is the deity of Christ.

But how shall we know if sinners believe in the deity of Christ in order that we might then baptize them for the remission of sins? It is impossible to read their minds for "what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?" (1 Cor. 2:11). The answer to this rhetorical question is obviously, "No one"; no one is able to know what a man is thinking within his spirit. First Corinthians chapter 2 uses this to teach a point about divine revelation. We cannot know either what a man is thinking or what God is thinking unless it is revealed to us. A revelation is needed, in either case, to know what someone is thinking. Therefore, in regards to salvation, the alien sinner must reveal to us that he believes in the deity of Christ before we may baptize him into Christ.

The revealing process, wherein an alien sinner makes known his faith in Jesus' deity, is called "confession" and as pointed out above, it is a necessary prerequisite to baptism. "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 10:32-33). Despite all efforts to remove this passage from the discussion, this scripture remains in the discussion. Whether at the beginning, middle, or end of one's spiritual life, he must be willing to verbally confess his faith in Christ as the Son of God and if at any time one refuses to do so, his salvation is forfeited. While this passage may envision a lifetime of confession, it at least embraces the initial confession made before baptism. Again, the apostles wrote concerning verbal confession. Most notable is the passage written by John, "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God" (1 Jn. 4:15). In keeping with what Jesus said in Mark 16:16, that belief was necessary before baptism could occur, we read the confession of the eunuch, "Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, 'See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?' Then Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God'" (Acts 8:36-37)

So, in answer to the first major question, Is verbal confession of faith in Christ a necessary step in the conversion process for the alien sinner?, the answer is yes, a verbal confession is absolutely necessary.

WHAT SHOULD THE CONFESSION CONSIST OF?

The next question revolves around exactly what the verbal confession of an alien sinner should consist of. Commonly our brethren have required that sinners confess their faith in Christ as the Son of God, but a new generation of preachers has arisen to take issue with this. Because of the rise in popularity of the NIV translation among our brethren, some among us now argue that the verbal confession should consist of, Jesus is Lord, based on the NIV's translation of Romans 10:9. ⁴ This translation is different and at odds with the KJV and NKJV which render the passage, "Confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus." There is a significant difference between these two translations. The NIV rendition is saying that men should confess that Jesus is "Master" and that He should be submitted to in obedience. The KJV rendition is saying that men should confess the deity of Jesus and this is not the same as confessing that Jesus is "Master." Sarah confessed that her husband Abraham was "lord," implying that she should submit to and obey him (1 Pet. 3:6), but she was not confessing that Abraham was divine. The sons of Jacob confessed that Joseph was "lord of the land" (Gen. 42:30), but they were not confessing he was divine. The apostle Paul called slave owners "masters" ⁵ (Eph. 6:9; Col. 4:1), but he was not implying they were divine. To the man born blind Jesus asked, "Do you believe in the Son of God He answered and said, 'Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?' And Jesus said to him, 'You have

both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you'" (Jn. 9:35-37). Notice carefully that the blind man confessed Jesus as "Lord," but this was not enough. Jesus required that he also confess Him as the "Son of God." You will find the same thing in the case of Martha. In John 11:21 she confessed freely that Jesus was "Lord." But, as in the case with the blind man, this was not enough to satisfy Jesus. She must also confess that He is the "Son of God." Therefore Jesus said to her, "Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world'" (Jn. 11:26-27).

While it is true that men must confess Jesus as being Lord of all (Phil. 2:11), this is not the same as confessing Jesus as the Son of God. To confess Jesus as the divine Son of God is a greater confession than to say He is Lord. If men confess that Jesus is Lord, they are making a worthy admission that He deserves to be submitted to and obeyed, but if nothing more is confessed, they are saying no more than Sarah said about Abraham. In contrast, to confess Jesus as the divine Son of God is to admit that He is divine, equal with God, and therefore is Lord and should be submitted to and obeyed. In other words, to confess that Jesus is the Son of God encompasses the idea that He is Lord, but this does not work the other way around. To simply confess He is Lord does not necessarily imply that one believes Him to be divine. A "Jehovah's Witness" would be willing to confess, "Jesus is Lord," and therefore should be obeyed. But they would not be willing to confess that Jesus is the divine Son of God, equal with God, and therefore Lord. Jesus is Lord because He is first the divine Son of God (cf. Heb. 1).

Pt. 2 Next Month

¹ To list a few instances, consider the following passages: Lk. 8:12; Jn. 1:12; 3:15-18, 36; 5:24; 6:29, 35, 40, 47; 7:38; 8:24; 11:25-26, 40; 12:36, 46; 14:1, 11; 16:9; 20:31.

² Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Tim. 6:12-13.

³ More on this passage later.

⁴ The NIV is not alone in rendering Rom. 10:9 in this way. Other translations which follow suit include the RSV, NRSV, ASV and the NASV.

⁵ "Masters" in this passage is from the same Greek work kurios which is translated in other passages in "Lord".

GUARDIAN ANGELS

By ALAN BONIFAY

In Acts 23:8 we discover that the Sadducees taught that there was "no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit." The Sadducees were the liberals of New Testament times. They denied the supernatural element of God's word just as modernists do today. Consequently they, like many today, did not believe in the existence of angels.

Just as there was much confusion and misunderstanding about angels in the days of Jesus and the apostles, so there remains much confusion and misunderstanding about them today. In attempting to come to a clearer understanding we must remember that we are entirely bound in, bound around, and bound down by the complete and perfect revelation of God's word. The Bible contains the revelation and the only revelation of God extant in the world today. No man can justify himself as being in the presence of God, or validate the Scriptures by his personal experience. Instead men are obligated to validate their experiences by the word of God. One of the greatest dangers of our day is that men are turning away from the word of God and are

being guided and governed by their own feelings and experiences. They are appealing to subjective proof instead of objective truth. As a result we must guard against the danger of Joshua's day when "every man did that which seemeth to be right in his own eyes." Many convey the notion of these words: "I don't care what the Bible says and it doesn't make any difference what you read to me. I know what I feel in my heart and that settles it." When men adopt such a view they have cut themselves loose from all spiritual moorings and are adrift on the sea of emotion and instability.

Therefore, our appeal is to turn from all prejudice and superstition which envelopes our subject unto the clear light of God's holy word. What does the Bible say? Is the operative question. What about Christians having individual guardian angels today?

THE POPULARITY OF THIS IDEA TODAY

Many scholars believe that the doctrine of guardian angels is plainly and indisputably taught in the Scriptures.

Jesus said,

"See that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven." Matthew 18:10

In Hebrews the writer says that God's angels are:

"... ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation." 1:13.

David declared that: "The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them." Psalms 34:7.

Acts 12:15 and 27:23 are also often cited in support of the view that each disciple has a specific angel assigned to him for guidance, protection, and encouragement. Practically all denominational writers defend the doctrine of "Guardian Angels" and various brethren among us have also endorsed the view though by no means all of them. B. W. Johnson says that the doctrine of guardian angels is emphatically taught in the scriptures.

J. W. McGarvey wrote that the phrase "their angels" in Matt 18:10, refers to the angels especially charged with ministering to them individually.

One more recent writer quoted anonymously by Guy N. Woods said, The New Testament teaching of angels, and particularly the providential care which they exercise over individual is too plain to be disputed by informed Bible students.

Even in our own fellowship there are those who teach this doctrine for Bible truth.

ARE THESE UNWARRANTED CONCLUSIONS

In spite of these strong affirmations by great and good men can only state the passages proffered do not correlate with the conclusions they have drawn and that it seems to me that the doctrine is fraught with insurmountable difficulties.

First of all, the Bible neither in these passages nor in any other says that each person or even each saved person has a guardian angel assigned to his care. In Mt 18:10 "their angels" refers to Christians all right but they are said to be "in heaven" where "they always behold the face of the Father who is in heaven." The record does not say these angels care for, provide for, or protect the Christians. It does not say they do anything for or to Christians. It simply positions "their angels" before the face of the Father in heaven-not here on earth. Some scholars, (Guy N. Woods; James McKnight), believe that this passage is a figurative statement alluding to the Oriental view that those deserving of high honors and great favors are most often permitted in the king's presence. The plural form is suggestive of all angels who serve for all the saints in God's great plan-not that each believer has a separate angel. Metaphorically then it is being taught that faithful saints, even the most obscure of them on earth, are honored and highly regarded before the throne of God. The usage of the word "angels" here appears to me to be similar to that of Acts 12:10 where it must refer to Peter's spirit. However, at most, in favor of this doctrine, it is only being said that angels minister in general to all Christians. In this understanding Jesus is sternly warning his disciples not to despise those who are less mature or less capable in the kingdom because God's angels are caring for them. We must not be guilty of despising those over whom the holy angels as a collective

group are watching providentially. It is simply not taught here that each Christian has an angel in particular assigned to his protection.

INFLUENCE OF ANGELS IN MIRACULOUS TIMES

Angels were indeed actually engaged in influencing people in ancient times, but it must be remembered that these were miraculous actions performed in lieu of the inspired written record which we have today.

An angel appeared to Philip in Samaria and to Cornelius in Caesarea but these were instances of a type not possible today (Acts 8:4, 26, 10:3).

It is unquestionable in the operation of God's plan to save that angels actively participate but this is far, very far, from saying that angels direct, control and overshadow their earthly words as the doctrine of guardian angels demands.

When Peter was miraculously released from prison and appeared at the gate of the house where the saints were assembled the report of Rhoda of the apostle's appearance at the gate was assumed by them to be his angel (Acts 12:15). But all that this can possibly mean is that they concluded Peter had been killed by Herod and that it was his spirit which had come. Nothing here supports the doctrine of guardian angels; indeed, the implication seems quite the reverse, inasmuch as the conclusion which the disciples drew was that Peter must have been killed.

David Lipscomb said, (and I agree) "I do not find any clear indication in the Bible that each person has a guardian angel. Angels came to men during the miraculous ages of the world, but always with a clear and distinct form and with a clear, well delivered message from God. They never influenced men in a mysterious way, nor is there any evidence that they sought to lead or influence them otherwise than through the message they delivered to them. None of us believe they come in visible form or with an audible message now. If they do not, I cannot see how they can affect men or their course. The Bible says, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them." However, this was from Psalms-a time when angels did come to reveal God's word and to miraculously protect the Israelites. It means the same thing as the expression: "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. (Questions And Answers pp15, 16.)

Lipscomb goes on to point out that the other passage most often supposed to teach the doctrine of guardian angels actually refers to the ministry of angels in giving the Jewish law and their visitations to men under that law. (Hebrews 1:1 2:5) The whole connection is a contrast between the ministry of angels in the Jewish law and the ministry of Christ under the Christian dispensation. Reading from chapter 1:1 through 2:5, we see the superiority the ministry of Christ has over the ministry of angels throughout. The connection clearly shows that the angels ministered to them by giving them the law and revealing the will of God. But the Christian age, "The world to come," has not been subjected to the ministrations of angels. Rather, it has been subjected to the ministration of Jesus who is greater even than the angels. (Lipscomb, p

16.)

INSURMOUNTABLE DIFFICULTIES OF INDIVIDUAL GUARDIAN ANGELS

Still the whole concept involves difficulties that I believe are insurmountable. They cannot be resolved either in scripture or in experience.

First, this doctrine cannot be reconciled with the clear, explicit teaching of the scriptures regarding the free agency of man. Those who believe this doctrine teach that angels exercise watchful care and protection over God's people. Protection from what? Illness? Injury? Violent death? Many of God's finest servants languish on beds of affliction; their every wakeful hour in excruciating agony. Where is their guardian angel in this time of interminable pain and lonely, sleepless nights? Where is their guardian angel when Christians die in horrible accidents or automobile collisions? How can this doctrine be harmonized when those recurring and all too common tragedies among Christians? How can it be harmonized with Romans 8:18-23 which teaches us that these tragedies are the common lot of all men—even me apostles? A theory

in conflict both with God's word and known and demonstrable facts cannot be true.

Secondly, this doctrine is fraught with many of the same errors as the current theory of direct, independent operation of the Holy Spirit separate and apart from the word of God—the New Testament. It necessitates the conclusion that there is immediate, personal direction by the angel on his ward. How is this accomplished? By the implantation of thoughts in the heart? If so, how could the recipient of such alleged suggestions determine whether they originated from the angel or from some other source? "We can tell by the Bible they say." If so why may not the Bible be appealed to always and everywhere for such direction, since it is the monitor by which the "leading" of the angel is determined? What possible suggestion could the angel make contributory to the well being of the disciple which is not already set forth in the scriptures? Is the angel's direction irresistible or dependent on the will of the disciple? If the former, is the disciple responsible for his failure to follow the angel's leading?

WHAT DOES 1 TIM. 2:11-12 TEACH?

continued from page 1

group and a ladies' group simultaneously across town, with women doing some of the teaching? If not, why not? And if we can meet at 7:30 Friday evening, could we meet at 9:30 Sunday morning? Surely we could! And if our houses "joined hard" (next door) to the church meeting house, could we still have our meetings? If so, would someone please explain to me the difference in that and Bible classes, aka Sunday school? Surely the fact that the Bible classes are in a building owned by the church does not make the difference. Surely what Paul is forbidding is women leaving their God-given roles and trying to occupy the role of men.

Inconsistency of practice and a desire for a broader fellowship (perhaps) have caused the old anti-Sunday school, individual cups brethren to start referring to themselves as "non-Sunday school." In other words, they are no longer opposed to Sunday school, they simply don't have it. Of course, some have completely capitulated and have women doing things reserved exclusively for men, such as serving the communion. Let us be careful that we do not go beyond the limits of the New Testament and abandon the ground that our predecessors fought so hard to gain. Remember 2 John 8, "Look to yourselves, that we lost not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."—OPA.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

continued from page 2

(Romans 10:9, **New International Version**) We are reprinting (in two parts) George Battey's excellent article on this by request.

Some have noticed that in the 8th chapter of Acts, verse 37 is omitted in many of the Greek texts. This is not a real surprise. T. W. Brents (**The Gospel Plan of Salvation**) wrote a very interesting article about it in 1874. He made a very good case, in our opinion, for the passage being left in the text. After all, it does fill in a noticeable gap in the narrative. Are we to believe that Philip and the Eunuch are riding along and after Philip preached Jesus to him and the eunuch asked to be baptized, Philip simply stops the chariot and with never a word puts him in the water? He never asked the eunuch if he believed? That's hard to believe! Verse 37 is right in harmony with the context of the narrative. T.W. Brents wrote: "...Were it wanting in all the manuscripts of the first thousand years, and only found in such as are of modern date, (this is 1874, mind you. DLK) this would be a circumstance well calculated to cast suspicion upon it; but Dr. Hackett tells us that this interpolation was known to Irenaeus as early as

the year 170..." (pg. 251).

At any rate, the Word of God does supply us with the same thing in other places. When Peter was asked what he believed, he answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16:16) Here, the same grand truth that we believe the eunuch confessed was also confessed by Peter. Not only that, but Jesus affirms that His church is to be built upon that truth. In other words, it is the foundation of the church. Are we to believe that this won't do for our confession of faith? Notice 1 John 4:15: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in Him, and he in God." If this confession will do for God to dwell in me and me in Him, it must be the one I needed to confess when I obeyed the gospel 41 years ago. Look at 1 John 5:5: "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." If I believe it am I not to confess it?

When Paul wrote to Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:12 he said: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." The NIV has "... Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses." That "good confession" must have been that

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. That's the one, remember, that allows God to dwell in us! Well, of course, and who would believe otherwise?

Why do such things as these we have mentioned become a stumbling block for some? We confess, we know not. It

is a fact, however, that I never, never expected to hear of brethren of the Church of Christ arguing over the good confession. Let us put this business to rest and get back to the work of saving souls. DLK

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SENECA CONGREGATION

The Seneca Congregation has moved to a new building southwest of Seneca, on the Oklahoma state line. Since there is a church of Christ (cups and Sunday School) in Seneca that already uses the name of Seneca Church of Christ, this congregation will use the name Stateline Church of Christ. It is located on the North side of Highway 60, one mile West of the junction of Highways 43 and 60. The services are Sunday at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. and Wednesday at 7.

BACK IN PRINT

Back in print after almost 200 years is **Social Worship** by James A. Haldane.

This book, first published in 1805, had great impact upon young Alexander Campbell who was a student in Glasgow at the time of its publication. Robert Richardson, Campbell's biographer said that it was here that Campbell received his first impulse as a reformer. Greville Ewing, along with the brothers, Haldane played an important role in what would later become known as the great "Restoration Movement."

This important historical document is a "must" for every collector and student of restoration history. (315 pages).

Send all orders to: Howard Sharp, 3957 Villa Court, Fair Oaks, CA 95628. Price per book is \$10.00 plus postage. To one address, U.S. postage for one book is \$1.74; for two is \$2.24.

CHOTEAU, OK CHURCH DIRECTORY

Change Cale Green to Rodney, Dunkin, 1400 Meadow Trace, Pryor, OK (918) 825-2707.

MIDLAND TEXAS (MIDLAND COUNTY)

Westway Church of Christ is changing the morning service time from 10:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. beginning November 1, 1997. Please make a note of this in the directory.

SAN ANTONIO, TX

NACOGDOCHES ROAD — L. Melvin Crouch, change area code from 210 to 830.

HOUSTON, TX SUNSET HEIGHTS CONGREGATION LOCATION CHANGE

After September 15, 1997, we will no longer be meeting at 800 Aurora St. We have sold our building and are in the process of relocation. Please call to find out where we are worshipping until we can get a building site. Use church directory numbers to call. Thank you.—Harvey Hammonds.

NOTICE

The Hale Church of Christ located on Highway 21, 11 miles East of Berryville, Arkansas and 2 miles west of Oak Grove, Arkansas will have their final service on August 31, 1997.

Christians and visitors visiting the Branson, Missouri and Eureka Springs, Arkansas areas need to make arrangements to attend services in Ozark, Missouri; Mt. Home, Missouri; Harrison, Arkansas; or the Hartwell Church of Christ in Huntsville, Arkansas.

OKLAHOMA NEW YEAR'S MEETING 1997

The dates for this year's meeting will be Dec. 26-31. The meeting this year will be hosted by the Twenty-First Street congregation, Oklahoma City, OK. The meeting will be held in the auditorium of Western Heights High School located at 8201 S.W. 44th St. (SW 44th & Council Road). Morning services will be at 10 a.m. beginning Dec. 27th. Evening services will be at 7:30 p.m.

A list of motel accommodations will be mailed to many congregations. If you desire additional information on the meeting, please call Cliff Arney (405-685-5437) or Duane Cutter (405-745-2581).

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

OWEN-GAY -- Saturday afternoon, August 16, 1997, Justin Owen and Lori Gay were married in Sacramento, California. Justin is the son of Debbie Owen and the late Alan Owen of Benicia. Lori is the daughter of Cassie and Greg Gay. Our families were honored by a standing room only crowd of approximately 500, including fifteen gospel preachers. Rod Watson helped with the ceremony so I could escort Lori down the aisle. Singing was ably performed by the bride's uncle, Wyn Baker. I was honored to perform the ceremony to unite them for life.—Greg Gay

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.

OUR DEPARTED

HARRIS -- Russell L. "Doc" Harris passed from this life at his home on September 6, 1997, at the age of 74. He was a longtime member and leader at the congregation located at Chouteau, Oklahoma. He was survived by his wife, Connie, (who has been ill for several years now) and two sisters. Also surviving him are two sons and one daughter. His eldest son is our own brother, Jerry Harris, of the congregation at Mebane, N.C., whom I have known for some years now. Bro. Doc also had six grandchildren. It was certainly a blessing to have known this gentleman and brother in Christ. He was very knowledgeable in the scriptures and appreciated good gospel preaching. He was well respected in the area where he resided for the past 53 years. Such recognition was seen when we approached the road where Brother Doc lived off Highway 69 North of Wagoner, Okla. The road is named Doc Harris Rd. The funeral took place at the Chouteau Hills church of Christ on Tuesday, September 9th. The way in which Bro. Doc had touched the lives of others was seen in the host of relatives, friends, neighbors, and brethren from good distances that came to pay their last respect for this caring man. Congregational singing was led by Bro. Ron Green. This was an emotional service for those that had known and respected Bro. Doc and his stand for truth. He will be greatly missed by the Chouteau congregation. It was my special privilege to officiate.—Kenneth R. Middick.

SWARINGIN -- T.B. Swaringin, a longtime member of the Church of Christ in San Angelo, TX departed this life on July 21, 1997. T.B. was born in Hamlin, TX on November 18, 1910. He is survived by his wife, Leora; one son, Jim; and a host of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. T.B. was a lifelong, faithful soldier of the Cross and will be greatly missed. Graveside services and songs were conducted by the local 19th St. Church of Christ.—Dwain Morrison.

BRAGG -- Donnie Alice Bragg, 92 years of age of Brooks, Summers County, died July 3, 1997 after a long illness. She was a faithful member of the Piney View Church of Christ and is survived by a son, Louis of White Sulphur Springs, and a sister, Margaret Thompson of Piney View and nine grandchildren. She lived the Christian life and it was an honor to conduct her funeral.—Lawrence Lore.

MAXEY -- Don Edward Maxey was born June 2, 1934 near Lebanon, MO and departed this life July 23, 1997 in Springfield, MO. On August 19, 1960 he was united in marriage with Paula Percy, and to this union was born one son, Paul, who lives in Springfield. Don was baptized into Christ and attended Mission Hills Church of Christ in Springfield. In spite of his serious illness for the last two years, he always maintained a cheerful and optimistic attitude. Everyone who knew him remembers his light-hearted, friendly manner. His interest turned more and more to spiritual things. He loved going to church services and had planned to attend the July 4th Meeting at Lebanon,

MO, but could not. He was fortunate to have Paula who lovingly cared for him until the day of his passing. We will miss him. I was accompanied by Ron Alexander in the service.—Dan Wissinger.

TOMPKINS -- Mack Tompkins was born April 16, 1918 in Purcell, OK. He died August 2, 1997 in Norman, OK. His wife, Lorena, preceded him in death in 1996. He is survived by two sons, Bill and Randel Tompkins, and one daughter, Lois Annesley, five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Mack died from complications following heart bypass surgery. Mack was a member of the Norman congregation and a friend to all. He was a kind and gentle man. He was hardworking and loved to garden. He had a contagious grin and a love for laughter. We certainly do miss Mack here at the Norman congregation. Jerry Harris and I conducted the services and offered words of consolation and hope.—Doug Edwards.

BOWLAN -- On August 4, 1997 our sister in Christ, Jewell Bowlan went to be with the Lord. Jewell was born March 13, 1932 in Washington, OK and passed away in Norman. She is survived by her husband, Dave Bowlan, one daughter, Sharon Covington; one son, Greg Bowlan and six grandchildren. Jewell was a member of the Norman congregation. She was such an inspiration to those of us privileged to know her. She suffered so much during her struggle with cancer, and yet she never grew bitter or resentful. Her faith in God never wavered. There were times when she came to services feeling very sick, and yet she always tried to come unless she was in the hospital. She was a kind and virtuous woman. There is a void in the congregation now because of her absence. It was my privilege to attempt to speak words of comfort and hope at her funeral.—Doug Edwards.

GARRISON -- Sister Gertrude Clara Garrison was born Sept. 12, 1912 in Bruno, Oklahoma. She left this life on Aug. 8, 1997 in Modesto, California. She had been a member of the church all of her adult life. The last many she attended at the congregation at Modesto. She was preceded in death by Denver H. Garrison, her husband of over 57 years, and a daughter, Joyce. She leaves a son, Dale Garrison, of Tigard, Oregon and a daughter, Gale England of Modesto. Also, two sisters, two brothers, eight grandchildren, sixteen great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild. Her quiet demeanor, diligence and words of encouragement are some of the things that will be missed by all. The greatest thing that she will be remembered by is her constant devotion and lifelong care to Joyce and to Denver in his declining years. Her smile and quiet laughter were like sunshine in a dark place. She can rest with the hope of the resurrection to be with the Lord. Brother Richard DeGough and I were honored to speak words of comfort.—Rod Wilson.

PATTERSON -- Tom Patterson, thirty-one years of age, died suddenly September 1, 1997 in his home of heart failure. His memorial service was conducted on Thursday, September 4th before a large gathering of family, loved ones and friends. Sadly, Tom leaves behind his wife, Lesa, and two small children. He was a faithful member of the

Eldon, MO congregation, and worshipped there faithfully since his conversion from digression. Tom was a very large man and had no social security due to a medical disability. In order to help the family financially, Lesa has worked outside the home at different jobs as much as possible. The expense for the funeral arrangements was just under six thousand dollars. The funeral arrangements were not lavish or extreme, but were very simple and modest. Unfortunately, Tom had no life insurance or burial policy. The churches in the area have helped Tom's family some, and in addition, friends and family members have also

contributed to help Lesa with the cost of the funeral. Approximately three thousand dollars have been donated in total. Brethren, if you could help this family with an individual contribution of five or ten dollars it would be a very good work, and the kind of sacrifice the Lord is pleased with. If you desire, you can send it to: Lesa Patterson, 505 Dunstan Dr., Eldon, MO 65026. I honestly don't know of a more pitiful or deserving case. I personally don't like to make a practice of asking the entire brotherhood for financial assistance, but this is definitely an exception. Please help if you can. God bless you.—Doug Hawkins.



Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808, Sept. 12 - The Texas Labor Day meeting was good this year as usual. Large crowds gathered Friday through Monday. The preaching was timely and forceful. The Lord willing we look forward to meetings in the near future at White Bluff, Tn. Sept. 21-28, West Chester, Ohio Oct. 15-19, Cable Ridge, Mo. Oct. 26-Nov. 2, and Brumley, Mo. Nov. 9-16. Please remember us in your prayers.

Kenneth R. Middick, P.O. Box 869, Seneca, Missouri 64865 - Much has been accomplished in the Lord's work since last report. We have enjoyed the meetings in our area with various preachers from across the brotherhood. Recently I held a singing school here at home in Seneca and at the Lamar, AR congregation. We had an enjoyable week with the brethren in Lamar and pray that their zeal for the Lord will never waver. Recently we had a wonderful meeting at the 21st street congregation in Oklahoma City. It was a pleasure to have Edwin Morris, Glen Osborne, Doug Edwards, Greg Branch, Jerry Harris, and other gospel preachers in the audience to support the preaching of the gospel. Bro. Glen has started a new work in that area and has a great group of people to use as a nucleus for spiritual growth. We invite any and all to come and worship with us at our new location (announcement in another part of the paper) southwest of Seneca. Pray for us in the Lord's work.

Johnny Elmore, 419 KSW, Ardmore, OK 73401, Sept. 3 - We were able to hear Doug Edwards several times in a meeting at Healdton, and on the fourth Sunday we enjoyed the usual singing at Healdton. We are scheduled to have the fourth Sunday singing in Ardmore this month, and also next month to climax a meeting with James Orten, Oct. 24-26. Next Sunday, I am to be with the Crestview congregation in Wichita Falls, TX, at Huntsville, AR Oct. 5-12, and El Cajon, CA Nov. 5-9. We attended the Texas Labor Day meeting this year. The Fossil Creek congregation did well in taking care of the meeting. It was thought

that over 600 attended.

Doug Hawkins, HCR 3 Box 203-C, Rocky Mount, MO 65072 - We just closed a very enjoyable meeting in Henryetta, OK. The meeting closed with one confession of fault. During the meeting several preachers came to support us. As always, we were glad to have all of them. Included were Brandon Stephens, Larry Combs, and Joe Hisle. It was especially good to visit with Joe and Darlene Hisle, a welcomed and refreshing occasion. Just after the meeting in Henryetta, I returned home to work cooperatively with Ron Alexander in a mission effort in Iberia, MO, a community 12 miles east of Brumley. During the meeting one man was baptized, and several other contacts were made. Presently, we are looking forward to going to Montebello, CA (Oct. 12-19) and Modesto, CA (Oct. 20-27) this month. Brethren, please read the announcement in this issue about Tom Patterson's death. His family desperately needs your financial help. God bless you all.

Brett Hickey, P.O. Box 6506, Ventura, CA 93003 - September 1 When we arrived in Ventura eight months ago, our average attendance was about twenty. Due to the combined efforts of the congregation, our Sunday morning attendance has been well over thirty the past three weeks. Visitors from other congregations have offset the void left by several who were traveling. We were thrilled to welcome Barbara and her two children back to the congregation. Louise's sister had been out-of-duty for about six years. We have had a couple responses from a free ad in the weekly Pennysaver for a non-denominational Bible study. Our local Bible Study load has increased. This is the first month since we moved here in January, that we have been so absorbed with the studies that we had no time to pass out doorhangers. My insecurities about speaking Spanish have kept me from aggressively seeking Spanish Bible studies, but with a large Hispanic population some have crossed our path. While struggling at times in our studies with Spanish speaking families, I seem to be steadily improving. Wilda Egurrola comes with me. She is good at conversational Spanish and is therefore a big help. We hope Raymond Fox can come down and help us occasionally. We still have several studies by mail with people in Arkansas jails and prisons. Miles King answered my letter this week agreeing to try to contact those in his area who are completing their correspondence course this month. We look forward to attending the California Labor Day meeting in Manteca. November will bring us to Bro-

ken Arrow, OK and Mtn. Home, AR to be with some of our dearest brethren.

Jack Cutter, 12321 E. 14th, Tulsa, OK 74128 - Since my last report earlier in the year, the work in the Broken Arrow and Tulsa area has been blessed. At Broken Arrow, there have been six baptisms and one restoration. Five of the baptisms are individuals without any prior knowledge of the Truth. They were either converted by home studies or sermons at church. Three families are represented in these conversions. The big challenge now is attempting to firmly establish them. It is requiring much patience and prayer. In the past month or so, there have been several meetings in the area; Don King, (Muskogee), Jimmy Smith (Chouteau), Joe Hisle (Council Hill) and Don McCord at Broken Arrow. They all preached well. Don McCord's meeting at Broken Arrow was strongly supported in attendance from distant places, but especially by all the local churches. Also, some interest was shown from the community. We were privileged to attend one night of the opening services of the new building at Rogers, AR. The building was impressive. Carl Johnson preached well. As for my health, I am feeling fine. I am doing usual work. Please, pray for me and the Cause!

Jerry Dickinson, 13803 Crosshaven, Houston, TX 77015 - The Texas Labor Day Meeting was, as usual, inspirational and refreshing. Ronny Wade and the Fossil Creek church did a great job conducting and arranging the meeting and it was estimated that there were six hundred in attendance. It was great! September 5-7 my son, Jason held a weekend meeting at Sandgrove. The crowds were good and the preaching was excellent. I am encouraged to see young men like Jason and others around our brotherhood stepping up and taking hold. As I get a bit older I am concerned more and more about the future of the church, but when I hear these young men preach the same old Bible truths with zeal and vigor, I am filled with confidence and hope that the church and the ancient order will be in good hands. My preaching schedule for the next few months includes the following dates. October 4-5, Tulsa, OK; October 13, San Diego, CA; October 23-26, Harrison, AR; November 15-16, Fayetteville, AR; November 30, Allen, TX. My phone number in the church directory and preacher's list is incorrect. It should be (713) 455-8024. Pray for the work everywhere.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, Sept. 10 - Don McCord closed a good meeting for us recently, preaching some much needed things. We enjoyed having him in our home. We are to hold a short meeting at Yuba City, CA Sept. 12-14 to which we look forward. The Labor Day meeting in CA this year was well attended and we hope productive of much good. The Manteca congregation hosted it and worked hard to make it a success. It was my pleasure to preach on Lord's day morning at Atwater, CA during the Labor Day meeting. Preachers, make a note to send your field reports! Brethren everywhere love to read them and they have a right to know your works. We also need articles dealing with the church, her work, mission, worship, government, evangelists, etc. Your voluntary writings are not only wanted by

us, but needed by the brethren around the world. May we hear from you soon?

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012 - The Eastern Labor Day Meeting hosted by the Brazil, Indiana congregation was wonderful. The church at Brazil is small, but with the help of sister churches and with cooperation of so many individual Christians everything went well. There were sixteen states and two countries represented. We were not able to use all the speakers who were present, as is often the case, but we did use fourteen preachers who gave inspiring lessons. I was honored to be asked to help direct the meeting. My next effort will be at Miami, OK Sept. 13-21. The congregation at home, 79th and Kansas City, Kansas City, KS, continues to grow in number and in knowledge and we are seeking to develop the ability of the younger members as well as others in the public services of the church. We have some fine people with whom to work and it is a joy for my family to be a part of it. We have had lots of company in our home this summer and hope to have more in the fall. We have also had many visitors for our services which is always encouraging. Things are going well and we thank God for it. May the Lord bless us all as we work for Him. My email address is pon.wjn.ks@juno.com.

Jimmie C. Smith, 5100 Rail Rd., Harrison, AR, Sept. 5 - Once again I've been slothful in reporting to the paper. The first of June found us in a meeting at Brundage Ln. in Bakersfield, which is one of the favored places to hold a meeting. Crowds were exceptional with local preachers attending along with Gayland Osburn from Oregon. Brian Elliott, a native son labors with the congregation and has the esteem of all, which is an oddity, and speaks well for both Brian and the leaders and members. Brian is humble, studious and energetic. We enjoyed our stay immensely, making our home with Doyle and Nancy. The annual Lebanon meeting was a real upper! I then held a meeting at Chouteau, OK where the little building was filled to capacity. I stayed with the Ron Green family, taught a singing school each morning, and sang until Ron and I were hoarse as frogs. The congregation has taken on new life with several young families. Next, we enjoyed a meeting at Hartwell, (Huntsville) AR that truly exceeded our expectation. They are about fifty miles from Harrison and we've enjoyed a close relationship for years. Ronny and Alfreda Wade drive all the way from Springfield one night for services. Hartwell started from the TV program about thirty years ago. Roger Owens made both Chouteau and Hartwell's meeting. Jack Cutter and Jim Hickey at Chouteau, Bruce Roebuck and I held a mission meeting at Cotter, AR on the banks of the White River that was most enjoyable. I would preach until I fell in my tracks if I could do that every night. Miles King came by on a night that we were rained out to help in the meeting. We heard Ronny Wade at the new congregation at Ozark and enjoyed the Labor Day meeting in Springfield. Oct. 5-12 I will be Harrodsburg and Jerry Dickinson will be at Harrison Oct. 23-26.

Billy D. Dickinson, 215 Forest Hills Dr., West Monroe, LA 71291, Sept. 8 - The church here at West Monroe

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE (USPS 407-560)

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is making progress in our efforts for future growth, and we have reason to be optimistic about the direction the work seems to be going in. When 1996 ended about nine months and we entered the new year, several things had taken place which gave us concern for the congregation's immediate future. However, I'm happy to report that in the last few months things have made a complete "turn-about." In July, a significant restoration took place, and we have also witnessed two of our young people obey their Lord in baptism. Our attendance is in the middle 40's on most Sunday mornings. Another situation has developed recently which is a source of great optimism and joy. We are now in the process of beginning a series of home Bible studies which we pray will be blessed with success. My recent meeting at Goshen, OH was most enjoyable, where I stayed in the home of Al and Ayna Moore. The Moores really know how to put you at ease, and they truly love the Lord and His church. We had visitors from far and near, including these preachers: Bill Ferguson, Mark Deatherage, Bill Leford, Cecil Smith and Jimmy Cating. The meeting ended with one confession of faults. I enjoyed attending the Texas Labor Day meeting a few days ago. The Fossil Creek (Ft. Worth) congregation did a great job hosting it, and I appreciated the opportunity of being one of the assigned speakers. I'm looking forward now to the rest of the year. On Sept. 26-28, I will participate in a weekend meeting at the Aurora Street congregation in Houston, TX. This will be "homecoming" for many of us, and it will be their last meeting in the old building before they move to a new location. It should be a nostalgic event. I am scheduled to be at Allen, TX on Nov. 9. But the big event for us as a family will be on Nov. 27 (Thanksgiving Day), when our son, Chris will marry Tammy Patton in Shreveport (Midway congregation). Brethren, time is swiftly passing by. Let's stay busy for the Master!

Jim Franklin, Malawi Report - We have just completed our 1997 studies for preachers and "leaders" which were conducted in twenty-two locations throughout Malawi. In addition to a total of 224 preachers who attended the studies, there were 1,473 "leaders" representing 547 congregations. The numbers of leaders in attendance were less than we expected. But, considering the multiple problems these people face in their every way life, it was not to surprising. The villagers live in abject poverty. If they get sick, they cannot receive proper medical treatment

because none is available. Consequently, the number of deaths taking place is almost unbelievable. We received word from several congregations informing us that the leaders would not be present because of a funeral—either of their own family, or a member of their congregation. Interest was exceptionally good in every place we conducted the studies. Without a doubt it was because our subjects were targeting issues and problems with which the brethren were familiar. In addition, our question and answer sessions were popular as it gave brethren an additional opportunity to "air out" other problems which our subjects did not cover. It has been a physically exhausting experience conducting the studies this year. Even so I believe that the benefits not only outweigh the physical demands, but worth all the time, effort and expense.

It looks as if the work in Mozambique is on the increase. We had brethren from that part of the country west of Malawi to visit us asking us to assist them in their effort to get the Government of Mozambique to give them due recognition as being the Church of Christ in fellowship with us here in Malawi. These brethren became members of the church when they were refugees in Malawi during the civil war in Mozambique. When they returned to Mozambique after the war, they did not have a preacher, so they assumed the responsibility themselves and have started three congregations. Their local government will not allow them to continue to serve as preachers and establish other congregations without having first proved to the District Commissioner that their church is a legitimate, established region. This is where I come in to the picture. As a "missionary" approved by the Malawian Government, I will have enough influence to assure the Government of Mozambique the legitimacy of the church these men serve. We have sent three Malawian preachers to their area to check out the validity of their request. If things are as they say, we will visit the Government. Just the other day, two men from the area of Mozambique east of us came to Blantyre to visit us. They too are members of the church. One became a member when he was a refugee in Malawi. They other obeyed the Gospel in Mozambique. They are also asking us to assist them. We sent two preachers today from the area of Malawi nearest to the border to check out this work. The work never ends in this part of the world. The potential seems to be unlimited. Please continue to remember us in your prayers. Thanks! May the Lord richly bless all of you according to your needs and in keeping with His will.

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. LXXI

LEBANON, MISSOURI, NOVEMBER 1997

NO. 11

WHEN DOES THE LORD'S DAY BEGIN AND END?

By JERRY CUTTER

Why is this article so important? First, it involves the Bible and the truth. Second, many of us travel the world, and all churches do not meet in the daylight hours of the Lord's day. Those churches who cannot meet in the daylight have to be told to either meet after midnight Saturday night and before midnight Sunday night, or from Saturday evening until Sunday evening at the same time. Which is correct? When Don King and I first went to the Philippines many years ago, the first church we met with met at pitch dark early Sunday morning, but after midnight. The reason: many brethren had to work in the rice paddies on Sunday. In Malaysia one of the churches meets Saturday night, before midnight, and I have met with this church. But I would not have met with the brethren if they had met Sunday night at the same night. Why? Because Sunday night at the same time would not have been upon "the first day after the sabbath," IT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE SECOND DAY AFTER THE SABBATH. In Israel the brethren now meet Saturday night before midnight. This is because the Jews keep the Sabbath and the brethren have to work Sunday. However, they have been known to meet Sunday night, which is unscriptural. So, you can see why this is an important subject.

The word **day** (Gr. hemera) is a very common word in the New Testament. It occurs 389 times and literally refers to "the period of natural light." It is also used figuratively. Thayer defines **day** accordingly: used "1. of the natural day, or the interval between sunrise and sunset." Under 2, Thayer shows **day** can refer to "the civil day, or the space of 24 hrs." (Thayer, p. 227). However, despite the many times this word is found in the New Testament, it is never used once to explain the Lord's resurrection or to the time in which the church is to meet for the Lord's Supper, or for when the church is to take up the collection. For those great occasions a much more precise wording is used.

THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

"The first day of the week" is our English translation. The Greek words from which we receive this expression "first day of the week" are very precisely given eight times in the original. Six of these references have to do with the Lord's resurrection and two with the church. They occur as follows: Mt. 28:1; Mk. 16:2,9; Lk. 24:1; Jno. 20:1, 19; Acts 20:7 and I Cor. 16:1-2. These words are 1) "mia" (first), 2) "ton" (of), 3) "sabbaton" (Sabbaths). Thayer

(p. 566) defines these words to mean *the first day of the sabbath*, and the wording as found in I Cor. 16:2 as meaning "on the first day of every week."

Now with this understanding and definition, we are prepared to study the first day of the week from a Bible point of view. The sabbath itself is the seventh day of the week (Thayer, p. 565), and a week is seven days (Thayer, p. 566).

If we can ever agree upon when "the first day of the sabbath" begins, our subject will be completed. But who can doubt that the first day after the sabbath **began in the evening and not at midnight**? In short, our Lord was not resurrected on a day that began at midnight. And once we agree to this important point, we will have no trouble understanding when the SAME DAY began in Acts 20:7 and I Cor. 16:1-2. Looking the other way, if one can begin the day of Acts 20:7 at midnight, then one can also declare Jesus was resurrected on a day that began at midnight. However, the Lord was resurrected on the FIRST DAY AFTER THE SABBATH.

The ability to keep time in Bible days is not the topic of our subject. Remember, though, God did not ask the Hebrews to do something they could not do, and something they did do successfully for over 1500 years before Christ, that is, keep the Sabbath. From antiquity men of every kind have known about solstices, years, seasons, months, days and hours. The Creator Himself, while on earth, spoke of 12 hours in a day, and the Scriptures often refer to hours and watches. If one desires to make keeping time a point in understanding Acts 20:7, one will probably find oneself in the dark about midnight also.

THE LORD'S DAY

In Revelation 1:10 we read of "the Lord's day." It literally means "of or belonging to the Lord, or 2. relating to the Lord, the day devoted to the Lord, sacred to the memory of Christ's resurrection, Rev. 1:10." (Thayer, p. 365). Such a construction of the word Lord is used only twice in the New Testament. The other time is when we read of "the Lord's supper" (I Cor. 11:20). In short, the Lord's supper is eaten on the Lord's day, or the day sacred to the memory of Jesus' resurrection. However, the day of His resurrection began as soon as the Sabbath ended, in the evening, and not at midnight. The Lord's supper is not eaten on a day that begins six hours after the day upon which Jesus

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PUBLISHER

Don L. King
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Fax 510-651-3926

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER

Ronny F. Wade
P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808

EDITORIAL STAFF

Clovis Cook
Edwin S. Morris

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Bennie Cryer	Johnny Elmore
Barney Owens	Jerry Dickinson
Billy Dickinson	Kevin Presley
Carl Johnson	

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Editorial

A NEW CONFESSION?

By DON L. KING

We are continuing the piece by George Battey regarding the confession in this issue. We were asked to reprint it, and are glad to do so. However, there are a few things we would like to say as well. (We also have an article by Greg Gay for next month.

The New International Version (NIV) omits Acts 8:37. That verse in the King James Version reads: "And Phillip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

It is amazing that some are so insistent that this verse, which has been used for hundreds of years, should not be used.

They prefer to ask a person to simply confess Jesus as Lord before baptism. This is based on Romans 10:9 in the NIV.

Is it the same thing for one to confess Christ as Lord as to **confess him as the Son of God**? It absolutely is not! There are thousands who would readily confess Christ as Lord who would balk like a stubborn mule at confessing that He is the Son of God.

In the Philippines there is a sect called "the Church of Christ 1914." Strange as it may seem, these people have named their church after Christ but they do not believe that He is really the Son of God. We have asked to no avail why they call their church after one they do not admit is deity. At any rate, they could accept Him as Lord (their superior) but not as God's Son. That would destroy their doctrine. There are many others also.

When one confesses Christ as the Son of God, that is the ultimate. It includes the idea of His being Lord. It is a greater idea than merely confessing Him as Lord. By the way, look in the NIV at Romans 10:9. It reads, "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,'...." Now notice the original as it reads in the Nestle Greek text:

"Because if thou confessest with the mouth of thee Lord Jesus, and believest in the heart of thee that God him raised from the dead, thou wilt be saved." Does that sound the same to you? It certainly doesn't to me. By the way, the King James is a nearly verbatim quotation of the Greek. I think I'll just keep using it, thank you very much! Paul evidently did not intend to set forth "**the confession verbatim**" but rather referred to the fact that one must confess the Lord Jesus. In other words, he identified the one to **be confessed**. The NIV makes it sound as though that is the actual confession. However, the original shows a different point entirely. It is interesting that Macknight in his commentary says: "...The duty of faith, which we apostles preach as necessary to salvation, is this: 'that if thou wilt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus;' that is, wilt openly confess Jesus to be Lord and Christ. This interpretation the apostle Peter hath taught us, Acts 2:36. "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly,

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VERBAL CONFESSION OF CHRIST - PART 2

By GEORGE BATTEY

Is the NIV rendition of Romans 10:9 valid? Is its manuscript basis the most reliable available? To answer this authoritatively would require someone more trained in ancient manuscripts than myself, but with the information available to me, and provided I am interpreting this information correctly, it does not appear that the text used by the NIV in this passage is the best available.

The NIV OT is based upon the standard Masoretic Hebrew text, but the NT is built upon an eclectic text - a fluid text taking what the translation committees thought to be the best parts of all available manuscripts. In the case of Romans 10:9 there were two major variant readings to choose from. The United Bible Society (UBS) 3rd edition opted for the first variant which agrees with the Received Text and is translated, "confess with the mouth of you (the) Lord Jesus." This is based upon rather impressive textual authority including the Sinaiticus, the Bezae, and other manuscripts ranging from the third century all the way to the year 1561. In total, twenty-six Greek manuscripts, fourteen Greek and Latin lectionaries, and the writings of six "early church fathers" are cited in the footnotes to support this reading. Three more manuscripts add the word "Christ" after the name "Lord Jesus." However, the NIV did not choose to use this reading. Instead, the translation committee chose the second variation which, when translated is rendered, "Confess with the mouth of you, 'Jesus (is) Lord.'" This is supported by only one manuscript dated in the year 1044, one Greek lectionary dated from the fourth to seventh centuries, and three "early church fathers." A variation, "Confess *the word* with the mouth of you 'Jesus (is) Lord,'" is found in one ancient manuscript (the prestigious Vaticanus of the fourth century), one Greek lectionary, and three "early church fathers" all ranging from the third to the fifth centuries.

It would appear, then, if the footnotes of the UBS 3rd edition are accurate and up-to-date, and if I am interpreting the data correctly, the most well founded text was rejected by the NIV committee and the weaker, more feeble text was adopted. Interestingly, there is more textual support and just as impressive support for including Acts 8:37 than for the NIV rendering of Romans 10:9! In other words, the NIV rejected Acts 8:37 because the textual basis seemed weak to the translation committee, but in Romans 10:9 they chose to include a variant reading founded on a weaker basis! To make matters worse, the NIV does not even footnote the fact that the larger majority and oldest manuscripts have, "confess the Lord Jesus." This is not an NIV bashing campaign, but it is truly a weakness in an otherwise and overall good modern translation.

In the case of Romans 10:9 it would seem that the Greek text and translation of the KJV and NKJV is superior to the NIV and other modern translations. Again, let me emphasize that I am not bashing the overall integrity of the NIV, nor am I implying the KJV and NKJV have no textual or translation problems of their own for they certainly do. I am merely saying, that if the data I am looking at is correct and current, and if I am interpreting

that data accurately, the KJV and NKJV have the upper hand in transmitting and translating Romans 10:9. The Scriptures, in this case, are undoubtedly teaching men that they must confess the Lord Jesus Christ. That is, Romans 10:9 is not giving a verbatim confession that must be repeated, but rather the passage is identifying the One who must be confessed - the Lord Jesus Christ.

WHAT MUST BE CONFESSED?

This brings us back to our original question, What must the confession of Christ consist of? Romans 10:9 identifies the One who must be confessed, but what must be confessed about Him?

During the ministry of Jesus, on several occasions, demons would "confess" Him before men, but He would promptly rebuke them and not allow them to continue confessing Him. One example will suffice to illustrate: "And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, 'You are the Son of God.' But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known" (Mk. 3:11, 12). Jesus did not tolerate such a confession from the demons because (1) it would not alter their destiny, and (2) he did not want anyone to conclude He was in league with demons.

Over and over again men confessed the deity of Jesus by confessing He was the Son of God. By making such a confession they were at the same time acknowledging Him as a Lord or Master who was worthy of ruling over their lives. The disciples said, "Truly You are the Son of God" (Mt. 14:33). Nathaniel confessed, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" (Jn. 1:49). Caiaphas and the other Jewish leaders were not interested if some viewed Jesus as a master, or lord, but they would not tolerate anyone confessing Him as the Son of God because that implied deity (Mt. 26:63-64; Jn. 12:42). Neither would they allow men to confess Him as the "Christ" (Greek for Messiah), because the Messiah was admittedly the Son of God (Ps. 2:2-7). In response to this, Peter boldly preached Jesus as both Lord and Christ, that is, enthroned deity (Acts 2:36).

When God sent John the baptizer to prepare the way for Jesus, John made two confessions. First, "He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, 'I am not the Christ'" (Jn. 1:20). And second, "'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God'" (Jn. 1:32-34).

This was not enough to satisfy our heavenly Father. He must Himself confess His own son. First, at the baptism of the Savior, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mt. 3:17). And again on the Mount of Transfiguration, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" (Mt. 17:5). This made a lasting impression upon the three disciples who witnessed this great event. Years later Peter wrote of it, "or He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice

came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (2 Pet. 1:17).

Jesus confessed Himself on numerous occasions. During debate with unbelieving Jews He said, "I and My Father are one." Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?" The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God." Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, "I said, 'You are gods'"? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, "You are blaspheming," because I said, "I am the Son of God"? If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him" (Jn. 10:30-38). Again, when on trial before Caiaphas, "The high priest answered and said to Him, 'I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!' Jesus said to him, 'It is as you said'" (Mt. 26:63-64).

Over and over we read of men either confessing that Jesus is the Son of God, or else remembering that He confessed this about Himself. Mocking Jews at the cross remembered that Jesus confessed of Himself that He was the Son of God (Mt. 26:43). The soldier standing at the foot of the cross when Jesus died said, "Truly this Man was the Son of God!" (Mk. 15:39). Some might argue that this soldier was merely saying Jesus was "the son of a god" rather than "the Son of God." But the objection is invalid because whatever the soldier meant, he certainly meant Jesus was deity. The very purpose for writing the gospel accounts was so that, "You may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (Jn. 20:30-31). The first thing Paul preached after his conversion was "the Christ . . . that He is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20). To the Romans Paul wrote "concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord . . . declared to be the Son of God with power" (Rom. 1:3-4). In other words, Jesus was proven to be more than just "Lord" by His resurrection; He was proven to be the Son of God' To Timothy Paul counseled, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses" (1 Tim. 6:12). The "good confession" which Timothy made was that which Jesus Himself made before Pilate (1 Tim. 6:13). That confession concerned the identity of Jesus as the Son of God (Jn. 19:8-11) and the fact that He was a heavenly (divine) King rather than an earthly king (Jn. 18:33-37). The Hebrew writer wrote of the Christian's confession when he exhorted, "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession" (Heb. 4:14). John adds to the testimony when writing his epistle, "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God" (1 Jn. 4:15).

The strongest evidence available that confession is both necessary and should concern Jesus' Sonship toward God,

not merely His Lordship toward believers, comes in Peter's confession. Jesus was concerned as to what men were thinking of Him: "When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, 'Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?' So they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?'" (Mat. 16:13-15). Jesus was not satisfied for men to view Him as a prophet, or lord only. Elijah, John the Baptist, and other prophets were also "masters" or "lords" with disciples that followed them. Jesus expected more in the confessions of men than this. The confession made by Peter satisfied Jesus because it embraced His deity as well as His Lordship. Peter confessed: "'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church'" (Mt. 16:16-18). Two plausible explanations have been offered for this confession and Jesus' response to Peter. The most common and widely know explanation among our brethren is that Jesus would build or found the church upon the fact which Peter just confessed - that He is the Son of God. Another reasonable explanation is that Peter is typical of any believer who would come to Christ and upon such confessors the Lord would build or base His church. 7 In either case, the church would be founded upon the confession of His divine Sonship powerful and convincing proof that anyone wishing to enter His church and be saved from sin must confess with their mouth the Lord Jesus as being the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10).

SUMMARY

While it is true enough that we must confess Jesus' Lordship (Phil. 2:11), no one can successfully deny that when men confess His divine Sonship, they are at the same time declaring and professing His Lordship. But this is not always the case the other way around as we have seen in the case of "Jehovah's Witnesses" who are willing to confess the Lordship of Jesus, but not His divine Sonship.

For salvation men must believe that Jesus is the great "I AM" (Jn. 8:24) equal with His father (Jn. 1:1; 10:30). On this the church is founded (Mt. 16:16-18). And without revealing this to the preacher the sinner has no right to be baptized for the remission of sins (Mk. 16:16; Acts 8:36-7; 1 Cor. 2:11; Rom. 10:9-10). Confession is therefore both (1) necessary and (2) must contain a declaration concerning Jesus' divine Sonship.

Consider all the occasions it was spoken on: demons, the disciples, Nathaniel, Martha, John the baptizer, God the Father, Jesus Himself, the four gospel writers, the apostle Paul in his very first sermon, the young preacher Timothy, the soldier at the foot of the cross, the Hebrews, and Peter. Every one of these confessions were in regards to Jesus' Sonship. Can we possibly conclude that any confession less than this will suffice? It is called the "good confession" and it encompasses both Jesus' Lordship and deity.

My conclusion is therefore that confession is both (1) necessary and (2) must contain a declaration concerning Jesus' divine Sonship- OPA

ANGELS DEFINED AND MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THEM

By ALAN BONIFAY

In a previous article we introduced the subject of angels, and were especially interested in the concept of "Guardian Angels." There is, of course, much more to be said about these beings than is encompassed in so narrow a discussion as that. As we continue our study of angels, in this article we will limit ourselves to defining angels, explaining some of the common misconceptions about angels, and showing that angels make up the family of God in heaven. As always, we appeal only to the Scriptures in our search for the truth, for the Bible alone is the revelation of God.

WHAT ARE ANGELS?

The word "angel" is derived from two words: the Greek word "angelos" and the Hebrew word "malak." Both words refer simply to a messenger, and in some instances are applied to a human messenger such as a prophet or some other special servant of God. An example is found in Haggai 1:13 where Haggai the prophet is denoted by the word "malak." In the book of Malachi, the same word is used to refer to the priests (2:7) and to John the Baptist as well (3:1). However, when these words are used in scripture, most of the time they refer to special messengers from God called "angels." These are heavenly or celestial beings, and they are the focus of our study.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ANGELS

As we seek to understand what angels are, we might do well to consider some common ideas about angels which do not have any foundation in scripture, and in some cases are in direct conflict with what the Bible does say. These are misconceptions about angels. The first is the notion that we cannot know much about them from the Bible.

Actually, while our knowledge is limited to the revelation in God's word, there is a considerable amount of material found in the Bible on the subject. In fact, angels are mentioned in 34 of the 66 books in the Bible. A second misconception is that angels are really an Old Testament subject. The truth is that while the word "angel" appears 108 times in the Old Testament, in the New Testament its occurrence is even more frequent - 187 times is the word "angel" used. Many people think that angels are women, another misconception. This notion no doubt arises from popular artists' conceptions of these beings. However, the only two angels in the Bible who are named have the masculine names Michael and Gabriel. And scripture indicates that when angels appear in human form they always do so as men, such as the time Abraham entertained the three men (Genesis 18). Actually, Jesus taught that angels are neither male or female.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." (Matthew 22:29-30).

The idea that "the sons of God married the daughters of men" (Genesis 6:1) describes a marital relationship between angels and women which produced the giants is

obviously wrong in the light of our Lord's teaching. A fourth misconception is the association that is often made between angels and halos, harps, angelic choirs, and wings. As far as halos go, they have become symbolic of holiness, but wherever this idea has come from, it certainly does not find support in the Bible. Halos are simply not Biblical. The idea of angels playing harps is taken from Revelation 14:2. But this verse actually employs a figure to describe melodious voices, for it was "the voice of harpers harping with their harps; and they sang as it were a new song" (14:2,3). In the Bible, we find no direct mention of an angelic choir, however, the idea is taken from the above passage (Revelation 14:2, 3), and also the statement made in scripture that "a multitude of the heavenly host [were] praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace good will toward men" (Luke 2:13, 14). Wings are thought to be suggested when John "saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven" (Revelation 14:6). But this is most likely a symbol of great speed. However, the seraphim clearly had wings - six in fact: "with twain he covered his face and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly" (Isaiah 6:2). And so wings upon angels are not without any scriptural support, but it seems clear that the two-winged versions of the artists are clearly fanciful. A fifth misconception is that angels have no body. This is simply not true, for the Apostle Paul teaches they have a celestial body (I Corinthians 15:40). This body is neither human nor physical, for it is a spiritual body. A common belief in today's world has it that angels are spirits who have departed their human body, the spirits of the dead. This too is a misconception. There is no Bible evidence for this notion, and the teaching of Jesus about the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:22) seems to speak to the contrary. In this verse, both Lazarus and the rich man retained their identity and neither became an angel. Also, the Bible makes a distinction between "an innumerable company of angels" and "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Hebrews 12:22, 23). A seventh and final misconception we will note is that angels have no feeling. The Bible clearly defines one of the desires angels possess:

"Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into." (I Peter 1:12).

The Bible also speaks of the joy that angels have when sinners repent:

"Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." (Luke 15:10).

Obviously, angels do have compassion and they are indeed concerned about the salvation of our souls.

ANGELS ARE IN THE FAMILY OF GOD

God has family both in Heaven and on Earth, as is evidenced by what Paul the Apostle has said:

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our

Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," (Ephesians 3:14,15).

God's family on Earth is the church as well as all who have not attained a responsible mental age (I John 3:1; Romans 8:14; Galatians 3:26, 27; Matthew 19:14). God's family in Heaven is made up of the angels. We know the Heavenly family is not made up of departed saints because Peter said, "David is not ascended into the heavens" (Acts 2:34). Also, when Jesus died, He went to Hades (Acts 2:31), and yet to the repentant thief He called it "paradise" (Luke 23:43). Therefore, departed spirits of the righteous go to paradise and not to heaven. This leaves us with only the angels to form the family of God in heaven.

The proof that God's family in heaven is indeed made up of the angels is found in two passages of scripture which say, ..."That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 18:10), and "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matthew 24:36).

There are many misconceptions about angels, but a careful investigation of the scriptures will lay these to rest. What the Bible does teach is that angels are celestial beings who are God's special messengers, and they make up the family of God in heaven. Lord willing, in the next article on this subject we will take up the theme of "The Origin Of Angels."—523 Jessie, Manteca, CA 95337.

THE PHILIPPINE MISSION WORK

By VIRGILIO O. DANA O. SR.

Sometime in 1988, my wife and I made our first visit to the U.S.A. During that memorable visit, we had the privilege to be acquainted personally with stalwarts of the faith and faithful members of the Church. Stalwarts of the faith and faithful members of the Church, who had, and still have, deep foresights for mission work. For they were the very first ones who immediately extended their hands right at the start of the Lord's work in my country. And I am glad and grateful for most of them still are behind the work, by continually extending their love, concern, generosity and financial assistance toward the Lord's work there. Of course, we, the entire brotherhood in my country, especially the preaching brethren, acknowledge the fact that without their continued generosity and support, the mission work there would have not been able to reach the stage where it presently stands. — A stage, which I would say, unique in itself; in the sense that the mission work there is one, (if not the only one) among all mission fields the brotherhood has in the world, which has an American missionary who is only in the Philippines not more than 21 days every year. And I am glad to inform you that the work there continues to move on toward progress, and paces steadily towards spiritual maturity.

However, the Lord's work there does not always walk along "a bed of roses", so to speak. Just like the early church, and any mission work in the world today, the work in my country is not spared in encountering problems whose main objective is to undermine the growth of the Church, if not to totally destroy it, inflicted by those who continue to oppose us, and sometimes those from "within the brotherhood." But through the guidance of the Scriptures, we are able to pilot the work to go through these big waves caused by the strong winds of trials, spiritually; determined evermore to move on toward spiritual maturity.

Beginning from a single tiny congregation located in my home town of Roxas, Isabela, Philippines in 1981, after about 17 years ago, the Lord's work expanded to neighboring provinces. And today, we find local congregations in the provinces of Isabela where the work was started, Quirino, Cagayan, Ilocos Norte, even going farther north of Northern Luzon in the group of small islands in Camiguin; in the provinces of Pangasinan and Tarlac. We also started our work in two major cities of the Philippines, namely Baguio City and Metro-Manila, and

two smaller cities — Santiago City and Laoag City. Recently, we were able to start work in Cavite province, south of Metro-Manila. Now, the brotherhood there has a vision — a long range program: This is about our desire to extend our work to Mindanao, the second largest island in the south among the islands that comprised the Philippines archipelago. Though the program seems hard to attain, we earnestly pray this will come to realization. This can be attained through your continued financial support and prayers.

In behalf of the brotherhood in the Philippines, I continue to solicit your assistance. Of course, our brotherhood there is trying hard to share to the work whatever it can give. Still, it can not meet all the necessary financial needs of the work. The economic condition of the Philippines is not stable. Prices of prime commodities have skyrocketed. The common people are affected, economically, and this severely affects the income of the brethren and the treasury of the Church. Permit me then once again to say, please do not forget the work in your prayers. I know the great brotherhood here in this nation of plenty and satisfaction, is helping financially many mission works throughout the world. Our plea, however, is: Please don't forget the work in the Philippines. Please continue to share your love and generosity. We can assure you brethren, we will see to it that your support will be put to good use.

We must remember, that the Mission work in the Philippines is not the work of the Filipino brethren alone; nor it is the work of the American brethren. NO! It is the work of God. As members of his family, we are only His instruments in the execution of His plan for the salvation of the world; and so that this may come to realization!

To those faithful Churches and individual members of the Church, who have been supporting all of us, in behalf of the entire brotherhood in my country, thank you very much! May I also acknowledge the efforts extended by some of our capable preaching brethren from the U.S., to the work there. To name a few, whom I can right now remember, Bro. Duane Permenter and Bro. Brian Burns, young preachers as they are, but dedicated to mission work, Bro. James Franklin, Bro. Paul Nichols, Bro. Jerry Cutter, Bro. Bennie Cryer, and Bro. Don L. King. But foremost among them, are Bro. Cutter, Bro. Cryer and Bro. King who helped us lay the very firm rudiment of our Mission

Work in the Philippines, with a very special mention of the continued sacrifices, dedication and love Bro. King has shared with the work there, every since its start in 1981. Their dedication and sacrifices which have instilled in my mind have motivated me to love the Lord's work, more

than anything else, even more than my family itself and myself. I salute them, and I pray their tribes may continue to abound evermore in the brotherhood.—Virgilio O. Danao, Sr.

WHEN DOES THE LORD'S DAY BEGIN AND END?

continued from page 1

was resurrected, and ends six hours after the resurrection day, as would be the case using the day that begins at midnight.

Roman time, it is contended sometimes, was used during the days of Jesus on earth, and some believe they can prove by the scriptures that the Jews had adopted this time. Any reasonable person on earth knows the Jews would never adopt Roman time, or midnight to midnight time, for their religious, or God-given days. They have never done that, even to this day.

ACTS 20:7

The reasoning that begins the day at midnight forces the brethren in Acts 20:7 to have met six hours or less from the end of the day. Why? Because the day that begins at midnight has the night split, and ends with the darkness that begins before midnight. Two things we can agree upon. One, the brethren met after dark on the first day of the week, and two, the meeting began before midnight. That they met before midnight is plain. As for the Lord's supper, it could have well been after midnight. Using the day reckoning that begins the day at midnight, the brethren could not have met Saturday night before midnight, for this would still have been Saturday, not the first day of the week at all, using Roman time. The only alternative, using the Roman day, is to agree they met on what is now called Sunday night. But, just as clearly, Jesus was resurrected on "the first day after the sabbath," and the Sabbath ended Saturday evening, and not at midnight.

CONCLUSION TO ACTS 20:7

What happened in Acts 20:7? The brethren met on the first day of the week for the Lord's supper, or, "the first day after the sabbath," the day that began in the evening. On this day the night is not split, as with ours and Roman time, but it is first darkness and then daylight. Darkness begins the new day and light ends it. This day is a 24 hour day, beginning Saturday evening and ending Sunday evening at the same time.

In Acts 20, the young man fell out of the window at midnight and was taken up dead. At this point a new day had begun, if we use our present method of beginning a day at midnight. What day was it? Although the brethren came together on the first day of the week to break bread

(Acts 20:7), the actual breaking of bread apparently did not take place until after midnight (Acts 20:11). Are we to believe they met on the first day of the week and broke bread on the next day? If we use this midnight day, this is what we have. After midnight Paul "broke bread and ate." That is, he partook of the Lord's supper, ate an early breakfast, visited with the brethren until daylight, and continued his journey on towards Jerusalem with the brethren in the daylight hours of Sunday. Their meeting began and ended on "first day after the sabbath."

I CORINTHIANS 16:1-2

The Apostles built the gospel of Christ around the Lord's resurrection (Acts 2:32). This included proving that Jesus was resurrected on "the first day after the sabbath." It might be assumed that the Jewish Christians continued keeping the day according to the way the Lord gave it to them under the Old Testament, and that the Gentiles continued the day by beginning it at midnight. We do not know when men began keeping the day by beginning it at midnight. We do know how to keep the day "the first day after the sabbath."

When Paul wrote the Corinthians, he included all Achaia (II Cor. 1:1). He had given the same "orders" to the churches in Galatia (I Cor. 16:1-2). To all these churches, really brotherhoods, he "ordered" or "commanded" them to contribute upon "every" (see Greek) "first day after the sabbath," or, upon the "first day of every week." Only Gentile Christians were ever commanded to give on the "first day after the sabbath." The Jews, both in and out of the church, already understood clearly the point.

CONCLUSION

Why do we keep the Lord's supper every week? Paul commanded the church to assemble on "the first day of every week" (I Cor. 16:1-2), and the church was instructed by the same apostle to keep the Lord's supper when "you come together" (I Cor. 11:17), "when you come together in the church" (I Cor. 11:18), "when you come together therefore into one place...to eat the Lord's supper" (I Cor. 11:20). And there is a clear inference that this was exactly what the church was doing in Acts 20:7). The first century church kept the Lord's supper on "the first day after the sabbath," the resurrection day, and clearly a day that began and ended in the evening.—Rt. 1, Box 139, Crescent, OK 73028.

A NEW CONFESSION

continued from page 2

that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ," that is, ruler over all, and the promised Messiah, Psalms 2:2,6." When I made the good confession over 40 years ago, I said: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." What did I confess? Did I confess Him as both Lord and Christ? I believe I did.

J.W. McGarvey said of the above confession: "That this confession was the only one required of candidates for immersion by the apostles is universally admitted by those who are competent to judge. It is likewise admitted that they regarded it as a sufficient confession. This fact alone should teach men to be satisfied with it now. He, indeed, who is guided by the Bible alone, can not require of men any other confession than such as he finds authorized by Bible precedents." (page 103) (Amen! DLK)

On page 102 in the same commentary, McGarvey says: "...there is no way in which an organization can be built on a person, except by believing something in reference to him. It is not the fact that there is such a person as Jesus, but that that person is the Christ which gave existence to the Church." Folks, it is the truth of Peter's confession in Matthew 16:16: ("...Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.") that provides the foundation for the Church of Christ. Once again, if it is the foundation, it is the confession. I would certainly be afraid to baptize a person under any other.

Brethren are stirred up over this matter, as well they

should be. It is only a few who are responsible for this problem. We assume their motives have been pure. However, we call on all who have been teaching this, either privately or publicly, to cease and desist. It is an unscriptural position and may cause the loss of souls. It is our understanding that they don't deny that one can confess that Jesus is the Son of God, (Well, we appreciate that!) but they wish to insert this "new confession" as an alternative. Why do we need one? That's our question. Our suggestion? Let's just keep using the one we have used all along!—DLK.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ANNUAL PREACHERS' STUDY

A Survey of the Old Testament will be the topic at the annual Preachers' Study at the congregation on Green Oaks Blvd. in Arlington, Texas this year. Dates for the study are Monday, December 22, beginning at 1 p.m., through Thursday, December 25, ending after the evening session. The purpose of this study is to provide a synopsis of the author, background, purpose, nature, and content of the books of the Old Testament so that we can reach a more accurate interpretation of their content. It is designed to provide the tools for a clear understanding of the historical, religious, cultural, and social context of the books. The first half of the Old Testament will be covered this year, and the second half in 1998. All preachers and church leaders have a special invitation to attend. For more information, get in touch with Bro. J.B. Spradley, (817) 473-9972, Bro. Tom Crouch (817) 457-2301, or Bro. Joe Norton (817) 465-4933.

HAMMOND, LA

Pineview Church of Christ, Hammond, LA is looking for an evangelist to come work with the church. We are located between New Orleans and Baton Rouge. If interested contact: Chad Cochennic, 43305 W. Pleasant Ridge Rd., Hammond, LA 70403, (504) 429-0954 or Malcolm Myers, 2111 Dennis Dr., Hammond, LA 70401, (504) 345-6603.

CHURCH DIRECTORY CHANGE

CHANGE SERVICE TIMES FROM: Sun. 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. to Sun. 10:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

REMOVE NAME: Leo Powell, 217 Doolittle Dr., Roseville, CA 95618. Phone (916) 771-0240.

ENTER NEW NAME: (Raney) Max Buttler, 7823 Delaney Dr., Antelope, CA 95843, Phone (916) 348-0501.

THANK YOU ANNOUNCEMENT

Tom Patterson's family would like to acknowledge and specially thank a number of congregations of their kindness and financial help. A word of thanks is given to the churches of Eldon - Lebanon - Houston, MO and Ada, OK for their financial assistance. The family thanks everyone for their encouragement, their help and especially their prayers.

A WORK PLANNED IN MOSCOW

By Jimmy Vannoy

A faithful congregation of the church currently exists in Moscow. It is a small congregation of only three members, but the leader of the church, Sergei, is both knowledgeable and enthusiastic about working to save souls. He was baptized in Tambov in 1993 and has grown in knowledge and maturity.

Previously, it would have been difficult to work in Moscow because there would be no one to work in Moscow with the new Christians after Americans left, necessitating sending Americans in on a regular basis. However, now that Sergei lives in Moscow, he can work with the church after Americans leave. Kostya Alekseev, an evangelist from Tambov, Sergei and I are planning to work in Moscow for one month during the summer of 1998. I plan to take two other Americans with me.

Since 1993, my method of teaching in Russia, in addition to worship services, has been to offer free English lessons during the day, using the Bible as text, lectures in the evening and private studies with those who are interested. Several have been converted by one or more of these methods. As evidence of the success of these methods, during the past three summers, 29 have been baptized in the small city of Michurinsk (120,000), including eight this year. Most of this total remain faithful.

The only reason I mention the details about the methods and results is to show that this system works in Russia, and Moscow should be no exception.

Moscow is a city of 10 million people and the results there should be several times those in Michurinsk. Many of the Russian people are searching for a value system and are groping for something to believe in. For many years they have had no opportunity to learn the truth. Now there are many with honest hearts in Russia who are ready to accept the gospel.

Moscow is very important to the spreading of the gospel in Russia because of the large number of people, but also because it is the hub of Russia. All major train tracks radiate from Moscow, as well as all major roads. About six million people enter and leave Moscow every day, and a large percentage of Russians live in Moscow at some time during their lives. A strong congregation in this city could open for other cities in Russia.

This article is to inform you of our plans in Moscow, to ask for your prayers and to ask for any financial support you can give. Moscow is an expensive place to work, so a broad base is needed. Make checks payable to me and mail

them to Rt. 3, Box 1880, Corsicana, TX 75110.

A REPORT ON MICHURINSK, TAMBOV AND ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA

By Jimmy Vannoy

Steve Ramsey and I spent three weeks in Michurinsk, Russia and one week in Tambov during June and July. We worked with Kostya Alekseev, evangelist for the Tambov Region. I am grateful for the generous support of this work from Corsicana, TX, Joplin, Mo. (Leawood), Bridgeport, TX and Medina, TX.

This is the fifth summer I have gone to Russia, and each year I have found people with honest hearts willing to obey the truth. God has blessed us with multiple baptisms each year, and this year was no exception. There were eight baptisms in Michurinsk and three in Tambov. There have been a total of 29 baptisms in Michurinsk in the three summers we have gone there. The congregation in Michurinsk is two years old and is still having growing pains. It is lacking in leadership, but progress was made in this area. Some problems among a few members were dealt with and should be solved. The congregation in Tambov has been in existence since 1993 and has strong leadership from three men, Nikolai, Vadim and Kostya. The Wichita, KS congregation has worked with Tambov since its inception and has helped it to become strong.

The eagerness of the people of Russia to learn the truth and obey it causes the work in Russia to continue to be exciting and productive.

The congregation in Michurinsk was saddened to learn that three young Christians in their late teens and twenties were moving to St. Petersburg, the second largest city in Russia, to go to school. The two young men and one woman are dedicated Christians, and both men have been teaching in the public assembly. But Michurinsk's loss is St. Petersburg's gain. They plan to establish a congregation there and work for the salvation of souls. Now a faithful congregation will exist in St. Petersburg.

The congregation in Corsicana is supporting Kostya, with the help of Bridgeport and Jamesville, Mo. We need an additional \$600 per month, if you can help with all or part of it, either by monthly support or a one time contribution. Kostya is doing an excellent work with the two congregations we visited and is worthy of support. I have lived with him for several weeks over the past three summers and know him to be a man of integrity, intelligence and dedication to the Lord. You may make the check payable to Kostya Alekseev and send it to me at Rt. 3, Box 1880, Corsicana, TX 75110. Contact me for further information.

OUR DEPARTED

TOBEY - Jessie Alice (Pruitt) Tobey was born November 29, 1913 at Deer, AR and died September 10, 1997 at Checotah, OK. She is survived by a daughter, Christine Knight of Oklahoma City; a son, Homer Ray Tobey of Hartshorne, OK; a sister, Alva Ray, of Broken Arrow, OK; a brother, Willard Pruitt of Tulsa; six grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandson. The

funeral service, at Sis. Tobey's request, was held in the gymnasium of the Council Hill High School from which she graduated. A large number of friends and family members gathered for the memorial service and joined in the congregational singing led by Charles Pruitt, one of Sis. Tobey's nephews. Sis. Tobey was widely known among churches in Oklahoma, California, and New Mexico. Her son remembers standing beside the Weedpatch Highway in California on Sunday mornings to flag down a Greyhound bus to take them from Fairfax to Arvin for worship. They would get to church two hours early. The children also recall that she would refuse to make a trip with the family unless, after consulting the church directory, she could be assured of being at a place of worship on the Lord's Day. Many who remained after the funeral service to have lunch with the family recounted precious memories of Sis. Tobey's lifelong devotion to the Lord and to the church which he purchased with his blood. The writer, pursuant to Sis. Tobey's written instructions, was asked by the family to deliver the eulogy.—Taylor A. Joyce.



Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, October 9 - The weekend meeting at Yuba City, CA was very enjoyable. Crowds were excellent with visitors from a number of places and areas. Preaching brethren Rod Watson and Greg Gay came and helped us out and we were glad to see them. There was one confession of wrongs. The church at home continues to maintain peace. The younger men are still active and several show signs of becoming good teachers, song leaders, etc. Larry Lay will soon hold a weekend meeting for us and we look forward to that. The news out of the Philippines is good. The churches are growing with souls being added to the church. The work in Hawaii seems to be doing well also. We give the Lord the credit and praise for all of it. Don't forget us when you pray.

Douglas T. Hawkins, HCR 3 Box 203-C, Rocky Mount, MO 65072 - We just closed a very enjoyable meeting at London, KY Sept. 14. It was a real pleasure to be with brethren Arville Baker and Phillip Scott throughout the week. Both of these men are tremendous assets to the church. Their only problem is that they have been heavily influenced by Ronny Wade and Irvin Barnes. (Ronny holds a meeting there about every year and Irvin did a T.V. program for the London congregation out of Hazard) Optimistically, I still hold some hope for them. In all seriousness, Arville and

Phillip are like so many brethren in KY. They hold the cause of Christ dear to their hearts and work tirelessly for the Kingdom of Heaven. I'm glad to know such men. Speaking of Kentucky, Lori and I plan to move to Blue Springs next September, if the Lord is willing. The congregation is going to support us partially so we can continue to hold meetings as we have the opportunity. In addition to working locally with Blue Springs, we will also be able to help Bro. Richard Bunner in starting the new work in Lexington. We are looking forward to our efforts there. Our prayers are with you as you labor within the Kingdom. God bless the faithful.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012, Oct. 2, 1997 - The meeting at Miami, OK was well planned and well organized, thanks to the good leadership and the cooperation of the congregation. The dates were Sept. 13-21. We had good crowds, and the help from other congregations was appreciated very much. We had some outsiders as well as church members in attendance. Some members came several times from other churches, having to drive many miles to attend. Lots of young people were at the meeting, which was certainly encouraging. We made a quick trip to California for our granddaughter, Vanessa's wedding, September 26-28. We have been busy this summer with work with the home church and the meetings I have held. It is good to be able to slow down now for awhile. The congregation at 79th and Kansas Ave., KCK has grown and we have more to work with. Our local teachers did not spend their time running from congregation to congregation, pretending to be itinerate preachers. They know they are local teachers, and the congregation is benefiting from their dedication to the home church. We believe this is as it should be and we encourage it. May the Lord bless all our righteous efforts.

Bruce Roebuck, P.O. Box 209, Mtn. Home, AR 72653, October 9 - Since my last report there have been several additions to the church here at home. We have had several baptisms and a number of restorations. For which God must receive all the glory. We have had our share of struggles and malcontents as well, yet the church keeps marching onward. In August Jimmy Smith and I worked together in a mission meeting in Cotter, near Mtn. Home. We enjoyed meeting various visitors as well as fine services. Presently, brother Lynwood Smith is here conducting a meeting. The sermons are getting better from night to night and we are already dreading that the meeting must close. Our meeting schedule will soon end for this year. We have enjoyed good meetings this summer. First in Brodhead, KY preaching night about with Kevin Presley, which ended with five confessions. Next we were in Cassville, MO

for a week. The meeting there ended having seen the restoration of one young lady. It was a pleasure to visit with preaching brethren John Anderson, Ron Alexander and Roy Lee Criswell. Most recently we conducted a meeting in Bandy, KY. We were greeted with fine crowds each night. Many brethren have entertained us in their homes and we love and appreciate each one. Our final meeting this year is scheduled for Holdenville, OK October 15-19. Please keep us in your prayers.

Edward Williamson, 9330 Hwy. 63, Houston, MO 65483, (417) 967-2760 - Sept. 23 - Please make note of my new address and phone number for the church directory and preachers address list. I continue to work with the Bendavis, MO congregation where we have had two baptisms in August. It was a distinct pleasure to baptize my oldest son, Clint. The efforts of the congregation here have been blessed by good attendance and considerable interest in the local community. We sincerely appreciate Rodney Wood, Monte Wood and Ron Heiskill, who come and preach for us from time to time. Wyn Baker recently closed a meeting here which had good crowds and great preaching. We appreciate Wyn for his efforts and the surrounding congregations for their support. In August I went to Paducah, KY to hold a weekend meeting. My family and I enjoyed the hospitality of Gene and Nancy Anderson and the congregation there. We had a good meeting with several visitors from the community. Recently, I have been able to preach at the Ava and West Plains (Missouri Avenue) congregations. We solicit your prayers for the continued success of the gospel in our area. If you have family or friends in our area that we can invite to services let me know.

Brett Hickey, P.O. Box 6506, Ventura, CA 93003 (805) 658-7860 - October 1 - The Lord continues to bless our collective efforts at Ventura. We had three baptisms this month. One was Lizzie, our niece that, until recently, we had not seen for six years. The other couple is in their mid-30's with four girls from age five to ten. Thanks in part to these additions our attendance has been in the forties the past two Sundays. This is double what it was in January. Raymond Fox was kind enough to come down to Santa Barbara to conduct a Bible Study in Spanish for us. Miles King continues to help us follow up on folks in Central Arkansas who are completing our 8 lesson study course. We received news this week of another who wants to be baptized and a list of five others who want to begin the Bible Course. There are five talented young men at Ventura who aspire to be leaders or preachers in the future. We are having weekly studies together to help equip them to fill these roles. They have demonstrated a profound inter-

est in reaching the lost. Some are generating studies on almost a weekly basis at their schools. In addition to our progress report, we plan to initiate a monthly report detailing various reasons why the Christian need not retire his King James Bible just yet. We will also encourage caution in choosing some of the more popular modern Bible versions. A gentleman who wrote the preface to one of the more accurate modern versions has now apologized for his part in it and referred people back to the Authorized Version. This development alone demands a second look, or for some perhaps, a first look at the other side of a very important issue. We look forward to being with dear brethren at Mountain Home, AR and Broken Bow, OK at the end of November. May the Lord bless the harvest worldwide.

Virgilio O. Danao, Sr., 94-545 Mahoe St., Waipahu, HI 96797, tel. no. (808) 680-0249; September 22, 1997 - Greetings to all the brethren everywhere! I am glad to inform you that my wife, Anna Marie, our adoptive daughter and I are back here in Hawaii. Our first visit to this beautiful archipelago in the Pacific Ocean was in 1993, primarily to start the work here. Our first Sunday worship service was held in our apartment located at the Bishop Garden in Honolulu on August 15, 1993, three days after we arrived here. It was well attended by Bro. and Sis. Don L. King, who came here to help us begin the work. We left for the Philippines on December 6, 1993. After three and a half years, we returned to Hawaii with visas that granted us more time to stay and to help in attending to the spiritual needs of the Lord's work here. As soon as we arrived, Bro. Bayani and I made plans for our work. At present we have two regular Bible studies, attended by members and non-members, as well: Every Friday afternoon and Saturday evening, not to mention our regular Sunday worship services in the morning and evening. So far, there have been two baptisms. We are also taking steps to improve our singing in the Church here. I am pleased to work with Bro. Bayani, whom I found to be hard-working. We are grateful to all the brethren in the mainland who made it possible our return here in Hawaii, and to those who have been extending financial support to me and my family since we arrived here. Also we are thankful to all the brethren here, especially to Bro. and Sis. Felipe Bayani and their family for their continued assistance so we can easily adjust ourselves to live in a new and different kind of life here. May the good Lord continue to bless us all everyday!

(Raney) Max Buttler, 7823 Delaney Drive, Antelope, CA 95843 - When Peggy and I returned from Russia (June '96) North Sacramento, California engaged me to work in that area. The following September I under-

went back surgery. My back has healed pretty well, but other health problems which surfaced after surgery have continued to date and worsened in some respects. During this time I have remained able to continue preaching and at the present time am strengthened sufficiently to conduct studies. My mother, Elva, is in the process of moving into his area and will soon be worshipping with us. We welcome her arrival. The North Area Brethren continue to contend for "the faith" in this community as opportunity presents itself. During this time there have been one baptism, several confessions of fault, and a number of visitors from the neighborhood, some of whom we are having valuable discussions with. The North Area community has changed a great deal from the past decade or two (as is true everywhere). Today it primarily consists of young, transient people, who are either non-religious or irreligious, with little interest in things spiritual, but we continue to pray for the work here and look for opportunities. During this time, it has also been my pleasure to speak at Fair Oaks, Placerville, and the 64th Street congregation in Sacramento, and also at Santa Rosa, California. It is always a special treat for us to return to those areas, because of our long association with them in years past. Recently we enjoyed being able to attend "most" of the West Coast Labor Day Meeting at Ripon, California. The crowds were excellent, the preaching good, and many old friendships renewed. I thank the brethren for permitting me to be numbered among the Saturday morning speakers. Brother Alan Bonifay did a fine job as Master of Ceremonies. I appreciate having this opportunity to give an update on the work and conditions in North Sacramento, and report on my own personal health conditions for any who may be interested. The work here continues slowly and, I believe, will grow. When traveling this way, come worship with us. Pray for the Church here. Pray for the progress of the Gospel throughout the world, and may God bless the faithful everywhere.

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820, Oct. 11 - I am currently in a meeting at the Mountain Home congregation. We are having good support from surrounding congregations and visitors from the community at virtually every service. I have enjoyed getting to visit Smith Bibens and Irvin Barnes during the meeting. Since my last report I have also been in meetings at Lee's Summit, MO, Rogers, AR and the Labor Day Meeting at Chapel Grove, TN. Each of these meetings was well attended and I am confident some good was done. One young lady was recently baptized at home and several have made public confessions of faults. We also had a meeting with Duane Permenter at home recently. My schedule for the remainder of the

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year includes: Kansas City, KS (36th and Everett Oct. 15-19); Lodi, CA (Nov. 1-9), Orange, CA (Nov. 10-16), and Seminole, OK (Anniversary Meeting; Dec. 5-7). We continue to solicit your prayers.

Kevin Presley, Rt. 2 Box 166, Kinston, AL 36453, (334) 898-1301, October 13, 1997 - Our meeting at Lawrenceburg, TN was well attended. I enjoy being with these brethren and it was a great pleasure to hold them another meeting. I enjoyed the hospitality of the Joel Orten family and also Boyd and Ruth Pilkington. Preaching brethren Johnny Fisher and Paul Walker lent their support. In September I stopped by the TX Labor Day meeting, on my way to hold a meeting in Galey, OK, the Labor Day Meeting was enjoyable. I appreciate being asked to be a part of it. The subjects assigned were much needed across our brotherhood. We had a real good meeting at Galey. This was the second one I had held there. The crowds were excellent and the meeting closed with two confessions. Preachers present were: Joe Hisle, Carl Johnson, Richard Frizzell, Clarence Kessinger, and Ray Kessinger. It was good to see them. When I returned home, Joe Hisle started a meeting here at Earlytown. He held us an outstanding meeting. I go there every year, and this year was one of the most enjoyable for me. The church has grown since I was there last year. The meeting closed with two confessions. At the end of September, I also enjoyed holding a short meeting for the brethren at Columbus, GA. Although short, I feel as though we had a profitable meeting. The brethren there are a pleasure to be with. I just returned home this morning from a meeting in Oakdale, CA. This was a high spot for me. Good crowds and great singing helps to make the meeting a real treat. We closed with two confessions. This congregation is very sound and is working together in peace. It was good to have preachers with us. Alan Bonifay, Benny Cryer, Richard DeGough, Frank Harris, Matt Trent, and Ryan Conner were an encouragement to the meeting. I enjoyed staying with my good friends - Phillip, Lilla Mae, and David

Permenter. I am almost through for the year. I go this weekend to Walnut Grove, KY and then on to Spring Valley, WV. I close the year with the Thanksgiving meeting in Burkhart, MO (Nov. 26-30) and Grassy Fork, TN (Dec. 6-7). One brief note about the work here at home. We are very excited about our Sunday morning television program. In August we changed stations and times and have been rewarded as the result. Since the last of August we have had some 70 responses to the broadcast. I am hoping to visit these people and hold a mission meeting somewhere in the area this winter. Pray for us in the Lord's work. May God bless the faithful.

Alton B. Bailey, 410 Ginger Circle, LaGrange, GA 30240. (706) 882-1114 - It has been sometime since I have sent in a field report to the O.P.A. It is wonderful that we can say that Mark is doing much better and well on his way to recovery. The church here in LaGrange is doing well; although, we have suffered loss by death of a number of our star members in the last year or so. Following are the places where we have held meetings since our last report. Baton Rouge, LA; Texarkana, TX; Fieldstone, MO; Lone Rock, AR; Jacksonville, FL; Hamilton, OH; Hoyte, TX; and Radnor, WV. I had to reschedule two or three meetings due to Mark's last surgery. All the meetings were well attended and the spirit was good everywhere. At this writing Bro. Ron Courter is holding our fall meeting here in LaGrange, Oct. 4-12. As would be expected he is doing a wonderful job preaching the gospel. My next meeting will be at Hartford, TN Oct. 15-19 at the Grassy Fork congregation. Lord willing, the week of Thanksgiving all our children and grandchildren are planning to come home. Florence and I are truly looking forward to that. We look forward also to the Preacher's Study and the New Year Meeting. Then to be at the home church to sing and pray the old year out and the new year in. May God bless all his faithful children everywhere. Please continue to pray for us, our family and work. PLEASE NOTE MY NEW ADDRESS.

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. LXXI

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NO. 12

CONQUERING THE DEVIL

By *BENNIE T. CRYER*

The Devil entered God's created world, tempted man to sin successfully, and through sin obtained a power over man that was not broken until Jesus the Christ came to this earth, was tempted by the Devil, lived a life free from sin, died on the cross, was buried, and then arose from that sepulcher as a victor over sin and the Devil. I John 3:8 states this, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil still has power, but He rendered the power of the adversary inactive, so much so, that the Devil, upon experiencing resistance, will flee from you." James 4:7.

This new ability to resist the Devil successfully was not possible under the Old Testament dispensations. Jesus had to "come to... deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Hebrews 2:15.

What powers did the Devil hold that Jesus was able to render inactive and will finally abolish when the tempter will be sent to "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Matthew 25:41?

THE DEVIL'S ANGELS

Who are these beings that are called the Devil's angels in this verse? They are the angels that help him do his dirty work. There are God's angels that are celestial. There are angels (messengers) that are terrestrial, and there are the infernal angels that belong to the Devil and are in his power. The problem man has with his finite mind is an inability to distinguish between the celestial, terrestrial, and infernal angels. If someone sees an angel then the question becomes, "What kind of angel was it?" The Devil himself is an angel and has the ability to change into the angel of light according to 2 Corinthians 11:14-15.

"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness..."

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Galatians 1:8.

Because men have failed to "test" these "angels" the Devil has enjoyed the ability to start many spurious religions and false doctrines and as a result hundreds of different kinds of churches abound and prosper today. It is not only in the realm of religion the Devil's angels operate. They are also active in the governmental realm and are styled "principalities and powers" in Ephesians 6:12 along with some other names.

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rules of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Note that these entities are not flesh and blood. They are beings with high rule capabilities. They operate as rulers in the Devil's domain and among earthly rulers who permit the Devil to reign in their regime. In Jesus' temptation the Devil offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world.

"And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed up all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will give it." Luke 4:5-6.

The Devil was able to work through these kingdoms to get the rulers to crucify Jesus and to persecute the church later on as is depicted in Revelation 13:2.

"And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority"

The dragon is the devil, Revelations 12:9. The beast was the old political and pagan Roman empire. The Devil clearly gave the beast its authority. But Jesus came to defeat the Devil even in this type of political arena. The "principalities and powers" would go down in defeat with their powerful leader. This had to occur before Jesus could offer salvation to mankind. In Colossians 2:15, in speaking about the things Jesus did in order to procure salvation for man Paul wrote, "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

In this context observe that in order for man to be quickened or made alive with Christ, He had to accomplish a number of things: 1. All trespasses against an individual had to be forgiven, v13; 2. The old testament had to be blotted out and nailed to the cross, v14; and 3. The principalities and powers had to be spoiled, v15. Christ could not offer salvation until these things were accomplished.

It was the intent of Jesus to bind the Devil in certain areas so man could be saved. This is expressed in Matthew 12:29, "Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? And then he will spoil his house."

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PUBLISHER
Don L. King

41931 Chadbourne, Fremont, CA 94539
Fax 510-651-3926

ASSISTANT PUBLISHER
Ronny F. Wade

P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808

EDITORIAL STAFF
Clovis Cook
Edwin S. Morris

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Bennie Cryer	Johnny Elmore
Barney Owens	Jerry Dickinson
Billy Dickinson	Kevin Presley
Carl Johnson	

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Editorial

ITEMS OF INTEREST

By BILLY D. DICKINSON

John F. Kennedy once observed that too often we enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought. However, not only is that true in regard to politics and other worldly affairs, that is especially true with reference to religious beliefs! That's why the Bible exhorts us to search for the truth with a discerning eye: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (1 Thess. 5:21) "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1) The following "items of interest" will demonstrate how man is often guilty of fallacious reasoning while he ignores pertinent facts and information that can lead one into the glorious light of God's truth.

The first item is an article, "Genesis Reconsidered," that appeared in the Oct. 28, 1996 issue of *Time*. It constitutes a blatant attack upon the veracity of the Bible, but the logic (?) and reasoning found therein is palpably weak and shallow. In fact, the article is one of the poorest attempts imaginable in trying to undermine people's faith in the Scriptures! The subject of this article was actually given top billing on the front cover where these words could be found: "And God said... Betrayal. Jealousy. Careerism. They're all in the Bible's first book. Now there's a spirited new debate over the meaning of Genesis." What was the main argument used to cast doubt upon the Bible? Well, a Rabbi is quoted extensively by the name of Barton Visotzky who is declared to be a "scholar" with the highest credentials: "Not many people in the country are as familiar with the workings of the Bible's first book as Visotzky, an expert in Midrash, the authoritative early rabbinical parsings of Scripture, or the Torah" (Pages 67-68). The article goes on to relate how in the late 1980s, with an impending divorce, Visotzky went through "a bit of religious crisis." The Rabbi discovered to his dismay that Abraham and the Patriarchs were not perfect men and that they also experienced problems with their wives and families. Then Visotzky is quoted as saying: "The blinders fell off. This dysfunctional family was my family in every sense of the word. But why was it in Torah? I was holding onto my chair white-knuckled so I wouldn't run out of the room" (Page 68).

Think about it! This so-called "expert" of the Scriptures discovered one day that Abraham and the Patriarchs were not perfect men? What a scholar and what a discovery! Why, that should come as no surprise to even the casual reader of the Bible! In fact, for years Gospel preachers have preached entire sermons on both the strengths and weaknesses of men like Noah, Abraham, Jacob, David, etc. Instead of destroying our confidence in the Bible, this is a fact that should strengthen our faith. I say that for at least two reasons: First, it shows how inspiration tells it like it was. Unlike the works of men which often give a biased view by glossing over reprehensible actions or

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: It is wrong to place a steeple or a bell tower/bell on a church of Christ building? (OK)

Answer: There are no blueprints in the bible for a church building. A building is authorized, however, within the framework of the command to assemble (Hebrews 10:25). Christians may either rent, borrow, or buy a place in which to worship. In early new testament times the church often met in homes or private dwellings, as may be seen from the following scriptures. (Romans 16:5, I Cor. 16:19 etc.). The type and location of church buildings are matters of judgment. It should always be remembered that a building is a means to an end. The building merely provides a place for the church to gather, nothing more. We must be careful, however, not to unwittingly send the wrong message when we build a meeting house. If it is shabby, unkept, and run-down, people might get the idea that we don't care and are unconcerned about our appearance and presence in the community. If, on the other hand, it is extravagant or lavish people might think we are more concerned about real-estate than our real mission of saving souls. In his book **Babylon Mystery Religion**, Ralph Woodrow points to some ancient pagan practices that have perhaps, unknowingly, found their way into many modern church buildings. He contends that obelisks, pillars, phallic symbols etc. were apart of pagan worship, that was condemned by God (I Kings 14:23, 2 Kings 18:4, Jere. 43:13), and that spires, steeples etc. are but a derivative of these symbols. Even though most people today would never make that association, if in fact it actually exists, we would do well to avoid such things. I can't think of any reason why Christians would want to promote anything in religion that had its origin in paganism or Catholicism. Why practice or use something that sends the wrong message? I don't know of any scripture or principle violated by having a bell atop a building in which the church meets. In years gone by the bell was used to

call the worshippers together. Its ringing signaled the time for services to begin. There are some who continue such a practice even now.

Question: In Acts 17:26, is "blood" used to denote human blood or is the idea that God no longer recognizes Jew and Gentile but all are one blood in Christ? (KY)

Answer: The passage reads: "And has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings. " (NKJV) Some translations delete the word "blood" because it is not in some manuscripts. When deleted the passage reads "And has made from one every nation. . . " McGarvey says "made of one all the nations of men," asserting that such is an affirmation of the "unity of the human race. " Coffman notes "No matter how one reads it, whether 'one race,' or 'one blood,' or 'one family' the meaning is the same: all men are descended from a single ancestor. 'Eve was the mother of all living' Gen.3:20." The context in which this verse appears is Paul's speech on Mars' Hill. He has pointed out in v.24 that God made the world and all things in it, and in the next verse that God is the sustainer of life, then in v.26 Paul undoubtedly challenges the notion, held by most ancient civilizations, that their particular race was superior to all others and it boiled down to US (the superior) against THEM (the inferior). It is the oneness and brotherhood of man that Paul affirms. In so doing he strikes a death blow to the idea that one race was superior to all others. Hence the verse refers to the fact that we are all descended from the same parents, and are therefore one blood family, and not to the fact that God has made all men (Jew and Gentile) one in Christ. Even though the latter is true, the context does not permit such an interpretation. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808)

THE ORIGIN OF ANGELS

By ALAN BONIFAY

Two installments on the subject of angels have already dealt with Guardian Angels, the definition of angels and misconceptions about them, and the fact that until judgment day, when the saved are given their home in Heaven, angels make up the family of God in Heaven. Now, looking again only to the scriptures to teach us, we wish to examine the origin of angels. This study will lead us also to a consideration of the origin of Satan and the demons.

ANGELS ARE CREATED BEINGS

Angels are created, not eternal, beings. The Apostle Paul, writing by inspiration to the saints in Colosse clearly taught the creation of angels saying,

"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him." (Colossians 1:16; cf. Eph. 3:9; Heb. 1:2; Jn. 1:3).

When these words are considered there can be no doubt

that angels are not by nature eternal beings, but in fact have their origin as part of God's creation. But when did God create the angels? He probably did not do it in the six days of the creation of the universe. We base this contention upon the fact that everything created during those six days is carefully named, and yet we have no account of the creation of angels. As we try to determine just when the angels were created, considerations of another class of angels enter into the picture. We have not yet discussed these angels, but to study them now will help us with this question.

INFERNAL ANGELS

In addition to earthly messengers (angels) and celestial messengers, the angels we are really concerned with in this study, there are also infernal angels. These are evil angels who wait upon and serve the Devil. They are the demons. The book of Revelation reports the entrance of these angels into evil, so giving us an account of the ori-

gin of demons.

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him... Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." (Revelation 12:7-9, 12).

Jesus said in Luke 10:18, "I behold Satan as listening fall from heaven." This great war and the origination of demonhood must have occurred after the origin of all the angels, and after the creation of the earth (since Satan was cast into it at the end of the war), but anterior to Satan's appearance on earth in the Garden of Eden. Clearly, Satan had, by the time of his appearance in Eden, already fallen "as lightning," having lost the war in heaven. Before the great war in heaven, before Adam's last day in the Garden of Eden, angels were created. But did this creation of angels occur between the creation of the universe and the great war? Or was it during the creation of the universe? Or was it before the Genesis account? A final passage may help us to narrow down the period in which angels came into being, Job 38:4-7.

"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the corner stone thereof, When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

The New International Version equates the phrase "sons of God" with angels in this passage. And as the LORD speaks to Job, the indication seems to be that angels were certainly created before the sixth day of creation, and with all probability on or before the first day. All of this information taken together seems to place the creation of the angels sometime before Genesis 1:1. And that is as close as we can determine. They are not eternal, but as far as we can tell, they were in existence prior to the creation of the universe.

But what about these evil angels we have discussed? Where did they come from? Did God create them as evil beings?

THE ORIGIN OF SATAN

As we consider the origin of Satan and his demons, we must look at some passages of scriptures from the prophets that are written in Apocalyptic Language. This symbolical form of writing was used by several of the Bible writers - Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and John the Revelator. The Book of Revelation is, in fact, called The Apocalypse, which means veiled or hidden until revealed. Apocalyptic writers used symbolical language to reveal truths to those to whom he addressed his work while at the same time keeping the message hidden from others. Persecutors of the truth could not understand the meaning, and so Apocalyptic Language was a form of protection for the writer and the receivers. This language is used about Sa-

tan to describe other people, the intention being to show how they and their sins are like Satan and his sins. Isaiah, writing about the King of Babylon, actually reveals a great deal to us about Satan.

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." (Isaiah 14:12-15).

Ezekiel 28:12-19 describes to us the high position once occupied by Satan, and even speaks of the perfectness of his ways until iniquity was found in him (verse 15) and he suffered the judgment of God. Ezekiel Apocalyptically gives us this picture as he describes the King of Tyre. These two passages teach us much about Satan's character. Several New Testament passages also describe the origin of Satan and the demons. Paul wrote to Timothy about the qualifications of elders saying in I Timothy 3:36, "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." (emphasis mine - AWB). Jude 6 says, "...the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Peter also speaks of "the angels that sinned" and their judgment (2 Peter 2:4). The Scriptures teach that Satan was, when created, a great angel with much influence in heaven. It seems to be implied in Ezekiel and Isaiah that Satan was the first angel in creation, rank, and power. However, he became lifted up with pride, and rebelled against God by trying to raise himself to an even higher station than God had given him. In fact, he actually sought to overthrow God. Consequently, he was cast down to earth with all the angels who followed him. Here we have the origin of Satan and his demons. They were not created evil, but through their own iniquity became so. When Satan was cast down to earth, it was then that he appeared in Eden to tempt man, and he continues his pernicious work as the deceiver of nations to this day.

It is well to note in all of this that the angels were under law. I John 3:4 says, "sin is the transgression of the law," and Paul said, "where no law is, there is no transgression," (Romans 4:15). And yet Peter, as we noted previously, spoke of "the angels that sinned," (2 Peter 2:4). We must conclude that the angels were indeed under law. Having once fallen under the power of darkness, those angels that sinned were forever condemned to Hell, which Jesus said was "prepared for the devil and his angels. In this, we note a tremendous difference between the way God has treated us and the way He treated the sinful angels. They never had a Savior. Once under the power of darkness, that is where they were consigned to stay forever. However, God has given to us a means of deliverance, and we should be eternally grateful for it.

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:" (Colossians 1:13-14).

CONCLUSION

The scriptures teach us that the angels are indeed created, not eternal, beings. They were created, in all probability, by God prior to the creation account we find in Genesis chapter one. Satan and his angels, the demons, were also created by God, not as evil beings but the same as all the other angels. By their own sin they fell into eter-

nal condemnation. And thus we see the origin of all the angels and the origin of the evil angels, and as we consider the state of the latter, we are bound to thank God always for the hope we have through Jesus Christ. We intend in the next article to study the Nature of Angels.—523 Jessie, Manteca, CA 95337.

THE GOOD CONFESSION

By GREG GAY

The emotion filled time when I obeyed the gospel stands out vividly in my memory even though over 30 years have passed. I was baptized when I was twelve years old during a gospel meeting held by Wayne Fussell at the Lee's Summit congregation in Missouri where I was raised. I made up my mind to become a Christian and took extra clothes with me to church that night. Once we got to church I visited with Jerri Triplett (Jerri Young now) and told her I was going to be baptized and did she want to also? Then, when the invitation song started I went forward and so did Jerri. I remember I could not stop singing as I walked down the aisle, I was so nervous. Then followed our confessions and baptisms in the baptistry there at the building. What wonderful memories for all of God's children as we remember the time when we were "born again."

Each facet of our obedience to the gospel is both precious and important to understand. In recent years the confession has come under fire in some quarters so I want to examine what the Bible has to say about "The Good Confession." Questions I intend to answer include: Is a confession necessary when we obey the gospel? If it is, does it make any difference what we say? Is what we have said through the years and handed down from generation to generation sufficient or is there something else that is necessary? Does it make any difference what Bible translation we use to learn about the confession? All of these questions deserve Bible answers.

Confession in obeying the gospel is essential and necessary.

I believe the Bible teaches confession is necessary when we obey the gospel because of what we read about Timothy.

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. (1 Tim 6:12 KJV)

The "good profession" or "good confession," as the same word is translated in the next verse, is describing the time when Timothy obeyed the gospel. He made a statement before others and they were witnesses to his statement. His statement was acceptable to God and commended by the Apostle Paul.

When Jesus sent the twelve forth to preach to the Jews as described in Matthew 10 he warned them they could expect many problems. He reassures them and us with these words:

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. (Matt 10: 32-33 KJV)

We can conclude from these passages there is never a

time when it is wrong to confess Christ in our lives, whether at the beginning of our walk with God, during a time of persecution, or at the end of a long life in his service. Obviously our confession of Christ is important since Jesus' response is to confess us to God the Father.

Vine on this verse says:

In Matt. 10:32 and Luke 12:8 the construction of this verb (the word translated confession) with en, in, followed by the dative case of the personal pronoun, has a special significance, namely, to confess in a person's name, the nature of the confession being determined by the context, the suggestion being to make a public confession. (p224)

Zerr writes:

Confess is from HOMOLOGEO, and I shall give Robinson's definition of the word... "To speak or say together, in common, i. e., the same things, hence to hold the same language, to assent, to accord, to agree with." To confess one, then, means to admit being in agreement with him and endorsing his teaching. (vol. 5, p37)

The Good Confession:

Timothy's confession is referred to by Paul as being "The Good Confession." Let us take a closer look at this passage to see what is being taught.

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; (1 Tim. 6:12-13 KJV)

Notice the same passage from another translation:

Combat the good combat of faith: lay hold on eternal life; to which, also, you have been called, and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you, in the presence of God, who makes all alive—and of Christ Jesus; who witnessed to Pontius Pilate the good confession; (**The Living Oracles**)

Timothy's profession or confession is compared to what Christ did when appearing before Pilate. It follows then, in order to understand what Timothy said we need a better understanding of what Pilate heard from Jesus.

Christ's confession:

But, in order to understand Christ's confession to Pilate, we need to look first at what Christ confessed to the Jews.

Jesus' confession to the Jews:

The Jews were aware of old testament prophecies concerning the Messiah, the anointed one of God, the Christ.

And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto

him, *How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. (John 10:22-24 KJV)*

I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him. (John 10:30-38 KJV)

Jesus to the Jews during his trial:

But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. (Mark 14:61-62 KJV)

And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth. (Luke 22: 66-71 KJV)

Jesus' confession is later referred to by those who mocked him while he was on the cross:

And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. (Matt. 27:37-43 KJV)

While we have looked at what Jesus said to the Jews, we still have not looked at what Jesus said to Pilate. Before we look at what Jesus said to Pilate, let me ask a question: Have you ever tried to explain a religious concept to someone of the world? That is what the Jews are about to attempt to do with Pilate.

Several years ago when Don Pruitt and I were in Russia we went into a restaurant to eat lunch. The only other people in the place were two Russian men. As was usual, we enlisted anyone's help ordering our meal, because we spoke no Russian, and the waiter spoke no English. The two Russian men spoke a few words of English so between

all of us we ordered something to eat. During the course of our meal the waiter delivered a bottle of wine to our table, which we did not order. The two Russian men had ordered it for us at their expense, usually a great honor in their country. Oh no. Now what do we do? We told the waiter "No Thanks!" This prompted our benefactors to come over to our table. They had been drinking, and not a little. We told them in English we do not drink, but they did not understand. Then we tried to find words they would understand to convey the message we do not drink. We eventually used the word "priest" pointing at ourselves and then at the wine shaking our heads. That word they understood, but their response was "So?" Evidently, Russian Orthodox priests do imbibe. Finally, they went back to their table, obviously upset and not completely understanding, but knowing we were not going to drink. We were faced with explaining a religious concept to someone of the world.

We see an example of a worldly person attempting to explain such a conversation in Acts 25. Paul was accused by the Jews of a crime worthy of death. The Jews had presented their case against Paul to Festus and Festus is relating what he heard to King Agrippa.

When his accusers got up to speak, they did not charge him with any of the crimes I had expected. Instead, they had some points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive. I was at a loss how to investigate such matters; so I asked if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem and stand trial there on these charges. (Acts 25: 18-20 NIV)

It is difficult to explain religious concepts to people of the world, even when you speak the same language. That is what the Jews were faced with when they needed to explain to Pilate the crime Jesus had committed that was worthy of death. Now, notice how the Jews reported Jesus' confession to Pilate:

And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King. And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it. (Luke 23: 1-3 LJV)

What did Jesus confess? To the chief priest and Jews he affirmed he is the Christ, the Son of God. The Jews reported to Pilate, "He is Christ a King." Pilate's response lets us know what he understood: "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus' response to Pilate is, "Thou sayest it." Those familiar with figures of speech will recognize this as a synecdoche, where a part stands for the whole. What was told Pilate stands for all that Jesus had revealed to the Jews.

So, what is the good confession? It certainly includes all that Jesus told the Jews, that he is Christ and the Son of God.

Jesus' confessions to the Jews and their report to Pilate agree with Peter's earlier confession:

Peter's confession:

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or

one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. (Matt 16:13-20 KJV)

Let us ever be reminded, Jesus tells all mankind that the truth Peter declared is the foundation of the church. What is that truth? That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God! We dare not lose sight of that important and wonderful point.

Learning about Jesus

How do we come to know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? Is this some miraculous knowledge that God places in our hearts? Not at all. John answers our question:

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. (John 20:30-31 KJV)

John is saying the result of studying what God inspired him to write, of learning about the life, death, burial,

resurrection, and ascension of Jesus is to conclude that he is the Christ, the Son of God.

When Christ was to be born the angel told Mary her baby would be "holy" and that he "shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). When Jesus was baptized God the Father declared from heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt 3:17). Paul tell us that Jesus' resurrection from the dead declares him to be the "Son of God with power" (Rom. 1:4).

An expected and natural consequence of learning about Jesus is to confess who he is and to tell others about him. When Paul was converted he immediately started preaching. What did he preach?

And straightway (immediately) he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. (Acts 9:20 KJV)

Other references to the confession remind us of the importance and preciousness of the profession of our faith. When John the Apostle was combating the problems of his day he again places importance on the confession.

Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth (confesses) the Son hath the Father also. (1 Jn 2:23 KJV)

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. (1 Jn 4:15 KJV)

Hopefully, thus far in our study we have sufficiently proven that confession when we obey the gospel is necessary, and that the confession we make should include reference to Jesus being the Christ, the Son of God in keeping with the example of Timothy whose confession follows the example of Christ.—More Next Month.

CONQUERING THE DEVIL

continued from page 1

So what powers did Jesus take away from the Devil and his demons? Just look at this list and contemplate it. The dominion the Devil held over sinners, Acts 26:18; blinding the minds of the lost, 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; the authority he claims over the world, Luke 4:6; his ability to wage warfare against the saints successfully, Ephesians 6:12 and many others. In all of these things, along with others, the Devil had free course and, then, Jesus came and conquered him.

If Jesus destroyed the Devil and his angels why are they still working today and influencing people? A part of the good news from Jesus is, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." James 4:7.

The power of Satan has been curtailed so much that resistance to him brings about his defeat in our lives today. Satan is going about today seeking those he can devour, but steadfast resistance in the faith will conquer him, I Peter 5:8-9. The devil, his demons and angels can influence us, but can never possess us. His influence vanishes in the face of the authority of Jesus. If the Devil has you it is because you have willingly let him.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

continued from page 2

inefficiencies of important men, the Bible gives an accurate and impartial account of its characters. Surely this is not a strike against the Scriptures but is actually an internal evidence of inspiration! Also, rather than destroying our faith, we should find it reassuring to realize that God was willing to deal favorably with men like Abraham (because of their faith in Him) in spite of all their weaknesses and imperfections. If this is the strongest criticism that modern day skeptics have to challenge God's word with, they don't have much, do they? Yes, critics of the Bible come and go, "but the word of the Lord endureth forever." (1 Pet. 1:25) That brings us to our next item...

The second item appeared under the caption, "Archeologists look for proof of the Bible in stones" [The

News-Star, Monroe/West Monroe, Louisiana, Dec. 8, 1996, Page 12 A]. The information in this article demonstrates why our faith in the Bible rests upon a solid and unshakable foundation. Consider the following: "From the Northern Hills of Israel to the desert of Yemen, a string of recent archeological discoveries have provided the first hard evidence for a number of Biblical figures and events, many of which had been widely dismissed as myths and moral tales. Individually, the discoveries are important. Together, they are shaking the field of Biblical archeology and buttressing words believers have taken on faith." Then the article produces several examples of how the archeologist's spade proves the Bible's accuracy in dealing with people and places: (1) "In 1993, Israeli archeologists digging in Tel Dan in the Golan Heights unearthed a piece of stone from an ancient monument, or stele. Inscribed upon it, in ancient Aramaic, were the words King of Israel

and House of David.” The article says that the finding so shook some scholars that they insisted it had to be a fake. However, more fragments were found a year later with additional inscriptions referring to David. (2) “Recent expeditions at Shechem, where the Bible says Abraham built an altar to God, prove an organized community existed there during Abraham’s time nearly 4,000 years ago.” (3) “Recent excavations have uncovered a string of ancient Egyptian forts along the Sinai’s Mediterranean coast.” The article explains how that this provides a plausible explanation for the Exodus story that has long puzzled scholars— why Moses led the people out of Egypt through the Sinai wilderness instead of along the shorter coastal route. (4) “An ivory pomegranate purchased in the international antiquities market by Israeli authorities for \$550,000 in 1988 is now believed by many scholars to be the first relic ever found from Solomon’s Temple.” It is reported that an inscription on the pomegranate reads, “Holy to the priests, belonging to the temple of Yahweh.”

Yes, let **Time** publish all of the articles that skeptics deem necessary for the purpose of attacking the Bible. However, one of these days when **Time** has ceased to exist and its last issue has been printed, God’s word will still be standing (Matt. 24:35)! As an advertisement for Ken Connolly’s book, **The Indestructible Book**, declares: “If you knew all the attacks the Scriptures had endured in order to survive the centuries, you’d realize you’re holding a miracle in your hands every time you pick yours up.” Amen!

The last item appeared under the heading, “Dancing In Praise!” [**The News-Star**, Monroe/West Monroe, Louisiana, Jan. 18, 1997, Page 1 B]. Is it scriptural to dance as an act of worship and praise unto God today? The instrumental music man would be hard pressed to answer in the negative because he appeals to Old Testament Scriptures to justify his practice. Also, the grace only, unity-in-diversity advocate cannot afford to condemn it because

he would argue that there is no pattern for scriptural worship that must be maintained. Yet, there are those in the religious world who extol “spiritual dancing” (their term) as a means of worship and praise unto God. Listen to this explanation: “There is nothing sinful about dancing in church. I have seen other people dance the holy dance when praising God. I dance to praise God. It’s a way to express myself and to express my love for Jesus.” Also, they say, “Plus, it’s fun and it lifts up the congregation.”

There you have it! Why do they engage in this activity? Notice the answer that is not given. It’s not because the Lord commanded it or authorized it in His church. Yet, they say that they dance to express their love for Christ. This is a repudiation of Christ’s statement in John 14:15, where Jesus said that we demonstrate our love for Him by keeping His commandments! Notice, too, that they don’t dance because the Apostles led the early church into this practice (Acts 2:42) or because we can read where a congregation engaged in this activity under apostolic guidance. No, instead of pointing to an approved example in the New Testament, an appeal is made to what other uninspired men are doing. Finally, it is admitted that the real reason they engage in “spiritual dancing” is because it is “fun.” In other words, they are engaging in something that appeals to the flesh, in stead of seeking to glorify God by worshiping Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). However, I would like to issue the following challenges: challenge the instrumental music man to show why dancing would be unscriptural in the New Testament church today! Because when he does, away goes the instrument with it. Furthermore, I challenge the grace only, unity in-diversity advocate to condemn dancing as an expression of praise in our assemblies today! Because when he does, he is going to be admitting that there is some kind of pattern (a word they despise) to be followed and that certain activities, like dancing, are unauthorized acts.—215 Forest Hills Dr., West Monroe, LA. 71291.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LAST CALL FOR CHURCH DIRECTORIES

This is the last call for the most recent church directory. My supply is almost exhausted. I will not advertise it after this month. If you don’t have yours or if you need a replacement, please order today. Cost is \$2.00 for each directory. Send all orders to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808.

SERMON OUTLINE BOOK

The Sermon Outline book PULPIT TREASURES containing one hundred sermon outlines by our preachers is almost all sold out. I have less than one hundred copies left. If you have not ordered yours, please do so soon. Once they are gone, there will be no reprint. Send \$10.00 for each book. Postage is included. Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808.

THE SUN WILL SHINE AGAIN SOMEDAY

From time to time, I get inquiries about my book *The Sun Will Shine Again Someday*, which is a history of the

one cup, one-class churches of Christ. I only have a very few of the limp binding left. They are \$10.00 each post-paid. The book will not be reprinted. This is your last chance to get one for yourself, your children or grandchildren. Send orders to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808.

TOUR OF ISRAEL

A group is now forming to visit the Biblical sights of Israel. Led by James Orten, the tour will depart from Dallas on May 31, 1998 and return on the 12th of June. The group will arrive in Israel on Monday afternoon, spent the week visiting the places where Jesus walked, and gathering in the evenings to read and discuss the Scriptures about them. For lack of a place to worship, we will depart Israel on Saturday and fly to London, where we will be picked up by a bus and driven to the Nottingham area near a church that worships as we do. The Lord’s Day will be spent with our British brethren, who have always welcomed us. From Monday through Thursday we will see favorite places in Britain, including London, and fly home on Friday. Places should be secured before January 15. For more information, call James Orten at (405) 478-1854, or write for a

brochure to: 4113 N.E. 141 Street, Edmond, OK 73013.

50 YEARS TOGETHER

September 20, 1997 family and friends from near and far gathered at the Anderson, California Community Center to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Jay and Marge (Alpha) Pendergrass. Jay and Marge are faithful members of the church at Redding, California where they have lived since 1978. Previously they lived in the Watsonville, California area.



Among the attendees were Dorothy Thornburg, who introduced them in 1943. Later, Marge introduced Dorothy to one of her uncles and they were married. Also attending were Peggy Brown Edsall, who was in the original wedding as the maid of honor. Marge's mother, Margaret Eaker, who is 89 years young, was also able to attend.

Jay and Marge have a wonderful ability to carry on a conversation and make you know you are important to them. Jan is an active handyman in his neighborhood. He built the oak pulpit stand and communion table now used

in the church. During the five years we lived in Redding from 1978 to 1983, Jay and Marge were like grandparents to our children and have always been our home away from home when visiting there since.

Rod Watson and I sang songs from their original wedding "Because" and "I Love You Truly." Rod also spoke, giving their life history and I was honored to perform the ceremony that renewed their precious vows as husband and wife.—Greg Gay.

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Please change address of Wayne Sanders to read Rt. 1, Box 1077, Colbert, OK 74733, (405) 296-4330.

BOOK AVAILABLE

Facts You Should Know About The NIV is now available upon request. This 30 page track was written by Reggie Kinser and was printed with the help of congregations and individuals of the Church of Christ. It contains helpful information in selecting a translation of the Bible, and identifies some problem areas in the NIV. The tract is free, postage costs would be appreciated. Send requests to Reggie Kinser, 4407 Georgetown Dr., Columbia, MO 65203.

OUR DEPARTED

DeMASTERS - Sister Treva R. DeMasters of the Leawood Village Congregation, Joplin, Missouri, passed away October 12, 1997 at the age of 81. Sister DeMasters was born in Carterville, Missouri. On December 24, 1937 she married Brother Fred DeMasters. He passed away in 1986. Together, they owned and operated a service station and grocery store until they retired in 1972. Brother and Sister DeMasters were two of the original members who first met in 1957 when the congregation that now is the Leawood Congregation. They were an integral part in the continuation of the congregation, especially in its early days. Sister DeMasters was in failing health for a number of years and had been confined to her home and more recently a rest home. She is survived by one daughter, four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. She will be missed by all who knew and loved her. Jim Stockam, an Elder at Leawood, and I conducted the grave site service on a beautiful fall day that graced the Ozarks.—Ronald Lankford.

TRIPLETT - Venus Triplett was born September 25, 1912 and departed this life October 27, 1997 in her home near Phillipsburg, Mo. In 1931 she was united in marriage to Earl Triplett and had remained his faithful wife until her death. To this union two sons and one daughter were born. One son and her daughter preceded her in death. Surviving are her husband, Earl, one son, Vernon, one sister, Inez Lee and several grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews. Venus was a good woman. She was a Christian. Her good life testified to her love for the church and the truth. She had suffered several years from

cancer. Her fight was brave and persistent, and even though she lost her battle with this terrible disease, she, through Christ will win the greater struggle—victory over death. Memorial services were conducted from the Holman Funeral Chapel in Lebanon, with burial in the Mt. Zion Cemetery. The writer was privileged to deliver the sermon and eulogy to a large crowd of family, friends, and fellow-Christians.—Ronny F. Wade.

DIAMOND - George Diamond, 99, of Lavalette, WV died July 29, 1997 at his home after a long illness. He was a member of the Garretts Creek Church of Christ. He was born March 8, 1898 in Chatteroy, WV. He was preceded in death by his wife, Mary Christine Stone Diamond, one son and infant daughter, two brothers and four sisters. Survivors include four daughters, 19 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren. Funeral services were conducted Aug. 1, 1997 at Morris Funeral Home Chapel by John Holland. Burial was in Barboursville, WV.

FENDER - Phillip L. Fender was born March 5, 1926 in Coal Strip, Montana. He passed from his life on September 28th at the age of 71 in San Antonio. He is survived by his wife, Dorothy; one daughter, Alice Tomlinson; three sons, Mark, Dale and Sam; and four grandchildren. Bro. Phil was baptized in 1943, faithful, active, and recognized as a leader in the Vance Jackson Church in San Antonio. "Others" was the watchword of his life. For over thirty years he went once a month to assist the Church in Medina and others as he could. He was a kind and gentle man with a big heart. Phil Fender — a servant of Jesus Christ! Murl Helwig, William St. John and I were privileged to offer words of comfort to such a dear family and to a great ingathering of people.—J. Wayne McKamie.

BALL - Johanna E. Ball, 68, of Doniphan died Friday October 24, 1997 at Lucy Lee Healthcare System where she had been a patient for nine weeks. She had been ill for several months. Mrs. Ball was born on March 9, 1929 in Bruslau, Germany and had lived in Ripley County three years. On March 5, 1955 in Aschaffenburg, Germany, she was married to Edwin W. Ball, who survives. She was a member of the Church of Christ. Other survivors include one daughter, Barbara Mock of Doniphan; one brother, Wolfgang Sommerfeldt of Cologne, Germany; three grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Visitation was at Edwards Funeral Home Chapel. The funeral was held at the chapel. Ron Courter of Waterford, Michigan officiated. Burial was in the Pine Cemetery.

KEEL - Daniel Forest Theodore Keel, affectionately called "Paw Paw" by his family was born on September 30, 1912 to Mattie Elizabeth Samply Keel and Forest Bradford Keel in Bryson, Texas. He passed from this earthly life October 4, 1997 in Bakersfield, California at the age of 85. He was married to Mary Eveline Willingham on July 24, 1934 in Grandfield, Oklahoma by the Justice of the Peace. Dan and Mary were married almost 59 years. Mary preceding Dan, passed away in March of 1993. To this union, four children were born. Dan also has two living sisters, as well as numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews. Dan was baptized in his teens having raised in the New Testament Church of Christ. He was a faithful member and attended the Planz Road congregation in Bakersfield until he was physically unable. Dan was a quiet man, but his actions spoke louder than words. One of the things that I appreciated about Dan was his example of attending the worship services of the Church. If Dan could be there, he was. He had gone through times when he was physically unable to be at services, but when he regained his strength, he was there. In doing this, he set an example that was noticed by myself and others. His works will follow him.—Terry W. Osburn.

ROWE - Sister Faye Rowe was born October 12, 1938 and graduated this life November 6, 1997 at the Emory University Hospital in Atlanta, GA. Faye had a light stroke in August and after a series of tests, it was determined that she had three aneurysms which would require surgery. The initial surgery was November 4th followed by another surgery the same day and a third one on the 5th. However, her condition continued to decline and about 6:30 p.m. she slipped into eternity. She is survived by her mother, Vivian Prince Rowe; two sisters, Mary Edna Crawford and Dorothy Eulene Bowen and a large number of relatives and friends. The singing was so beautifully done by ten members of the Prince family who were also Faye's relatives. She was known and loved by the church here in LaGrange and across the country by the many friends she met at the annual meetings. She will long be remembered for her ability to sing in the church services, weddings and funerals. Faye touched the lives of so many, in so many different ways. The funeral service took place at the Murphy Ave. Church of Christ in LaGrange, that is designed to seat 300 people. The building was filled to capacity, the walls were lined and some outside because of

lack of space. Words would fail to describe the beauty of the many flowers. Bro. Jimmy Smith and I shared words of comfort to the family.—Alton B. Bailey.

LANKFORD - James Anthony "Dutch" Lankford of Pilot Rock, Oregon closed his eyes in death after suffering many years of cancer's ugly hand. Brother Lankford was born Aug. 4th, 1912 in Seneca, Missouri. Death's door opened for him on July 2nd, 1997 while in his home. With his passing the little home church passed away as well. Dutch loved his family very much and was always talking about them. The Saturday service was a true reflection of his example and pattern of life before the world. He wanted congregational singing and words from a brother in Christ. None other would do. At the service there was not an empty seat to be found and many were standing at the back of the building. Brother Dutch indeed has gone the last mile of the way and departed this world, his pilgrimage over. He now rests beyond the reach of sorrow. I will always hold dear Brother Frank Green, who took the time to travel with me to complete the final work of saying farewell to our brother in Christ and a very dear family member. The family wishes to thank everyone for their support and prayers during their time of need and sorrow. The writer conducted the final service.—Roger L. Owens.

SHORT - Inez Short, age 84, departed this life November 6, 1997. She was a member of the Rice Road Church of Christ in Columbia, Missouri. Although she had not been able to attend services of late, she worshipped regularly before her illness. Inez was a long time widow with no one in her family to see that she made it to services. Brethen Bill Smith and Brian Davis was diligent in making certain she had transportation to services every Lord's Day. She will be missed by her brothers and sisters at the Rice Road congregation. I was honored to speak words at her funeral.—Reggie Kinser.



Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808, November 5, 1997 - Sept. 15-19 it was my privilege to be with the church in West Chester, Ohio. We had a number of visitors from congregations in and around the Cincinnati area as well as from over in Indiana. It was also good to have Bill Ferguson present for several services. The church at West Chester continues in word and doctrine undaunted by the advances of evil in the world. Next we were at Cable Ridge, Mo., where we had the pleasure of working with Hugh Bentch and Larry Thomas, both Elders of the church. This congregation nestled in the hills of central Missouri has been a light to the surrounding communities for many years. They work together as well as any church I know in carrying out the great commission. Lord willing we go next to Brumley, Mo. and then

for the remainder of the year I will be working with my home church in an effort to contact those people who have responded to our television broadcast. The Lord bless everyone who labors for Him. Remember us when you pray.

Douglas T. Hawkins, HCR 3 Box 203-C, Rocky Mount, MO 65072, Nov. 5, 1997 - Lori and I just returned home from Montebello and Modesto, CA. It was very enjoyable to be with friends and loved ones in those areas again. In Montebello we enjoyed the company and hospitality of David and Teresa Mackey, very dear friends of ours. Throughout the meeting, a number of people from the "cups" church attended several of the services. It was good to see preaching brethren, Don McCord, Brett Hickey and Matt Trent at the meeting. In Modesto, it was good to have preaching brethren Richard DeGough, Bennie Cryer, Delmer Lee, Alan Bonifay, Ryan Conner and Leland Byars. I appreciate our preachers so much for the noble work they do. We are looking forward to the preacher's study and the Oklahoma New Year's meeting. The congregation at Brumley has just moved into their new long awaited building. Everyone is elated over its completion. Just a word about Lesa Patterson. Brethren, the response you have given has been overwhelming and amazing. I never expected such a flood of response. She thanks you so very much for your care, concern, and financial help. I think it bespeaks so well of our people. The need has been abundantly met. More than enough has been contributed. God bless the faithful.

Johnny Elmore, 419 KSW, Ardmore, OK 73401, Nov. 4 - Since last report, it has been my pleasure to speak at the Crestview congregation in Wichita Falls, TX Sep. 7, and at Midway congregation in Shreveport Sept. 19th. At the latter, I enjoyed getting to visit with Wayne Fussell, a preaching pal when we were both a good bit younger. Oct. 3 and 4 I visited with Jimmie Smith at Harrison and Oct. 5-12, I held a meeting with the Huntsville, AR congregation. This was my first time to preach for them. I was told beforehand that I would enjoy it and I certainly did. I found them to be a dedicated and hospitable group. During the meeting, I got to visit with Bruce Roebuck and Lynwood Smith, who was in a meeting at Mt. Home, AR. Oct. 24-26, were privileged to have James and June Orten with us for a meeting which climaxed with the fourth Sunday singing. We had a good meeting with a lot of visitors. I am leaving today for the El Cajon, CA congregation for a meeting Nov. 5-9. I expect to be at Crestview again on Dec. 7.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, November 13 - It was our pleasure to preach both services at Escalon, CA recently to a good crowd. Sickness has hindered the leadership there in recent times, but health appears to be returning for which we are thankful. The home church continues in peace. Ron Jordan recently preached Lord's Day morning and evening and one confessed wrongs. The young men here are improving their abilities in teaching, leading public prayers, etc. We continue to study with them on a weekly basis and hope that good will continue. It will soon be time to make the annual trip to the Philippines. It is a hard trip, but one to

which I always look forward. Brother Matthew Trent is to accompany me this year. I look forward to being with him. Preachers: don't forget to send your field reports! Articles are also needed by all of our preaching brethren. Let us hear from you soon. Remember us when you pray.

Bob Johnson, 8078 Whitewing Drive, Frisco, TX 75034, (972) 3350-1005, Nov. 5, 1997 - Greetings to the faithful in Christ Jesus from the Lord's church in Frisco, TX. Next month will mark four years of labor here. Attendance on Lord's Day morning has grown from nine (including children) to near thirty. One outsider, a young man age 24 seems to be nearing conversion. One lady is about halfway through a fifteen lesson Bible course. We enjoyed a weekend meeting here last month with brother Melvin Blalock doing some excellent preaching. We are now working together in door knocking here in Frisco as well as in Cleburne, where Melvin lives and labors for the church. We gained a new home study there just this week while out knocking doors near the church house. I usually teach at least twice a month for the church here, once a month for the Allen and Irving congregations. In mid-September, I stayed in the home with and enjoyed the hospitality of Wayne and Carolyn Fussell in Shreveport, while participating in a meeting there. Preaching brethren Billy Dickinson and Bobby Cunningham were in attendance the night I spoke. It was good to converse with them. It was good to see and speak with so many of the local brethren there that I had not seen for some time. There are still lots of new folks moving into this area, in addition to many new businesses that have started up in recent months. There are plenty of jobs available if one is looking to relocate. Please pray for the work here as we continue to labor for Him who died for us.

Glenn Arnett, 1445 S.E., N. St. Grants Pass, OR 97526, Oct. 29 - It was a joy to have the many visitors we recently had from several central California churches. There was Don and Pat and Lance and Colton King from Fremont, James and Loretta Mason, Bob, Kris and Landon Baker and Howard King from Stockton. Vera, Melissa, Jennifer and Amanda Winchester from Lodi, Rodger and Cheryl Nelson and family from Escalon and others I may have missed. We also had sister Blanch Muse from Portales, New Mexico for three weeks and it was good to see her again. We look forward every year for most of these same brethren from California to visit us and as best I can remember, they with others, have been visiting the church here in southern Oregon for the past 36 years. Not only is it a joy to have fellowship with these brethren, they always bring some capable preachers with them and they are always ready to preach for us. This year Don and Howard King preached for us and as always we were edified and encouraged by the good lessons from the word of God. Others who have preached for us are Bennie Cryer, Jimmy Winchester, Carl Johnson and our dear brother, Granville Mahurin, who is with the Lord. Brethren, it is Christians like these, wherever the church is, that we all appreciate and respect for the constancy of their faith that is manifested in the third and fourth generations of faithful children. The church here continues to be at peace and though we are few in number, we strive to grow in knowl-

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edge and understanding of God's word that we might with wisdom exercise His righteousness to the edifying of the church in love. If compromising God's word is the only way we can grow in number we will continue to be a small congregation. We have had some confessions of fault which to me expresses spiritual growth to be thankful for. We have some who attend regularly who are not members and we look forward to the time that our desire for them to obey the gospel will be a reality. We all know that the devil, who is the god of this world, is working very hard now for his time is getting shorter so we all need to put on the armor of God that we may resist him. May God bless our work of righteousness wherever it is being done.

Brett Hickey, P.O. Box 6506, Ventura, CA 93003 (805) 658-7860 - November 1, 1997 - In October we conducted studies with twelve members and twenty non-members. We had the pleasure of sitting down for a detailed study with a "cups and classes" family of four. How refreshing to see these folks react openly to a previously unknown truth. He said during our study, "I hate to admit it, but I see it." At present we're studying with ten people in Arkansas jails and prisons. Miles King is following up on James Maples, who may be one of the hottest prison leads. Miles was not able to see him on his first visit, but is arranging another date to meet him. Michael Johnson was to be released just days ago. His grandmother, Shirley Johnson, has also been studying with us and has nearly completed the 8-lesson Bible course. They have both expressed their desire to come to our meeting at Mt. Home in November, although it is at least a couple hours for them. We were honored to participate in Grass Valley's meeting with Greg Gay and Michael Fox. How exciting it was to be with so many first generation Christians and to associate with brethren involved in the amazing growth realized in the area in recent years. We could only attend one night of Montebello's meeting with Doug Hawkins and Lynwood's meeting at Brundage Lane in Bakersfield. Both services were well worth the miles travelled. Their uncompromising preaching is always uplifting. We are very thankful that the Lord continues to bless Lynwood with strength. We look forward to meetings in Broken Arrow and Mountain Home this month. We will certainly feel at home in each congregation. It's encouraging to hear of the growth at both places since we last visited them.

Kevin W. Presley, Rt. 2 Box 166, Kinston, AL 36453 (334) 898-1301, November 10, 1997 - Our meeting at Walnut Grove, KY was quite enjoyable. Large crowds were present at each service. The meeting closed with two restorations, one confession and one young man out of the

Baptists obeyed the gospel. I always enjoy associating with Ed and Marvin Cromer who are the leaders of this congregation. We were also glad to have preaching brethren such as Cecil Smith and Bill Ledford with us. My next was at Spring Valley, West Virginia. This was a first for me. I enjoyed it very much. These are good, conservative brethren who appreciate sound teaching. It was good to have the following preachers with us: Dennis Smith, Wyn Baker, Bill Ledford, and David Smith. Also, I am thankful for the hospitality of Elwin and Wanda Cutter. I look forward to being back at Walnut Grove and Spring Valley in the future. Here on the homefront, things are going well. As of the past Sunday we approached 125 calls and letters as a result of our television program. I had the opportunity to study with some digressives last month and have had phone conversations with others. We are looking forward to trying to hold a mission meeting in Andalusia, AL sometime this winter. I have been away from home a lot this year. I appreciate the home congregation's (Earlytown) moral and financial support. Lord willing, I go next to Slocomb, AL - Nov. 21-23; Burkhardt, MO - Nov. 26-30; and Grassy Fork, TN - Dec. 6-7.

Jimmie C. Smith, 5100 Rail Road, Harrison, AR Nov. 6 - The meeting at Harrodsburg surpassed any expectations. I found the church in peace (they've had five years of peace), with young men developing their talents in the leadership. I think this was my eighth meeting to conduct there and it was by far my most enjoyable. Cooperation from sister congregations has never been better. I taught the rudiments of music after the services to a growing number of eager students. John Strain and Grant Hensen obeyed their Lord in baptism and one sister confessed faults. It was one of those meetings in which things "clicked". Preachers in attendance were Anthony Brocket, Fred Harris, Jimmy Cating, Walter Hunter and Cecil Smith. I enjoyed some extended visits with Cecil. We recently assisted Christopher Jones in baptism here at home. There are now three young men who fill the pulpit in my absence without having to import a speaker. Miles King and Johnny Elmore each spent a night with us in October. Last weekend was spent with the brethren at Lee's Summit, which is always a joy. There were outside visitors to the meeting. They had just mourned the loss of sister Venus Triplett. Because of their early evening service we were able to hear Barney Owens preach a fine sermon in Springfield. If the Lord wills I will be in a singing school with the brethren near Pocahontas, AR Dec. 3-7; in another singing school at Mountain Home in January and with the brethren at Rogers one Sunday also. It is my prayer that the Church may ever grow and be at peace.