

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. LXXIII

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NO. 1

HOW TO BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT—PART 2

By ALAN BONIFAY

In part one of this discussion of Ephesians 5:18 (see OPA-November 1998) we discovered four notable facts:

(1) The Greek word translated "filled" does not always refer to miraculous power and in this instance certainly does not because all believers for all time are instructed "to be filled with the Spirit."

(2) The verb rendered "filled" is an imperative. In other words it expresses a command which must be obeyed. It is not optional.

(3) The parallel passage in Colossians 3:16 demonstrates the effect... "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly"; while Ephesians 5:18 reveals the cause—"be filled with the spirit." When the inspired Word of God dwells in the believer richly, then he is obeying the command "to be filled with the Spirit."

(4) Paul follows the command with a list of five participle phrases explaining the means by which the believer accomplishes obedience to the command found in Ephesians 5:18.

In order to obey Paul's directive to "be filled with the Spirit" the Christian must allow the word of Christ to dwell in his heart richly. James Macknight observes that "the Hebrews expressed absolute rule or dominion by the figure of dwelling (Ezek. 43:7,9; Zech. 2:10) (*Macknight On The Epistles*, Vol. 1, 325). The idea, then, is as Lenski concurs: The Christian is to allow the word of Christ to inhabit his life as if he were "the house and home of his word." He is to do this "in a rich way by filling every nook and corner of his being with the blessed, spiritual wisdom" found in the Scriptures (IX, 177). The word translated "richly" (*plousios*) "pertains to that which exists in a large amount with the implication of its being valuable" (Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, II, 601). Paul then lists in both of these passages (Eph. 5:18-21 and Col. 3:16-18) five participle phrases explaining the means by which the believer is to accomplish his task. The NIV's rendering of Colossians is most instructive.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word

or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him (Col. 3:16,17).

Let us now examine each of the participles discovered in Ephesians chapter 5.

"Speaking To Yourself"

This method of being filled with the Spirit is directed parallel to that in Colossians of "in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another." God's people are to fill their hearts and minds with the Word of God, so that they can then share its message with one another. In other words, the devout child of God will develop some system of daily reading of Scripture. He will spend time each day studying and meditating upon the Word of God (I Tim. 4:13, 15, 16). Then with his heart and mind filled to overflowing with the truths of the New Testament he will begin speaking to his fellows in Christ that which he has learned.

God's people are to be filled with the Spirit by instructing one another (Acts 2:42; 17:1-4, 11, 12; 20:7; Col. 1:28; 1 Thess. 4:18, 5:11, 12; 2 Thess. 3:15; Heb. 12:12-15). Paul commended the brethren in Rome for their knowledge in the Scriptures and their willingness to teach and admonish one another.

And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another (15:14).

God's people are also instructed to correct one another (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Gal. 6:1; James 5:19, 20). They are to exhort one another (Heb. 10:25; 3:13). They are to encourage one another, lift one another up; edify one another; warn one another. God's Word and the principles it teaches should be the center and focus of our discussions with each other. Believers spend far too much time discussing worldly subjects—football, fishing, television, newspapers, houses, cars, boats, shopping, and infinitum. Such pursuits are in the end totally irrelevant to all that matters. We need to study God's Word together—not only in our assemblies but also in our homes. Paul reminded the elders at Ephesus that he had taught them "publicly and from house to house" keeping back nothing that was profitable to them (Acts 20:20). Read Acts Chapter 2, verses 42-47 and notice particularly the focus of the lives of these first Christians.

continued on page five

CONTENTS

Vol. LXXIII No. 1



ADVOCATE

ANNOUNCEMENTS 7-9

How To Be Filled With The Holy Spirit - Part 2	1
Here and There	2
The Querist Column	3
Ye Have Not So Learned Christ	3
Have You Viewed The Movie Titanic?	4

FROM THE FIELDS 9-12

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Editorial

HERE AND THERE

By DON L. KING

As we begin this 67 year of publication under the name *Old Paths Advocate*, we are thankful for many things. We are thankful for the continued cooperation of preachers and brethren around the brotherhood and world. We are thankful for those who subscribe to the paper and send it to their friends. Without them we could not continue. We so much appreciate the quick response to help us send the paper to foreign fields. In faraway places there are brethren now who might not ever have heard the truth had it not been for your help.

The paper is doing well, but should be going into more homes than it is. May we ask our preaching brethren to help us? If you will mention it as you travel and hold meetings, you can be of invaluable assistance. When I was a lad it was common for nearly all the preachers to talk about the paper and send subscriptions. Some send a gift subscription to friends. That is a wonderful idea. Perhaps you have been thinking of someone who might obey the gospel. Try sending the paper to them for a year or two. Their interest in spiritual things could be brought to life.

To our preaching brethren, we especially ask your help. Send regular field reports. Please. Sit down and write an article now and again about a topic you have been studying. We have always relied upon our brethren voluntarily sending their writings. Try to keep your articles to about 3 or 4 pages of double spaced typewritten material. Think about the subject material too. While we realize there may be exceptions, the paper is not usually the place to air your disagreement with a brother. Remember that some who are not members of the church will also be reading it. We always need of articles about the church. We need good articles dealing with fellowship, Sunday school, instrumental music, individual cups, the missionary society, worldliness, stewardship, preaching, elders, etc. Field reports should be kept brief (1/4 to 1/2 page is about right) as well as obituaries. Unless the deceased was known over a wide area it is unnecessary to make mention of all the relatives, etc. Use your good judgment in such matters. However, we need your cooperation on a regular basis in all areas. Many years ago, there were times when those who were not preachers still sent an occasional report about the state of their congregation.

As we begin this new year, there are things of grave concern also. It is a real worry that so many are so little concerned about their soul. While we hesitate to be so negative, it is obvious that many are not thinking of the Lord's second coming. People surely would not do some of the things they do, go the places they go, etc. if they really believed they might have to explain it to the Lord this very day. Are we losing our fear of God? Are we getting used to the dark, so to speak? Hosea wrote of Israel's flagrant lack of dedication, their gross impiety and said:

continued on page seven

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Please discuss the implications of the law being a schoolmaster Gal. 3 :24. Also, could you explain verse 28 and the implications of there being neither male or female in Christ Jesus. (TX)

Answer: One of the major stumbling blocks to understanding the Scriptures is a failure to distinguish between the Law of Moses, and its purpose, and the Law of Christ, and its purpose. Many today still try to prove their religion by the Old Testament. They justify certain practices by appealing to various statements or conditions existing during that time frame. In verse 19 of Galatians 3 Paul asked "What then is the Law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made; and it was ordained by angels through the hand of a mediator." Paul here affirms that the Law was given to demonstrate the true nature of transgressions. It made sin known for what it was. The ugliness and utter despicability of sin was seen as a result of the Law. "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound" (Romans 5 :20). The Law of Moses was, however, temporary. Given, "till the seed should come," that is until Christ came. When the Lord died, the law was taken out of the way "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way nailing it to his cross" Col. 2:14). In addition to the above, Robert Milligan in his *Scheme of Redemption*, also gives as purposes of the Law, the following: 1. The law was to be used by Israel for direction of their civil government. 2. The law was to preserve both the knowledge and practice of true religion, till Christ should come. 3. The law gave the world a suitable religious nomenclature, and "a sort of pictorial outline of the Scheme of Redemption, by means of certain types and symbols, rites and ceremonies addressed to their senses." Galatians 3:24-25 states that the Law "was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." The term "schoolmaster" does not carry the same connotation as normally thought of today. The word "tutor" better describes the writer's meaning here. A tutor was "one who was legally appointed for the care of the person or property of a minor" (*Vincent*). The work of a tutor included a watchful care over his charges restraining them from falling into evil, and seeing that they received instruction. Under such tutorship they were prepared for the time of manhood. Hence the Law was designed for the training of the Jews in preparation for Christ. This was in order that they might come to Him, be justified by faith in Him, and conform their lives to the law of faith that came through Him. Does this mean that the Law has no value for us today? Of course not. Paul stated in Romans 15:4

that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." There are many principles and truths in the Old Testament that are eternal in nature and universal in scope. It provides for us today historical backgrounds from which we gain insight, which is necessary in understanding references in the books of Hebrews and the Revelation, as well as many other passages in the NT. It also provides us with an understanding of the moral requirements of God and how in dealing with man He always meant exactly what He said, Genesis 19:17,26 being a case in point. People in that day did not get by with disobeying God. Neither can we. Burton Coffman commented on the value of the Old Testament when he wrote "The immediate application of the first clause of this verse (Romans 15:4) is to the things written in Psalm 69, just cited; but it has a wider scope of application to all of the sacred Scriptures, showing that the OT, no less than the NT, bears a precious freight of relevance to all men of all ages; and, although many of the forms and shadows of the old order have been replaced by the realities of the new institution of Christ, a proper understanding of those glorious principles which, in the NT, have supplanted the types of the OT, is surely promoted and enhanced by the study of the OT as well as the NT." But what of Paul's statement that there is neither male nor female in Christ? Paul is merely pointing out that in Christ there are no racial, economic, or sexual distinctions. Both male and female are equally accepted in Christ. The worth of a woman spiritually is just as important as that of a man. This verse, however, does not teach that all distinctions between men and women have been wiped out, for such is not the case. Men and women are physically different, and certain limitations exist for each as a result of these differences. God made them male and female in the beginning. He did not make a unisex being. He evidently intended for them to be different in a number of areas, and woe to the man or woman who tries to obliterate those differences. God has also given specific instructions regarding offices and roles in the home and church. In marriage even though they "become one flesh," God has appointed the husband head of the wife and home (Eph. 5:23-31; ICor.1 1:3). Wives are to be in subjection to their husbands (IPeter 3:1). This does not mean that she is not under obligation to study for herself. She is responsible for her standing before God, and cannot follow her husband into wrong doing and claim innocence because she was to submit to him. To take this verse and claim that whatever a man may do, a woman may do is to misapply the writer's meaning and intent. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 10811 Springfield, MO 65808)

YE HAVE NOT SO LEARNED CHRIST

By BILLY D. DICKINSON

"But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus" (Eph. 4:20-21). The above statement made by the

Apostle Paul is very simply stated and yet it proclaims a great truth and embraces important implications! Paul was writing to the converts of the Gentile city of Ephesus. That

means that most of them came from a background of idolatry, immorality, and all kinds of lascivious behavior. But those who had obeyed the gospel and became members of the Lord's church had "learned Christ," and learning Christ had brought about a change in their lives.

Learning Christ was the factor that had made the difference! While the Gentiles were walking in the vanity of their minds, having hearts that were darkened and hardened by sin; While they were alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them and had completely given themselves over unto lasciviousness and uncleanness [This is the description Paul gave in Eph. 4:17-19]; While all of that was true of worldly Gentiles, Paul would say of the converted Gentiles at Ephesus: "But ye have not so learned Christ." The Apostle Paul is reminding us that those who are Christians are disciples of Christ. Actually, in a sense, before we can be a Christian we must first be a disciple. Remember what Acts 11:26 says: "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Notice that it was the disciples who were given the name Christian to wear. In other words, before they became known as Christians, they were first designated as disciples. To be a Christian means to be a follower or adherent of Jesus Christ, but before one can be a follower of Jesus, he must first know something about Jesus and His doctrine. To be a disciple means to be a learner or a pupil of another. Yes, we learn of Christ and His will in order to imitate His life and to do His bidding: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (John 8:31).

Let me pose this question: How does Christ teach us and how do we learn of Him? Paul told the Ephesians that they had "learned Christ," and then he went on to describe how they had heard Him and had been taught by Him, as they embraced the concept that "the truth is in Jesus." Please let that sink in! Paul said that "the truth is in Jesus" (Eph. 4:21), for He is the very embodiment of truth (John 14:6). How did they learn Christ and how are we taught by Him today?

I believe that we learn Christ by two specific ways: (1) By studying His life, and (2) by studying His teachings. First, it is important that we scrutinize and examine closely the life of Christ over and over again because Jesus lived the perfect life, and as 1 Peter 2:21 affirms, He left us an example that we should follow in His steps.

Some seem to think that the four gospels only serves a historical purpose and since the church was not established until after the death of Christ, Jesus taught little for the use of the church in those books and they have little relevancy to our lives as far as doctrine is concerned. This is a misconception. To begin with, bear in mind that the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were written after the establishment of the church with the Holy Spirit bringing to the remembrance of the writers the things that Jesus said and did while here on earth (John 14:26). When we study the life of Christ and see the holy and godly

characteristics that He possessed, that gives us a profound insight into the kind of life that God would have us to live. In fact, to be a true disciple of the Lord means to be someone who is walking in the footsteps of Jesus: "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:6).

We also learn of Christ by His teachings. That would include not only what the Lord himself taught personally in His ministry, but it would also include the teaching of His apostles because they were His personal representatives (Matt. 18:18, Acts 2:42). By following the doctrine of Christ we discover the way of truth wherein we are to walk.

The Apostle Paul is telling us in Eph. 4:20 that if we have truly learned Christ as we should have, then we know the kind of lives that God would have us to live. Conversely, we know that there are certain kinds of behavior that we didn't learn from either the life or the teachings of Christ! That's the point I want to really emphasize. In describing the idolatrous and immoral behavior of the Gentiles, Paul wrote to the Ephesians: "But ye have not so learned Christ." I believe that can be said of a lot of different things. There are ways that people often conduct themselves in, sometimes even children of God, that they did not learn in Christ. These are things that had to be learned from some other source, namely Satan and the world. It is like when one of our children misbehaves, perhaps in word or deed, and we respond by saying: "Where did you learn that word? You didn't hear it spoken in this house! You didn't learn such shameful conduct from anyone in this household!" In essence, that's what Paul is saying; there are certain things that people do, especially people of the world, but of the Christian it can be said— "Ye have not so learned Christ."

There are so many things that fall into this category. Some people are selfish and self-centered, "But ye have not so learned Christ" (Phil. 2:3-8). When an attitude of disrespect for the authority of the Scriptures is manifested, this is something that cannot be learned from Christ (John 10:35; Matt. 4:4). This is a good way to approach the subject of carnal warfare in trying to decide whether a Christian should participate in the carnal conflicts that the kingdoms of this world often engage in. In studying both the life and the teachings of Christ, we do not learn of how one should resort to violence or how to retaliate by repaying evil with evil. Do we? Will anyone so affirm? Do we learn from Christ how to take vengeance or how to destroy our enemy when threatened? Do we learn from either His life or His teachings how to use weapons of war to kill our fellow man? No, I think not. None of this is learned from Christ; it is the very opposite of everything He taught and exemplified in His life (John 18:36; Matt. 26:52; 1 Pet. 2:21-23). Finally, when careless souls have a frivolous attitude toward life and eternity, they are not following in the footsteps of the Master (Luke 2:49; John 9:4).

HAVE YOU VIEWED THE MOVIE *TITANIC*?

By JIMMIE C. SMITH

I haven't and don't expect to; yet numerous Christians have viewed it according to reports, which I believe is to their eternal shame.

I've never been inside a movie theatre, neither do I rent the smut to view in my own home, so obviously I'm not among the number who proclaim there is nothing wrong

with attending the movies, nor do I go with the "young people" to the movies. I still preach that such is sinful. All that I know about the Titanic is what I've read and heard from others. What are some of the things I've read about Titanic?? Well I read:

"Kate Winslett" didn't like the idea of her parents viewing the movie because her father would see her bare chest.

In the *Harrison Daily Times*, Friday, Sept. 11, 1998 p. 9 a staff writer interviewed a seventeen-year-old girl from Valley Springs who wants to clean up Hollywood. "Elise Jenkins says she is disappointed when she goes to see a much anticipated movie and discovers nudity, violence and vulgar language, all of which she sees as useless..."

"Not long ago Ms. Jenkins said, she took her younger sister to see *Titanic*, a movie they both wanted very much to see. However, she was surprised and a little embarrassed, to see a scene depicting nudity and heat obscene language used throughout the movie. "I really felt bad that I had taken (her sister) to see that movie, Ms. Jenkins told the times."

(AP)--AMERICAN FORK, Utah (9-1-98) "For \$5, a video store here promises to take your recently purchased copy of *Titanic*--rated PG-13 and transform it into a shorter film that's rated G. Sunrise Family Video offers customers the option of cutting the scene in which Kate Winslet poses nude and another which suggests Leonardo DiCaprio's and Winslet's characters have sex...More than 50 customers dropped off personal copies of the Academy Award-Winning film for editing Tuesday--a four day backlog for the store's employees... "It's not with paramount's blessing and it's illegal, Paramount Studios spokeswoman Dorrit Ragsone said Tuesday."

For those with computers and internet access one can find the objectionable content of any movie by connecting with "www.screenit.com" then looking up *Titanic*.

One preacher, not of our fellowship, said he didn't usually attend movies but after listening to members of his congregation tell him he ought to see it, went under their prodding, only to be aghast at the filthy, vulgar language, then walking out in shame when the frontal nudity appeared.

Another brother told of a couple in the leadership of the church who applauded the movie, another couple bought the video and insisted that they loan it to him to see, only

for him to pull the plug shortly into the viewing, because he couldn't stomach the filth and nudity.

Reportedly one preacher told his congregation there is nothing wrong with attending the movies today, only later to have his wife take their teenage daughter to see the *Titanic*, after which the wife made a confession for such action at church, but the teenage daughter did not. **WHY WOULD ANYONE HAVE TO MAKE A CONFESSION WHEN THE PREACHER SAID SUCH IS ALL RIGHT??**

SHAME, SHAME, SHAME: Brethren surely it is later than we think. I'm often asked to preach on the Movies by parents "So our children can hear it from someone besides us, our children are the only ones in the congregation that do not attend the movies."

If we have in fact, lost our sensitivity to obscenity and are patting ourselves on the back (because viewing such doesn't bother us), we are not far from qualifying for Paul's description of those "whose glory is in their shame" (Phil. 3:19).

Need it be pointed out that the Scriptures call us in inner sanctity? Have we forgotten that the Lord said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God?" (Mt. 5:8) Have we forgotten that Paul wrote, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are noble, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things" (Phil. 4:8)?

There are some things not "fitting" for the Christian to dally with, among them "uncleanness" and "filthiness" (Eph. 5:3,4). Those around us, whose souls we hope to reach with the gospel, deserve to see in us a better example. We owe it to them, as well as to the Lord and ourselves, to demonstrate that the way of purity is the better path.

Eph. 5:11-12 "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are for them in secret."

Did your dollars help make the "Titanic" the record money maker? How can you support such an industry? If such is not the "unfruitful works of darkness?" Then someone please enlighten me as to what is! It is truly **LATER THAN WE THINK!**

HOW TO BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT - PART 2

continued from page 1

"In Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Song Singing"

It is important to note that what is taught in this passage (Eph. 5:18-21) and its parallel (Col. 3:16,17) is inclusive of both public and private worship. Each of these participle phrases provide the means by which the believer is filled with the Spirit in both public and private realms of worship. For example, singing is one of the means of being filled with the Spirit in congregational worship (1 Cor. 14:15, 16) as well as private or individual worship (James 5:13). Doctrinally Paul teaches us that whether in public or private worship psalms, hymns and spiritual songs are to be sung without the aid of mechanical instruments.

To be filled with the Spirit one must be filled with singing. However, not just any kind of song will provide the means of obedience. The believer is to be filled with the singing of "psalms" or songs drawn from the Old Testament psalms. "Hymns" were songs written by Christian composers to give glory to God. "Spiritual songs" were most likely songs revealed by direct inspiration (1 Cor. 14:15). Andrew Lincoln suggest that the three terms for singing are the three most common terms in the Septuagint for religious songs and occur there interchangeably in the titles of the Psalms (Ephesians, 346).

The messages of the songs we sing are very important and hold tremendous sway in our lives. Psalms, hymns and spiritual song are designed to boost the flagging spirits, to keep the company of believers in step, to distract us from preoccupation with our suffering, to express to God

the joy of our forgiven hearts. Think of soldiers marching to battle; slaves singing from away their oppression; children playing together. Singing lifts the spirits of men even in the most trying of times (Mt. 26:30; Acts 16:25). Singing breathes new courage to the disheartened, emboldens the fearful, and expresses the joy of the victorious.

“And Making Melody In Your Heart To The Lord”

The parallel in Colossians says, “singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” “Making melody” comes from the Greek word *psallo* which etymologically meant originally “to cause to vibrate by touching, to twange, to touch or strike the chord, to twang the strings of a musical instrument so that they gently vibrate and absolutely to play on a stringed instrument, to play the harp...in the New Testament to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song” (Thayer, 675). However, it is important to define a word as it was used in the time of the author. Though this originally meant to pluck the strings of a musical instrument, by Paul’s day it meant simply “to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song.”

Nevertheless, even granting its ancient meaning of plucking a stringed instrument there is no authority here for the use of instrumental music in worship for Paul specifies the instrument to be played. It is the heart: The believer is to be filled with the spirit by “making melody in his heart to the Lord” as he sings psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

In passing, it is noteworthy to observe that these verses do not teach that singing is teaching. Singing is not teaching in the ordinary sense of the words.

(1) The words “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” are governed by the participles “singing” and “making melody” and not by the participle “speaking” or its parallel “teaching and admonishing.”

(2) Teaching and admonishing are directed to “one another” or “yourselves.”

(3) Singing and making melody are directed to God—“to the Lord.”

(4) Singing and making melody affects the singer’s heart, not his fellow believer’s heart. It is true that we enjoy lifting our voices in concert to the glory of God, but we do not do so to instruct one another. We do it to glorify God and lift up our own spirit.

Clearly, our singing is designed to pluck the strings of our hearts as we glorify God. It is worship and by engaging in it we obey the command to be filled with the Spirit.

“Giving Thanks Always For All Things Unto God And The Father In The Name Of Our Lord Jesus Christ”

The fourth means by which Christians obey the command of verse 18 is to pray out of a thankful heart. Christians whose minds are filled with God’s words and on whose lips are the songs of the faith will be compelled from within to pour out their hearts to God in thanksgiving for “all spiritual blessing in heavenly places” (Eph. 1:3).

Even the admonition reminds us of the bases of our

thanksgiving. We have been adopted into God’s family. We are God’s children. God, Himself, is our Father. All of these blessings were made actual by Jesus’ sacrifice of himself upon the cross of Calvary. He is now our risen Lord—the authority over our lives (Gal. 4:4-6; Rom. 8:28). No matter our condition in life, thanksgiving should be continual expression to God for His unspeakable gift in Christ Jesus (Acts 4:29, 30; 5:41; 16:25).

“Submitting Yourselves One To Another In The Fear Of God”

Humility is the fifth key to serving God acceptably. We are filled with the Spirit when we submit our will to God’s will. Jesus must become the Lord of our lives—the owner, master, ruler, controller. We must evidence our submission to God by submitting to the demands of God’s word in our lives. Then we must prove our humility by submitting ourselves to the service of our brethren in all humility of mind (Phi. 2:1-4).

In the context of Ephesians chapter 5:

(1) Husbands are to submit to God, to their leaders both civil and religious, and to their brethren.

(2) Wives are to submit to their husbands, their God, their leaders and their fellows in Christ.

(3) Children are to submit to their parents, their God, their civil leaders and their spiritual leaders.

(4) Servants are to submit to their masters, their God, their leaders, and their brethren (this no doubt speaks of the employer-employee relationship as well as the master-slave relationship).

(5) Masters are to submit to God, their leaders, and their brethren.

The opposite of Christian submission is to be self-willed and God will not have that.

How Can Christians Today Be Filled With The Spirit?

(1) By speaking to yourselves or by teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom.

(2) By singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.

(3) By making melody in your heart to the Lord or by singing with grace in your hearts to God.

(4) By giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(5) By submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

In short, Christians today can be filled with the Spirit by obediently allowing the word of Christ to dwell in their hearts richly with all wisdom. Let the word of Christ fill every nook and cranny of your mind; speak forth those things you have stored up; live your life in humble submission to God and to one another, worship God “in spirit and truth.”

WHERE IS GOD?

THE MAN offered the little boy, who was returning from church a dollar if he would show him where God is. The little boy responded, “Mister, I’ll give you a dollar if you will show me where God ain’t” (End of Story).—*Selected*

EDITORIAL*continued from page 2*

"For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind..." (Hosea 8:7)

Bible knowledge is lacking in many places now. There is only one reason for it. Too little time reading and talking the Bible. There is nothing wrong with most of the things folks do. However, we apparently have allowed these "allowable" things to keep us away from Bible study. We used to talk the Scriptures. Now, we talk other things.

We are concerned that too few attend meetings now. The fact is, church members often fail to attend as they should. To encourage better attendance and more interest, some have thought to organize more recreational activities. Is it sinful to enjoy recreation? Of course not, but that isn't going to build spiritual health. If we want to encourage our neighbors and friends to come to church, the best thing we can do is to LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE BEFORE

THEM! That will encourage them to attend our meetings perhaps better than anything we could do. Remember, Paul said, "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (1 Corinthians 1:21) If they need help, if anyone needs help, the preaching of the gospel is the right medicine. Apparently, Troas needed help and 2 Corinthians 2:12 says Paul "came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel...." It is interesting that it was the gospel Paul brought to them. That was his reason for going to them and it was also their reason for assembling. Paul said: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." (2 Timothy 4:2-4).

Think on these things. DLK

ANNOUNCEMENTS

My Position on Carnal Warfare

We occasionally publish the names and addresses of those who wish their conscientious objection to carnal warfare and participation in the military to be known to all. We gladly do so this month.

Preston Owens, 1432 West 3rd St., Florence, CO 81226; Nona Elizabeth Holt, 439 Blanco, Duncanville, TX 75137; James Russell Pannell, 1940 Hwy. 51 NE, Brookhaven, MS 39601; Garrett Keith Lorton, #254-63-1278, Ada, OK 74820; Aaron Duane Little, 316 Caldera #123, Midland, TX 79705; Daniel D. Smith, 1614 Zetus Rd NW, Brookhaven, MS 39601; Wade Erik Hisle, #442-80-3814, Ada, OK 74820; Matthew Cole Frye, #461-57-7700, Ada, OK 74820; Cody Earl Frye, #461-57-7135, Ada, OK 74820; Byron Franklin Frye, #461-57-7135, Ada, OK 74820; Paul Melton, HC 64, Box 750, Healdton, OK 73438. No Addresses for the following: Jennifer Leonard, Jessica Smith, Jana Hopkins, Danny Hopkins II, Justin Hopkins, Melissa Crisel & B.J. Crisel.

Hawaii, Directory Correction

Please make the following correction in your directories. Church of Christ, 94-371 Ikepono St., Waipahu, Hawaii 96797. Sunday 9:30 A.M. and 6:00 P.M., Wed. 6:00 P.M. Contact Virgilio O. Danao, 94-545 Mahoe St., Waipahu, Hawaii, Ph (808) 680-0249 or Tomas Rivera, 94-943 Kauolu Pl, B416, Waipahu, Hawaii Ph (808) 679-9325. (Bro. Felipe Bayani now lives on the big island and worships at the Hilo congregation)

Send Material to Ronny Wade Next Month

Since we will be in the Philippines during January, please send your materials for the February issue to Ronny Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808. Subscriptions may be sent to me as always. Thank you for your patience. For those of you who wish to E-Mail to us, our E-mail address is oldpaths@juno.com. Please be patient with us.

It seems I could fly a 747 as easy as run this computer. DLK

New Books

Exploring Revelations

I have written and published a book titled *Exploring Revelations*. It is a hard back and has 349 pages. It has scripture and history to support the views put forth in it. It will be available by January 1, 1999. The price will be \$20.00 including tax and/or shipping. My address is 536 Chadon Ave., Gridley, CA 95948 or you may call me at (530) 846-6660 or e-mail me at plittle@manznet.com. Thank you.—W.F. Little

A Star In The East

This book is a summary with many photographs of the history of the Eastern Area Labor Day Meetings for 50 years (1948-1998). If you treasure our history and heritage, you may want to have a copy for your library. I would like to thank the many who purchased the book. The wide acceptance has made the effort very successful. Please order from Carl Diamond, 722 Coal River Rod., St. Albans, WV 25177. Price \$15 postage paid.

They need a preacher

We are a small congregation in Middle Tennessee that is in need of an evangelist to come work this area. There is a great potential in the Burns area of Dickson County. We have been having visitors almost every Sunday since we have been meeting in our building. It will be one year on January 1st, at which time we sang the New Year in together. We have had three confessions and one baptism. If anyone is interested, or a family who would like to locate to this area, please contact: Bro. Walter Odom at 1235 Petty Road, White Bluff, TN 37187, or call 615-797-3503. Or write to the church at 1610 Hwy. 96, Burns, TN 37029.

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

CONNER-DEPONTE—September 25, 1998. Ryan Joseph Connor and Shannon Christine DePonte were

united in marriage in a beautiful outdoor evening ceremony at Vintage Gardens in Modesto, CA. Ryan is the son of Joe and Vicki Connor of the Placerville congregation. Shannon is the daughter of George DePonte. George and Cheryl are members of the Oakdale congregation. Ryan is a very accomplished young preacher who works with the congregation at Stockton under the tutelage of Bennie Cryer and the elders there. I have known Ryan all his life and it was a great honor to be asked to officiate at the ceremony. A large crowd of brethren and friends number over 400 gathered to witness the establishment of this Christian home and that speaks well of the respect and affection that Ryan and Shannon have cultivated in the hearts of their fellows in California. May God always cause his face to shine upon this devoted couple and may he ever richly bless their home and their labors for the King and help them to honor the solemn and sacred vows they declared as they committed their lives to one another before God and this great throng of witnesses.—Alan Bonifay

OUR DEPARTED

CHRISTMAN—Savilla Ann Christman was born Feb. 26, 1928 in Pittsburg County. She died November 25, 1998 in Pittsburg Oklahoma. She is survived by two sons, a grandson, three granddaughters, five great-grandchildren, four brothers, and three sisters. Ann worked as a nurses aide over the years in nursing homes and hospitals in the Pittsburg County area. She was a member of the Legal Church of Christ in northern Coal County, OK. I was honored to be asked to speak words of comfort and warning.—Vaden Morgan

WHEAT—Iona Jane Wheat of Forum, Ark. departed this life on Sept. 24, 1998 at home, after a bout with cancer, at the age of 78 years and 3 months. She and Raymond faithfully attended the Hartwell congregation. Their marriage of 63 years produced four sons and one daughter. They were two of the earlier ones who took their stand for the truth with the Giffords and Parks. Ronny Wade conducted the service at the Brashears Chapel in Huntsville, taking his text from 2 Kinds 4:8. Four weeks later I preached Raymond's funeral at the same place assisted by Roger Owens. The Hartwell congregation loved them dearly and are grieving their loss deeply.—Jimmie C. Smith

PRINCE—Lloyd S. Prince was born February 13, 1917 at Non, Oklahoma. He passed from this life September 15, 1998, at the age of 81 in Stonewall, Oklahoma. He was married to Julia Ardilla Coffee October 13, 1934. He is survived by his four sons: Earnest, Richard, DV. and James; four daughters: Pat Guinn, Wilma Jordan, Dorothy Adams and Zoria Dougherty; a brother Carl Prince; two sisters: Linnia Griffin and Marie Parent; 28 grandchildren, 60 great-grandchildren and 18 great-great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, a daughter, four brothers and one sister. Brother Prince loved the Church and his family. He suffered a great deal in his last days, however, and said he was anxious to move on and be with the Lord. We shall miss him. It was a privilege for me to speak a

few words of consolation and warning to the overflowing crowd who came to the funeral to show their respect for Brother Prince and his family.—Carl M. Johnson

BURNS—The day dawned overcast and grey, but by noon the clouds had given way to bright sunshine. At 1:30 p.m., with police escort, we left the Neal Funeral Home in Lawrenceburg, TN for the meeting house of the Chapel Grove Church of Christ, some ten miles distant, where we would conduct the memorial service for Brother Howard Leo Burns. At every traffic light intersection a police guard stood at attention with hat over heart as we passed by. Still a custom in the South where people pull over to the side of the road and wait in respect while the procession passes by. It's a shame that our society has become so busy, in most places, for such to not be the practice. When we arrived at the meeting place, an overflowing crowd had gathered to pay their respects to this good man and his family. Leo departed this life November 29, 1998 after an extended illness being at the time of his departure seventy-eight years of age. He had been baptized into Christ by Brother James R. Stewart some sixty-five years earlier at the tender age of thirteen. For fifty-six years he was married to his faithful companion Bernice. To this union were born four sons and one daughter all of whom survive. He was also survived by one sister and brother. Leo had served as an elder in the Chapel Grove church for the past eight years, where he was loved and respected. He and his wife had one of the most hospitable homes I have ever known. It has been my privilege to stay there countless times over the past forty-five years. He was a dear friend to me and my family and we shall greatly miss him. The writer assisted by brethren Johnny Fisher and Paul Walker conducted the service. The singing, provided by Christians who had gathered, and led by brother Dwight Patton, touched the hearts of all who were there. May Leo now rest from his labors and reap the reward of his efforts in the cause of truth and right.—Ronny F. Wade

BURNS—Howard Leo Burns was born August 12, 1920 at Allens Creek in Lawrence County, TN. He departed this life in the Maury County Hospital at Columbia, TN at the age of 78 years. His parents were the late Jasper Perry and Fannie Louise Rawdon Burns. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Burnice Alexander Burns. They raised five children, all of whom are members of the church. One daughter, Kathy Burns Gilbreath of Summertown, TN. Four sons, Leslie Burns of Mt. Pleasant, TN, Wane Burns of Indianapolis, ID, Danny Burns of Ethridge, TN, Randy Burns of Thompson Station, TN. Leo loved his family which includes eleven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. He has one surviving sister; Lois Lasater of Mullins, TX and other brother Jasper Perry, Jr. of Livingston, LA. Leo was one of our beloved elders at Chapel Grove. He had been struggling with cancer and dialysis for a long time. He entered the Maury County Hospital in Columbia, TN on Nov. the 25th. He was made as comfortable as possible until his death on Nov. 29 at 6:05 p.m. The family was at his side when Leo's spirit left his body. Leo and Burnice observed their 56th wedding anniversary while in the hospital on the 28th of Nov. The body lay in state at Neal's Funeral Home in Lawrenceburg,

TN. There were about 300 brethren and friends who viewed the body. On Tuesday, Dec. 1, 1998 a beautiful service was held at Chapel Grove. Ronny Wade was assisted by Paul Walker and myself in the service. Leo always loved singing. Several songs were sung during the service. At the conclusion of the service Leo's body was laid to rest in the cemetery adjoining the church building.—Johnny Fisher

BAKER—A large number of friends, relatives and brethren in Christ gathered at the Green Funeral Chapel in Cameron, TX to honor the memory of Sister Lillie Mae Baker. Sister Baker was born in the Big Lump Community in Brazoria County, TX, Nov. 29, 1918. She passed from this life Sept. 29, 1998. She was a long member of the Hoyte Church of Christ. A large crowd gathered to honor the memory of Sister Baker. This was an indication of the love and respect, so many have for Sister Baker and her family. She is survived by sons: Monroe, Leland, Alton, Harold and Wilfred; daughters Erna Mae and Joyce Gann, Inez Crowe and Carolyn Baker. She is also, survived by one brother. Sister Baker leaves sixteen grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. She is preceded in death by her husband, Choice, and her daughter, Erlene Baker, who passed away in July of this year. All of Sister Baker's children are members of the church which speaks well of her godly influence as a mother. Many brethren and many gospel preachers have shared the hospitality of the Baker home through the years. This saintly woman will be greatly missed. The writer was honored to assist Brother Miles King in the memorial service. Brother King delivered a wonderful and comforting message to those present. Brother William St. John led the congregational singing.

At least four of the songs that he led were those that had been written by Sister Baker and published in our song books. Brother St. John conducted a beautiful graveside service where Sister Baker was laid to rest by her husband and her daughter. What a privilege it was to know this godly woman. May God bless her family during this difficult time.—Melvin Blalock

HOPKINS—Mildred Hopkins was born January 2, 1922 at Elk City, Oklahoma. Her parents were Lon and Dora Young. She was married at Sayre, OK to Dean Hopkins of Sentinel, Oklahoma November 22, 1941 and since 1945 they made their home in Oklahoma City. To this union were born six children, Shirley Pruitt of Newcastle, OK; Donna Glass of Newalla, OK; Gloria Perkins of San Antonio, TX; Larry of Broken Arrow, OK; Danny of Huntington, WV; Keith of Houston, TX. Mildred was a member of the Church of Christ, having been baptized at Sentinel, OK by Homer L. King in 1944. She was a very devoted Christian wife and mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. Mildred was a homemaker and helped care for other people who could not care for themselves. She was of a "meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." Mildred is survived by her husband, Dean of the home, her children, one sister, Irene Hopkins of Sentinel, OK, twenty grandchildren and eight great grandchildren as well as a host of other relatives and friends. I was honored to be asked by her husband, Dean, to conduct the services for this wonderful Christian friend and sister in Christ. The singing was beautifully rendered by members of the church of the Oklahoma City area.—Paul O. Nichols



Johnny Elmore, 419 KSW, Ardmore, OK 73401, December 8—It was my good pleasure to speak for the Fairview congregation while in Louisiana on Nov. 15. I certainly enjoyed visiting them again. Then we were at New Salem in Mississippi Nov. 25-29. Since it embraced Thanksgiving holidays, many people came to be with relatives and attended the meeting. Several preachers, including Jimmie Smith, Cecil Smith, Richard Nichols, Chris Enos, Brad Post, Jack Cutter and, of course, Lynwood Smith, attended parts of the meeting. I was glad that my family could also attend. We look forward to the New Year meeting and I remind all who are interested that we still have the Fourth Sunday singing, with all day services, and that it will be at Ardmore on January 24, 1999.

Douglas T. Hawkins, P.O. Box 728, Brodhead, KY 40409 (606) 758-4071, December 3, 1998—We just closed two very enjoyable meetings in the month of November. It was

a pleasure to be with the brethren at Cable Ridge, MO and Walnut Grove, KY. While in Missouri we were able to see many of the people we have grown to love so much. Many from the congregations at Brumley, Eldon, and Lebanon where we worked for the last couple of years were able to attend some of the meeting. I was happy to see all of them. It was good to have preaching brethren David Griffin, Wyn Baker, Reggie Kinser, and Dan Wissinger with us during the meeting. At Walnut Grove, the crowds were consistent throughout and the spirit of the meeting was good. Looking forward to the winter here at Blue Springs. If you're through the central part of Kentucky plan to worship with us. You'll meet many fine people at any of the congregations in this area. Don't forget the new congregation in Lexington where Bro. Richard Brunner is working. They seem to be off to a good start. God bless us in his service.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012—We have been having some good crowds at our Lord's day worship services, and I am happy to report that the Wednesday night crowds have picked up in size recently. We have some good teachers and we have some novice teachers coming on. Three will be speaking this coming Lord's day afternoon. Recently Reggie Kinser of Columbia, MO held us a weekend meeting and did an excellent job. Joe Norton of Arlington, TX spoke two Lord's days ago and gave us a good lesson. After the tornado in the Dominican Republic the congregation at 79th and

Kansas sent financial aid toward the need of our brethren there, and we will consider the need of the Christians in Honduras at our next business meeting. The Lord bless us all in His work.

Tommie Jackson, 5816 S. Cockrell Hill Road, Dallas, TX 75236, December 1, 1998—The church in Duncanville is working for the Lord. We have had some very good preaching weekend meetings with Billy Dickinson, Jerry Dickinson, Glenn Ballard, Carl Johnson. A week meeting with Greg Gay, with at least 90 visitors. Our next meetings are Joe Hisle 5th Lords day in January, Bruce Robuck 5th Lords day in May, Mike Fox, week meeting the end of July. This summer Bro. Buddy Johnson baptized four of his grandchildren, two girls and two boys. The bro. are leading songs for which we are very happy to say. Please note my new address for I am in the new directory. My phone #214-330-7053 or 214-339-0961.

Jerry Dickinson, 13803 Crosshaven, Houston, TX 77015—October was a busy month for me. The first weekend I was in Cleburne, Texas where brother Melvin Blalock lives. Melvin is a highly regarded man in that part of the country and I personally respect him because of his bedrock stand for basic and conservative biblical principles. My dad accompanied me to the meeting and we were treated wonderfully by the congregation. On October the tenth my mother and father celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary. My brother, two sisters, and I hosted a reception for them, and the four of us even sang a song that was their song when they were going together back in 1947 (you should not have missed that). All in all it was a marvelous celebration for our whole family. In November I was in Kansas City, Kansas (36th & Everret) for the first time in several years. I had a great time staying with Keith and Karen Sifford (whom I married twenty something years ago) and their children. It was good to see preaching brethren, Paul Nichols, Mike Criswell, and Tony Denton during the meeting. Here at home we are looking forward to a short meeting with Lynwood Smith the first of December. I am to be in Nashville, Tennessee the third weekend of December. This year is almost gone - may the Lord grant us a new year and a renewed vigor and zeal for the church and the spread of the gospel!

P. Duane Permenter, P.O. Box 60687, Midland, TX 79708, Dec. 7—The meeting at Fremont was quite enjoyable. I enjoyed seeing many friends and brethren from various places in CA. It was also a pleasure to attend the services of the meeting at Camanche, CA before the meeting at Fremont. The work of the leadership at Lodi, CA is commendable for bringing this church back into fellowship. "Behold how good and how pleasant it is to see Brethren dwelling together in unity (Psalm 133:1)." During the meeting at Oakdale we had tremendous crowds. The last Sat. night we had standing room only. Many preachers attended both of the above meetings one or more nights and this was an encouragement to me and added to the meetings. We had some outside interest at both the meetings which of course is what we want. The work continues to prosper here at home and we are thankful to the Lord. We have had some confessions of sin lately and we

are thankful for the honest heart and the power of the gospel. Joel Blalock preached for us recently and did a great job. Our elders organized an outstanding series of training sessions for the leadership of the church with brother James Orten. The church is better prepared to deal with problems in the future and I believe that the leadership is better fit for service in the kingdom. My family fares well and we send our greetings to all the faithful. Please pray for our trip to the Philippines Jan. 1. I am looking forward to this opportunity to preach in this field. This will be my fifth trip with Don King. The tapes of Lynwood's latest book, GLORY GLEAMS, are still available at \$12.00 per set postpaid and you may order them from the address above or call to ask about them at (915) 520-6508. May God bless the faithful.

Brett Hickey, P.O. Box 6506, Ventura, CA 93003, Dec. 8—Area brethren were bolstered this fall by good gospel preaching. We were able to attend one night of James Orten's meeting at Covina. Dear souls were snatched from Satan this week. Doug Hawkins was at Bakersfield and Orange. My paternal grandmother - not a member of the Lord's church - came to hear Doug preach. The sermon gave her much to think about. Keith Brown was in our area from Kansas City. We were honored to have him preach the gospel to us. We were impressed with his work in Kansas City. He shared some of the personal evangelism tools that have worked for him. Frank Brancato and I shared the pulpit in our weekend meeting at Ventura. The congregation actively participated in publicizing the meeting. Several helped pass our 1500 invitations. Others helped us invite by phone and mail the leads we have compiled over the past two years. Twelve different outsiders responded to these efforts by attending one or more services. The following week, Michelle—a lady in her late 30's that we met through an ad in the local Pennysaver—obeyed the gospel. We met her almost a year ago. She came to one study and appeared to have lost interest. We didn't hear from her for months. She called back again in August and had studied weekly with us ever since that time. Like several who have been converted here, she was born a Catholic and realized her baptism as baby was unnecessary and ineffective. We appreciated the opportunity to preach at Planz Rd. in Bakersfield. This month we look forward to our meeting at Stockton, our visit with the brethren in Allen, TX, and the annual New Years meeting in Oklahoma City.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, Dec. 14—We recently heard Ryan Conner and Aaron Risner preach good sermons at Fremont. May God bless them. It was our pleasure to recently preach twice at the Escalon, CA congregation. It was good to be with the Homer Sallee family again. Last Thursday, we assisted Richard DeGough in the funeral service for Johnnie Broughton. A large crowd was present. We shall miss Johnnie a great deal and the church at Atwater, CA certainly will. He had been a good friend of mine for a number of years. On January 1, Lord willing, Duane Permenter and I will travel to the Philippines to work among the brethren there. We pray for a profitable and safe trip. The typhoon which recently went through there apparently caused major damage and has harmed the brethren and their

homes. We will have more information upon our return. Several are sending help for the needy with us as we go. If more is needed, we will let you know. The church at Fremont continues in peace. Pray for us.

Brian C. Elliott, 2013 Bradley Ave., Bakersfield, CA 93304, bnlelliott@netxn.com, Nov. 10—This is my first report to the paper. We have just closed our Young Speakers Meeting hosted by the Brundage Lane congregation. The crowds were good, and the young men who were assigned topics from the Parables of our Lord did a wonderful job. Those speaking were Shawn Wackerly, Ryan Conner, Chad Sampanes, Barry Bonifay, Aaron DeGough, Matt Trent, Grant Zane & Brian Osburn. We had young people from all over the state of California. The interest of our young people seems to be quite high and for that we are grateful. Seems as though it was just minutes ago I heard my Grandpa say "You all are the future of the church!" That day came sooner than I ever could have imagined! I was able to attend the fourth meetings at Lebanon and Sulphur. I was privileged to be asked to speak at Lebanon and also Niangua, Mo. while there. I stayed with Ron & Carolyn Alexander and it was just like being at home. We have just enjoyed a good meeting at Planz Rd with Doug Hawkins. Doug's preaching was excellent as usual and there were visitors from the community. A radio program has been started here and commercials on the television have been running. We are following up leads from both. We are also knocking on doors in the community. Growth has been slow in the past few months but the brethren here are committed to seeing the gospel preached in the area. If you have friends or relatives in the Bakersfield area you would like for us to contact please let me know. I currently have 1 Sunday a month free to travel and openings for meetings. Please pray for the work here and everywhere.

Virgilio O. Danao Sr., 94-545 Mahoe Street, Waipahu, HI 96797, Tel & Fax No. (808) 680-0249, November 25, 1998—It has been quite sometime since I reported last in the *Old Paths Advocate*. I hope I will be able to report through this paper more often these coming days, so faithful brethren everywhere maybe informed from time to time about the Lord's work here in Hawaii. We are glad to report that in the morning of November 3rd, two couples (four precious souls) were baptized for the remission of their sins, and have been added to the church here in Waipahu. We pray they will continue to be firm in the faith. Faithful members here are showing interest to grow spiritually as manifested by their continuous attendance to our regular Bible studies and worship services. We attend to our program regarding home Bible studies with prospects. I continue to work with my radio program. The Waipahu congregation has been blessed to have visitors from the mainland—from the states of Tennessee, Texas, California, etc.—who worshipped with us during the past weeks. Last Sunday, Bro. Wayne Franklin, his wife (from Colorado) and his sister-in-law from California were with us. Bro. Franklin shared us a lesson based on Philemon. In case you are here in Hawaii, if you need our assistance so you can worship with us during Sundays, please let us know by telephone or fax (the numbers are stated in this report).

We continued to solicit you please mention us, especially the Lord's work here in Hawaii in your prayers. May God bless us all!

Reggie Kinser, 4407 Georgetown Drive, Columbia, MO 65203, (573) 446-5934, Nov. 16, 1998—I recently closed a meeting at 79th and Kansas, in Kansas City, where Paul Nichols labors with the church. We greatly enjoyed our stay with Paul and Wilma. Thank God for people like them who continue to uphold the truth even when it may not be popular. The work they have put forth with the church at Stony Point is mirrored by the personality of the congregation. The brethren there impressed me as being a group of folks who are committed to following the BOOK. It is wonderful to see such a congregation thriving. I was encouraged throughout the meeting by the attendance of so many young people from other congregations. I want to thank brethren Curtis Freeman and Lee Owens, who were largely responsible for the good turn out. We need more young men who are willing to use their influence for the cause of Christ. Meanwhile, here in Columbia the work continues to prosper. We recently baptized Eric Thompson who was introduced to the church by Bart Shaw. It seems Eric became curious when he noticed Bart studying his Bible at work. May we never underestimate the power of a good example. Hanna Davis who had been attending our services for several weeks also obeyed the gospel. Each of these individuals had any previous experience with the Church of Christ. For these and other blessings we give God the glory. Presently, we continue to conduct several home studies throughout the course of each week. We look forward to a joyous and prosperous winter in serving the Lord. Pray for us in our work.

Jimmie C. Smith, 5100 Rail Road, Harrison, AR, e-mail Cjsmith@alltel.net—Once again it has been a long time since reporting, necessitating brevity. In March I conducted a very enjoyable meeting with the good church at Deer Park, TX making my abode with the Jerry Dickinsons. Good singing, good attendance, good attitude, lovers of truth! Ronny Wade held us a very good meeting here in Harrison in May, I've never heard anyone preach with more pathos. In June we were at Neosho for 10 days with great crowds and interest, and savored the hospitality of Frank and Yvone Green. The fourth meeting at Lebanon was uplifting as always. Then a nephew and niece, Daniel Smith and Renae Cantrell accompanied me to Manteca, CA where Melvin and Lynette Lee welcomed us for 10 days, and Jimmy Bradford furnished us with transportation. Crowds were huge and preachers galore, the singing was awesome, and Alan Bonifay kept me on the road. Then Cindy accompanied me to Napoleon, AL for a very enjoyable meeting. It had been some eight years since we were there and we were much welcomed, with good cooperation from sister congregations. They had grown in numbers since we were there. We enjoyed the hospitality of Joyce Hammonds. There are a lot of fine young couples there. We attended two services of the Springfield, MO Labor Day meeting before starting an eight day meeting at Hartwell. Hartwell (near Huntsville AR) is doing a good job developing its young men into the lead. During this meeting we enjoyed the association of young bro. Chris

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE (USPS 407-560)

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Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, Cal. 94539.

Enos from Kinston, AL. Chris aspires to preach the gospel, and hopefully will travel with me in the future. Bro. Calvin Prince came and spent several enjoyable days with us and preached two very good sermons for us with the old time ring. Kevin Presley held us a five day meeting in

Oct. and you had better believe he can preach. He has reached another level. I enjoyed my annual meeting at Lee's Summit, and the Thanksgiving meeting at New Salem with Johnny Elmore doing the preaching. I've assisted three in baptism within the past six months in this area.

'Twas the Night Before Jesus Came

'Twas the night before Jesus came and all through the house
Not a creature was praying, not one in the house.
Their Bibles were lain on the shelf without care
In hopes that Jesus would not come there.
The Children were dressing to crawl into bed,
Not once ever kneeling or bowing a head.
And Mom in her rocker with baby on her lap
Was watching the Late Show while I took a nap.
When out of the East there arose such a clatter,
I sprang to my feet to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash!
When what to my wondering eyes should appear
But angels proclaiming that Jesus was here.
With a light like the bright sun sending forth a bright ray
I knew in a moment this must be THE DAY!
The light of His face made me cover my head
It was Jesus returning just like he said.
And though I possessed worldly wisdom and wealth,
I cried when I saw Him in spite of myself.
In the Book of Life which He held in His hand,
Was written the name of every saved.
He spoke not a word as He searched for my name;
When He said "It's not here" my head hung in shame.
The people whose names had been written with Love
He gathered to take to His Father above.
With those who were ready He rose without a sound
While all the rest were left standing around.
I fell to my knees but it was too late;
I had waited too long and thus sealed my fate.
I stood and I cried as they rose out of sight;
Oh, if only I had been ready tonight.
In the words of this poem the meaning is clear;
The coming of Jesus is drawing near.
There's only one life and when comes the last call
We'll find the Bible was true after all!

Mom or Dad, *Could This Be You?*

A Preacher was calling on a man about his soul, and was concerned about his salvation. The preacher pleaded with the man to come to Christ, but he wouldn't budge.

The next Lord's day when the invitation was given, the invitation hymn was sung, this man came down the aisle and said, "Preacher, I want to get right with God." He confessed his faith in Christ and was buried with him in baptism. After the services he told the preacher what made him come to realize the great importance of accepting Christ as Savior.

He said, "Preacher, after you left my home the other evening, my little boy climbed on my lap. He said that he heard what you said to me. Then he reached out his chubby arms, hugged me real tight, put his little mouth up to my ear and whispered, 'Daddy, we don't want to be a Christian do we?' Preacher, I went upstairs that night to bed, and then said, 'Oh God, I never realized the example I was setting for my son.' I want to get right with God. I want to be right with God so I can help my family to know Him."

If this applies to you, don't wait. Get right with God today.—*Selected.*

It Is Strange

"IT IS STRANGE that alcoholism is the only disease where it is considered illogical and unethical to annihilate the cause. To prevent malaria, we kill the mosquito; to prevent a germ disease, we kill the germ; to destroy beverage alcohol, however, is considered an infringement of personal liberties."

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. 2

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST VERSUS THE KINGDOM OF THE WORLD

By MORRIS LYNWOOD SMITH

"My kingdom is not of this world," declared Jesus to Pilate, the Roman procurator. What did he mean? When he spoke these words he implied that there were certain kinds of kingdoms existing different from the one that he would establish. Thus we see one great division existing; the kingdom of Christ, composed of all the redeemed of the earth, and the kingdoms of this world, composed of all the earthly governments in existence.

In what way is the kingdom of Christ versus the kingdoms of this world? The fact that these separate kingdoms stand for and uphold different principles is proof that they are at variance. But, to prove that these kingdoms are antagonistic, it will be necessary to notice the difference between them. First, let us notice,--

The Kingdoms of This World

The kingdoms of this world are owned by the devil. I mean by this that every civil government upon the earth is the property of Satan. In Luke 4:5 we read, "And the devil taking him up into an high mountain, showed unto him 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 I give it."

But there are those who, in an effort to disprove this, say that the devil lied. They deny the verity of the devil's words, "these are delivered unto me." But, we notice that Jesus did not contend with the devil as to the ownership.

Jesus admitted that the devil owned these kingdoms by implication. Had the devil been lying, the Savior would surely have reproved him for that. But the only thing the Savior did was to resist the devil by putting him behind him. But again, if these kingdoms belonged to the Lord as some contend, why would the Scriptures have said "The devil tempted him?" Could the devil tempt Christ with something that already belonged to him? The devil knew of Christ's mission in the world; he knew that he had come to establish a kingdom that would be antagonistic to his own kingdoms. So, in order to keep the kingdom of Christ from being established in the world, the devil offered Christ these worldly kingdoms. Did Christ take them? No, Thus we see that civil powers did not and have not found favor in the eyes of the Lord. For these kingdoms were not the kind for the Prince of Peace. They were 'of this world,' but the one that Christ was to establish was "not of this world." Thus the reason for Christ's refusal is obvious.

Some still, in an effort to prove that these kingdoms are of God, ask the question, "How can these powers be of the devil and still be ordained of God?" Just as God used Pharaoh, who was a servant of the devil, to do certain things that would have been a sin for Moses to have done, so God ordains or appoints (not forces) world kingdoms to do things that would be a sin for members of the kingdom of Christ to do. God wants certain things accomplished and, since it would be wrong for the subjects of his kingdom to do them, he uses these worldly kingdoms that are already under condemnation to do this work.

Because the scriptures say, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," some say that human governments belong to God. It is true that the earth, and everything that the Lord created belongs to him. But, be it remembered that the Lord did not create human governments. They were founded by man in rebellion to God. (Gen. 10:10). So, when they were founded, because of their rebellion, they were turned over to the devil just as every rebellious and disobedient person. In Luke 4:5, the devil tells us that these powers were "delivered" unto him.

Another noticeable feature concerning this kingdom is that one of the greatest extremes known to mankind is used to describe it. That extreme is darkness. Throughout the Scriptures the term "darkness is used to describe civil powers. I know of nothing that describes its base, ungodly and low principles any plainer than this term. In Luke 22:53, when the civil powers came with lanterns and torches, swords and spears to seize the Son of God, Jesus said, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." Also, in Eph. 6:12, they are spoken of as the "darkness of this world."

How could they be pictured otherwise when they are upheld by the bloody sword and force is their nature. Greed, lust, hatred, warfare, bloodshed, envy, strife, rebellion and the disregard for the rights of others reign supreme within their vast domains. But now, let us consider,--

The Kingdom of Christ

What a contrast! It is just like emerging from a dark and dismal dungeon and walking into the illuminating rays of the noon day's sun. For the opposite extreme, which is light, is used to describe this kingdom. And as light differs from darkness, so does the kingdom of Christ differ from

continued on page five

CONTENTS

Vol. LXXIII No. 2



ADVOCATE

ANNOUNCEMENTS 7-9

The Kingdom Of Christ Versus	
The Kingdom Of The World	1
Proof Of Congregational Singing ...	2
The Querist Column	3
Your Reasonable Service	3
Sandwiches, Coffee & Donuts ..	4

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Editorial

PROOF FOR CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

By EDWIN S. MORRIS

Col. 3:15-16

Vs. 15 "And let the peace of God rule in *your hearts*, to the which also ye are called in *one body*: and be ye thankful."

Vs. 16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in *you* richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

This epistle is written to the Church at Colosse. In chapter one and verse two: "To the saints and faithful brethren which are Colosse."

Saints and faithful are the same people not two different groups.

Now in verse 15 And let the peace of God rule in *Your Hearts* is the saints and the faithful which is the church. These have been called in *one body* which is the *church* (Col. 1:18). These Saints & faithful—the Church—are to Let the word of Christ dwell in *You*. The *you* here are the *one body* of vs. 15 and also the "*your hearts*" in vs. 15, are to "teaching one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Women can sing in the church but they cannot teach. In Acts 5:14 "And believers were the more added to the Lord, Multitudes both of *men* and *women*."

Now both are a part of the *one body* that are commanded to sing in Col. 3:15-16. But the woman is commanded to keep silence in the Church. This is the public teaching which is to be done one by one in 1 Cor. 14:31. (vs. 34).

If the woman teaches publicly she is condemned but if she sings in the congregation she is carrying out God's command and she is not condemned.

If the term sings means to sing and play, then each member would have to sing and play. If it means sing or play then the one that played the instrument could not sing and the one sang could not play the instrument. So we can sing and fulfill the requirements of God.

I Shall Not Pass This World Again

Though this toilsome world, Alas
Once and only once I pass
If a kindness I may show
If a good deed I may do
To a suffering fellow-man
Let me do it while I can
No delay for it is plain
I may not pass this way again.

—Author Unknown

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: I think it would be hard for me to explain 1 Corinthians 6:3. Would you offer a comment on "we shall judge angels?" (CA)

Answer: The querist is not alone in his feelings about this verse. Most commentators recognize a number of difficulties in understanding the exact meaning of the writer. Some advance the idea that Christians will judge, in some sense, both good and bad angels. Others, perhaps the majority, that the reference is only to the evil angels. Coffman understands the statement to be one of sarcasm and paraphrases "You who know all about judging angels in the last day, how about judging some of these petty disputes you are disgracefully airing in the courts of the pagans?" Macknight mentioned the ideas of some commentators who felt that the reference was to the power some of the first Christians possessed of casting out devils "and of the efficacy of the preaching of the gospel in destroying the usurped dominion of evil angels over the children of disobedience," only to conclude "but such a sense of judging is foreign to the apostle's argument," whereupon he failed to offer any thoughts of his own. From my own research McGarvey seems to offer the most logical and scriptural explanation when he says, after citing Barrow's view, "But it is more probable that the saints will only participate as mystically united with Christ the judge, just as, by mystical union, they are kings and priests, though in no sense exercising these offices literally. The Church shall judge the world in Christ her head. But the point made by Paul is that those whom God honors by association in so important a judicature may well be entrusted to judge trivial matters for the weightiest matter of earth is light compared with the questions of eternal destiny decided on that day." Another view, expressed by Zerr, that has merit is that as Christians we teach and apply the divine law that sets forth the judgment of angels. "A part of that law is shown in 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6, that tells of the judgment to be pronounced against those angels that sinned. It is in this sense that we shall judge angels, not that any man will literally participate in the procedure at the last day. " Having noticed the above, there are two general observations that are in order. First, a fact is stated by Paul. A fact upon which inspiration chose not to further elaborate. I may not understand completely what is meant by the phrase "we shall judge angels," my lack of understanding, however, does not negate the truth stated. Secondly, in such matters as this, it is dangerous for me to venture a guess, or go out on a limb with some kind of explanation that cannot be supported by other scriptures. It is in such areas that many people have advanced theories that later grew into false doctrines that divided the church

and became the basis for the destruction of someone's faith.

Question: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is advertising a book called "Another Testament of Jesus Christ. " What scripture teaches that there is not "another testament" of Jesus Christ? (GA)

Answer: The question here involves the subject of continuous revelation. Is revelation complete, or is God still communicating with man. If God still speaks to man today, then "another testament" is possible. If he is not, then such is not possible. Let it be noted that most of the denominational world believes in continuous revelation. Joe Smith, of the Mormons, claimed to have unearthed some golden plates in N.Y. that became the basis for the book of Mormon. Ellen G. White, founder of Seventh Day Adventism claimed to have been taken up into heaven where she was shown the Ark of the Covenant and the tablets containing the ten commandments. The fourth commandment had a halo around it. She concluded that God wanted her to return to earth and preach that the sabbath day was still binding. Catholicism places more stock in the edicts of the Vatican than in the Bible. Encyclical Letters of the Popes are considered authoritative and divine. Mainline denominational preachers often say they feel "led of God," or "the Lord laid this message on my heart," or "I feel moved." All such expressions are merely another way of saying "God is communicating with me." There are a number of passages that refute such claims. In Heb. 12:2 we are told that Jesus is the "author and finisher of our faith." Literally "the faith." Peter tells us that His divine power has already given to us "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3). That is either true or false. If additional revelation is needed, than God has not given us "all" things. In Galatians 1:6-9 Paul reasons that anyone, angel, apostle, or man who preaches another gospel is to be denied and rejected. One determines the truthfulness of any doctrine by comparing it with what the Bible teaches. If it is in addition to what is revealed, it is to be rejected. If it falls short, we cannot have it (Rev. 22:18). We are told in Jude 3 that the "faith was once for all delivered to the saints." All these scriptures and many more refute the claims of all those who profess special revelation. But why would people want additional revelation? The answer is both simple and revealing. If something is not in the Bible, then special revelation must be sought in order to prove or sustain it. The reason people are getting these "special messages" from heaven is that the Bible does not give them the message they are preaching. If it did, then they would not need "another testament." (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 10811 Springfield, MO 65808)

YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE

By BILLY D. DICKINSON

I fear that too often we simply skim the surface in regard to certain passages of Scripture. The result is that a great blessing is missed out on because we fail to get the full import of what is really being said. I think that is especially

true of Rom. 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world:

but be ye transformed by the-renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." The above verses constitute a text we often quote in our preaching and teaching, but it probably deserves more attention than we sometimes give it. However, it embraces the responsibility we have as children of God in striving to render unto our heavenly Father a service that is dedicated and fit for His acceptance. That is why I believe it would be a profitable exercise to notice Rom. 12:1-2 in greater detail. Let's analyze what Paul wrote; in some cases we'll do it word by word, while in other cases we'll consider one phrase at a time. In so doing, we can all have a greater appreciation for the "reasonable service" which is ours to render unto God. **"I beseech you therefore, brethren by the mercies of God."** The first thing that should stand out in our minds is how Paul is entreating us or appealing to our good senses to engage in a certain behavior. Indeed, Paul could have worded it differently. He could have said, "I command you" (2 Thess. 3:6) or "I order you" (1 Cor. 16:1). But instead, Paul implores us, or begs us, to do the right thing. This shows that Christianity is not just an arbitrary set of rules and commandments, but rather it involves spiritual service unto God that is to be rendered from a heart full of love and gratitude! Yes, there are rules and commandments, but the keeping of those things should be an indication of our love for God and a willing desire to serve Him (John 14:15).

Paul is reasoning with his readers as he seeks to give the proper motivation for what he is about to demand. Notice that he directs his entreaty to: *Brethren*. Yes, Paul is about to give some duties and obligations that every child of God should take to heart. If you are a brother or sister in Christ, these verses are for you! After all, it is the people of God who "have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (1 Pet. 2:3). Hence Paul beseeches us "by the mercies of God." It is with tender compassion, based upon God's love and goodness that have provided man with salvation, that Paul supplies us with the motive for obedience.

"That ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." Here is what Paul is imploring us to do! Notice what he is concerned with: Our bodies. Why our *bodies*? If our service to God is spiritual in nature and it is our souls that are saved (Matt. 16:26), what does the body have to do with it? Paul says that our bodies should be a living sacrifice because the body is regarded as the outward organ of the will—i.e., it is through the deeds of the body that the heart of the inward man is revealed: "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." (Rom. 6:13)

Whether we have yielded to God in our hearts is going to be manifested in the physical members of our bodies. Are they instruments of sin or instruments of righteousness? Paul says we must present our bodies a

living sacrifice. There are two key words here: (1) "Present"—Vincent says this word is the technical term for presenting the Levitical sacrifices and offerings [**Word Studies of the New Testament**, P. 153]. The word "present" in Rom. 12:1 is the same word found in Luke 2:22 where it is said that Joseph and Mary took the Christ-child to Jerusalem "to *present* him to the Lord." The word means to dedicate unto God or to set apart for a holy purpose. (2) "*Living Sacrifice*"—Under the terms of the gospel, a new order of sacrifice has come in. It is no longer the *slain* Levitical offerings, but a living sacrifice! We are to give ourselves; As the victim on the altar was surrendered wholly to God, so our bodies with all their members should be consecrated to godly service.

"Holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." The apostle is saying that when we present our bodies as a living sacrifice, we are then consecrated unto God and worthy of His acceptance. And this is our *reasonable* service. Vine says that "reasonable" means pertaining to the reasoning faculty or rational: "The sacrifice is to be intelligent, in contrast to those offered by ritual and compulsion; the presentation is to be in accordance with the spiritual intelligence of those who are new creatures in Christ and are mindful of the mercies of God." [**Dictionary of New Testament Words**, P. 935] Our service to God (the consecration of the body) is not simply an outward act like animal sacrifices, but it is the act of the mind or reason. Hence, a "reasonable service."

"Be not conformed to this world." The "*world*" here refers to the ungodly system in this old world that is under Satan's control and domain. The spirit of the world is opposed to Christ (James 4:4), and Christ died to "deliver us from this present evil world" (Gal. 1:4). Christians are under a different system than the world is under because they have placed themselves under the rule and reign of Christ. That is why Paul says, "Be not conformed to this world." "*Conformed*" means to fashion or shape one thing like another. Paul is saying that our standard or model of imitation is not the world!

"But be ye transformed." "*Transformed*" is the same word found in Matt. 17:2 where it is said that Christ was "transfigured" before the disciples. It indicates that a change took place from one form to another. As Christians, we are to undergo a transformation. Furthermore, Paul tells us how this change is brought about: "By the renewing of your mind." "Yes, a change takes place in the inner man; We have a new spirit and a new understanding. The mind that has been renewed and enlightened by the gospel does not seek to be fashioned after the world. The renewed mind enables one to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4).

"That ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." By doing all that Rom. 12:1-2 demands of us, we demonstrate in our own lives what the will of God is, what is good, and what is acceptable. This is something that each Christian must do for himself (Gal. 6:4).

SANDWICHES, COFFEE AND DONUTS

By PAUL O. NICHOLS

One man said, "When I hear the word 'fellowship' I smell the coffee." A social gathering of Christians and others

does not constitute fellowship in the scriptural sense. It seems that some have been confused as to what true Chris-

tian fellowship really is.

The apostle Paul writes, "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9). And John says "...truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3). We also have the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (Phil. 2:1).

When a person obeys the gospel and becomes a Christian he enters into fellowship with God. By this same token one enters into fellowship with other Christians. However, the fellowship that we sustain with God and with fellow Christians is dependent on whether we walk in the light after that. John says, "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (v6). Again, "...If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another..." (v7).

Christians should know the difference in a "potluck" where members of the church gather together for the purpose of eating and playing games or socializing, and what

the Bible teaches is fellowship of Christians. We can gather for coffee and donuts and visit and talk at a social function and there enjoy Christian association, but that is not Christian fellowship, as taught in the Bible.

When brethren announce a social event they should not announce it as "Christian fellowship." We should encourage the association of fellow Christians and their families and encourage members of the church to expose their friends to the association with Christians for the influence we can have on them. But why not call it what it is, "Christian association," meaning the association with fellow Christians. But that is not Christian fellowship in the scriptural sense.

"Christian fellowship" is not based on hot dogs and hamburgers nor coffee and donuts. Such gatherings of Christians are good association and can be beneficial, but let's not confuse worldly things with spiritual. We should not "smell the coffee" when we hear the word "fellowship."

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST VERSUS THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD

continued from page 1

the kingdoms of this world. In Col. 1:12, 13, this kingdom is describe by light. How beautifully it is described! For in the kingdom of Christ there is love, peace, forgiveness, longsuffering, gentleness, kindness and the tenderest regards for the rights of a brother.

What about the king of this kingdom? Ah! He is "the Messiah," the "Prince of peace," the gentle "Lamb of God." For he it was who bought it with his own precious blood (Acts 20:28). All of the greatest heroes of earthly kingdoms conquered by their life: he by his death. They built kingdoms and founded empires by the shedding of the blood of others; but he, by the shedding of his blood for others, established this kingdom of light. It is no wonder that Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world."

We can see that these kingdoms are separate and distinct powers. They do not and cannot mix. There stands, as it were, a line between these powers that has been placed by the hand of God. The citizens of the kingdom of Christ are forbidden participating in the affairs of the kingdoms of this world. But an invitation stands to those who are in the kingdom of darkness to forsake the kingdom of darkness and its ways and obtain entrance into the kingdom of our Lord, the beautiful Mount Zion. And by doing this they become "new creatures." (2 Cor. 5:17)

There is a warfare existing between these kingdoms. The forces of each kingdom are on the battle ground. In Eph. 6:12, Paul says, "We (members of the kingdom of Christ) wrestle not against flesh and blood; but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Thus we see that the war is on and the battle forces are in array.

We shall trace some who have left these kingdoms of darkness and have come into the kingdom of Christ. In Col. 1: 12,13, we read, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his

dear Son." Here we see that some have left the kingdoms of darkness and have become members of the kingdom of Christ. What was required of them? In Rom. 13:12, Paul speaks thus: "Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light." And again, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11). So we see, after we leave the kingdoms of darkness and come into the kingdom of Christ, we are commanded to "cast off the works of darkness and have no fellowship with them." Then, according to the foregoing, there are many things done in the kingdoms of the world that we Christians cannot do. We have a few questions of paramount importance that we shall ask and answer according to the word of the Lord.

May Christians Engage In Carnal Warfare?

You will notice the question is not, may sinners or worldly nations engage in carnal warfare, but may Christians, those who have left these kingdoms of darkness and have come into the kingdom of light? Carnal means "fleshly" (Webster). Eph. 6:12, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood." According to this the members of Christ's kingdom are forbidden such. Again, 2 Cor. 10:3,4, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh; (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds)."

Jesus also made the statement, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36). We see that Christ's kingdom was not of this world because it possessed certain peculiarities, one of these being the fact that Jesus did not authorize or allow his followers to use the carnal sword. We do have an account of Christ's rebuking one of his followers for using the sword. In Luke 22:36, before the disciples entered the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus commanded them to sell their purses and buy a sword. In John 18:11, He teaches a lesson with it. After the overzealous Peter smote Malchus, servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear, Christ rebuked him sharply, "Put up thy sword into the sheath" (John. 18:11). "For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:52). So when Jesus sheathed the sword

of Peter, he sheathed the sword of every one of his followers. Thus we conclude that, if Christ would tolerate one of his followers fighting to protect him, he would not allow his followers to fight to uphold a wicked, immoral and ungodly government.

In Isa. 2:2-4 we have a prophecy of the kingdom of Christ. Isaiah, while enthralled in prophetic ecstasy, saw the kingdom of God established and towering far above the mountains (worldly kingdoms). Many people came to the house of the Lord, were taught of his ways, and walked in his paths. The Lord judged among many of the nations and rebuked many people. What were the results? What did he rebuke them for? "They shall beat their swords into plow shares and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isa. 2:4) When one becomes a citizen of Christ's kingdom, he is to "learn war no more." Some contend that the kingdom Isaiah saw has never been established. Those who so contend put themselves in the class with those who are looking for a future kingdom.

May Christians Vote In The Political Elections?

This question is really answered in the foregoing. For, if a Christian would not be allowed to go forth into battle, would he be allowed to elect the men to office whose duty it is to declare the war? If he could elect them to office, could he not go forth in obedience to their orders? Could he not fight in the war that his men have declared? To reason otherwise would be very inconsistent. We have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness, and have put off the works of darkness, and have put on the whole armor of light. Now can we cross over the boundary line and go back into these kingdoms of darkness to help carry on their political affairs? I am persuaded that such would be displeasing to "him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Pet. 2:9). We are commanded to have "no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." Can we heed that injunction and assist in the prosecution of the affairs of the "power of darkness?"

We are also commanded to "reprove them." Can we reprove them and at the same time be doing everything within our power to propagate and advance them? It is God who appoints the rulers of these kingdoms for Daniel says, "He ruleth in the kingdoms of men" (Dan. 4:17). "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever: for the wisdom and might are his: and he changeth the times and seasons: He removeth kings, and setteth up kings" (Dan. 2:20,21) Thus we learn it is God who does the setting up and the removing of the worldly rulers. Who are we to cast a ballot for a ruler when it is God who attends to that. Should we cast a ballot for one man and he be defeated, another being elected in his stead, would we not be arraying ourselves against God?

May Christians Hold Office In The Kingdoms Of This World?

Having proved that it would be sinful for Christians to engage in carnal combat and vote in the political affairs of human governments, it logically implied that it would be wrong to hold office in these same kingdoms. Yet we will get into a more detailed study. When the Savior said, "My kingdom is not of this world," he also meant that those who are in his kingdom must not be of this world either.

For in James 4:4, we read, "Know ye not that the friendship of this world is enmity with God." From this it is evident that it would be incompatible with the divine law for a Christian to go into the dismal powers of the condemned and sit as a ruler. The only place that a Christian has a right to rule is within the domains of the "holy nation" into which we have been called (I Pet. 2:8).

Daniel says, "The most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth over it the basest of men" (Dan. 4:17). What kind of men does God put over these kingdoms? Daniel says "base" men. Such an office would be inconsistent with Christian profession, and God does not use a Christian for that evil work.

Again in Eph. 6:12, Paul says, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Thus, Christians are to put on the spiritual armour and wrestle against the "rulers of the darkness of this world." How could he be a "ruler of the darkness of this world" and at the same time wrestle against these rulers? Would he not be wrestling against himself and opposing himself (II Tim. 2:25)?

Rulers are also ordained of God to do certain works that would be sinful for Christians to do. They must keep order at all cost. They must do everything within their power to enforce civil law, regardless of the law. Paul says of these officers in Romans 13:4, "He is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou shalt do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is a minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Could a Christian hold this office and do this work? No, for a Christian must "Recompense to no man evil for evil" (Rom. 12:17).

Even running for an office would be wrong for a Christian. For, when one announces himself for office, he must exalt himself to the extent that he makes himself the most competent man in all the world for that office. He also makes it very manifest that no one on earth can perform the duties of that office as efficiently as he, and, as a rule, many boasts and brags are made which are never performed. Does this sound like the spirit of the lowly Nazarene?—Or even the spirit of one of his followers? No, in no wise. In Phil. 2:3, Paul says, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves." How far in a political election would a candidate get if he allowed that injunction? He would be defeated at the beginning. But the truth of the matter is they that run for office go out for self. Therefore, it is wrong for Christians to hold or run for office.

Some Duties To Civil Powers

In Rom. 13:1, Paul says, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, for the powers that be are ordained of God." Some try to believe, from the import of this Scripture, that they are duty bound to obey everything that is commanded by civil powers. But it must be agreed that this scripture is conditional; the conditions are not stated but implied. For there are certain things that civil powers command us to do that the Lord says not do.

So, unless we accept this command as conditional, we

will have scriptures contradicting. We must be subject unto the higher powers until the higher powers contradict the laws of God. Then we must be subject to the divine law. We might put it like this: God has sovereign authority. He has delegated certain authority into the hands of civil powers. This is delegated authority. Delegated authority is limited by sovereign authority. So long as the delegated authority is in keeping with the sovereign, we may obey the delegated authority. But should the delegated authority command something that would be a violation of the sovereign, then we are commanded to obey the sovereign. In Acts 5:29, we have an example of this thought. Here the delegated authority made a command that, had it been obeyed, would have violated the sovereign. Christ, the sovereign authority, commanded the apostles to preach the gospel (Matt. 28:18,19). The officers, the delegated authority, commanded the apostle not to preach the gospel. What did they do? Peter said, "We ought to obey God rather than man." This explains the question. When the two authorities conflict, always obey the sovereign, which is God's.

There are some things that we are commanded to render unto these worldly governments found in Romans 13:7. Paul says, "Render therefore unto all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor."

(1) Tribute or "taxes" (*Wilson's Emph. Diag.*). We Christians must render taxes unto the civil powers. We can do that and not violate the divine law. Therefore, we are commanded to do it. According to Romans 13, we Christians pay our taxes for the protection that we get under civil powers. So, when someone who is unlearned on this question makes the wild statement that, because we do not fight, we should not have the government's protection, I tell them that we deserve that, since we pay our taxes for it, according to Romans 13:4-7. We are walking in the footsteps of our Savior, when we render tribute to the higher powers, for we find in Matt. 17:27, where Jesus commanded his followers to pay tribute or custom. Also, in Matt. 22:21, when they came unto him to tempt him concerning the tribute money, Christ took the coin and asked them, "Whose is the image and superscription? They

say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; but unto God the things that are God's." This is just what Paul commands. We render unto the rulers their money with their image thereon, but we render ourselves unto God because we are created in his image. And Paul commands us to "Present our bodies unto God" (Rom. 12:1).

(2) "Custom to whom custom"—Custom "is a duty to a prince or king on the importation or exportation of goods" (*Crudens Concordance*). It is used interchangeably with tribute in Matt. 17:25. We can see by this that it is closely related to tribute. In fact, it is tribute but is somewhat of a saletax.

(3) "Fear unto whom fear" or, as Moffatt renders it, "Respect to whom respect is due." We are commanded to respect or fear the higher powers. I Pet. 2:13,14, "Submit yourselves unto every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well."

(4) "Honor to whom honor"—We as Christians are commanded to honor those in office, those who have the rule over us. "Honor the king" (I Pet. 2:17). If we honor them and do all we can toward scripturally obeying them, Paul says we, too, "will have praise of the same" (Rom. 13:3).

Conclusion

So let us, as members of the kingdom of Christ, ever strive to do that which will meet with the approval of the great king. For at last he shall descend from heaven with "his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance" upon all the ungodly and disobedient. Then, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psa. 9:17). But while this old earth is melting with fervent heat and the flames of God's wrath are leaping high, this blood-bought kingdom shall spread its wings, as it were, to ascend to meet the Lord, bearing on its pinions every faithful citizen, to live forever with the great and mighty King of kings, and Lord of lords, "Even so come, Lord Jesus, Amen!"

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Old Paths Historical Library

In the recent past, many of you received a brochure introducing you to the idea of the Old Paths Historical Library. This proposed Library is for the purpose of preserving the past, and at the same time allowing those now living to profit from its existence through study and research. There are a number of fine research libraries currently in this country. It has been my personal privilege to study at several of them. The most complete by far is the Disciples Of Christ Historical Society in Nashville, Tn. I have been an active member there for many years. Even here, with the exception of the few books that I have donated and those donated by Bro. J.D. Phillips, there exists very little information about those of us who oppose Sunday school classes and a plurality of cups in the communion.

The library at Abilene Christian University is by far the most complete in Restoration History Literature among the Churches of Christ. Again you will find very little information about the above named issues and the trouble caused by their introduction into the churches. For example, many of you probably do not know that at one time, the editorial board of the Firm Foundation, (the second oldest religious paper among Churches of Christ,) was dominated by a group of men who opposed Sunday schools. That group included H.C. Harper, Dr. G. A. Trott, and N.L. Clark. Of these three, two opposed the use of more than one cup. GHP Showalter was later brought on as Editor and Publisher with the mission of clearing out the "Anti's" which he successfully did. You will never find this information spelled out in any of these libraries. I could give you a number of examples just like this which, I believe, point to the advantages of having a place where we can preserve important information, in the form of,

documents, books, papers, and other items of interest that are of historical value. Wouldn't it be nice to look up the history of a congregation? When it started, by whom, how long it has been in existence etc. This type of information is soon lost unless we take care to preserve it. Valuable books, tracts, articles etc. all represent such an important part of our heritage. Fifty years from now, if the world stands, many will know little or nothing about what happened when the church was split over some of these innovations. The names of men who fought valiantly to resist error will be buried in the past. These are just a few of the reasons behind the Old Paths Historical Library. As you have been told this is a private matter, not a church matter. The Church has nothing to do with planning it, or supporting it. We are accepting no monies whatsoever from any congregation. Only private donations will be accepted. It will be privately built and sustained. If you are interested in knowing more about this venture you may contact Don Pruitt at P.O. Box 323 Houston, MO 65483.

Song Books To Give Away

The church meeting in Foreman, AR has about 50-60 red hardback song books they will give to any church that can use them. Contact Leon Klite, 929 CR 52, Winthrop, AR 71866 for more information.

Church Directory Information

The church in Orange, CA will begin having evening services at 3:00 p.m. beginning January 10, 1999. The Sunday morning service will remain at 10:30.

The church in Avon, (Indianapolis) IN is now meeting at 2:30 p.m. for the afternoon service.

The church at Lee's Summit near Lebanon, MO now meets at 3:00 p.m. in the afternoon.

The church on Texas Rd. in Ft. Smith, AR will begin meeting at 3:00 p.m. for the Sunday evening/afternoon service February 7, 1999.

Please make all these changes in your current church directory.

Brethren Beware

In early October of 1998 while conducting a Gospel Meeting with the Congregation at Marion, Iowa a young man, 26 years of age by the name of Dan Snipes came to the first service of the Meeting. He informed us that he had traveled extensively, even to Russia, and he had been living in Des Moines, Iowa for approximately one year and had been worshipping with these brethren. We checked this out and found it to be true. He stated that he was in the process of moving to Cedar Rapids, so the brethren in Marion agreed to let him live in the basement until he could find a job and get settled. He stayed there several weeks and never told the brethren anything about securing work. In less than 2 months he decided to leave and turned in the key to the building. After he had left the brethren received a telephone bill for the Church for over \$250 and most of the calls had been made to Russia. He did not return to pay this bill and no one has heard of his whereabouts. Since I was there when he made his first appearance at the Congregation at Marion, we have found out that he has made other debts and hasn't paid them. The brethren at

Marion requested that I write this letter to inform the brotherhood.—Roy Lee Criswell.

My Position On Carnal Warfare

We cannot take part in military service in any form, directly or indirectly, in combatant or noncombatant service. Below, are listed some of our reasons:

1. Our duty and obligation to God is superior to all other obligations. (Acts 5:29; Matt. 22:37).

2. God in the Bible forbids that we engage in carnal warfare in the following references: "Put up they 'sword', 'For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword' (Matt 26:52). "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (2 Cor. 10:3, 4). "Love your enemies" (Matt. 5:44). "Turn the other cheek" (Matt. 5:39). "Recompense to no man evil for evil" (Rom. 12:17).

3. To enter any military service combatant or noncombatant, we would be compelled to "swear" (take an oath), but the Bible forbids that we do so. "Swear not at all" (Matt. 5:34).

4. To enter any military service, we would be compelled to be yoked with unbelievers, which is forbidden. "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14).

5. To be in any branch of military service in any way, we would be a part of the organization and would therefore have fellowship in the service but such is prohibited. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." (Eph. 5:11).

6. To serve in the military service in any way, we would be deprived of obeying the command to assemble on Lord's day to worship God in the Bible way, at least part of the time, hence would disobey God. (Heb. 10:25; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1,2).

Therefore, we cannot conscientiously engage in carnal war in any form or branch, and for the above reasons, we authorize our names to be listed in support of the above principles.—Cullen Smith, Ryan Cantrell & Chad Monter

Fifty Years Of Service

The book by the above name is still available for the price of \$15 post paid. It contains an autobiography of the life and preaching career of Paul O. Nichols over a period of fifty years, published by Smith Bibens. It also contains articles which have appeared over a period of time in the *Old Paths Advocate*, plus full sermons and sermon outlines which can be of benefit to teachers and others who are interested in the various subjects covered by them. Parents would do well to purchase a copy for themselves and one for each of their children so that they may have a history of the church during that period, as well as the names of some of the contemporaries who lived and preached during those years but who since gone on. The book may be purchased from Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012. The price is \$15.00 total.

OUR DEPARTED

GARRISON—Mac Ray Garrison was born at Locust Grove, OK, April 4, 1922, to Burl and Martha Pearl (Bradshaw) Garrison. He was married to Mary P. Burns

on March 28, 1941 in Tahlequah, OK and passed away at home from cancer December 24, 1998. He lived at Locust Grove all his life so was well known by most of the townspeople. Brother Garrison was a member of the Lord's church and worshipped with the congregation that meets at Choutou. Mac was preceded in death by his parents, one son, four brothers, and one sister. He leaves to mourn his passing his devoted wife, Mary, one son, Donald, one brother, Carl Gene Garrison of Salina, OK as well as several nieces and nephews, and friends and brethren and sisters in Christ. Gene Hopkins and I were honored to be asked to speak and the memorial service which was held at Locust Grove. We tried to encourage people who were present to think about the time when they, too, must pay the debt to nature and to think about meeting the Lord in the day when we must all give account of our lives. Various members of the church provided the pretty singing and were complimented after the service. Mac was laid to rest next to his son's grave to await the resurrection.—Paul O. Nichols

JAMESON—Loretta Jo Jameson passed away December 16, 1998 shortly after midnight at 60 years of age. She was born on August 8, 1938 in Taft, California, to Wilburn and Lois Pruitt. The family soon moved to Oklahoma where Jo lived the rest of her life. She graduated from Ada High School in 1956. She married Charles Jameson October 21, 1957 and they settled in south Oklahoma City. She was a beloved wife, mother and wonderful "Jiji" to her grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her father, Wilburn Pruitt. She is survived by: her husband Charles; son and daughter-in-law, Jeff and Christy Jameson; daughters and sons-in-laws, Ross and Jill Riley, and Steven and Janna Shelton; mother, Lois Pruitt; brothers, Charles, John and Don; 6 grandchildren and many other relatives and friends. I was acquainted with Jo for well over 40 years and knew her to be dignified, charitable, hospitable, and diligent. Her husband Charles summed up her outstanding traits: "She was a good Christian, a good wife, and a good

mother." I count it a privilege to have known Jo, and a honor to have been asked to conduct her memorial service.—Carl M. Johnson.

BROUGHTON—Brother Johnny Broughton was born May 8, 1935 in Merced, California, and departed from us December 7, 1998, being 63 years old. He leaves his dear wife Diane, one daughter Debbie Miller of Benicia, CA; one son, Johnny Broughton Jr., of Winton, CA; two grandchildren, three sisters, Hazel Baxter, Mary Ann Kemp, Elvira L. Willis, all of Merced. Preceding Johnny in death was several members of his family. One sister, Jurdine, three brothers, Henry, Marvin and Eugene "Inky" Broughton. Also his father John Henry, and his mother Martha Broughton. Johnny was a good leader in the church at Atwater. He willingly assumed the responsibility. He was away from the Church for several years, but when he came back it was with a sincerity and determination as strong as I have ever known in any brother or sister in Christ. This man was converted to the Lord in every truth he knew, and you could not move him from the ancient moorings. His talk and concern for the Church was evident to all who knew him. He was a friend to gospel preachers, always encouraging and appreciating them all. To me he was a friend "closer than a brother." I will miss the close association we had almost on a daily basis. The brethren in Atwater and congregations nearby will miss this great man, his concern, and good works, which I know will follow him. Although he is taken from us a short time, we shall meet again in a fairer land and brighter day, where hearts will know no sadness, sorrow and no pain, tears, for these former things will have passed away. May the God of all comfort assuage the grief and comfort he hearts of Johnny's family and brethren. Especially his good wife Diane, who cared for him so well. The memory of him will abide in our hearts the rest of our days. I was honored to speak at his memorial service. Interment is in Merced, California.—Richard DeGough



Roy Lee Criswell, Cassville, MO—Greetings Brethren. We have crossed over into the year of 1999. The year of 1998 was a very busy year for us in the service of the Lord. During the year I conducted 10 funerals in this area. Some were members of the Congregations around us and some were people of the community. Also thru our weekly visits and studies at the Aurora Nursing home I have been called upon to conduct Memorial services of at least 6 of the residents who passed away. Here at the Congregation at Aurora we have had 4 baptisms and I had the opportunity

to baptize a young man who was a prisoner in a nearby County jail. He was later sent to the Arkansas State Prison, and after a brief time He was sent to the Missouri State Prison. In November he was scheduled to appear before the State Parole Board and he ask me to appear with him. Everything about the hearing was encouraging and he should know shortly if he will be released. He seems to be a very sincere person. We returned last week from the New Years Meeting in Okla very much lifted up. The sermons, singing, and fellowship was wonderful. A special thanks to the Norman Congregation and Bro. Lynnwood Smith for all their hard work. Please pray for the Lord's work for this New Year. Especially for the work here at Aurora, MO.

Johnny Herrera, 7804 S. Cooper Arlington, TX 76001 January 1—The church in Fort Worth, Texas continues to work for the Lord. We have had a good year. In the beginning of 1998 we had about 10 members. Now, thanks to God and your support we have doubled our membership. We have about 24 attending each Lord's day. The Spanish work has increased alot this year. We now have

congregations in Waco, Ft. Worth, Dallas, and Bro. Julio Rod. is working in Garland and also in Corsicana. We have a new year before us, may the Lord grant a renewed vigor and zeal for the Church and the spread of the gospel.

Miles King, Box 115, Scotland, AR 72141 Phone: (501) 592-3956 January 6, 1999—We continue to enjoy the Old Paths Advocate coming into our home each month. And we do appreciate the good articles and Field Reports from brethren in different parts of the country. We sure had an enjoyable New Year's meeting at Oyster Bay, Florida. We had about 13 states represented and several elders, church leaders and gospel preachers who did some very good teaching. Everyone seemed to enjoy the hospitality of these brethren at Oyster Bay. We will not soon forget the generosity and Christian love extended to us. The Fall meeting at Wynnewood, Ok. was good. We had good local interest and brethren attending from about 10 other congregations. At our home congregation (Scotland, AR.) We look forward to a Spring meeting with Bro. Shelby Taulbee. Doug Hawkins is to be here in a meeting June 23-27th.

Billy D. Dickinson, 2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803, (417) 864-8879, Jan. 7—Countdown to the year 2000 is under way and I am persuaded that 1999 has great potential for success in this part of the Lord's vineyard. During our Wednesday evening service last night, the new year got off to a good start as two precious souls took a stand with us for scriptural worship. This is the couple I referred to in my last report. Their decision to leave the conservative element of those who use cups and classes was the result of much study and prayer on their part. I am thankful to God for having the opportunity to study with them and to help them see the need for a change. The television program in our area should get a lot of the credit. The strong, doctrinal preaching by Irvin Barnes (when he was on the air) and that Ronny Wade continues to herald each Lord's day did not fall upon deaf ears. Also, Jim Batson is to be commended for helping them to first learn about the issues. I am reminded of 1 Cor. 3:6, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." To God be the glory! I am looking forward to my first meeting of the year, March 20-28 at Oakdale, CA. Brethren, let's keep sowing the seed of the kingdom. With the Lord's blessing, the fields are white unto harvest (John 4:35).

Richard L. Frizzell Sr. Rt. 5 Box 376, Ada, OK. (580) 332-3673 Dec. 30, 1998—It has been over a year since my last report to O.P.A. It has been a good year, I was in Ca. the month of May and preached at four congregations, then at Tucson AZ. where I got word that my Father had died. After his funeral. I had an enjoyable meeting in Kenai, Alaska and I was there about six weeks. Brethren, there is a need for at least two preachers to go there and work to build up the church, and start a new congregation in Anchorage. After returning home I have preached one or more times in TX. OK. and AR. During 1998 I have had one to be baptized and one was restored after several years out of duty. And several confessions of false. In 1999 Jan. & Feb. I will be in Paducah, KY. working with the church

there. I look forward to the work in 1999. Let us all work very hard to build up the Church in 1999. I need your prayers please.

John R. Scott, 903 Peterson Rd., Neosho, MO 64850—As the new year begins, the Burkhart congregation will enter into it's 104th year. Beginning with my great grandfather, and including my grandchildren, makes six generations who have attended this congregation. I, of course, don't take this lightly. The congregation is blessed with fourteen male members, of which seven teach and the others lead songs, prayers and participate in the other items of worship. The past year there were five baptisms, for which we give God the praise. Love and unity prevails and we look forward to another great year in service for the Lord. Our gospel meetings for this year will be in June with brother Lynwood Smith and in November with brother Bruce Roebuck. May the borders of Zion be increased throughout the land.

Anthony Brockett 8030 E. Co.Rd. 400N Brownsburg, IN 46112 (317) 858-0762 e-mail: ABBrockett@aol.com PLEASE NOTE NEW ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER! December 1—The work here in the Indianapolis area continues to go very well. We have been successful in gathering more leads, and have had a number of new studies. Several of the studies we have held recently have been very encouraging. One study has been with a man in his early forties, who was in a serious truck accident over the summer. He was critically injured and in a coma for six weeks. About a week after he awoke, a brother in the congregation told me about him, so we paid him a visit. He agreed to have a Bible study. We have held numerous studies with him now, and he has come a long way—literally—physically and spiritually. He then began attending services with us, and has been attending regularly for about six weeks now. We are very encouraged by his progress, and continue to pray for that effort. Oddly enough, while we were having studies there in the hospital, a woman down the hall heard that we were studying the Bible, and asked a nurse if she could join in. They wheeled her into the room with us, and I have now had two good studies with her. With transportation provided by the brethren, she has now been at services about four times. We hope for continued studies with her. You never know when an unexpected contact or opportunity may present itself. We must always be ready to "give an answer." We have also had several good visits and studies with the members here as a means of strengthening and encouraging one another. They have been just that! We just closed a good meeting here in the middle of November with Cecil Smith. The crowds were good, and the preaching was excellent. It has been a pleasure to get to know Cecil better since our move to Indiana, and we have always appreciated his efforts at the Depauw congregation. It was a pleasure to have Cecil and Lisa and their children in our home during that time. We were recently encouraged with some happy news. An elderly brother and sister here in our congregation, Gary and Audra Stockrahm, celebrated their 71st wedding anniversary. Their example is an inspiration to us all! Also, my wife Tina's grandparents, Russell and

Helen McBride of Bedford, recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. It is such an encouragement to us younger folks to have such good Christian examples! They have worked so hard throughout the years to build and maintain Christian homes and families. In a day of rampant disregard for the sacredness of the marriage vow, their dedication to doing God's will is an example for all to follow. Since my last report, I have had the privilege of preaching at the following places: Mitchell, IN, Bedford, IN, Pleasant Grove, IN, Depauw, IN, Harrodsburg, IN, Chicago, IL (Glen Ellyn congregation) and Ada, OK. It was also a privilege to preach at the 50th annual Eastern Labor Day meeting, this year held in Huntington, West Virginia. It has been enjoyable to attend some of the area gospel meetings. Please continue to pray for and remember us in our labors here, and all those who work for the Lord's cause.

Kevin W. Presley, Rt. 2 Box 166, Kinston, AL 36453 (334) 898-1301, January 9, 1999—When I last reported to the paper, I was engaged in a meeting with the brethren at Andrews, TX which was a real pleasure. Bro. C.A. Smith is to be commended for his many years of faithful service and diligent attendance to this congregation. I appreciate C.A. for his love for the truth and his ability in preaching. We had a very uplifting meeting with a lot of support from neighboring congregations such as Midland, Odessa, Lubbock, and Levelland. Next on the schedule was Waterloo, IA. It had been many years since this group had held a meeting. The brethren from Marion, Grinnell, and Bloomfield supported us well. The meeting closed with four baptisms, including a 91 year old woman. I was especially impressed with the Matt Enos family who has taken a real interest in the Lord's work and are so anxious to learn and grow. I went from there to Brazil, IN where we had a great meeting. We had a number of visitors from the community and a host of brethren from other places. There were several preachers in attendance one or more nights from the area, as well as Ronny and Alfreda Wade who were passing through. Greg Jordan lives and works with the Brazil and Pleasant Grove congregations. He is doing a fine work from all indications. The crowds were big each night and the meeting closed with one confession. It was also good to hold a short meeting in Trussville, AL. This congregation is doing well with 50-60 in attendance and a large number of younger people. I enjoyed the meeting and it was good to visit with Richard Nichols. It was also nice to have Bro. Gene Grant and Bro. Ricky Martin in attendance. Two people confessed faults. In September it was good to be back with the brethren in Bandy, KY. This church continues to do well and it is always a thrill to preach to people who love gospel preaching. Also, it was a pleasure to be with Bill Fergerson and family while holding a meeting at Hamilton (Cinninnati), OH. Great crowds greeted us throughout with a number of preachers present (Barney Owens, Brian Burns, Dennis Smith, and Anthony Brockett) Bro. Bill Fergerson does a fine work with the church there. He and his sweet family made the week a real pleasure. In October, it was back to Oklahoma for a meeting with the Washington congregation. This meeting was very profitable with one baptism and two confessions. I enjoyed the hospitality of

Ralph and Lois Stephens and Mark and Faye McAlister. It was also good to visit with Bill Davis, Brandon Stephens, and Joe Hisle - all gospel preachers. You will also, always have a good meeting in Harrison, ARK where Jimmy Smith labors diligently with the church. We had several digressives with us and a number of visiting brethren. Bruce Roebuck supported us faithfully. The meeting closed with one confession. I consider Jimmie, Cindy, and Cullen good friends and strong workers in the church, and it was great staying with them. Finally, our travels took us to Joplin, MO for a short meeting. The crowds were good and with preachers John Anderson, Steve Ramsey, Stan Elmore, and Roger Owens attending. The church continues to march forward under the able leadership of their elders and deacons. Since closing 98's meetings I have been working hard at home. We are thankful to have begun a new congregation in the Dothan, AL community stemming from our television work. I will try to report more specifically on the work there in next month's OPA. 1998 closed with a great New Year's meeting in Oklahoma - Lynwood doing his usual great job conducting it. With 1998 behind us we look forward to a new year of opportunities in serving Lord. May God bless our brotherhood.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct. Bonner Springs, KS 66012—We being a new year in the service of the Lord with a glance at the past and an eye to the future. In 1998 I was with brethren in some very enjoyable meetings in a number of places. October 20, 1998 marked my fifty eight year preaching the gospel. It hardly seems possible. I am thankful for health and strength to continue to preach and to be able to travel and hold meetings as I have for so many years. I also appreciate the calls I receive. Wilma and I were able to attend several services of the New Year Meeting in Oklahoma City. We heard some good singing and outstanding preaching, and it was wonderful to see Christian friends and loved ones from various parts of the brotherhood. The church here at 79th and Kansas Ave., Kansas City continues to move forward. We are developing more and more teachers and song leaders. We have some excellent singers who are an inspiration to our services and we appreciate every one of them. We look forward to our next meeting in June with Ronny Wade. Our crowds, especially on Lord's day morning, have grown considerably for which we are thankful. The Lord bless His work everywhere.

Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808, Jan. 11—The New Year meeting in Oklahoma City was one of the best. I think probably the largest crowds I have ever seen. The talks by the young men were outstanding, and should be heartening to all Christians. We continue our work in the area around home. Recently we have had a brother and his wife come over from the conservative churches of Christ that use cups and classes, where he worshipped and preached. We believe they will be a great asset to the cause in this area. We were privileged to preach at Lebanon recently where we baptized a man and his wife into Christ. Our television program is now being seen in Springfield, San Angelo/Abilene, Texas and Nashville, TN.

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The Lord willing we will be in Edmond, OK for a meeting March 7-14. We look forward to seeing many of the faithful in that area at that time.

Johnny Elmore, 419 KSW, Ardmore, OK 73401, January 7—We enjoyed the Oklahoma New Year's meeting this year very much. It is so good to see and be with friends we have known down through the years even though it is for a short time. I commend the Norman congregation for their efforts in making it an success. I plan to be at Cleburne, TX Feb. 13, 14 for some singing instruction and preaching. Come and be with us.

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Dr., Ada, OK 74801, carlmj@juno.com, Jan. 11—We enjoyed the annual Study in Oklahoma City and the New Year Meeting. My meetings schedule for 1999 is not completely set, but the fol-

lowing is a tentative list: Sulphur, OK (Feb. 26-28), Shreveport, LA (Mar. 10-14), Eldon, MO (Mar. 21-28), Oklahoma City, 21st Street (Apr. 2-11), Cedar Creek, AR (Apr. 16-18), Napoleon, AL (May 2-9), Spring Valley, WV (May 30-June 6), Ceres, CA (June 13-20), San Angelo, TX (July 11-18), Lee's Summit, MO (Aug. 7-15), Kansas City, KS, 36th & Everett (Oct. 6-10), Fremont, CA (Oct. 15-24), Covina, CA (Nov. 7-14) and Seminole, OK (Nov. 3-5). Please continue to mention us in your prayers.

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THE SERENITY PRAYER

*God, grant me serenity,
To accept the things I cannot change,
Change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.*

Attributed to Friedrich Oetinger
1702-1782) And to Reinhold Niebuhr
"The Serenity Prayer" (1934)

The New Year is here and I am just like the majority of people that never get-done all the things that they want to before the New Year gets here. Someone has said, "Failure isn't fatal and success isn't final." Scriptures that come to mind this time of the year are found in Philippians 3:13-14 as spoken by Paul.

"Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before,

I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

As we all look to the New Year, think on the things that these two passages suggest.

1. Forget the past; it is done and gone. Dwelling on yesterday will only rob you of the strength and fortitude it takes to face life's challenges.

2. Stretch yourself as you enter into the New Year: do not be satisfied with mediocrity. As a runner exerting that little extra bit of energy, put forth your very best.

3. Make the "High calling of God in Christ Jesus" your top priority. Develop the spiritual man and everything will take care of itself. After all, what have you (I) profited if you gain the whole world and loose your soul?

Here's hoping that all will have a happy, healthy, peaceful, prosperous New Year; also a very prayerful year while we "Let brotherly love continue." (Hebrews 13:1) Do not be

ashamed to tell someone that you love and appreciate them. We are all important to God. The beginning of a New Year is sort of philologically exciting. Really, it is just another day, but still, it has a certain freshness about it that suggests a clean slate, another chance, a new start. We have 365 days in the New Year ahead of us. After each night's rest, there is the dawning of a new day. What the new day brings is mostly up to the individual. As the New Year progresses, try not to rely just on yourself to get the job done. Don't be ashamed to ask for help. Everyone needs it every now and then. My lot in this life was to learn this lesson well and how to do it gracefully. This is still a beautiful world with a lot of wonderful people. Just remember that it is better to share the glory than to face defeat alone. The older we get, the more we resent change. When we realize that we need change, we should do it. Always finish what you start. Never leave anything half-done. Also, under this topic comes "Sins of Omission." Complete the task, come out on top in whatever you do. "Anything worth doing is worth doing well."

This year, I want to make myself available to those who need me. We all know that, "In this life, some rain must fall." We should all do a little preventative maintenance and seize the opportunity to do good while we can. It can get too late. Remember well, "You don't miss the water 'til the well runs dry." There is a time, "When You can't come back."

I heard an elderly man once begin a prayer with these words, "Dear God, I just don't know what we would do without YOU."

Let us hold our heads high and with dignity live our lives closer to God this year.

May God bless you and may His word be a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path. (Psalm 119:105)

Harvey Hammonds

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. 3

UNION OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES

BY BENNIE CRYER

The *San Francisco Chronicle* printed an Associated Press release on this subject in their January 25, 1999 issue. Nine denominational churches voted to move toward a broad affiliation of churches—a rare victory in a four decade campaign to unite 20 million Protestants, despite their differences. They are calling for the creation of a Protestant superchurch believing that Jesus call for "one faith, one baptism, one God," requires this. These nine denominations would agree...to recognize one another as "authentic expressions of the one church of Jesus Christ. This megamerger proposal's success is being threatened because they are having difficulty in hashing out leadership differences which seems to me to be the same problem the 12 apostles had in Mark 9:33-35. Jesus solved their problem rather handily as the record indicates.

"And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest. And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all."

In Mark 10:41-45 Jesus added more information that would help solve this problem when He was solving the problem created by the request of James and John when they asked Him to let them sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. Their request greatly displeased the other disciples and so Jesus said to them.

Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you...

It seems to me if they would let Jesus be the head of the church, Ephesians 1:22-23, and recognize His lordship a lot of their difficulties would be solved. After all, they did recognize that one faith, one baptism, and one God, came from Jesus and that their goal is to recognize each other as expressions of the one church of Jesus Christ, so why not go to the scriptures in the New Testament and let him solve their other problems that they have tensions about? Jesus did now how to organize the church's leadership when he built His church, the one church of Christ, Matthew 16:18.

We must recognize that we have a similar problem among us who claim to be the Church of Christ. The late T.F. Thomason, a gospel preacher, told me that the Church of Christ was becoming like a little dog that liked to fol-

low a big dog down the street. The little dog, of course, represented the Church of Christ and the big dog represented denominationalism. He also used the example that you can tie two tomcat tails together and hang them over the clothesline and have union but you certainly would not have unity. Are we trying to be like the denominations? Are we craving union instead of unity? A few are. For example, the article mentioned above states,

When the plan was derailed by denominational loyalties and disagreements, the group opted for a proposal for church affiliations without merger.

Do this sound like the movement began several years ago in the Church of Christ that was referred to as "unity or diversity?" Sure it does. And that is nothing more, according to Bro. Thomason of the little dog (the Church of Christ) following the big dog (denominationalism). The innovations that have divided the Church of Christ are equal to the doctrines and commandments of men that keeps derailing union movements among the denominations. The New Testament is the will of Christ and His blessings are dispensed according to this will. Unity is to be achieved through its precepts and not through ignoring differences fostering innovations. John, the beloved apostle wrote in 1 John 1:3, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

Jesus thus made those things the apostles saw and heard the basis of fellowship whether our outreaching brethren want to admit it or not. It scares me when I see brethren trying to embrace those who practice divisive differences that are not founded on the Lord's word. It even frightened the apostle of love so much that he was instructed by the Holy Spirit to write, "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds," (2 John 8-11).

Brethren, we can lose our works and not receive a full reward by partaking with those who are not satisfied with the doctrine of Christ. When we share with them in their

continued on page six

CONTENTS

Vol. LXXIII No. 3



ADVOCATE

ANNOUNCEMENTS 7-9

Union Of Protestant Churches ... 1

Old Paths 2

The New Year 3

WANTED "Gospel Preachers" 3

Cutting & Burning God's Book .. 5

The Philippine Work 6

FROM THE FIELDS 9-12

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Editorial

OLD PATHS

By DON L. KING

Jeremiah 6:16 is a passage used often. "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein."

There are so many lessons to learn from this passage. However, let us look at the fact that within the "old paths" we can find "the good way." It is strange indeed that the majority seeks a way outside of the old paths. The world is constantly in search of some new thing. Even some who are brethren like to be on "the cutting edge" of new things. They love to find some new thing to teach or explain. We certainly agree that we need to be always on the lookout for truths we have not yet understood or fathomed. This means that study is always in order. However, one must be careful that his search and study is not for the wrong reasons. Just to find some new thing with which to dazzle the brethren is the wrong motive for searching. Remember, folks, new and improved can never hope to compete with tested and tried!

Let's notice a few things wherein we are better off in the old paths. The United States is in chaos because of its lack of morals. Sex is portrayed everywhere! Just today, we heard on the news that the average couch potato watching the soap operas and sitcoms, etc., can expect to see an average of three sexual encounters every hour. Why all the preoccupation with sex? Can anyone doubt Satan's work here? Morality is supposed to be the Christian's standard. It is high time we think about this.

Marriage is a risky thing, according to the statistics. Half or more are going on the rocks, experts say. Divorce is common. We are told that of the divorces granted by the courts today, 65% are because of immorality!

The recent happenings in the Senate (regarding the President's behavior) give ample testimony of the moral climate of this nation. It is simply pitiful.

Whether our times are the most evil, we can't say. However, we are exposed to terrible things on the evening newscasts. My children and yours likely don't remember when it hasn't been this way. Some of us recall when even worldly people were ashamed of adultery, fornication, rape, divorce, robbery, etc. These sins were not excused. Yes, indeed, "the times they are a changing." We have lived to see the time when the basis for right and wrong is not the Bible but rather the personal wishes of the individual.

Even some within the Church have dared us to prove their dancing, drinking and gambling wrong! Sisters have heard gospel preachers explain why they need to let their hair grow (from the Bible) for generations. Yet, this continues to be a problem. Why is this? Could it be that our love of the world has outdistanced our love for the truth? Listen brethren, Jesus said "... Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and

continued on page six

THE NEW YEAR

By BARNEY OWENS

What an exciting time is the opening of the New Year. For many it represents the time to make resolutions to better their lives. There are some who, engaging in habits that are harmful to themselves and others, lay these aside at this time of the year. There are words and works that should have been said long ago and, often, which have been dormant, that now can spring forth actively. Sins, which have been in control, will find a place on the lips of confession, since the New Year lends encouragement to these and other things. Yes, it is a thrilling time.

I find this period of the year personally gratifying, because I am made to reflect upon personal shortcomings and dilatory characteristics which seem to overwhelm me by year's end, causing me to wonder just how I reached the point at which I find myself. Please allow me to think about the New Year and perhaps something said will have a positive effect in your heart and spring forth to make this year the best ever for the both of us.

Opportunities

I suppose that the best thing about the New Year is the thought of the opportunities which will present themselves. Some of these are known, as the signs of their developing are in sight, yet, there are others that cannot be visualized and, should the Lord grant life, then they will surprise us as we reflect this time next year.

One of those which I am able to see and therefore am able to take advantage of is growth. Surely we all can see the goodness and benefit from growing. I have read and heard many times the expression: "When one stops growing, he begins to die." Although I have no idea who first said that, nor can I even recall when first I heard or read it, it is true. Like many other things, it has come to use by observation and/or experience. We cannot deny it. There are three areas of growth I wish to be concerned with this year. I wish to be aware of physical growth, for mentally maturing, and spiritually removing some of the childish things that hold me back and truly becoming an adult Christian in every way.

1. *As for the physical.* I have no reason to think I will get taller, nor do I expect to become stronger, not even to regaining the strength I have had in younger days. And, of course, there is the continuous battle with growing outwardly, where I have no wish for growth. However, I do wish to grow in the care of my body, as even the Scriptures emphasize such. Paul wrote in the Corinthians: "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

The Bible does teach that God created our body and that the breath of life was given by Him. A spirit within us elevates us above the beast, therefore we are a representation of God's own image in the world. Especially is this true of we Christians. We must take care of our body without abusing it. Can we not resolve to look at our body differently than we have heretofore and glorify God with proper maintenance of it?

It needs some thought as well in regard to the body and sinful things. Again, the language of Paul stands forth to the Romans: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members of righteousness unto God." (Rom. 12:1; 6:12-13).

We use our bodies to worship and serve God as well as aiding our fellow travelers in the journey of life. Too long have we neglected the investigation of God's will respecting physical growth.

2. *Our mental growth.* The mind, or, as the Bible speaks of it, "the heart," must be used in a manner in which it can grow. Solomon wrote long ago words to encourage mankind: "Keep thy heart with all diligence: for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23).

Many of the things we reflected upon in times gone by, we have all learned to lay them aside, because there is no profit in giving such space within our mind. Like the skin of a snake, we have shed such and gone on without them. Failing to grow in mind leaves one stagnated and useless in the world. We really do become what we think about.

For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. (Prov. 23:7).

It doesn't take a great mind to become a Christian, but it takes all the mind a man has. If we think we can obey God and live for Christ in this world without growing in mind, we are sadly mistaken. If we fail to use and expand our muscles, we will lose them. Likewise, if we fail to use and expand our mind, it is a guarantee that we will lose the great benefit of it for which God intended.

3. *Our spiritual growth.* The New Year will present opportunities for this growing. When a child does not grow or mature as is the normal thing, we take this as a sign that something is not right—we may not know exactly the problem, but we know all is not as it should be. The same is true of the Christian. In most congregations, there are members who have been a part of the church for 40 or 50 years, but are babies. They have never grown up physically. One may say, "Oh, that is just your opinion." Such could be the case, however, I have some proof. One obvious point to consider is this question. Why is it that we have so many churches without men who qualify as elders and deacons? Why is it that their wives fail in many of the characteristics Paul names? Even some who have been appointed are not thirty second cousins to those men named in the scripture. Why, I ask? The answer is lack of growth.

"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe" (Heb. 5:12-13).

Let us not think that those who could qualify for the

places named above are the only ones who have not grown. In some congregations those who insist on the growth of others are yet babies, as they fail to heed their own advice.

The New Year will present to God's children many opportunities for service. We need to remind ourselves as Christians that we have been saved to serve and not to sit and relax in the Kingdom. Our Lord set the great example when he washed the disciple's feet. (Jn. 13:3-5). Mark His words: "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." (Vs 15). We must realize that as we serve the world, we are serving Christ. By doing to the least, it is service to the Lord. (Mt. 25:40).

The world is not air-conditioned and carpeted! There are stony places and difficult tasks to be performed if we are to be salvation to humanity. So it must be. The opportunities for our growing are the opportunities found only in our sharing.

Tragedies

It is much easier to speak about the opportunities that might come our way in the New Year than it is to bring up tragedies, yet surely these will be a part of some lives this year, as they always have. May I also say, it is much easier to talk and write about these than to pass through them. And I am not so silly as to think we might be able to bear up under every trial which comes our way. We can however, deal with them in a better way if our mind-set is correct in their regard and we have some preparation for them. We must understand that there are a variety of things which cause tragedies.

1. *Our own fault.* Yes, we are the blame for some of the things that alter our lives in a distressful manner. Remember when Adam and Eve were filled with guilt, when they discovered that they were shamefully exposed? Finally,

they lost their home in Paradise of Eden. Forever was their life altered. Never were they able to regain what was no longer their possession. What was the reason? The own (personal) decision and sin. Such can bring tragedy to you and me. Beware.

2. *The fault of others.* The finger of blame is well known among children and the immature, as others are blamed for every failing, when no personal responsibility is taken for one's action. While that is unbecoming in many cases, the fact is, sometimes others bring tragedies into our lives over which we have no control. Do you recall the days of Noah? He lost his home and his life was never the same again, not because of his wrong doing, but because of the sins of other people. As wonderful as the deliverance of Noah's household was, all his toil and work was due to the decisions and sins of his fellowman.

3. *The fault of the devil.* The devil is at work, and has been, in the world. His great tool of sin brings heartache among us. One can think and read of the man Job. Tragedies came his way as the devil tried to master him and prove himself better. Job's faith prevailed, but all was not bliss. Everything he cared for in this world was touched and the devil dealt him misery with one tragedy after another.

Tragedy is serious as we view it in others. The reality when affecting our own existence in a personal way, often brings tossing about, but with prayer, hope, and faith, we can deal with it, not for our own benefit only, but for others, too. This New Year may bring the tragedies of material loss, the loss of health and the loss of loved ones. My hope and prayer is that we can turn these TRAGEDIES INTO OPPORTUNITIES.

WANTED - "GOSPEL PREACHERS"

By RICHARD DeGOUCH

Recently, I noticed this wording on a sign board by the highway. It caught my attention and caused me to think seriously about the gospel preacher in general and myself in particular. The need for sound gospel preachers no one will deny that has a love for the lost, and the Church. I hardly believe that the originator of the sign could fully understand the meaning of "Gospel Preacher" since a denomination was behind it. However, the thought and the fact of it are certainly true and the need is real. A lost world, dying in sin can only be rescued by the preaching, believing, and obeying of the gospel of Christ.

The Preacher

We must remember who we are and to whom we must answer. We are not hired servants of the church but servants of the Lord Jesus. Paul said: "But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, ...". Again, "For do I now persuade men or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." (II Cor. 6:4, Gal. 1:10) The gospel preacher has courage and conviction. Courage to preach what he is convinced is the truth of God, the gospel of our salvation, and to have confidence in the power of the word. Paul said: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God, which ye heard

of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." (I Thess. 2:13) To the Ephesian elders Paul said; "... I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." (Acts 20:32)

In Romans 1:16, Paul wrote; "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." When we preach we must convince the hearers of our sincerity and the seriousness of the import of the message. Henry Book once said; "A preacher asked a clown why it was he could tell a lie, when the people knew it to be a lie, and they would laugh and cry, while he would tell the truth and they would not be moved. The clown replied: "I tell a lie just like I believed it were the truth and you tell the truth just like you believed it were a lie." When we are "converted", then we will manifest our enthusiasm to the hearers. To a vacillating Peter the Lord said; "...and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (Lk. 22:32) The word of the Lord to him must have touched his heart, because he was not the same apostle in action after his denial of the Lord.

His Message

We have but one, and that is God's. To Jonah of old God said; "Arise, go into Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." The message was not Jonah's, but God's. Jonah at first rose up "to flee from the presence of the Lord," but when the Lord got through with him, he accomplished the task of heralding the message of repentance to a perishing city, and it accomplished exactly what the Lord intended. (Jonah 1,2,3) Jeremiah, the ancient prophet to the "nations," was raised up for the purpose of speaking the word of the Lord to perishing people, a people beloved by the Lord. The Lord said; "...for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak." "...Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth." (Jer. 1:7,9) This prophet would not fail, though under persecution, threats on his life, and at times, discouraged. His conclusion was: "...I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." When his words are in us, fellow preacher, as it was Jeremiah, then, we will go forth as in the words of Henry Book, with a

burning, heart-searching, sin- condemning, life-giving, conscience-awakening, personal message. Be assured, the word of the Lord "...shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Jer. 20:9, Isa. 55:11). It is God's message, not ours, for we are just the earthen vessel carrying that message to the people. God's wisdom, God's thought revealed in the printed page of the Bible will be sufficient if we will but preach it. There is in this modern day of knowledge about everything under the sun the temptation to leave the word of God lay, and give in its place the wisdom of men. The question is, will this fill the need of speaking unto men to "edification, and exhortation, and comfort?" This reminds me of a story I read. It is said that a noted preacher, a pastor of a strong church in the east, found his people drifting and his pews empty. He wondered the cause. He had been preaching on modern themes and his messages were beautiful but lifeless. One Sunday morning he went into his pulpit and found on his desk this statement: "They have taken away my Lord and Master and I know not where they have laid him." He saw the point. He began to preach the gospel and the people returned to the house of the Lord. More later.

CUTTING AND BURNING GOD'S BOOK

By C.A. SMITH

In Jeremiah 36:22-25, we read of King Jehoiakim sending for the roll of Jeremiah. When the roll was brought, the king commanded it to be read, but when only a part of it had been read, he took the roll from the reader, and deliberately cut it to pieces with a penknife and threw it into the fire, so that the roll in its entirety was consumed in the flame. This was the reaction of this wicked ruler to God and his precious word. When we read this account, we are amazed how anyone with an ounce of sense could so act! Yet, all down through the years, others have foolishly opposed God's word and endeavored to destroy it. In this little article, we would like to consider with you how men have opposed it, why they have opposed it, and the folly of opposing it. To begin with, let us notice how men have opposed God's word. Of course, very few have employed the knife-and-fire method as Jehoiakim, but all were motivated by the same wicked design. May we know that it matters not what methods are used, what matters is our opposition to God's word. The Roman Catholics opposed the word of God by forbidding the people to read it. Denominational preachers by refusing to preach it. So called "great" theologians by rejecting the Bible as the divine revelation. Many by persecuting the brave and faithful men who proclaimed it. Great numbers reject or ignore it. Still greater numbers refuse to obey it. To the shame of some "so called" gospel preachers, when standing in the pulpit to "feed the flock" the Bible is never opened or its sacred oracles quoted. All of the above need to hear Jesus' words and hear them well, when He said: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

Next, let us consider Why men have opposed the word of God. We know, don't we, that the king cut and burned God's book because its divine message ran contrary to his

own plans or sinful desires, and you know what? In the final analysis, the love of sin is the fundamental cause of all opposition to God's eternal truth. You mark that down as we look at why some have opposed the word of God. The sensualist opposes the Bible because God's word condemns sensuality. The sectarian opposes the Bible, because God's word opposes parties, discord and division among God's people. The digressive oppose the Bible, because God's word condemns adding to or subtracting from that which is written. The covetous man opposes the Bible, because the Word of God condemns greed and instructs men to give liberally of their means. Then there are those who consider themselves to be wise who are displeased with God's word because it presents a much different philosophy. As you know, the man who prizes very highly his own ideas will invariably set himself against any conflicting ideas. That is why "not many wise after the flesh" answer the gospel call. (1 Cor. 1:26).

Now then, let us consider the *folly* of opposing God and his word. To begin with. Truth is not subject to change (Heb. 13:8). Why can't men see that they do not altar truth one jot or tittle by opposing it? There is nothing or nobody that can hinder or interrupt God nor his divine word, for, "His truth is marching on." "Let no one be deceived by thinking otherwise! God's book survived the cutting and burning of the wicked king. It was written again, and naught was taken from the divine predictions in it, for they all came true. Then, when men rejected, pierced, buried in a sealed and guarded tomb, The Incarnate Truth, these wicked men thought they were forever done with him, but how mistaken and deceived they were. He overcame the grave and lived again. So, you see, whether you cut and burn the book, speak against it, or merely ignore it, the sin is the same, and the results are the same. God help all men to learn that the wise thing for us to do is to accept the

truth and conform our life unto it. To do so, will mean our salvation and everlasting joy. Listen to what the poet wrote concerning truth: "Truth crushed to earth shall rise again.

The eternal years of God are hers: But error, wounded withes in pain, And dies among her worshippers.'

THE PHILIPPINE WORK

By DON L. KING

This past January, Brother Duane Permenter and I visited the Philippines and found the work to be stable and sound. It was a joy to see those whom we have known for nearly twenty years still growing in the Faith. 1998 held some great victories and a few disappointments. It was really disappointing to lose a preacher whom we loved and respected to digression. However, we rejoiced to see others rise to the challenge and the work remained intact and sound. In fact, the brethren are stronger and more determined than ever. This past trip, we rejoiced that six congregations had taken a stand for the Bible way from digression along with a preacher we had previously heard of but never met. Some of the brethren made their confessions of wrong and asked for prayer while we were there. Also, according to our count, there were 41 who were baptized into Christ. We drove about two thousand miles and preached countless sermons as we visited among the brethren. We also distributed some badly needed help to members who were victims of recent typhoons.

It was a pleasure to travel with Duane again. He has made a number of trips with us and certainly carried his share of the load well. Brother Danao came home from Hawaii for the month of January to work with us and act as guide and translator. He is an able preacher in his own

right and is highly respected among the brotherhood there. His work in Hawaii along with Brother Felipe Bayani, and others, is producing fruit. The work is growing. If our schedule permits it, we hope to see him in Hawaii some time in 1999, Lord willing.

There are many needs in the Philippines. The church in Baguio City badly needs a meeting house as do the brethren in Manila. Real estate is much more expensive in those places and they will have to have help to get the task accomplished. The Philippine peso, which fluctuates in value, is badly devalued. In 1981, when we made the first trip, a dollar was equal to 7 pesos. Now, the rate is about 38 pesos per dollar. The people are desperately poor. Skilled labor can be hired in the rural areas for about 200 pesos per day. (about \$5) Yet, a Toyota can cost \$20,000 dollars. Almost none of the brethren can afford an automobile of any kind or age. They travel by bus, bicycle, and motorcycle or on foot. In spite of these difficulties some of the preachers preach at three congregations each Lord's day. In some cases, they must ride a bus, or walk, several hours in between. Their love for the Cause of Christ is really thrilling to see. I have been made a better person for having known them. Please pray for the work. DLK

UNION OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES

continued from page 1

services and works we are bidding them God's speed whether that is our intent or not. In a similar setting Paul, in 1 Corinthians 10:22, asked two questions, Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he? In this context the apostle has under consideration brethren who thought they were so strong they could partake with the Pagans and it would not affect them in anyway. He clearly teaches that when Israel ate the sacrifices they had

offered they became partakers of the altar, verse 18. In the same way, when we partake of error, it provokes God to jealousy, does not edify, verse 23, and manifests selfishness because we are seeking to please ourselves to the detriment of our brethren, verse 24. We are to be close enough to our erring brethren to attempt to convert them, but far enough away to show we are not going to be perceived as partakers of their errors by our own brethren. Let us not follow denominations down this path that leads to more and more problems.

EDITORIAL

continued from page 2

with all thy mind." (Matthew 22:37) Such things should never enter the mind of a mature Christian. It's time we grow up in Christ.

What about sound doctrine? We simply must be concerned about this. One of the major reasons Israel of old fell away from God was because they allowed false prophets, etc., to become their leaders. Rather than following the Lord, they sought idols. They wanted to be like the heathens around them! Little by little, divine standards were lowered and lies exalted in the minds of the people. What can we learn here? False teachers always precede false doctrine! In other words, false teaching will always lead to false worship. It is as simple as cause and effect. In Jeremiah 2:13 the prophet wrote, "For my people have committed two evils, they have forsaken me the

fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water." Think about it. Why would anyone do away with a cistern, or well, that holds good water and choose a well that leaks and holds nothing? Do you know that is exactly what happens when brethren discard the Bible way of worship for innovations? That is certainly what happens when we turn a deaf ear to the pleadings of God for holy or pious living, choosing rather to live like the heathen world around us. It is almost as though some are ashamed to live right.

You say, "is it going to get better?" Not according to the Word of God. Paul said, "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." (2 Timothy 3:13) Folks, this means we must be more and more careful to what and to whom we listen. Get your Bible and read it often. Be familiar with it. When you hear something new be suspicious. Be sure it is authorized of God. Paul said, "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel

which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Galatians 1:11,12)

Let us say with those of old, "give us the Bible and we'll be satisfied." Think on these things. DLK

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Church Directory

My supply of the 1998 directory is exhausted. Since there are so many changes that need to be made, I have decided not to reprint them, but work on a new directory for 1999. If you have changes to make in your listing, please get those to me as soon as possible. Please don't wait until the last minute, I need to hear from you now. Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO, E-Mail: rfwade@juno.com.

Houston, MO

Change Sunday evening service to 5 p.m.

New Congregation In Dothan, AL

We announced in December that there was a new congregation meeting in Dothan, AL. Since that time we have been meeting in a hotel conference room. We are pleased to announce that we have relocated into a more permanent and visible location. The church meets at 2652 Fortner Street which is only one block west of the Ross Clark Circle. Service times are 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. with mid-week services pending. The phone number at the building is (334) 671-2277. For any information, feel free to call Kevin Presley at (334) 898-1301, Troy Spradley at (334) 983-4411 or Michael Hatcher (334) 702-8848. We would love to have you come and worship with us. The congregation is an outgrowth of the television work of the Earlytown congregation. If you know of any possible prospects in or around Dothan please contact us and let us know.—Kevin W. Presley

New Congregation In Wichita KS

We recently launched a new work in west Wichita. We are now meeting at the Friends University Casado Campus Center, Bonn St. & Kellogg Drive in Wichita, Kansas. We would enjoy having you at our services anytime you are in Wichita. We meet each Sunday at 10:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Contact any of the following brethren for additional information: Mike Whitworth (316) 722-0894, Jeff Hogland (316) 729-8853, Delane Butler (316) 729-5571, Bob Loudermilk (316) 722-6724, Tom Greb (316) 788-0925, Bill Savage (316) 524-5203 or Troy Presley (316) 788-2436.

Missouri Labor Day Meeting 2000

The West Hwy. 60 congregation, in Neosho, Missouri, will be hosting the Missouri Labor Day Meeting in the year 2000. This will be the third time for us to have the meeting and we look forward to it with great joy and anticipation. Yes it is a lot of hard work, but the memories of these meetings are so wonderful and up beat that is well worth the efforts. Please start now and make plans to attend. More information will be out in the months ahead

and we will send out notices as the time grows closer.—
Roger L. Owens

Need Preacher/Personal Worker

There is a small congregation in Paducah, KY, who are very much in need of a preacher to come here and work with the church and do personal work. If you are willing to dedicate your life in the service of the Lord, this would be an ideal place to work. Right on the banks of the beautiful Ohio, and Tennessee rivers. And there are several lakes in this area, also I-24 goes through here. I ask my fellow preachers to consider this great work or if a family could locate to this area, please contact: Bro. Gene Anderson at 590 Gass Rd., Ledbetter, KY 42058, or call (502) 928-2175. Thank you.

Gospel Preacher Needs Support

Dear brethren, I am writing on you on behalf of the church in Armadale Western Australia. We are a small congregation founded in the mid 1980's by Brother Jerry Cutter, we have had visits from a number of American teachers, some of who have lived here including Glen Osburn, Bruce Word and David Stands. We are currently without a full time preacher. Some time ago the support for Keith Thomson was discontinued, as a result of these circumstances he engaged in a course of study in order to be able to support his family. Keith recognizes the need for someone working with the church here in Armadale and desires to return to working as an evangelist. Over the past three years Keith has spend a good deal of time in Russia, at one point staying for a period of six months with his wife Anne and son Jamie, working with the church in Saranski. Keith is currently in Penza, Russia with his family working with the church, on his return (January 9th) he desires to resume working full-time with the church here in Armadale, to do this he needs the financial support of the brethren. Previously the congregation in Armadale supported him as much as possible in this manner (an amount which, due to the small size of the congregation, represented only 25%-40% of the minimum wage in this country). With the support of the congregation here in Armadale and the support of willing congregations in the United States, Keith will be able once again to resume working full-time as an evangelist (he would be the only one in the whole of the country). If you are able to assist, we as a congregation, would be greatly appreciative. On a personal note I must express my admiration of Keith's dedication to the work of the gospel, he has given much time to full-time work with the church, sometimes in quite difficult circumstances. If your congregation is able to assist, Keith would be very pleased to hear from you. Contact him at phone 011 618 94973610 or via mail at 5 Carrigal Place, Armadale, Western Australia 6112.—Jim Howard

60th Anniversary

CORNETT—Pearl and Norma Jean of Hamilton, OH

observed their 60th wedding anniversary December 24. They were married December 24, 1938 in Lothair, KY. They have six children; 12 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren and attend the Hamilton Church of Christ.

OUR DEPARTED

POWELL—Sister Alma Cleo Adams Powell passed from this life Wednesday, December 9th, 1998 at her residence in Summertown being 83 years, 8 months, 24 days of age. She was a native of Lauderdale County Alabama, a homemaker, and a member of the Chapel Grove Church of Christ. Her parents were the late William Frank and Zephia Gulley Adams. She was preceded in death by her husband, Farris Clint Powell. She is survived by five daughters: Betty Jensen of Summertown, Tn., Sue Frazier of Summertown, Tn., Elaine Moore of Summertown, Tn., Barbara Smith of Summertown, Tn., and Jane Chunn of Mt. Pleasant, Tn. One sister: Odell Holloway of Summertown, Tn. Twelve grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren. Sister Cleo Powell was a faithful member of the Chapel Grove congregation. She and her husband, Farris, with the children could be counted on to be at worship. Paul Walker and I held the service after which her body was laid to rest next to her beloved husband in the Chapel Grove Cemetery—Johnny L. Fisher

WILLIS—George Carl Willis was born in Greenville, S.C. on March 25, 1921. The family moved to Lawrenceburg, Tn., when Carl was three years of age. Carl's spirit slipped from its fleshly tent on November 10, 1998. His sojourn here in the creation that groaneth and travaileth covered a span of 77 years. He was baptized into Christ at the age of 28 by Brother Billy Orten. He married at the age of 31 to Geneva Arnett. Carl and Geneva's home focused around Christ and the church. Hospitality knew no bounds and opportunity to do good unto all men was never missed. Their children Kerry, Gina and Aaron were exposed to an untiring example of love for the church, of strong, spiritual convictions and a readiness to aid one's fellow man. They are all members of the Lord's kingdom today and this awareness is seen in the grandchildren also. Carl's passing marks the end of an era for the church here in the Pontiac area. Carl was the last brother still in this area, that went back to the beginning years of the church here. Carl's leadership role in the church here cannot be fully expressed and his labor for the church reached far beyond the boundaries of Michigan. How well this is known especially throughout the eastern part of the United States. Our years of working with Carl and appreciating his convictions and labor goes back through some 33 years of preaching and some 4 years of association prior to that time. The sorrow of Carl's departing us has not been light, but it has been lifted to some degree, since we are of those who sorrow with hope and are not of those who sorrow with no hope. Carl's uniqueness rested in the fact that he was a man of rather ordinary talents, but his extraordinary priority for the church, his commonness to share, his awareness of others and his forthrightness to express scriptural convictions to all men made the church

and the community realize the uniqueness of Carl's life. Truly, this was expressed by the massive outpouring of respect by the church and the community when the word was heralded that his departure was no longer at hand, but had become a reality.—Ron Courter

WALKER—Victoria Camille of Odessa TX was born March 16, 1906 in Williamson, West Virginia and departed this life, after a long illness, December 17, 1998 in Odessa, TX. at the age of 92. Her relatives had all met their appointment with death, except her sister, Maudie Warren of Odessa, TX. who patiently and lovingly cared for her during her extended illness, even to the point of endangering her own life for the welfare of her dear sister. Sister Walker was a member of the University Blvd. Church of Christ, in Odessa, TX. and faithfully attended there until her health would not permit her to do so. Everyone who knew her, loved her, and she reciprocated in her own unique way. I had known and loved this good woman for about forty-two years and was honored when asked to say a few words at the graveside on a cold and windy West Texas day. We shall miss her down here, but if God wills, and we are faithful to the end of lifes way, we shall see her again when we all get to heaven.—C. A. Smith

WAGES—On Thursday, January 8, 1999 many friends, family, and brethren in Christ gathered at the Lunn Funeral Home in Olney, TX for the memorial of sister Rena Faye Wages, my grandmother. Sister Wages was born in Newcastle, TX on Sept. 28, 1914. She passed from this life on Jan. 4, 1999 at the age of 84. Her home congregation was the Eastside Church of Christ in Olney. She was married to Herman R. Wages on Dec. 2, 1933 in Newcastle, TX. He preceded her in death. She is survived by one son, three daughters, two brothers, three sisters, ten grandchildren, and twelve great grandchildren. The writer along with brother Leo Short conducted the service. Singing was provided by various relatives and brethren in Christ. The service focused on her attributes as compared to the description of the virtuous woman found in Proverbs 31 along with some memories of the family. We also exhorted the audience to obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to follow Him in their lives. She will be missed by all, but we know it is better that she not continue to suffer physically in this life. Her good influence will live on.—Gary Robinson

STARKEY—Cynthia Ruth Starkey of San Angelo, TX, departed this life on Nov. 27, 1998 at the age of 93. Sister Starkey was member of the Nineteenth St. Church of Christ in San Angelo. It was the writer's privilege to baptize Sister Starkey into Christ on Aug. 10, 1986. If my math is correct that would have made her 81 years old when she was baptized. It was a beautiful day when her family and brothers and sisters in Christ gathered at the Lawnhaven Memorial Gardens to pay their respects to the memory of this lovely lady. Sister Starkey is survived by three daughters, Dorothy Morrison, Barbara Gengo, and Edie Arhelger, and one daughter-in-law, Judy Starkey. She is also survived by a brother and three sisters. Sister Starkey leaves behind 10 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

Curtis Morrison said of Sister Starkey, "A man couldn't have had a better mother-in-law." Surely that is a wonderful compliment coming from a son-in-law. The writer endeavored to speak words of comfort and warning to those present.—Melvin Blalock

RIVERS—Brother Joe Rivers was born on December 7, 1928 in Memphis, TN. He obeyed the gospel at the age of thirty six in Memphis and later moved to Chicago where he was the backbone of the Church in South Chicago for many, many years. Since 1991, when I moved to the Chicago area, until his death, Joe was a true inspiration to me personally as well as our entire congregation at the DuPage County Church of Christ. Joe supported every endeavor-Bible studies, Gospel Meetings, singing schools as well as preaching and teaching the gospel at every opportunity. Brother Joe Brewer and others officiated at the funeral service and followed Joe's request that the gospel of Christ be preached. Brother Brewer did a great job of honoring Joe's request, as Christians in attendance were edified and the lost certainly heard the gospel preached in a way that could be clearly understood. The singing and prayers were beautiful. Joe leaves his beloved wife Earlean, one daughter-Urshula, two sisters, three brothers and a host of relatives and of course his beloved Lowe Street congregation. The family asked me to express their thanks to all the Brothers and Sisters for their prayers, calls, participation, love and support. May God, who is the giver of all good and perfect things, bless each of you.—Baine Adams

WHEAT—On October 21, 1998, Brother Raymond Perry Wheat, passed from this life to cross over the chilling waters of death. The wake of his passing left behind a river of aching hearts and a flood of memories, which shall be a constant reminder of his Christian influence on those of us who knew him best. Raymond, was a member of the Church of Christ, in Huntsville, Arkansas for many years. What a great blessing to have known him and his family for many years. Brother Wheat was always an inspiration in life, a wonderful friend, but above all a Christian and fellow laborer in the Lord. My daughter asked on one occasion, "Daddy, can we go to church where that little man goes?" You see even the children loved his wit and humor for which he was so well known. His own family spoke of him as a man of integrity, one to be honored. Raymond, can best be described as a great soldier for the

Lord, for he held the shield of faith with strength using the word as his only defense against evil. I assisted Brother Jimmie Smith, who spoke at the funeral services with words that comforted, and consoled the family. Only four weeks earlier Jimmie had assisted Brother Ronnie Wade, with Raymond's wife's services here at the same place, now they rest together in the Lord. The congregation at Hartwell, will miss Raymond, but I am sure they will never forget the little man with the heart of gold. What a treat to have known this man and to have shared his life.—Roger L. Owens

GENTRY—Ola Mae Gentry was born Sept. 20, 1900 in Drake, Indian Territory and departed this life Jan. 20, 1999 at Sulphur, OK at the age of 98. She was preceded in death by her husband, Archie in 1963. Survivors include two daughters, Marilyn Gilbert and Loetta Lemons, of Ardmore, OK and a son, Allen Gentry, of Everett, WA, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Sister Gentry was an old-time member of the church in Sulphur. She lived a life of faithfulness, kindness and devotion and was always encouraging and optimistic. The funeral was conducted by Clagg Funeral Home in Sulphur on Jan. 22 by the writer, assisted by Jerry Gilbert.—Johnny Elmore

GILBERT—Jerry R. Wayne Gilbert was born September 10, 1927 in Nebo, OK and departed this life Jan. 27, 1999 at the age of 71. He is survived by three daughters, Nina Pittman and Lenita Tuck, of Norman, and Janece Owens, of Sulphur; one son, LaWayne Gilbert, of Sulphur, one sister, Analois Walker, of Gaithersburg, MD; three brothers, Ozell and Dale Gilbert, of Sulphur, and Donnie Gilbert, of Prague; six grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren and other relatives. Jerry was known to many across the brotherhood as one of the leaders of the Sulphur congregation, but he also served locally, preaching, conducting funerals, baptizing people and other things that preachers do. He owned and operated Jerry's Shoe & Vacuum Cleaner Repair. A large crowd attended the funeral Jan. 29, conducted from the building of the Vinita Avenue Church of Christ in Sulphur. Just eight days earlier, Jerry assisted the writer in sister Gentry's funeral, where he encouraged the audience to turn away from the sorrows and cares of this life and think on the rewards ahead. His departure is a tragic reminder to us to be prepared for death may come sooner than we think. Miles King and the writer conducted the funeral.—Johnny Elmore



Kevin W. Presley, Rt. 2 Box 166, Kinston, AL 36453, (334) 898-1301, the bible@alaweb.com—The new year has renewed our optimism for the Lord's work in this area.

Our new congregation in the city of Dothan is doing well and we have a number of goals and plans of action we hope to implement in the next few weeks and months. Come by and worship with us sometime. It was good to hear Lynwood Smith preach two good sermons recently. We here at home anxiously await our spring meetings. My first meeting will be March 15-21 at Piedmont, AL and then on to Jacksonville, FL on March 24-28. Keep us in your prayers.

Douglas T. Hawkins, P.O. Box 728, Brodhead, KY 40409, Feb. 1, 1999—We are eagerly looking forward to the work here at home and in meetings. By the time you read this report, Lord willing, the Blue Springs congrega-

tion with the financial help of area churches will have begun a television program on WKYT channel 27, a CBS affiliate in Lexington. We look forward to the work in this area and the results of our efforts. Let me encourage every congregational leader to think seriously about utilizing this media to evangelize their area. Despite the times we are living in, several churches across the land are busy in the Lord's vineyard. We all need to be. Perhaps that would eliminate a lot of feuds between brethren. If we're busy working, we have less time for fighting. My first meeting is in Early Town, AL Feb. 26-March 7. I look forward to seeing Bro. Kevin Presley and working with him in this effort. Next we will be in Holyoke, CO March 12-14. From there we go to Lexington, OK March 15-21 and then to Bridgeport, TX March 25-28. If you're able, make plans to be with us.

Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808, E-Mail rf Wade@juno.com, Feb. 15—Since last report we have been privileged to preach at the following churches: Lebanon and Springfield, MO; Nashville, TN; Jacksonville and Tampa, FL; and the new congregation in Opp, AL. It was good to see brethren in all these places. Currently we are working with the home church and continuing the T.V. program which is now seen here in Springfield, San Angelo, TX and Nashville, TN. We are hoping and praying for good results in all these locations. Lord willing we will be with the church in Edmond, OK for a meeting March 7-14, Liberty, KY March 24-April 4 and Linville, OH April 4 (p.m.)-April 11. We look forward to the work in all these meetings. Remember us in your prayers.

Virgilio O. Danao, Sr., 94-371 Ikepono Street, Waipahu, Hawaii 96797, Phone & Fax Number (808) 680-0249, February 10, 1999—The preaching itinerary January 2 to 18, of Bro. Don L. King and Bro. Duane Peramenter in the Philippines yielded 41 precious souls who were baptized in water for the remissions of their sins held in different places there. There were also eight brethren who were restored from the digressive Church of Christ; two of them are leaders of three local congregations that are now observing the Communion, like we do. The entire brotherhood in the Philippines is at peace and growing spiritually. I interpreted for Bro. King and Bro. Permenter. Once again, I found them both to be capable and dedicated preachers of our Lord Jesus Christ. Bro. Permenter has shown improvement in his biblical knowledge and in his sermon delivery and style. But special words of appreciation and gratefulness is in order for Bro. King because of his continued concern, sacrifices and dedication to the Lord's work in the Philippines since 1981. Also a heartfelt thanks to all, who, in one way to the other, continue to pray and extend financial supports to the works related to the Lord's work in my country. The work here in Hawaii also continues to manifest spiritual growth. I pray the present trend of the brothers here regarding their desire to participate and to be used in the Church activities, especially during worship services, continues, so that we may be able to develop teachers. Perhaps, this is the result of our leadership training held every Sunday afternoon (4:00-5:30 p.m.), where they are taught to pray and preside in the Church services, etc. During Wednesday evenings, we study verse-by-verse the epistles of the Apostle Paul. We have already studied First and Second Thessalonians, and First Timothy. We continue

our efforts for personal evangelism and the use of our radio program. We are sowing "seed" of salvation, expecting to reap harvests in due time. Pray for us and the Lord's work here in Hawaii. Please take note of my new address. May I also thank those who continue to extend financial support to us and the Lord's work here. May our Lord in Heaven remunerate you with abundant material blessings everyday for your continued generosity, love and concern. May God Bless!

Brett Hickey, P.O. Box 6506 Ventura, CA 93003, (805) 658-7860, E-Mail brett.hickey@juno.com, January 11—Although we have spent much of the last five weeks on the road, we have gained five new studies locally. Our first visit with the Stockton congregation was memorable. It was good to associate with elders James Mason and Gene Youngblood and preaching brethren Bennie Cryer, Alan Bonifay, Ryan Connor, G.V. Ayers and Jim Winchester. The meeting received impressive area support, especially among the young. We enjoyed Gene and Sandy Youngblood's gracious hospitality. We felt right at home. On our way to the OK New Year's meeting we were able to visit the new congregation in Allen, TX where my parents recently moved. This vibrant group is filled with talented and committed Christians content to walk in the "Old Paths." Aaron Risener and the Allen brethren are already making a mark on the community. Several visitors were there the Sunday I spoke. Some have been coming regularly. April, a friend of a high school member, was baptized last week. The New Year's meeting was unsurpassed by any of the two dozen I have attended. It must be encouraging for youth to see hundreds of other dedicated young Christians. More impressive yet was the evident conviction of the twenty young men who presented powerful five-minute sermons on the last night. On our way home we spent the night with Randy and Cynthia Tidmore at El Paso. Randy works with a Spanish and an English congregation. What a challenging, but rewarding work. If the Lord wills, we will be with the following congregations in upcoming months: Lodi, CA Feb. 26-28; Fremont, CA Mar. 26-28; Atwater, CA April 16-25; Bakersfield, CA (Plan) May 30; Huntsville, AR June 19-26; Mtn. Home, AR June ?.

Roger L. Owens, 16767, Hernon Drive, Neosho, MO 64850, Telephone 417-455-2497—What a joy the year has brought to all of us here at Neosho. The congregation at West Hwy. 60, have come through some hard battles the last two years, but the Lord has been our guide and stay. Peace is our current back drop and we move forward with great expectations for the years ahead, Lord willing. Our numbers have remained steady although some have moved to other congregations while others have fallen away. We pray for those to whom the world has swayed to disadvantage. I have spent the last two years, for the most part, right here at home. Currently I am speaking at the Eldon, MO congregation on a monthly basis. The brethren at Eldon, are very eager to learn and grow from the book. Since our last writing we have had some go on to their reward and we miss them so very much. I would ask that your prayers be offered in our behalf as we have so many that are ill and unable to attend on a regular basis. Currently we have five (5) who speak at the congregation each month, they are Jerry Owens, Eddie Owens, Lee Owens, Dan Heffren and myself. I would be remiss not to mention

the wonderful meetings this year. Brother Jimmie Smith, came in June and kept us spellbound from night to night. We love Jimmie and look forward to having him back in the area soon. Then to cap it off Brother Bennie Cryer, came rolling in the first of August with a thundering ten days of wonderment from God's great book. We have booked Bennie to return in the year 2000. Neosho has accepted the responsibility to host the year 2000 Labor Day Meeting and we are already planning for that. Brethren, if you have never been to this meeting you owe it to yourself and your family to come. I have time to conduct some weekend meetings if you have a need, I would love to get to know many of you better. Also I have time to conduct week long meetings, but I do need advance notice, please. If you do not know me and would like to investigate I welcome that and ask that you do as God has requested, "by providing all things." Folks who know me best are people such as, John Scott, Neosho, MO; Ronny Wade, Springfield, MO; Ron Alexander, Marshfield, MO; many of the folks at Blue Springs, KY and folks all over the state of Arkansas. Brethren, the church here at Neosho send our love and prayers to all of you, but especially those of other countries where daily living is from day to day. May the peace of God be with you, Amen.

Miles King, Rt. # 1 Box 115, Scotland, AR 72141 (501) 592-3956 Feb. 4th, 1999—The year has started off real good in our area. We were at Lamar, AR during January where we had six baptized. We compliment the brethren there for their good personal work and give God the glory and praise! We are hoping and praying for more results at Lamar this month when Jimmy Cating comes for a meeting — Feb. 12-14th. I'm looking forward to a weekend meeting at La Marque, TX. March 19 thru 21st. April 11-18 is our meeting at Mozier, Illinois. Brethren, please pray for our effort.

Barney Owens 8782 Meadowview Ln. W. Chester, OH 45069—It was a pleasure being with the congregation at Burkheart, MO for their yearly meeting during the national "Thanksgiving Day Holiday." It was good to see those from other congregations attending. Larry Combs came from Council Hill, OK. others from AR. and OK. and MO. Our next meeting will be at Imperial, NE Feb. 3-7. Then Mt. Home, AR Mar. 6-14; Birmingham, AL Mar. 31-Apr. 4. If you are near please plan to come and help us. Your prayers are needed that I might have the things needed to be effective in the Vineyard of Christ.

C.A. Smith, 810 NW 6th, Andrews, TX 79714—We are still waging the fight for truth and right here in Andrews, and while it seems sometimes that little is being accomplished, yet we know that if we do all that we can for the Lord, much is being accomplished and the end result will be, if we continue faithful to the end, a home in heaven. We consider ourselves fortunate here, though few in number to have faithful brethren and sisters who are willing to spend and be spent for the Lord and His cause. So, we will keep planting and watering and depend upon the Lord for the increase. The New Years meeting in Oklahoma City was so enjoyable. To see so many precious brethren and sisters at one setting was a blessing indeed. Then to hear the melodic voices as they sang praises to our God was an overwhelming joy, plus the wonderful added bonus of hearing God's preachers declaring the Oracles of God,

made it a memorable experience that we shall not soon forget. All were uplifted and encouraged and hopefully inspired to greater service for the Lord in 1999. We had two wonderful meetings in 1998 with Kevin Presley and Randy Tidmore. When you go to God in prayer, please remember us and the cause here in Andrews. God bless all of His.

Richard L. Frizzell, 2500 Adams St. Paducah, KY. 42003. Ph. (502) 415-0540—On my way to KY. I preached at Dardanelle, AR. and stayed one night with Morris & Maudine Reynolds, It was sure good to see them again. I arrived here in Paducah, KY. on Jan. 7 -99. I have been very busy going door to door. I have two home studies going, one couple said they would come to church on Sunday. I hope to get more interest in the near future. Gene & Nancy Anderson are good church workers. The Church here in Paducah, is small and need all the help they can get. If you are traveling this way please stop and worship with us. A full time personal worker is needed here, (see Announcements). The NEW HOPE congregation in Brookhaven, MS. is supporting the work here in Paducah, KY. I deeply appreciate the support and the work they are doing for the cause of Christ. I will return to OK. on March 15 or 16 after stopping over the weekend in AR. Please pray for an increase in the family of God.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, February 11—In January we made the 19th trip to the Philippines along with Brother Duane Permenter. (see report elsewhere) The work there is well and growing. It was wonderful to get home, as always. Since then we have preached at Fremont and at Yuba City, Ca. We continue to study with the younger men weekly about a variety of Bible topics. Presently, we are studying things, which have been issues through the years such as the innovations, etc. We appreciate their interest. Allow me to thank the brethren who have sent field reports to the paper recently. Please continue this and encourage others also. We continue to need your articles. Send them either on a diskette or double-spaced and typed, please. Our E-Mail address is Old_Paths@Juno.com. We are told by one or two that they can not reach us. However, others have. Please keep trying. Someone sent us a fax a few days ago (3 pages) that had no identity at all and no content. Only a heading from perhaps some business. If you sent a fax to us and it isn't published, please send it again. Pray for us.

Richard DeGough, 1907 Tully Rd., Hughson, Calif. 95326, February 10, 1999—I am happy to give a brief report in the O.P.A. My work of preaching in the nearby places continue. We have been encouraged lately in different congregations, as well as my home church with departed souls returning, and others making confessions of sins. The church seems to me, at least where I preach the most, to be more intense and concerned with the work of the Lord going forth just about every where. This is a good attitude I think. Recently, I preached at Atwater, Turlock and Fremont. The church in Fremont has a wealth of young men and women to keep the church working for years to come. I give credit to the parents and the teachers, who preach and teach sound doctrine. Also, the house is "filled" with babies that represent the future of the church beyond their parents' day. It thrills my heart to see such and to have the opportunity to preach there often. I was glad to

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be with brother Don King, who had just returned from the Philipines safely. Don deserves credit for grounding them in the faith, and encouraging them in their work. Atwater is like a second home to me. Two Wednesday night's a month and one Lord's day I preach there. The brethren are sound in the faith and working hard. They are not as fortunate as some churches with several teachers, so they ask help from nearby. They miss brother Johnny Broughton, as I do, but they go forward with enthusiasm anyway. Brother Larry McElroy, Henry Fields, Richard Arnold, Rocky Hill are the men there. They are good men and sound. I have appreciated the fine gospel preachers I heard recently and look forward to hearing Don McCord, Matt Hayes, in Oakdale and Stockton in the near future. May God bless all my brethren. I am looking forward to being with the brethren in Jonesboro, Georgia, March 27-April 4, and Lowery, Alabama, April 7-11 this year. Please come if you can.

Keith Thomson, 5 Carringal Place, Armadale, Western Austria—My family and I arrived in Russia on the 11th of November and have continually been blessed by our Lord's care and compassion. This is the second time that my wife, Anne and son, Jamie have accompanied me to Russia. It has been a privilege to have worked with the brethren here as I have again found them to be faithful and loving of the truth. The greatest proportion of our time has been spent with the congregation here in Penza, but we have also been able to visit the church in Moscow and Saransk. Both of these churches are very small and are calling out for help. The church in Moscow was started by a young Christian family, Serge and Olga, who have continued steadfastly to preach the word. They have met with some successes and many disappointments, but there are now five faithful Christians meeting in that church. I have been closely associated with the church in Saransk for three years now and have visited there many times. That church has been wracked with problems, with the leaders falling into apostasy and teaching false doctrines in the church. Many were lost at that time, but there remained a faithful few. In the middle of last year I was told that these few no longer met and all were going to different denominational churches. We went to Saransk on this visit to Penza to see if we could salvage something. When we got there I found that my contacts in Saransk had indeed gone over, but there were still three that continued to meet faithfully. This group have withstood all the attacks that Satan has delivered but they have stood fast. They need our continued prayers and help. Working with the church in Penza is always a great joy. The Christians here truly know the meaning of Christian hospitality. There is always a helping hand here

when the little problems that are associated with living in a foreign country arise. Each week we conducted three private studies which were all well attended. During our time here we completed an overview of the life of Christ, a detailed study of the Sermon on the Mount and we worked through a number of the Lord's parables. Each of these studies were followed up by a number of questions from the brethren, some of them, I have to admit, were quite difficult to answer! As well as the brethren who attended we also had a few visitors that came along regularly. Just prior to our visit here, brother Raymond Fox was working here for a short time. During that time he baptized three sisters into the church. In our visit I was able to study with these three women. My family and I were also able to accompany one young sister, Masha, to visit her family in their village about half an hour train trip from Penza. We were welcomed into a warm and friendly home and were showered by their hospitality. Her family was very happy that having left the family home she had found such a good family in the church. They were interested in the church and her father, Pavel later came to one of the studies and said that he would bring his family to the Lord's day services. The church here in Penza is in a good position. There are strong and faithful members who love the truth and hate the works of Satan. Unfortunately the church is lacking strong teachers. They will continue to need help in this area, but they are truly worthy of this help. The churches of Moscow and Saransk also continue to call out for help. I pray that there are those who hear their cries and are willing to go and help them. Finally I would like to thank those brethren who have helped us with this trip. Without their valuable assistance we would not have been able to come here and help with the Lord's work. May the Lord bless you for your love of His work.

Johnny Elmore, 419 KSW, Ardmore, OK 73401, Feb. 8—Last month we baptized a lady here in Ardmore, and on the fourth Sunday, we enjoyed our usual day with lunch and singing after the morning worship and an early afternoon service. That afternoon, I received a call from brother Hubert Fultz of the Dougherty congregation to baptize a man and his wife at Davis, OK, which I was happy to do. I was impressed with this couple and was glad to know that they are still trying to work and worship at Dougherty. Sally and I stayed for evening services at Davis, and heard Paul Melton speak. We also heard Tony Denton at Ratliff City Jan. 29-30. I expect to be at Hillcrest, near Brookhaven, MS March 8-14 for singing instruction and to preach, and at London, KY March 17-21 for the same purposes.

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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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THE CHRISTIAN AND CARNAL WARFARE

By PAUL O. NICHOLS

The name Christian in the title has reference to a person who is in covenant relationship with the Heavenly Father, and the theme deals with the relationship between that person and the conflicts of the nations of the world. The subject has nothing to do with what an alien sinner may or may not do, but to the Christian's attitude toward carnal war.

The one who approaches any subject with prejudice and a biased mind is very inapt to derive a great deal of benefit from his investigations. But if one will always study the Bible with the attitude, "Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth: Command and I will obey," or as Jesus, in Luke 22:42, "Not my will, but thine be done," he will be blessed with greater understanding of the will of God. And if he will resolve in his heart to put into practice the things he learns to be the truth, he can be assured of being the recipient of eternal happiness.

I have the deepest sympathy for suffering and sorrowing humanity, for the mothers and fathers who have had sons snatched from their loving bosoms; for the wives who have had husbands torn from their aching hearts; for the girls whose would-be companions, with whom they planned to make a home, were taken from them; for the boys who have been forced into war. It is not with disregard for souls involved in carnal conflicts, but my stand is motivated by a love for truth of God, souls of men and a hope of future happiness beyond this veil of sin and tears.

It is thoroughly possible for us to deal with hypothetical situations, and many do on this issue, but our hypothetical questions do not change the truth of God's word. The Bible remains as unchangeable as God Himself, "With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (Jas. 1:27). Therefore, we will deal with facts and the duties enjoined upon us. On the spur of the moment or in time of great excitement a person might do something drastically unscriptural, but the situation would not alter the truth nor change the Bible.

The prophet Isaiah, approximately seven hundred years before its fulfillment uttered this prophecy: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths...and he shall judge among the nations,

and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nations shall not lift up sword against nations, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isa. 2:2-4). It is true that the people of God under the old Mosaic dispensation fought in wars and God was with them, but this prophet said after the house of the Lord was established, God's people would not "learn war anymore." The house of God is the church (1 Tim. 3:15).

Down through the halls of time one can hear the loving voice of Jesus Christ, echoing and reechoing the sermon on the mount, the greatest series of truths that ever fell on the ear of fast decaying morality. Our attention is arrested by verses 43-48 of Matthew chapter 5. Jesus says, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy, but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh this sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." But, He was laying the foundation for the Christian religion for which He was soon to give Himself through excruciating pain and agony on Golgotha's brow. When the tone of love is lost, then comes a discord in the beautiful harmony of the Holy Scriptures, more disagreeable than any discord ever heard by natural ear. In fact, when one loses love, he loses God, "for God is love" (1 John 4:8).

On one occasion Peter whipped out his sword to defend Jesus. But did our Lord condone his actions? No! He said to him, "Put up thy sword into this place: For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:52). If a person were justified in defending anyone, it certainly would be Jesus Christ, our Lord. However, Jesus did not justify fighting with carnal weapons, even to defend Him. In fact, He said, "My kingdom is not of this world; If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews" (John 18:36). What about fighting for others? "He that loveth father or mother more than me isn't worthy of me" (Matt. 10:37). When Jesus told Peter to put up his sword, he sheathed the

continued on page five

CONTENTS

Vol. LXXIII No. 4



ADVOCATE

ANNOUNCEMENTS 7-10

The Christian And Carnal Warfare 1

The Standard:

The Bible Or St. Augustine 2

The Querist Column 3

New Testament Spiritually 4

FROM THE FIELDS 10-12

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Editorial

THE STANDARD:
THE BIBLE OR ST. AUGUSTINE?

By TAYLOR A. JOYCE

The newspaper headlines proclaim on an almost daily basis that U. S. warplanes have bombed some military installation in Iraq. Such attacks have become so commonplace that they cease to be news. If the reports can be believed, the allied planes drop their bombs and return to base safely, which is quite remarkable in view of the fact that the bomb dropping is often said to be in retaliation for Iraqi anti-aircraft fire. Anyone who has watched TV and seen the way the Iraqis filled the air over Bagdad with bullets and tracers when air attacks were expected can only marvel that planes could fly through that kind of barrage and return unscathed.

In a recent national radio broadcast, "BreakPoint with Chuck Colson," Chuck said he was beginning to have serious doubts about American policy toward Iraq. He said, "Whenever our country employs military force, Christians have a duty to ask whether the use of that force meets biblical standards." It would be difficult to fault that statement. Heirs of the Restoration Movement have long contended that the Bible should be and is the only rule of faith and practice. It delineates every "good work" for which God's people are held accountable. (2 Tim. 3 :16-17) Not just the use of military force, but every contemplated action must be measured against "biblical standards."

Unfortunately, Chuck cites no biblical authority at all for anything he says in his commentary, choosing instead to look elsewhere for his standard. Hear him: "Where do Christians find guidance in judging what appears to be an intractable dilemma? We turn first to St. Augustine, who set forth what is called the Just War Theory, which has guided the church for centuries in determining when and how military power should be employed." (Emphasis mine.) Isn't that an amazing statement from one who has just talked about the "duty to ask whether the use of that force meets biblical standards?" Does Colson think that the writings of Augustine are the same thing as biblical authority?

Augustine was born in 354 and died in 430. He served as bishop of Hippo from 396 until the time of his death. The biblical canon had been closed for 300 years before Augustine made his pronouncement on the Just War Theory. Only the Bible can provide biblical authority. A document written 300 years after the completion of the Bible could only represent human opinion and human authority.

The great deceiver has had no greater success in this world than in blinding the minds of decent people to the ultimate source of authority. He has convinced the masses that something other than the Bible can serve as a source of authority. Their feelings, the creeds written and adopted

continued on page seven

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: How should we conduct ourselves toward our children or other family members who have quit the church and are considered "out of duty?" (MO)

Answer: The Scriptures do not directly address this question, however, they do offer us some guidelines that will aid us in answering it. In Galatians 6:1 we are told "If a man be overtaken in a trespass, ye who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted." If a Christian brother, any Christian brother, commits a sin, then other persons in whom spiritual life is dominant, are to restore such an one in the spirit of meekness. This, I believe, is a command, that we actively seek to restore the fallen. We certainly cannot restore one who has fallen unless we go to that individual and make some effort to do so. We are not to ignore, forget, overlook, such people but "go after them" in an attempt to save them. Then Paul adds "looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Coffman observes here "The deceitful and seductive nature of sin being what it is, the child of the Lord should tread fearfully in the presence of any who have broken the sacred Law, being constantly aware that the same lure of the forbidden which has already trapped a brother might also entangle himself in disobedience." In the Old Testament God warned and plead with His children (Israel) to repent and return to Him. In Isaiah 1:2 He declared "I have nourished and brought up children, And they have rebelled against Me;" In Jeremiah 3:12-14, under the figure of marriage, He pleads "Return backsliding Israel, says the Lord; I will not cause my anger to fall on you for I am merciful, says the Lord; I will not remain angry forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity, That you have transgressed against the Lord your God, And have scattered your charms to alien deities under every green tree, And you have not obeyed my voice, says the Lord. Return, O backsliding children says the Lord for I am married to you..." One cannot read these verses without feeling the hurt and intense desire for restoration on the part of God. They underscore both His interest and love for His fallen people along with his verbal efforts to effect a reconciliation. Just such a care as this should characterize us when dealing with anyone who has fallen away from the faith. In First Corinthians 5 Paul deals with one who has been withdrawn from by the church because of immoral behavior. (Even though this is a different situation than one where an individual has ceased being faithful and voluntarily quit the church, there are some points we need to consider.) Regarding this person, the saints are told to, "deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," "purge out the old leaven," "not keep company with," and "with such an one not even to eat." Regarding the latter Zerr says "But such an act (eating) itself meant more in old times than it does today; read the following passages. (Gen. 26:30, 1Kings 13:15, Prov.23:6, Mt.24:49, Mk.2: 16, Acts 11:3, Gal.2:12). From these we may see that the act of eating with others had a social significance formerly that it does not have today. However, the same principle holds good now, and the restriction not

to company with means any act or association that would indicate a social recognition. If a man has been excluded on such charges as are named in the present passage, others are forbidden to be intimate with him, for such an association would encourage him to continue in his sinful life, thinking himself to be as good as those who associate with him." The teaching is here clear and to the point. We may do nothing with a person from whom the church has withdrawn that would give him/her the idea that we condone their wrong doing or behavior. There are several things that should be noted here: (1) those from whom we retreat are not to be counted as enemies, but as brethren, (2) we are to admonish them, 2Thess. 3:15, (3) this suggests that we may still have a particular, limited contact with such persons, else how can we admonish them? Two dangers emerge regarding our contact with such persons. One is to completely ignore the person. How can a fallen brother be admonished if we never go around him or make contact with him? The second danger is to be too friendly, to the point that the person feels no shame. Now, let us try and put all this in perspective as it relates to unfaithful family members i.e. those who have ceased being faithful and quit the church. The obligation of the faithful is first of all to God, but they also have an obligation to function as members of a family. The husband, for example, would not leave home if his wife were noted, since that would cause him to break another law (1Timothy 5:8). The wife would remain at home lest she violate the command to be an helpmeet and mother (1Cor.7, Eph.5:31). Obviously children should not leave home (Eph. 6:1-3). The family relationship is not to be broken in such matters. Each member of the family must function according to the will of God. Guy N. Woods says regarding 1Cor.5:11 "It seems clear that Paul was not alluding to a relationship involving husband and wife in this passage cited. The laws of God are never in conflict, all truth is harmonious with itself, and the principles under which God ordains we are to live are never contradictory. Wives have duties to their husbands whether they are Christians or not and these duties harmonize with their obligations as Christians as well. Marriage relationships were designed of God to take precedence over all other relationships; any situation later arising must be understood in light of this fact. The Christian wife should therefore continue to live with her husband and use her influence to bring him to repentance." By the same token a teen-age son or daughter who quits the church should not be run off from home. Parents still have an obligation to house, feed, and supervise their children. The fact that their child is no longer faithful to the Lord does not relieve them of that duty. It is understood, of course, that family members who are interested in the souls of their children will do nothing to encourage them in their sin by misplaced sympathy, and that even though family relationships will continue, they are very distressed for the soul of the wayward child and greatly desire their repentance. When a family member leaves the church there may be feelings of hurt, anger, resentment, and guilt. We should all remember that anger is a distancing emotion. If

I know you are angry with me, I will tend to stay away from you. I may even become angry with you. In a situation like this no one wins, we both lose. Grief, on the other hand, is a closing emotion. Grief brings people closer together. When we see loved ones grieve, we want to help and comfort them. If we could remember that becoming angry at a wayward child only tends to drive them farther away perhaps we would not make the mistake of saying things that we later regret. If wayward family members see genuine grief on our part because of their condition they are much more likely to respond to our concern and appeals. For purposes of summary and clarification we suggest the following do's and don'ts for family members of those who have children, parents, or siblings who have left the church:

Things To Do

1. Actively seek the restoration of the family member. At every opportunity express your love, concern, and desire for their restoration. (This cannot be in a vindictive manner or with an "I am holier than thou" attitude (Gal.6:1). Whether we realize it or not those who have left the church know if we are coming to them out of genuine concern and love or if we are motivated by spite, a desire to get even, or a condescending attitude. They know if we are brokenhearted over their condition, or if we happily consign them to the regions of the doomed. 2. Pray daily for their restoration. 3. Keep the avenues of communication open at all times. (To shut yourself off from the wayward is to destroy any opportunity to reach them.) 4. Continue to live faithful lives of service yourself, and be a true example of the believers.

Things To Avoid

1. Do not fall into the trap of blaming yourself for the unfaithfulness of a family member. We all make mistakes,

and it may be that in some situations we did things that we should not have done. We may have failed in certain areas, however, to shift the blame from the one who has sinned is but to reinforce the idea that some have i.e. that they are justified in what they have done. 2. Do nothing that leaves the impression you condone their sinful behavior. 3. Do not engage in "overkill." There is a point beyond which both words and actions become meaningless. Make your point, stand by what is right, but don't "run it into the ground" so to speak. To do so is counterproductive. 4. Don't become so overwhelmed with grief, that you fail in your duty to God, the Church and other Christians. A lesson demonstrating this very thing comes to us from 2 Samuel 9:1-8. David was grieving over the death of his wayward, rebellious son Absalom. Joab reminded him that those who had come to his aid and defense were being ignored while he wept for a son, who if he had succeeded, would have taken the Kingdom from him. In verse 6 he said "in that you love your enemies and hate your friends. For you have declared today that you regard neither princes nor servants; for today I perceive that if Absalom had lived and all of us had died today, then it would have pleased you well." The lesson is plain. David, in his grief, had forgotten others, very important others of whom he should have been mindful. By the same token, we cannot allow our grief to separate us from the Lord or His Church. 5. Don't give up. As long as there is life, there is hope. My heart goes out to all those parents who have to deal with a wayward son or daughter. The road you travel is difficult and lonely. Let me encourage you to keep fighting. Don't let the devil win this battle. Keep working, keep praying, and never be satisfied until your loved one is reclaimed for the Lord. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 10811 Springfield, Mo. 65808)

NEW TESTAMENT SPIRITUALITY

By BRETT HICKEY

It may have happened to you. You invite people to a gospel meeting. Most people give one of several common responses. But one man is different. He studies your flier, looks you in the eyes, and asks, "Is your church spiritual?" You may be taken back by his genuine interest and forthrightness. You make sure you can answer truthfully in the affirmative, then you say confidently, "Yes, our congregation is spiritual!" Then he describes what he means by a "spiritual" church. Obviously, you misunderstood his question.

This young man equated "spirituality" with impulsive behavior. This philosophy holds that the "Holy Spirit's presence" should spark congregational spontaneity. The sign in front of the meeting place gives fair warning, "God is doing a new thing." Every service has its own surprises. Worship is an adventure. Of course, this kind of "spirituality" has to be jump-started by a impetuous "pastor" who teams up with a talented band. The same "spirituality" cools as the service is brought to a close. As they leave, you can hear talk about the power of the Holy Spirit, the talented musicians and the lively service. Personal "needs" are met. These facts are indisputable. But was the Lord exalted? Was God's Word glorified? With reference to our prior conversation, would this qualify as

New Testament spirituality?

There is no scriptural precedent for advocating that the saints' assembly is a suitable theater for esoteric experience and personal fulfillment. One preacher aptly wrote, "Heartfelt religion is not a physical sensation, it is not something to get or lose, to excite or confuse..." What some label spirituality is actually sensuality, or artificial spirituality — the opposite of true spirituality. To be sensual is to be carnal — concerned more about personal pleasure than pleasing God. Paul contrasted the two in Romans 8. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

As for "Doing a New Thing," the modernization of technology and transportation can be used to God's glory. "New things" can, however, be deadly in spiritual matters. Jude echoes the sentiment of Jeremiah's cry (6:16), "ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3) Other New Testament writers voice their opposition to modernizing the apostolic system (I Tim. 4:1; 2 Pt.2: 1-2; I Jn.2:24).

PERSONAL BENEFITS FROM WORSHIP?

Does serving God — worshipping God — satisfy the emotional needs of the Christian? Yes, in the same way that the child is rewarded when he knows he has pleased

his father and mother. This, however, is a by-product of "doing the will of the father," not the primary motive for service and worship. In a day when many worship and serve the creature more than the creator, God's people must remember that true worship is directed heavenward. In Acts 8 the Ethiopian official "went on his way rejoicing" because he obeyed the Father's will. The Apostles reckoned their beating (Acts 5) a blessing because they knew they had obeyed God. Their joy rested in knowing that they stood up for Christ despite the consequences. In other words, Christians first seek to please God. This results in personal satisfaction. These Christians are certainly spiritual in that their genuine desire to please God leads them to willing submission to his word.

But what about the dangerous trend in the religious world represented by this young man? Heart on. Mind off. Careful introspection is supplanted by meaningless bodily exercise. Self gratification overruns self-examination. Paul's counsel is overlooked or at least inadequately observed. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves..." (2 Cor. 13:5) Instead, overzealous and misguided "evangelists" expect converts to be buzzing, "speaking in tongues" and shouting "hallelujah" almost incessantly. This is what they call spirituality. To them, this is holiness. Is it because the Holy Spirit's prescription for true spirituality and genuine joy is too simple, too monotonous? Paul advises believers in Phil. 4, "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." Meanwhile, the masses reject the apostolic pattern and truth is trampled in the process.

Euphoria, ecstatic utterances, hour-long fits of laughter and other unbridled "celebrations" of God's goodness are, at best, sensual substitutes for people not stimulated by plain Gospel preaching. When surveying the New Testament, it is hard to imagine assemblies bubbling over with laughter or being entertained by eccentric performances. A more realistic reconstruction would include audiences, like that of Matthew 5-7 and John 6, spell-bound by Christ's teaching.

When Paul and Silas prayed and sung the gospel story (Acts 16), I envision, not a frenetic bunch, but a reflective jailer and curious prisoners. The assembly of Acts 20 was peaceful enough for Eutychus to slumber. The religious huckster faults preachers like Paul and defends the modern day Eutychus: "The services are not 'spiritual' enough. You need something more exciting, interactive,

entertaining."

The apostle to the Gentiles, however, spoke repeatedly of spirituality as an abiding quality. "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." "If any man think himself be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." "...ye which are spiritual, restore such an one...." A person's spirituality is not gauged by his level of physical exertion or vocal assertiveness in the assembly. Rather, spirituality is demonstrated by the extent a man or woman submits to God's word and, consequently, how closely their life resembles that of the Savior (Jn. 6:63; Gal. 5:22-23; I Cor. 11:1-2; Phil. 2:5-8). Therefore, the spiritual person is mentally immersed in every act of worship. With the exception of singing, the spiritual individual may be as still and quiet as the pew he is sitting on.

On the other hand, those dissatisfied with the dignified, orderly interaction between preacher and audience, demonstrate the same selfishness and immaturity for which Corinth was chastised (I Cor. 12-14). In fact, when Paul admonishes the spiritually challenged Corinthians, he is really saying, "Settle down." He wrote, "For God is not the author of confusion², but of peace³, as in all churches of the saints...Let all things be done decently and in order." Relevant advice for those genuinely interested in spiritual worship.

Any human, whether devoted to God or not, is capable of speaking out and moving about. What separates the spiritual from the unspiritual is the willingness to continue in the word (Jn. 8:31) without the worldly bells and whistles — to worship God without making personal pleasure first priority. Ironically, Corinth, the congregation that overemphasized external displays — that put too much focus on tongue-speaking (in the age when such actually took place) — received the lengthiest rebuke for carnality. In chapter 3, Paul called them spiritual babies. Whenever anyone or anything is elevated above the written word or the Word incarnate, the Lord's cause suffers and truth is camouflaged.

² **Confusion** = "instability. . . a state of disorder, disturbance, confusion, tumult" — *Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words*. The same word is translated "commotions" in Lk. 2 1:9.

³ **Peace** = "...quietness, rest..." — *Strong's Greek Dictionary*. This word is translated "quietness" in Acts 24:2.

THE CHRISTIAN AND CARNAL WARFARE

continued from page 1

sword of every disciple for all time. And when a Christian takes up a carnal weapon, he does it without the sanction of our Lord whether it is used offensively or defensively. Remember, Jesus said, "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 10:39).

When John the Baptist, who was chosen to "prepare the way of the Lord" (Mark 1:3), came into all the country about Jordon preaching "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, many people came to him desiring this baptism. Among the number that approached him were some soldiers "demanding of him, saying and what shall

we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man...." (Luke 3:14). John was preparing the way of the Lord.

The advocates for Christians going to war and using carnal weapons to fight the enemy run to Romans 13 in an attempt to justify their position, and especially the first few verses. "Be subject to the higher powers...Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation...for he is the minister of God, for he beareth not the sword in vain...for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Rom. 13:1-4). Such individuals harp loud and long on these verses, but seemingly fail to realize that there might be more truth in this same chapter if they would just check. In verses 8 through 10,

the writer says, "Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal; Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

Those same advocates, like the drowning man clutching at the proverbial straw, grab for 1 Pet. 2:13, 14 in an effort to support their own desires and lusts in the stream of Bible truth. It is true, Peter did say, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well." But this same inspired man of God said, "We ought to obey God rather than man." (Acts 5:29). We need to "rightly divide the word of truth" (1 Tim. 2:15). When God tells me to "love your enemies" (Matt. 5:44), and "Thou shalt not kill" (Rom. 13:9), and man commands me to hate and kill our enemies, I must obey God rather than men. Just as long as a Christian can obey the laws of man without disobeying the commands of God, he should try to abide by them. Christians should be some of the finest citizens of any country. The application that some try to make of 1 Pet. 2:13, 14 and Romans 13 would get Christians into terrible trouble. They seem to forget that the New Testament is for the whole world and is universal in its scope. What it says to Christians in the United States, it also says to Christians in every country. Therefore, if we are to accept the interpretation of some of Romans chapter 13, and the application they make of it, then Christians in one country would be compelled to fight and kill Christians in another country, because they must be "subject to the powers that be." And consider a civil war, as in the case of the war between the North and the South, in our own country. There were governments set up in both sections. Do the advocates of Christians fighting tell us that the Christians in the North should have killed their fellow Christians in the South, and the other way around. There is but one solution, and that is, that we should obey the laws of the land as long as they do no conflict with the laws of God. Remember, "there is no power but to God" and whatever power civil governments possess was delegated to them by the Lord, who is our King. The civil powers be "are ordained of God...For he is the minister of God to thee for good...a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." But these powers do not always stay in their place. They have frequently gone beyond the work God ordained for them, in that they have abused their powers and even persecuted and punished faithful Christians. Remember Herod, Pilate and Nero.

Sometimes a war between nations is referred to as "The Cause of God and Man," but this expression is blatantly unscriptural in its application to such wars. The cause of God is that for which many of the apostles and other Christians suffered martyrdom. That cause is the thing that true ministers of the gospel of love for God and men are giving their lives to propagate and to which they tenaciously hold and for which we earnestly contend. The true mission of the "Cause of God" is to save souls, and certainly not to

destroy lives and property.

Why are not the preachers who believe it a Christian's duty to kill in battle showing themselves "examples of the believers?" (1 Tim. 4:12). They can stand back and boast that a war is for a sacred cause, or on the sideline coach others, but they themselves would have to be forced, were they to go. If it is good and right, why aren't they in there? "He that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

If there is any Christian who can be justified in killing anyone, who is it. May a Christian kill his wife? Paul says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). May a Christian kill his brother in Christ? "We ought to lay down our lives for our brethren" (1 John 3:16). May a Christian kill his neighbor? (Mark 12:31). Well, surely if he is justified in taking the life of anyone, it would be his enemy. But, no! For Jesus says, "Love your enemies" (Matt. 5:44).

Some seem to think that should a person do them bodily harm or destroy their goods or property, they have a perfect right to retaliate. But the teaching of Jesus is, "Unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also" (Luke 6:29). And the apostle Paul said, "render not evil for evil" (1 Thes. 5:15). Again, he said, "Recompense no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome to evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:17-21).

The apostle not only told people what to do, but he showed them, as well. For instance, Paul wrote in 2 Tim. 4:14, "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil, the Lord reward him according to his works."

The Christian does have a battle before him that he must fight. It is called "the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12). This is not a carnal, but a spiritual warfare. "For to be carnally minded is death" (Rom. 8:6). "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal)." So says Paul (2 Cor. 10:3,4). Again, he says, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood" (Eph. 6:12).

We, as Christians, are as out of place engaging in a carnal conflict as the world would be trying to fight the spiritual fight. The world cannot fight the spiritual warfare without first becoming spiritual, and a Christian cannot fight in a carnal conflict without first becoming carnal.

In this world of turmoil and strife, drenched in a welter of human blood and carnage, how many of us could close our lives on earth as triumphantly and victoriously as some of the characters in the Bible. For instance, look at the apostle Paul who suffered all kinds of adversities, persecutions, afflictions and temptations, but who through every trial was made even stronger. When he faced death by decapitation at the hands of the Roman government he was able to say very resolutely, "I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at

that day..." (2 Tim. 4:6-8). Or as Stephen, the first martyr of Christ, who fell asleep in the arms of death, praying for those who were murdering him for preaching to them the truth (Acts. 7:59, 60). Or would we be able to do as Jesus did, who was spit on, slapped, beaten with the fists of His enemies, lashed with the Roman whip, and finally crucified; with nails tugging at His hands and feet, and a crown of thorns piercing His innocent brow. He prayed for his murderers, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). The apostle Paul later said, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind" (1 Pet. 4:1).

Listen to the way the poet, who was evidently a peaceloving man, even if not a Christian, put into verse what he called:

The Call To War

Send me your youth, the best of your youth,
The courageous, clean, and strong,
From city, hamlet, and countryside
Where life is a careless song.
Have him forget his house of dreams
With ivy round the door,
For I have a task for his eager feet,
Wallowing deep in gore.

In a heart that's free from brutality,
I will sow the seed of hate

Till he goes forth with a lust to kill
Like a crazed inebriate.
I'll twist his soul with shameful lies
As he carries my banners high,
And prate to him of a sacred cause,
While he stumbles out to die.

You've sent me your youth, the best of your youth
A thousand times or more,
And I've left their bones in a shallow grave
On some beleagured shore.
I've plundered the world and laid it waste,
With youth as my helpless tools.
Each time I call, you send them all,
For you are such hopeless fools.

Many times temptations raise their ugly heads before us, but with the help of God we can overcome them. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). May the Lord help us to realize the truth of this scripture, for "If a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov. 16:7).

EDITORIAL

continued from page 2

by uninspired men, the writings of Mary Baker Eddy or Joseph Smith, or the Just War Theory of Augustine—any or all of these may be used as a yard stick by which one's beliefs and behavior can be measured. The Bible then ceases to be the only and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. It must share authority with these other standards and, in those instances where there is a conflict between the two, give up its authority altogether.

If we do not choose to follow the Bible, then it makes no difference whether William Jefferson Clinton or St. Augustine is determining the rules of our military engagement. Both are mere mortals. Neither is or was inspired.

More tragic, however, than the failure of our political leaders to follow the Bible standard in the political arena is the failure of religious leaders to follow the Bible standard in spiritual matters. The proliferation of new churches and religious organizations and the encroachment of innovation among the churches of the Restoration Movement demonstrate that there has been a widespread abandonment of the Bible as the only authority in matters religious. Isaiah's cry would fall on deaf ears today: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20). And the apostle would be as a voice crying in the wilderness: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). -1713 Savannah Drive, Fort Smith, AR 72901

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Good News From McAlester

Dear Brethren,
This is the first time that I have had the occasion to write to the O.P.A. I would like to say that I appreciate very much the work of all concerned. It is with great, GREAT joy that I am writing this letter. As of the first of April the congregation at Blue and Hereford Lane will once again be joined with the congregation of C & Tyler. Several years have passed since we were one. But with the Grace of the Lord we have overcome all obstacles and once again will be a force for Christ in McAlester. We wish to thank all the brethren for prayers on our behalf. Please note that there will be no services at those buildings after March.

We will assemble at C & Tyler on the Lord's Day at 10:30 and 5:00, Wednesday at 7:30. Also Brother Eddie Bullard came up with, what I believe to be, a wonderful idea of helping the smaller congregations in our area with a cost free meeting for the brethren that cannot afford one. We will begin this effort at Danison, TX April 11 through the 18th. Brothers John Tidmore, William St. John, Eddie Bullard, myself and Doug Anderson will speak at this meeting. We hope that we will be able to do this several times a year in other smaller congregations.—Bud Dismuke

They Need A Preacher

The Church in Paducah, KY is in need of a preacher to move here and work to build up the cause of Christ. If you would like to relocate and work for the Lord, this would be the ideal place. Brethren, please consider this work. It

is a great place to live and work for the Lord. If you are interested please contact Bro. Gene Anderson at 590 Gass Road, Ledbetter, KY 42058 or call (502) 928-2175.

OUR DEPARTED

FIELDS—Fern Fields was born November 15, 1910 and passed away January 26, 1999. She was a lifetime resident of the Joplin, Missouri area. Fern and King were married on August 21, 1938. She was obedient to the gospel in 1944. Fern, or as she was known by many as "Brownie," was a faithful member of the Leawood Village congregational located just south of Joplin. She and her husband, King, were pillars in the church for the many years I have known them. Fern suffered a stroke on June 26, 1993, and from that date till her passing, life had not been easy. King faithfully cared for her throughout her long illness. Fern is survived by her husband, King, and son, Bob, along with three grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. A great number of loved ones, members of the body of Christ, and friends gathered for the memorial service. The songs were sung beautifully by several from the congregation. We all will miss her, but we take comfort in the words of the Apostle Paul when he said: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." It had been my privilege to have known her and an honor to conduct her memorial service.—Murl R. Helwig

POWELL—George L. Powell, faithful brother and leader in the Lord's Church, passed away at his home on Friday, October 9, 1998 after a long battle against cancer. George was 71 years old. He was employed by El Paso Natural Gas Company for over 40 years, having retired in 1996. He was one of the founding members of the Wild Horse Valley congregation in Farmington, N.M. and up until his health failed him two years ago, he was a principal teacher of the church. A memorial service was conducted in Farmington on October 14 at which many friends paid tribute to George. He was lovingly remembered as one who enjoyed the outdoors, gardening, feeding birds, and fishing. His funeral service was conducted at the Crestview church house in Wichita Falls on October 17. It was my honor to conduct the service, assisted by my brother Dee Tate. Brethren Arly Fancher and Charles Goodgion led the congregational singing. I have known George and Winnie since I was a boy and I fondly remember visiting in their home and going to the Bar D Ranch in Durango. When I was just a teenager, George encouraged me to preach by calling on me to speak when my family visited the Farmington congregation. He was a kind and gentle spirit who I described during the funeral as one of the church's "unsung heroes." Those who knew him well, knew that he and Winnie were both set for the defense of truth and were committed to the church in Farmington. George will be sorely missed by his wife, the home congregation, and his many friends across the brotherhood. He is survived by his wife of 47 years, sister Winnie Powell of Farmington, as well as three brothers and three sisters. His earthly body will be interred in Electra, Texas where Winnie has family. George is one more dear brother who has gone to be with the Lord during this past year whose

passing leaves us a bit poorer but whose arrival in heaven was an occasion of joy. Our prayers are for Winnie and his relatives.—Glenn Ballard

A Tribute

George Powell was everybody's friend
I can honestly say everybody liked him
He is the only person I ever knew
That weighed every word making sure they were true

George was surely a true Christian
You could sense this without question
If talking about others there's one thing you never heard
George didn't talk about anyone not even one work.

He believed the Bible and what it said
Work with your hands if you want to eat bread
Even George's retirement didn't slow him down
His company knew a man like him couldn't be found.

George was a welder and he was one of the best
Yet he was humble about it and everybody knew this
I am sure all his co-workers would gladly say
There is just not another George they don't come along every day

When George was off duty his welder wasn't far away
With some bolts, nuts, washers George became the potter these
became his clay
Give George a railroad spike, horseshoe or steel ball or two
With them it seemed there was no end what he could do.

Rocking chairs, grasshoppers even a wester cowboy
I have many of these in my collection of his metallic toys
Like I say there just wasn't anything that he couldn't make
And there's no value on my souvenirs of his that I would take.

The fact that George could take these simple things
And make things that were so real and plain
Causes me to believe George had an insight of man
George could see his own life how he fit in God's plan.

George loved his Lord, his home and his work
He did the work of several men in his local Church
George with his welder could make anything
And God with material like George could do the same.

—Ed Bullard

CARSON—Birdie Fancher Carson was born January 26, 1898, at Foster, Okla. and departed this life November 25, 1998. She was one hundred years, three hundred and one days of age. Aunt Bird, as we called her, passed away in a nursing home. My wife and I and her daughter Connie, were present at the time of her death. Aunt Bird was united in marriage to Dow Fancher, in 1916, and to this union seven children were born. Two died at an early age. They were married fifty eight years. Two years after Dow's demise, Aunt Bird married Roy Carson, and they were married thirteen years before Roy passed away. Clovis Cook, her nephew, was master of ceremonies at her one hundredth birthday, and planned to be at the funeral but

because of illness could not attend. I conducted a memorial service in the Riverside Cemetery, in the presence of her children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and great-great grandchildren. A large number of relatives, friends, and church members gathered at the graveside. Several years ago I was honored to conduct the memorial services of Cleo Fancher, one of her sons, and a very dear friend. Aunt Bird lived well beyond her three score years and ten. She was the one person I have ever known in my life time who lived beyond the century mark. Many shared the wonderful memories of Aunt Bird, mother, granny, and friend, which I related to those present.—Bill Harmon

CURLEY—On Wednesday evening, February 17, we received the shocking news. Tina Curley (age 37), a member of the Heartland Church of Christ in Wichita, Kansas, and her daughter, Caitlin (age 10), lost their lives in a tragic car accident. Tina and Caitlin were greatly loved. This was evident from the crowd of approximately 500 people who attended the funeral service in Wichita this past Saturday, February 20. People came from hundreds of miles, offering their love and support. Tina was born on March 15, 1961 in Kansas City, Mo. Her daughter, Caitlin, was born on July 27, 1988. Tina was the daughter of Virgil & Frances Hogland of Springfield, MO. Tina is also survived by: Chase (husband), Chelsea (her daughter), Jeff Hogland (her brother), Diana Newberry (her sister). Tina was a virtuous, godly woman who set a wonderful example for all of us. It is impossible to think of Tina without thinking about the church. She loved Christ and his church with all of her heart. She obeyed the gospel at age 11 and was always interested in living a life for the Lord. She possessed a very tender, compassionate heart. Tina loved children, her own and others. She had recently finished her degree and had begun her teaching career as a pre-school and kindergarten teacher. She was highly respected and loved in her profession. The school superintendent commented on our local news how that Tina had impacted the entire school in a very positive way. He also mentioned that she would have gone on to deeply impact numerous lives due to her special talents and abilities with children. Caitlin, her daughter, was a very special child that we all loved. Like her mother, she possessed a tender heart. She and her mother enjoyed a very close relationship. They could usually always be seen together and that is how they left this world - together. The singing at the service was beautiful and included one selection for congregational singing. It was the writer's privilege and honor to address the family, brothers and sisters in Christ, and friends. We will greatly miss Tina and Caitlin. We find great comfort in the knowledge that they are with the Lord. Please pray for us in our loss. And please pray a very special prayer for Chelsea, Tina's surviving daughter.—Bob Loudermilk

MINK—James A. (Arlie) Mink passed from this life late Saturday January 30th. Arlie was but 61 years of age and his passing was a shock to all. He was born May 14, 1937 to Raymond and Melissa Mink, in Rockcastle Co. KY. He leaves to mourn his death, his wife Carol Bernice, sons, Ivan, Darryl, and David; daughters, Barbara Bullock, Audrey Calhoun, Connie Bunner, and Carol Abdun. His sisters are Christine Cromer, Aleene Richardson, and Faye

Mink. Surviving are also 9 grandchildren. Brother Arlie worshipped with us at Sharonville and is greatly missed. He took active part in the leadership and was able to go forward in every public activity of worship. He loved good singing and preaching. Usually along with his wife he was first at the meetinghouse, and if not present then one would realize something unusual was wrong. The singing was provided aptly by members of the surrounding congregations. Words of encouragement and warning were spoken by this writer.—Barney Owens

BRADFORD—Wallace W. Bradford was born May 21, 1923 in the Three Forks community near Belton, Texas and died February 23, 1999 in Temple, Texas. Brad, as he was known to most people in the church, is survived by his wife Marie of Belton, to whom he had been married for almost 56 years. He is also survived by two sons, Bob Bradford of Fort Worth, Bruce Bradford of Tulsa, a daughter, Judy Dickinson of Houston, and 10 grandchildren. Brad was raised in Belton, but he and Marie lived in Dallas for several years. Brad worked downtown as a printer in Dallas and he worked for a while with Lee Harvey Oswald. Brad said Oswald was a little weird even back then! They moved back to Belton in the late sixties and worshipped for many years with the church in McGregor, Texas. Brad was my father-in-law and was one of the most generous men I have ever met. Judy and I moved several times to work with churches across the country and Brad and Marie helped us move every time. He had been ill for some time and life became a great struggle at the end. He rests now in the arms of the Lord and we all take our comfort and hope in the knowledge that we shall meet on a fairer shore in the sweet by and by. I assisted Wayne McKamie in speaking words of consolation and hope.—Jerry Dickinson

RIVERS—Evangelist Joe Rivers was born in Memphis, TN on December 7, 1928 and he departed this life, due to cancer, on January 7, 1999. The funeral was conducted at the Leak Funeral home in Chicago, Illinois. There was a wonderful turnout to remember our brother. Brethren from St. Louis & Kansas City Missouri, Detroit Michigan, Phoenix Arizona, Brazil Indiana, and the West Side Chicago congregation attended. Brother Rivers obeyed the gospel in 1963 in Memphis. Brother Joe was a man that was in love with his Lord and his life reflected his love and obedience to Christ. Joe worked for the Federal Government for 18 years and was two years away from retirement, however there was a need for a gospel preacher in Chicago. Brother Joe left his job to move to Chicago with his wife, to preach the gospel to a community that needed Christ. Brother Rivers was a tireless worker for the cause of Christ; and many souls obeyed the great gospel message that he preached. If not for the efforts of Brother and Sister Rivers there would not have been a congregation of the Lord's church in the minority community in the city of Chicago. Brother Rivers loved to study God's word on a daily basis (2Tim.2:15) (Acts 17:11) and he passed that teaching on to all who obeyed the gospel call. Brother Rivers was an early influence in my life as a preacher of the gospel by encouraging me to use the talent that God had blessed me with to teach and preach. Brother Joe and

I had talked 20 years ago about his death and he asked me to preach at his funeral, and his concern was for his family members who had never obeyed the gospel. He said spend little time on my life, please preach the gospel to my family members and others who had never heard the truth taught before. Brother Joe loved his family a great deal and he knew the importance of obedience to God's will if they wanted to make heaven their home. The congregation in Chicago will miss Brother Joe Rivers, however like the Apostle Paul "he fought a good fight, he finished his course and he kept the faith." (2 Timothy 4:7) Brother Rivers leaves to cherish his memories his beloved and faithful wife Earlean Rivers, two brothers, two sisters, nieces, nephews, and a congregation who will miss him until that sunrise morning in eternity. This writer was honored to preach words of comfort to the family and warning to all to obey the gospel and live faithful till death.—John Brewer

HOLT—Maudie Alice Ridenhour-Holt was born on August 17, 1898 in Topaz, MO and departed this life Feb. 17, 1999 at her home in Mt. Grove, MO at the age of 100 years and 6 months. Maudie was married to Dorson Ridenour on Nov. 28, 1915. Two sons were born to this union. Mr. Ridenour preceded her in death on July 13, 1966. She later married Odess Holt on June 28, 1969. Mr. Holt preceded her in death on Jan. 3, 1996. Besides her parents and her husbands, she was preceded in death by one son, Lewis Ridenhour on August 18, 1982, and by two stepsons, Elvin Ridenour on Aug. 12, 1922 and Austin Ridenour on May 6, 1978. Maudie is survived by one son, J.D. Ridenour of Ozark, MO, seven grandchildren, and ten great-grandchildren. Maudie was baptized on Nov. 24, 1928 and was a member of the Southside Church of Christ in Mt. Grove, MO. She attended church services as long as her health permitted. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her. God granted Maudie a long healthy life. Seldom does someone obey the gospel at age 30 and live a Christian life for another 70 years. The writer was privileged to speak at her services assisted by Clovis Cook.—Ron Alexander

HEFFREN—Berlyn "Heff" Heffren was born August 28, 1925 at Princeton, Maine and departed this life on Jan. 25, 1999 at Joplin, MO at the age of 73 years, 4 months and 28 days. Heff married Eva Lue Thompson on June 9, 1946. To this union 5 children were born. Heff was preceded in death by one daughter, Debbie Burris and 2 sisters, Barbara Hansons and Allison Purcell. Berlyn is survived by his wife Eva of the home; three sons; Larry Heffren, Daniel Heffren and Jim Heffren; and one daughter, Linda Holcomb, all of Seneca, MO. Also surviving are three brothers; Carleton Heffren, Pine Tops, NC, Vaughn Heffren, Barefoot Bay, FL and Basil Heffren, South Berwick, Maine; two sisters, Leah Newhouse, Tucson, Arizona; and Joan Slipp, Burnham, Maine; two grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren. Berlyn and Eva moved to the Seneca area in 1946. He was a long time member of the Church of Christ and was a member of the Highway 60 Church at the time of his death. He will be missed by all who knew him. All of his brothers and sisters were able to be together for the first time in many years. The writer spoke words of comfort assisted by Roger Owens.—Ron Alexander



Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808, March 17—The meeting at Edmond, OK was very enjoyable. We had large crowds every service with excellent cooperation from congregations in the Oklahoma City area. It was my pleasure to work with Edwin Morris and James Orten who both live here. During the meeting we had several other preachers attend from the area. The Lord willing we go next to Liberty, KY (Hilltop) March 28-April 4, Linville, OH April 4 (pm)-April 11 and Waterloo, IA April 21-25. May the Lord bless His people everywhere.

Don McCord, Box 1773, Covina, CA Feb. 26—The weekend Ceres, CA meeting was good for me. I first preached there, a "boy preacher," 49 years ago. In preaching the gospel there, whether folks agreed or disagreed, the folks at Ceres have respected and loved me nonetheless. Visitors came from Stockton, Lodi, Oakdale, Escalon. The Oakdale meeting in February was a source of joy for me, too; my first time ever there. Visitors came from Ceres, Modesto, Atwater, Turlock, Sacramento, Olivehurst, Placerville, Manteca, Stockton, Bakersfield, Escalon: this overjoyed me. Our meeting here at home with James Orten was great; his insight into what the Scriptures really mean enthalls me. Ron Courter comes April 18-25; his first time with us; Carl Johnson comes Nov. 7-14. Ron Jordan comes for a weekend soon; Larry Lay still comes once a month to bless us. My next is a week in the Tucson-Phoenix areas, my first; I look forward to that. Matt Trent, Brett Hickey and Jerry Barrett have lately preached commendably for us. Brady McCord continues to preach here for which I am especially grateful. My first meeting of a long summer will be, Lord willing, at Midland, TX, June 20-27; joyful anticipation! With summer meetings coming up, Brethren, please resolve to attend meetings in your area; you owe it to the Lord, the church, the Cause; he may not be your favorite preacher, the congregation where he preaches worships just as you do and may use the same preachers you use, and may have some flaws, faults and failings, but so do you and I. If you can listen to a brother preach anywhere, you can listen to him everywhere; to do otherwise is to be glaringly inconsistent, and to be inconsistent is wrong; the Lord's way is NEVER inconsistent; test it; and in whatever arena you choose. I expect disgressives in worship, liberals, sectarians, worldings, cultists to boycott my meetings, but not my own brethren; I flat do not understand that; am not about to. How I appreciate brothers and sisters who still attend my meetings, ask me to come their way; listen to me preach the everlasting gospel, which I plan to do so long as He gives me breath. Lord bless the church!!

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Court, Bonner Springs, KS 66012, March 3—We are happy to report that

things are going well with the 79th and Kansas Ave. congregation in Kansas City. Our crowds are about double the number they were when we began the work here nearly five years ago. The Lord has really blessed us and to Him we give all the glory. We have "planted and watered" and God has given the increase (1 Cor. 3:7). We now have ten teachers in the congregation, up from three; we have three services a week, up from two; and the crowds at the morning worship on Lord's day have more than doubled. We have several young men coming on who are taking responsibility and are willing to help in the services anyway they can. Our teaching services are edifying and we have several outsiders who are attending. We recently began a regular monthly church bulletin and are in the process of installing a new six speaker PA system for the benefit of all. This is not to the neglect of our duties in benevolence and helping other congregations when we see the need. We have some of the most agreeable brethren to work with that I have experienced in a long time. We are workers together with God (2 Cor. 6:1). The Lord willing, I am to speak in the annual scripture study at Miami, OK on the 13th of this month. We are to be at Washington, OK March 20-28. May the Lord bless His workers everywhere.

Joe Hisle, Rt. 4, Box 188, Ada, OK 74820, Feb. 16—We are looking forward to a new season in the Lord's work. We are thankful to report that we had a very good year in '98, for which we give God the praise. Our schedule closed with a meeting at Odom, MO, which resulted in four baptisms. This meeting was an old time "revival" for which I was thankful just to be a part of. We were also at Athens, AL, Sharonville, OH and Longwood, FL. We enjoyed the association and hospitality of our brethren in all of these places. Following is my schedule for this year: Bedford, IN, March 28-Apr. 4; Odom, MO May 2-9; Little Rock, AR May 16-23; Galey, OK May 28-30; Kan. City, MO (85th & Euclid) June 2-6; San Antonio, TX June 13-20; Marietta, GA July 10-18; Wayne, WV July 25-Aug. 1; Chapel Grove, TN Sept. 1-5; Colins, MI Sept. 19-26; Spencer, IN Oct. 3-10; Seminole, OK Dec. 3-5. If you are in any of these areas we would be happy to see you. Please remember us in your prayers.

Virgilio O. Danao Sr., 94-371 Ikepono Street, Waipahu, Hawaii 96797; Tel. & Fax (808) 680-0249; March 1, 1999—The Church here is trying hard to grow spiritually. The brothers continue to manifest desire to participate in the Sunday worship services; such as, leading in prayers and songs, distributing the Lord's Supper, collecting contribution, etc. About 97% of all the male members of the Church here has already experienced leading prayers in the Church. Perhaps, this is the result of our Leadership Training, most oftenly done Sunday afternoon (4:00-5:30 p.m.) in the meeting house. We continue our efforts on evangelism through home Bible studies and our Radio Program. On February 14, in the afternoon, we baptized Sis. Gina Tajas, who exchanged vows with Bro. Edgardo Bayani in a marriage ceremony the following day (Feb. 15th), which I performed. Since Bro. Felipe Bayani could not go back yet to Keaau because of his health, I went there last Saturday (Feb. 27th); and helped the brethren conduct the Sunday worship service. I solicit the prayers of the saints ev-

erywhere for the Lord's work here in Hawaii, especially for Bro. Bayani. May God bless us always!

Richard DeGough, 1907 Tully Rd. Hughson, California, March 6, 1999—The Church at home is doing fine. We have eight men who take part in the teaching, as well as some young boys who are developing into good public servants of the Church, and, for this we give thanks. Brother Jerry Barrett comes once a month to study and teach. It is always a joy to have Jerry. He is studious, humble and a very good teacher. I profit from being with him every month. He worships with the Church in Bakersfield at Brundage Lane. Recently we were saddened by the death of brother Bob Brancato of Ventura. I had the privilege of visiting him two weeks before he passed, and then had a part in his memorial service. The Church in Ventura will miss him. The service was conducted by several members of the family as well as others. It was touching to see the respect and love all of them have for each other. The Church in Ventura is growing, and the work being done among them by brother Brett Hickey shows the dedication a church must have to prosper. My God bless them all in this loss of a dear brother. I look forward to meetings this month and April in Jonesboro, Georgia and Lowery, Ala. If you can come we would be honored. My God bless the brotherhood everywhere.

Billy D. Dickinson, 2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803, bddickinsonjuno.com, Feb. 14—I enjoyed being with the 11th Street Acres congregation in Tulsa, Ok last Sunday. After preaching for them both services, I spent the night with Bro. and Sis. Gene Hopkins and was the recipient of their generous hospitality. I arose Monday morning and headed for Houston, TX where I spent the rest of the week visiting my parents, family, and brethren who live in that great city. My father is having some health problems and I was thankful for the opportunity to go home for a few days. Our meeting March 10-14 with Jerry Dickinson will be the first of many meetings to take place in our area this year. We are looking forward to it. My meeting schedule for this year is as follows: March 20-28 at Oakdale, CA, June 9-13 at Cleburne, TX, June 27 July 3 at Lebanon, MO, Aug. 6-8 at Ratliff City, OK, Oct. 2-3 at Jackson, MS, and Oct. 20-24 at Deer Park, TX. Judging from the reports I have received, last year was an especially good year for gospel meetings across the brotherhood. Many precious souls were baptized into Christ, proving that the day for having meetings is still here in the present. My prayer is that God will crown all such efforts with success this year!

Rick Martin, 3400 Shaw Road, Marietta, GA 30066, e-mail address mmartin@bellsouth.net—The congregation at Marietta is doing well. We are blessed in the fact that we have some young men who are participating in the services. My sons Matt and Ben lead singing. Brother Jeff Broxson is doing a fine job teaching. Brother Walter Goodman, who became a member of the Church a few years ago has progressed tremendously and is a great asset to the congregation. We enjoyed the New Year's meeting in Oklahoma City. Lynwood and the Norman Congregation

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did a wonderful job. I recently held a meeting in Trussville, Alabama that was most enjoyable. We were sorry that Brother Richard Nichols was sick during the meeting. The church members in Trussville are fine people whom I have known for many years. They have always been an encouragement to me for which I am thankful. Lord willing, our meeting this summer, July 10-18, will be with Brother Joe Hisle. We are looking forward to it. Please visit us if you are in the area.

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Dr., Ada, OK 74820, email carlmj@compworldnet.com, Feb 2.-Please note my new email address. We have been busy this winter with preaching appointments. I just closed a weekend meeting in Tulsa. It was so good to see all the folks in that area again, including fellow preacher Jack Cutter. A young family man recently got out of the army reserve and was restored to the church here at home. I believe he's going to be a real asset to our congregation. My meetings schedule for the next few months include: Shreveport, LA (Mar 10-14), Eldon, MO (Mar 21-28), Oklahoma City 21st St. (Apr 2-11), Cedar Creek, AR (Apr 16-18), Napoleon, AL (May 2-9), Spring Valley, W.VA (May 30 June 6), Ceres, CA (June 13-20), San Angelo, TX (July 11-18), and Lee's Summit, MO (Aug 7-15) Please continue to pray in our behalf.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, email old_paths@juno.com.-The congregation at Fremont continues in peace, for which we are grateful. Matt Trent recently preached for us on Lord's day and did a good job. Brett Hickey will soon hold a weekend meeting for us and we look forward to having him with us. Carl Johnson will soon hold a week's meeting for us also. Carl hasn't been here for a while and the brethren look forward to the meeting. Regarding our email address: the underline must be placed between the words "old" and "paths." Otherwise, the address will not be recognized as valid. We are sorry this is necessary but apparently someone has already taken the simple title. We look forward to holding a meeting at Ada, Oklahoma in April. May the Lord bless the faithful.

Richard L. Frizzell, SR., 2500 Adams St. Paducah, Ky. 42003. Ph. (502) 415-0540.- Feb. 26-99-The work here in Paducah is going along very well. I have two home Bible studies. I am also showing the "Jule Miller" Filmstrips, which seem to be an effective teaching aid.

One couple have been coming to church for over a month now, and there has been four or five from the community visit one or more times. While here I have been very busy going door to door inviting people to church. Time will tell how effective it will be. I look forward to seeing Bro. Shelby Taulbee and family this weekend. Shelby has had some health problems that has really slowed him down. We pray that he will improve very soon. It has been a real pleasure to work with the congregation here in Paducah, Ky. The members here are workers. I pray that more souls will be saved. Pray for us.

Bob Johnson 8078 Whitewing Dr. Frisco, Tx 75034 (972) 335-1005 friscobob@comp.net March 3, 1999-Greetings to the faithful in Christ Jesus from the Lord's church in Frisco, TX. It has been quite some time since I have mailed in a report to the O.P.A. This past December marked my fifth year of labor here. We are presently publishing bi-monthly articles in the local paper, perhaps this will attract some of the new comers that are moving into this area, as well as some of the locals. It is good to be working with brother Melvin Blalock again in knocking doors, and in visiting the sick and bedridden. One lady is nearing completion of one of our 15-lesson Bible course's that we offer through the mail. This past year we baptized one into Christ, we certainly hope and pray that more fruit will abound to His honor and glory in the course of this new year. We look forward to our meeting here April 14-18 with brother Murl Helwig. We are also hosting the 53rd Annual Texas Labor Day Meeting this year. Our theme will be: SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF CHRIST. We will mail out information concerning this in late summer. To date, I am scheduled for a meeting in San Angelo, Tx Oct. 16-17 and in Deer Park, Aug. 18-22. We invite all that can to be present at one or both meetings if possible. Pray for us.

Barney Owens, 8782 Meadowview Ln., W. Chester, OH 45069-Since last reporting I have had the pleasure of assisting in a meeting with the brethren at Imperial, NE. As previously their dedication and faithfulness encouraged me. Due to the sparse population it is extremely difficult to get people to attend; yet we did have some from the world and digressive people as well. Next I am to be with the congregation at Mtn. Home, AR March 6-14., then Birmingham, AL March 31-April 4. April 30-May 2, Wayne, WV. Pray for the efforts and come be with us if you are near any of these places at the time of meetings.

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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. LXXIII

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NO. 5

WHEN THE DISCIPLES CAME TOGETHER TO BREAK BREAD

By KEVIN W. PRESLEY

"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow: and continued his speech until midnight." Acts 20:7. The regularity of meeting together for worship was a marked feature of the church in apostolic times. Acts 2:42 says of them, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." They were consistent and unwavering in their public meetings for worship. The record of Acts 20:7 implies that the early disciples met every Lord's Day to commune. The inference is drawn from the precedent set in Exodus 20:8-10, "Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy..." which was obviously a command to observe every Sabbath Day without exception. In the effort to restore New Testament Christianity by going back to the Bible for our religious practices, we follow the example of the church at Troas and the Apostle Paul in observing the significance of every Lord's Day by meeting together to break bread. These are things that nearly all who are identified with the Church of Christ accept and contend for.

IS THIS ASSEMBLY MANDATORY?

These meetings are so vital to the continuation of our Christian service that Paul commanded in Hebrews 10:25, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is but exhorting one another and so much the more as you see the day approaching." Some contend, on one side, that approved example and inference teaches that local congregations must assemble every Lord's Day to commune. However, they will then argue that such gatherings are not incumbent upon each member of that congregation. In other words, if a job or a recreational outing conflict with one's appointment with the Lord, one does not commit sin by opting to work or play instead. This flies in the face of so many basic principles of Christianity that one hardly knows where to start! They often maintain that Hebrews 10:25 does not apply to every Lord's day but rather to the habit of assembling in general. One does not forsake the assembling of ourselves together until he goes back into sin and "quits the church," so they reason. While I deny such a loose meaning being placed upon the passage, if we were to concede the point in reference to Hebrews 10:25, consistency on our application of Acts 20:7 would still be an issue. If one is willing to say that a member of the church can willfully absent himself from the local gathering of the saints for one reason or another, then

let him immediately stop telling the Baptists that it is wrong for them to commune quarterly or yearly. If the local church finds instruction to meet every Lord's Day to commune then why not the members who make up that congregation? If one could opt to go on vacation and not assemble, or work and not assemble then what would be wrong with 90% or even 100% of the group doing likewise? Rather, when the scripture says, "Upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread..." it implies that all, not some, of the saints at Troas along with the apostle Paul came together.

ASSEMBLIES WERE CONGREGATIONAL

The antiquity of scripture refers to the church of the Lord in only two senses. It is identified universally and locally. When Christ made the emphatic declaration in Caesarea, "Upon this rock I will build my church," He spoke of all who would come into covenant relationship with Him by obedience to the truth the world over. It was all the saved throughout the world for whom Peter commanded us to "Love the brotherhood!" (I Pe 2:17) However, the only relationship sustained in the universal body according to the Scriptures is a mutual conforming to the truth and a fellowship in the gospel. Never once did Jesus commission the world-wide church to any type of work as such. However, through His wisdom, He designed the church in the aggregate sense, so that it would be constituted by local or individual congregations sent out into respective areas to spread the gospel and fulfill the great commission. When Paul prefaced his Corinthian letter by saying "to the church of God at Corinth," or as in Galatians 1:2, "...unto the churches of Galatia," he was not speaking of the universal church, a multiplicity of denominations, or individual Christians, but rather local autonomous (self-governing) churches designated to carry on their own respective work. Any religious institution that is larger than the universal church, larger than the local church but smaller than the aggregate church (a denomination or regional conference, etc.), or smaller than the local congregation is human and not divine in its origin.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A LOCAL CHURCH?

The word church is worthy of definition in this study. The commonly accepted meaning is that of an assembly of saved people. W.E. Vine says that it stands for the word assembly which in the Greek means "to call out of" or in other words - those who have been called out. He offers

continued on page seven

CONTENTS

Vol. LXXIII No. 5



A D V O C A T E

ANNOUNCEMENTS 8-10

When The Disciples Came Together To Break Bread	1
Watchman, What Of The Night .	2
The Querist Column	3
The Road To Spiritual Independence	3
The Spirit Never Dies	4
High Priest Impeached	6

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Editorial

WATCHMAN,
WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

By DON L. KING

The above quotation is from Isaiah 21:11. This question was asked in the long ago by those who wondered if they were ever to be freed from their Babylonian captivity. They were concerned about the night and the evils of darkness.

We too have cause for fear and concern, at least in this writer's opinion. As we travel from place to place we are asked, "What is the greatest problem the church faces today?" That used to puzzle me, but not anymore. There is little doubt that worldliness and apathy are the big ones today. No one can say which came first. In fact, either one will bring about the other. Brethren who are apathetic are prone to become interested in the world. Why not, they have precious little interest in the church. They might attend part of a gospel meeting at the home church, if no ballgames, fishing trips, golf games, car races, or other recreation is available. Every preacher has had to deal with the disappointment of seeing his audience vanish on the weekends to do other things. You are far from home, wishing to see your family, but glad to have the privilege of preaching the wonderful old gospel of Christ. Then, the crowd is gone and you wonder, "What happened?" "Did I offend them?" You inquire as to their whereabouts. That's when you learn they had bigger and better things to do. That is a real disappointment and discouragement. One way or the other, the Lord's church certainly faces great problems as we near the new century.

Also of great concern is the seemingly apathetic attitude brethren have when such things happen. Even a few preachers seem to be used to the idea that some are not going to attend regularly or live as though they are particularly dedicated to the church. We frequently say little or nothing about the situation. Do we not see the danger signs? Is it not time we sound the alarm of impending disaster if such lack of interest continues? It has been said, "As the preachers are, so is the brotherhood." Should we not still be preaching about women cutting their hair, modest apparel, worldliness, forsaking the assembly, etc? Do we dare assume that the battles over the individual cups, Sunday schools, instrumental music, etc. are won until the Lord comes again? It is likely that unless we keep preaching the Bible about the issues we will have the war to fight all over again soon. When we were growing up, it was common to hear such preaching. The brethren expected and demanded it. If you still preach the Bible about these matters, may God bless you! Every preacher must keep in mind what the apostle Paul said in Titus 1:5: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order things that are wanting...." That is a part of our responsibilities. No, we don't like to be negative and sound warnings but it is obviously past time to do so. In 2

continued on page eight

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Does 1 Corinthians 11:14-15 apply to the cutting of the hair (for women) on the top and sides as well as the length in the back? (TX)

Answer: Yes, I believe it does. Unfortunately some have the idea that they can trim the sides and top and that is not a violation of these passages. Others seem to feel that they can cut the back straight across on the bottom, and as long as they haven't cut off but a half-inch or so, they still have long hair. The expression "have long hair" in verses 14 and 15 translates the Greek word "KOMAO" and is defined by Thayer on p. 354 as meaning "let the hair grow." The idea of length, whether on top, on the side, or at the bottom is not relative here. It is not how long someone's hair is in relation to how short someone else's is. The idea of a certain lineal length is not connoted in the case of either the man or the woman. The language used here is not difficult, but is actually easy to understand. Every man and woman with respect to their hair falls into one of two categories. Their hair is either natural length or it is not. They either cut it or they don't. If they don't cut it, then they let it grow. Any woman who cuts her hair, on top, on the sides, or at the bottom has failed to let it grow. In verse 15, the writer teaches us that a woman's hair is given her for a covering. Here, "hair" is from a word meaning "head of hair" (Thayer p. 354). Her natural uncut head of hair is given her for a covering. Notice he did not say "a part of her hair is given her for a covering, but rather "all of it" is given for a covering. Sisters you are not "covered" when you cut your hair. It seems that more and more women are disregarding what Paul wrote about this important subject, and some are trying to justify them both in private and from the pulpit. All women should remember that according to Paul, her prayers are affected when she fails to heed this inspired teaching. Note carefully his reasoning, the man is the head of the woman, verse 3, and the woman cannot pray through her authoritative head, the man, but must pray through Christ, hence she must have her physical head covered, verse 5, when she prays. Her head of hair was given her by God to serve as a covering. The man

has to pray through his head, Christ, verse 3, and therefore he prays with his physical head uncovered, verse 4. To have his natural head of hair is a shame. But for a woman to have her natural head of hair is a glory. Not long ago I was at a place where a woman used as an excuse for cutting her hair the statement made by Paul in verse 16 "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God." A study of this verse shows, that Paul is not saying "if anyone disagrees with or objects to what I have said here, he can just disregard it, because I really didn't mean it anyway." No, of course not. Some will always disagree, and others object. Paul addresses those people, (who might object) and gives them to understand that he nor the churches recognize any other teaching than that he has just delivered i.e. a woman cannot pray to God uncovered. That should settle it with all of us.

Question: What is meant by the phrase "on the other side of the flood" Joshua 24:2. Also the phrase "the other side of Jordan" is used by Joshua a number of times. What is meant by this? (OK)

Answer: The word translated "flood" in verse 2 should be understood to mean "river." The probable reference is to the Euphrates River. Ellicott notes that "flood" in our English Bible is sometimes used for river e.g. Job 22:16, Psa. 66:6. The same is true in the N.T. in Mt. 7:25-27. The same meaning is found in v.3 and 15 of Joshua 2.

The phrase "the other side of Jordan" is used numerous times in the book of Joshua. As a general rule, it refers to, and distinguishes between, those events, places, etc. that happened before the crossing of Jordan, by the children of Israel, into the promised land. God dealt with these people prior to and after their crossing, hence reference is often made to dealings and activities in both places. "The Jordan" is merely used as a "point in time" distinction.

(Note: I currently have a large backlog of questions. Please bear with me, and I will try and get to all of them as soon as I can. Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808)

THE ROAD TO SPIRITUAL INDEPENDENCE

By RICK MARTIN

The word "independence" often stirs the hearts of men, for many have fought and died so that they or others may be independent. All of our lives, we have been expected to become more and more independent—learning to live on our own. Almost every teenager looks forward to the day when he or she can be independent of his/her parents.

The Christian life is much different from this. In our Christian walk, the more mature we become, the more dependent we become upon our Lord. Unfortunately, many have chosen a road of independence from God.

In Luke 15, Jesus tells the story of the Prodigal Son. This parable illustrates the road to spiritual independence. This young man started out with plenty of money in his pocket; but in the end finds himself in a hog pen. Looking at some

key signals in this young man's life will be helpful to us in trying to avoid the road to spiritual independence.

The first step along this road is desire. Defection always begins with desire. This young man had probably heard about the far country, its pleasures and excitements. The more he thought about it the stronger his desire became. Often we are faced with the same kind of challenge. We begin to think and focus on that far country and soon we take the step from just thinking about it to going there. This desire to do our thing is a desire to be out from under the restraints of God. It is a move toward independence.

The second step along the road to spiritual independence is deception. Satan is the great Deceiver and he is always on this road, ready to paint the most beautiful and graphic

picture of how things would be if we could change our circumstances. Sometimes people get the idea that things would be better if they could simply move to that far country. Satan makes the world and its ways look beautiful and enticing. Satan will destroy, divide, and cause disharmony wherever he can. The Prodigal Son already had everything he needed. He had his father's love and protection, yet he was deceived into thinking that things would be better in the far country.

The third step along the road to spiritual independence is decision. The Prodigal Son came to a point, where he had to make a decision. He made the decision to leave home and take his inheritance with him. The Prodigal Son thought about the far country and he desired to go there. Satan deceived him into thinking that if he really wanted to live life to the fullest he had to get away from his father and into the far country. The far country is anywhere a person chooses to live outside the will of God.

The fourth step to spiritual independence is to depart. The Prodigal Son finally made the move to leave. He set out on his journey. He began to participate in those things that he thought would bring him contentment and fulfillment. He looked for things that were exciting and thrilling. He wanted new friends and relationships. He became enslaved by his search for new experiences. This slavery eventually led him to a hog pen experience.

Along this road you will also find delight. Some may say, "How can that be?" Can anything that brings so much pain also bring delight? The answer to this question is yes. This road would not have any appeal if it were not fun. There is some pleasure in sin.

Moses faced this choice and he chose God rather than to enjoy sin for a season. Hebrews 11:25 says, "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Satan entices people with sin. He makes it look fun, but he never tells people that the fun is only for a short time. Satan does not tell people that they will experience waste and ultimately find themselves in want. Time and energy and talents will be wasted in sin. They will be away from Christ and God.

The security that is found in doing God's will be lost.

The road to spiritual independence will eventually lead to despair. Despair is one of those things that Satan does not mention. The Prodigal Son came from a wealthy home, but he ends up in a hog pen and his life is full of despair.

The road to spiritual independence can end in disaster. Fortunately, it does not have to be that way. There is a way to avoid disaster and be delivered from the bondage of living independently of God. This is clearly illustrated in the story of the Prodigal Son. He was able to avoid disaster because he "came to himself." He realized that he was wasting his life, his time, his energies and potential. He made the commitment to return to his father's house. Luke 15:20 says "And he arose, and came to his father." He took a good look at his life, admitted his mistakes and went back home. He left home full of confidence, thinking that nothing could go wrong and now he has to return home dirty, hungry and dreading to face his father.

We have in this parable the most beautiful picture of God that has ever been written. Standing there looking down that road is this young man's father and in the distance he sees a figure. The more he watches, the more familiar the figure becomes. Finally, the father recognizes the figure to be his lost son. The Prodigal Son does not have to run to his father - his father runs to him. This is God's picture of himself. This is His attitude and His response to those who have squandered it all. God is quick to recognize the faces that are turned heavenward and He marks that first homeward step.

Perhaps you have wondered how God will respond if you ask Him to forgive you. He will respond to you in the same way as the father responded to the Prodigal Son. He will greet you with open arms and restore you back into His full graces. If you are willing to confess to God that you have lived a rebellious, independent life and you are willing to ask Him to forgive you of your sins and submit your life to Him, He will pick up the broken pieces and the shattered dreams. He can put your life back together again. Get off the Road to Spiritual Independence before disaster strikes.

THE SPIRIT NEVER DIES

By RYAN J. CONNOR

David's loss of an innocent child is one of the most tragic stories ever told (2 Sam. 12:13-23). This tragedy is compounded by the fact that David's sin was responsible for the death of his child. Once the child was born, and knowing the judgement of God, that the child would die, David pleaded with God, fasting and laying prostrate on the ground. After some three days, the elders of David's house try to help him, but to no avail. David would not get up from the ground. They were surprised by David's behavior—and in explanation it should be noted that "the custom in the East is to leave the nearest relative of a deceased person to the full and undisturbed indulgence of his grief, till, on the third or fourth day of at the most" (Jamieson. p. 244; of Lightfoot. p. 363).

David does not get up from the ground for seven days. Upon the seventh day the son Bathsheba bore to David dies. At first the servants are afraid to tell David. They reason, "Indeed, while the child was alive, we spoke to

him, and he would not heed our voice. How can we tell him that the child is dead? He may do some harm!" (v. 18). At the news of his child's illness David has sunk into such a deep seated grief that David's servants thought he might harm himself upon receiving the news of the child's death. In the uncomfortable mood of the room David perceived that the child was dead as the servants whispered. When David asked of it, the servants confirmed what he already knew to be true. But now watch David as he rises from the ground, washes and anoints himself, changes his clothes and goes into the house of the Lord to worship. Then watch him go to his own house and eat a meal after seven days of fasting. Again, David's servants are perplexed by his behavior.

Then his servants said to him, "What is this that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive, but when the child died, you arose and ate food." And he said, "While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I

said, "Who can tell whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?" But now he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." (vv. 21-23).

What seemed like odd behavior to the servants was to David the response of anyone who has a faith in the immortality of the soul. Two things checked David's grief. (1) He was now powerless to bring the child back, and (2) David knew that one day he would be reunited with his son. Commenting on this verse, Dr. Adam Clarke says, "It is one of the most solid grounds of consolation to surviving friends that they should eventually be joined to them in a state of conscious existence."

The immortality of the soul is a fundamental Bible doctrine. People can not bear the thought of being dead and forgotten. The April 1985 issue of *Eternity magazine* contained the following news item. It is not known if these plans were or will be accomplished:

The quest for pseudoimmortality took a giant leap forward with the announcement that you can send your remains "to the heavens" when you die. The Celestis Group of Melbourne, Florida has received federal approval for a privately financed launch of a rocket in early 1987, with a nose cone containing the ashes of 10,330 paying customers. Each person's ashes will be chemically treated to fit inside a 2 by 5/8 inch titanium capsule. The nose cone will enter an orbit at about 1,900 miles, and, thanks to a reflective surface, "it will be visible to earth-bound loved ones." The Celestis Group isn't promising an eternal rest, though. The orbit may deteriorate in about 63 million years.

People have always longed for immortality. And sometimes people do some awfully foolish things in an effort to achieve it. Cryonics is the pseudoscience of freezing a person's body and then later thawing it out when better medicines are available to the terminally ill. It costs approximately \$100,000 to freeze a whole body, but only \$30,000 to freeze just a head.

While people go to such extremes to save the physical body, few do anything to save the spirit. Nonetheless, the Scriptures teach that eternal life is possible. Jesus told the Jews of his day, "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39). Who can forget the words Jesus said to the thief on the cross? "And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise'" (Luke 23:43). Again, Jesus teaches in Luke 16:22-23 that there is life after death with the account of Lazarus and the rich man. The Apostle Paul teaches that there is life after death. For him to mean to "depart and be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. 1:23). How could death be better for Paul if there is no life after death? Clearly, the Scriptures indicate that life does exist after death.

The spirit of man is the part of man that will live on after death. The Bible teaches us that a living person is made up of 3 parts: spirit, soul and body. The Apostle wrote, "may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23). In Genesis 1:26 God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness" Some part of man is made in the image of God. Is it the outward, physical body? Let us hear the Apostle Paul on this subject.

Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things (Romans 1:22-23).

The heathens made idols of look like men, and called them gods. This, Paul says, is foolishness. God expressly said, that none "saw a similitude" (Deut. 4:15). This statement could not have been true if the body of man is made in the image of God. Clearly, the body of man is not that part of man made in God's image.

The part of man made in God's image is not the outward, but the inward man—the spirit. The Genesis account teaches that man was formed of dust. The word "form" means to shape or mold. However, the formation of body is not the only formation in man. "Thus says the LORD, who stretches out of the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him" (Zechariah 12:1). So, there is an outward man, and an inward man. Paul wrote, "Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16).

The spirit of man reflects what is the true image of God. It is said that the simplest way to understand God is in terms of PERSON and SPIRIT. God is a person. He has all the attributes of a person. He wills, speaks, creates and knows. God is not some impersonal force of energy, such as the eastern religions teach. The Scripture states, "God is Spirit" (John 4:24). This is His nature. Man is most like God in that he is a person, and he has a spiritual nature. The spirit is for all practical purposes the mind we possess. Compare Romans 1:9 with Romans 7:25. The mind and the spirit are one in the same to Paul. The spirit is the knowing part of man. Paul says, "For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him" (1 Cor. 2:11)?

Let it be understood that the spirit of man is not merely a mechanism, or merely a receptacle. In other words, the spirit of men and women is not just like an old dog learning a new trick. A dog can be conditioned and trained, but it cannot train itself or condition itself. Dogs do not set goals, people set goals—spiritual people set spiritual goals. The preacher of old asks, "Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the animal, which goes down to the earth?" (Eccl. 3:21). The spirit of a man is far more than that of an animal, for it has the capacity of self-identity, abstract thinking, and the sense of a future. Unfortunately, it is true that the person who lives for the moment, and has no concern for others appears more like the animal than the image of God.

The spirit never dies. It is eternal in nature. "The dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). Notice what James says: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:26). And notice what James does not say. He does not say, "The spirit without the body is dead." Thus, the body returns to dust, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

The consolation that King David found in his faith in the immortality of the soul, the eternal nature of the spirit, is the same faith we Christians must have fixed in our hearts. Our hope of eternal life is our anchor (Heb. 6:19). Without faith in eternal life everything we do is reduced to the

meaningless. No purpose is left to the mere mortal, but to the immortal goal we strive with purpose. Paul wrote, as noted above, "Therefore we do not lose heart. 'Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us are far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal'" (2 Cor. 4:16-18).

In no uncertain terms, the apostle states that the inward man—the spirit—which is not seen—is eternal. "Therefore we do not lose heart." We look toward the day when we shall be changed. Paul says, "For the corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of

sin is the law. But thanks to be God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord'" (1 Cor. 15:53-58).

The spirit never dies. We can trust in the truth forever. It is only the quality of our eternity that hangs in the balance. Jesus Christ promises, "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matt. 25:46). We are going into eternity. So let us go prepared.

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HIGH PRIEST IMPEACHED

By BRETT HICKEY

Did Eli the high priest commit an unpardonable sin? The wording of 1 Samuel 3:14 sounds like an indictment of that nature: "And therefore I have sworn onto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever." With the exception of his child rearing blunders, Eli seems to have served nobly as Israel's most honored official. Where did Eli go wrong? What could he have done to so infuriate the Almighty God? He refused to tell his children, "No." Truly, "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse..." (2 Tim. 3:13) Tragically, what appears unforgivable in Eli's household looks like the model for many American homes—perhaps even among some Christians?

The Lord explained Eli's punishment to young Samuel, "For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them no." (1 Sam. 3:13) There was more to the severity meted out to Eli. According to 1 Samuel 2:29, Eli could have—should have—done something about his son's irreverence. Because he ignored his sons' profane behavior, Eli paid the ultimate penalty. What some parents would in sympathy call "loving" his sons, God rebuked as "honoring his sons more than God."

"Love" Can Kill

The death of 13-year-old Christina is a modern day example of love gone awry. Officially, Christina died from heart failure. The real tragedy was that her mother "loved" her too much to tell her "No!" The crime scene tells the story. Her 13-year-old body was found surrounded by empty food cartons. The 5 foot 3 child weighed 680 pounds.

Facing charges of child abuse and neglect, her mother explained, "Every day I tell myself I should have done this, I should have done that. But what can I do now?" Christina's mother told police that "Christina demanded food, and she usually gave in." She had hoped that "Christina would decide on her own to stop eating too much." Her mother loved her too much to say no. This pitiful story gives us a cold, hard look at the world we live in. Some are

convinced that the way to have a better world is to let everyone "do his own thing." Don't judge, don't be critical and don't say the word "sin." This excessively tolerant disposition makes it difficult for the church to follow the directive, "Reprove, rebuke, exhort"—but we are still responsible.

The "hands-off" approach to religion, cleverly cloaked under the "love" label, starts at home. The following scenario is only slightly exaggerated, if at all. "Well, we let our kids do what they want. We try not to correct them. We defend their speech, their actions, their friends, their dress, and their absence from worship. After all, we are told, the Bible says "Provoke not your children to wrath." To that, add the testimony of "experts" like the late Dr. Spock¹ and who would dare challenge our "restrain them not" approach.

Dr. Spock Repents

A 1979 UPI release read, Spock Takes Some Blame For 'Brattier' Generations. In contrast to his original position, Dr. Spock lamented, "Inability to be firm is, in my mind, the commonest problem of parents in America today," Spock noted that parents are afraid of alienating their children. Solomon was right after all! "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." Prov. 29:15 (See also Pr. 13:24, 23:13-14; 22:15). While the Bible does instruct parents, "Provoke not your children to wrath," the same verse says to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Most Christians are very familiar with this scripture. Many can quote it. But, what does "nurture" mean? *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words* says, "By implication disciplinary correction:—chastening, chastisement, instruction."

Some people may want specific guidelines. The New Testament does not provide a step-by-step manual. We are left to our own discretion. Bible-based psychiatrist James Dobson praises Harvard University's Preschool Project. Though uninspired, these secular findings har-

monize with scripture. According to Dobson, The best parents were those who excelled at three functions: (1) They were superb designers and organizers of their children's environments; (2) they permitted their children to interrupt them for brief, 30-second episodes, during which personal consultation, comfort, information and enthusiasm were exchanged; (3) they were firm disciplinarians while simultaneously showing great affection for their children.

Notice: this secular study found that a child's best interest is served when firm discipline is tendered with affection. America has given this idea lip service with the anti-drug slogan "Just say no." Once out of school, we learn that the politically correct approach to our neighbor's moral and religious views and actions is "Never say no!" At times in the church, Christians are given the look. We understand without a verbal exchange—"Do anything, say anything, just don't say no."

Whistle Blowing

The denominational world may need to work on promise keeping, but we are past that. We need to work on whistle blowing. When the Bible says "NO" to human innovations in worship, we cannot be silent. When God's word shouts "NO" to fornication and adultery in the church (I Cor. 5), we dare not say maybe. If the Holy Spirit commands Christians not to forsake the assembly, we ought

not be ashamed of His words. It is possible to bend over backward so far to make people feel comfortable in sin, that the whistle blower, the preacher of righteousness is vilified while Satan and sin escape unscathed.

Could our love for our children work against them? Love can be harmful, if by love we mean unconditional acceptance of their rebellious actions. God loved Adam and Eve, but expelled them from Eden for disobedience. What if my long-standing convictions collide with my child's behavior? I will cling to what I have always considered truth and reprove my child's sin or I can defend my child and compromise my convictions.

Things "written aforetime were written for our learning." What can we learn from Eli? We should see that genuine love for children—and by extension for brethren—involves confrontation of sin. Will we care enough to confront? Avoiding confrontation endangers all involved. Obviously, the other extreme may occur. Parents can abuse their children. Well-intending Christians can abuse their brethren. Christians must confront error and immorality, but we must strive to do so in a way that will be received in the spirit it was intended.

¹ His book *Dr. Spock's Baby and Child Care* has sold 50 million copies since 1946. It seems more than coincidental that as these babies become teenagers America suffered the immoral revolution of the 60's.

WHEN THE DISCIPLES CAME TOGETHER TO BREAK BREAD

continued from page 1

the explanation of the two senses in which the word is used.

"It has two applications to companies of Christians, (a) to the whole company of the redeemed throughout the present era, the company of which Christ said, "I will build My Church," Matt. 16:18, and which is further described as "the Church which is His Body," Eph. 1:22; 5:23, (b) in the singular number (eg., Matt. 18:17, RV marg., "congregation"), to a company consisting of professed believers, e.g., Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:13; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:15"

Sometimes people will point to Matthew 18:20 where the Savior said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," in an effort to justify any type of gathering in any place to perform religious service. However, this IS NOT the import of Jesus' words! Rather, Christ qualifies the gathering of which He is in the midst; They must be gathered together in his name. He did not say where two or three are gathered together in the name of worship or in the name of religion there will I be...! When Paul declared in Colossians 3:17 "Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus," he was not saying that every solitary thing we say or do in life is an act of direct worship to God. He is saying that all must be done according to the authority that is represented in the name of Christ. If a civil authoritarian were to approach your door demanding entrance in the name of the law, he would be affirming that he has the authority of the government vested in him. Perhaps he has a warrant issued by the court to search the premises. He is acting by law and not of his own accord. So it is when a child of the King undertakes the duties assigned him by Heaven in Heaven's way. He is speaking

or acting in the name of or by the authority of Jesus Christ as revealed in His word. For Christ to be in midst of an assembly of his people whether it be two, three or a hundred, that assembly must be in His name or by His authority. A local congregation is not just any two Christians who decide to get together under a shade tree and discuss the Scriptures or meet in a motel room to observe the Lord's Supper because they are not in vicinity of an established church.

When the Scriptures teach that the disciples at Troas came together to break bread, it was referring to an established congregation of God's people residing in that vicinity. It undoubtedly bore the marks of an autonomous local church.

1. A local church is a local body of believers knit together in the fellowship of the Lord's work. When Paul said in I Cor. 12:20, "But now are they many members but yet one body" he had reference to a definite church that met for worship and edification in the city of Corinth. Of this same people he began his list of guidelines for the assembly of the church in I Cor. 14:23 by stating, "If therefore the whole church be come together. . ."

2. Each local congregation is to maintain a treasury of money which facilitates its benevolent work and its endeavors in preaching the gospel (I Cor. 16:1-2, II Cor 8, 9)

3. A local church is to have leadership (eventually elders and deacons) who feed, guard, and discipline members under their oversight. In Acts 20:28, Paul commissioned the elders at Ephesus to "feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." He also commanded Titus while among the disciples at Crete "that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee" according to Titus 1:5.

Every aspect of church work including the observing of ordinances pertaining to the worship of God are to be accomplished by the local congregation, no more - NO LESS! If a large number from the brotherhood get together to worship and engage in a gospel meeting such assemblies are to be conducted and overseen by the leadership of a local congregation. If one desires to fulfill his obligation in partaking of the Lord's Supper, this too must be accomplished in an assembly of the local church. One has NO SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY to meet once in a while in his motel room, his car, or his home to observe the Lord's Supper.

CONCLUSION

If a family meets in their home to worship in the corporate sense (i.e. - observe the Lord's Supper) they must constitute a local church such as existed at Troas which meets EVERY Lord's Day for worship and carries on the

Lord's work in a local area. Brethren, when people out of convenience or for any other reason convene an assembly in their home or elsewhere to commune one time or on a sporadic basis, they are violating not only the scriptural guidelines for what constitutes the worship and work of the local church, but the entire design behind communion - a common sharing in the benefits of Christ's death.

Those who contend that such is scriptural should begin doing as the digressives and take individual communion to shut-ins who cannot assemble with the local congregation. What is the difference? This writer contends that sporadic "home or roadside communion" is just as digressive as individual cups or any other perversion of the design of our Lord's memorial. Brethren, let us conform to the Bible's blueprint for not only what we do when we assemble, but HOW we assemble!

EDITORIAL

continued from page 2

Corinthians 3:12 the apostle said: "Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech." Yes, we all need to "preach the word; be instant in season out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (2 Timothy 4:2) Again, "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." (Galatians 1:10)

In an article written by Homer A. Gay in 1934 he mentioned the danger of our not being farsighted. He wrote: "Now, with all this before us let me insist that the leaders begin to watch for approaching dangers and warn against them. Our past experience has, or should have been a great lesson to us. In the fight over the instrumental music, the leaders saw no danger in using the digressive preachers for their meetings 'just so long as they kept quiet on it,' and they did not see what was going on until their flock was all torn and divided.... When loyal congregations use and support unsound preachers, those who endorse and use two or more cups in the worship, or anything else not taught in the scriptures, they are allowing the 'wolf' into

their flock. But, they say nothing about it. Sure, they don't. They are waiting until they can capture enough of the members, privately, to have the majority, and then you will hear them say, and they always say, 'if you don't like it, get out'May God speed the day when the 'watchmen' will wake up, and see the approaching danger in time to save the congregation. Use only loyal preachers and leaders and you will have only loyal churches." That is absolutely sound advice and just as true now as in 1934.

You ask, "Are you being critical of our preachers?" If some are neglecting to preach the truth out of a desire to please men, yes. By and large, we believe our preaching brethren are sincere and genuine in every way. We love, respect, admire, enjoy and pray for them on a regular basis. However, anyone can benefit from a reminder now and then. This writing is intended to be that and no more. Folks, it is not the time to be at ease. Paul warned Timothy that the time would come when some would "not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." (2 Timothy 4:3,4) Our God given charge is to keep sound doctrine before the brethren and world "in season and out of season."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A NEW CONGREGATION

A new congregation is meeting on the east side of Ft. Lauderdale, FL in the home of sister Marie Yadaseska at 840 NE 16th Ave. Worship is at 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Sunday. You may contact Mark Robbins, 1626 Fletcher St. Apt. 4, Hollywood, FL 33020, 1-954-927-9771 for further information.

NEW BOOK

Retelling The Greatest Stories Ever Told is the title of a new sermon book publishes by Jerry Dickinson. The book contains 15 sermons based on various stories from the Old and New Testaments. You can order the books from Jerry at the following address: Jerry Dickinson, 13803

Crosshaven, Houston, TX 77015, E-mail: MisterJLD@juno.com.

BRETHREN, CAN YOU HELP?

Recently, a congregation in California who has been supporting several preachers in the Philippines for a number of years had to drop out. Their support will end in September 1999. This is an urgent need! Can you help? One preacher receives \$350 monthly, another receives \$100. The Philippine work is among the greatest efforts in the world today. It is truly worth your consideration. Many are being baptized every year and several have been converted from digression. If you are willing to be involved in this work, contact Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, e-mail old_paths@juno.com. Be sure to include the underline between the words old and paths. Otherwise, the address will be invalid. Please, let us hear from you right away. DLK

FIFTY YEARS OF SERVICE

The book, *Fifty Years of Service* by Paul O. Nichols, contains an autobiography, articles and reports from the *Old Path Advocate*, as well as full sermons and sermon outlines preached by the author over the past fifty eight years. Many today are "drinking from wells they did not dig, and eating of vineyards they did not plant" and it might be of interest to learn of the history of the church and the men who helped to defend the truth and what we practice today. Some of the younger generations could benefit to see what we have been through in order for them to have the heritage that they enjoy today. Parents and grandparents are getting this book for themselves and their families and have been very encouraging with expressions of appreciation. The price of the book, *Fifty Years of Service* is \$15.00 per copy postage paid. You may order from Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012.

WESTERN STUDY

Fair Oaks Congregation is hosting a Western Preachers' Study, August 26-28, 1999. We will start with one topic Thursday evening, continue with morning, afternoon, and evening sessions on Friday, and conclude with morning and afternoon sessions on Saturday. This schedule gives time for 10 presentations. Each speaker will have 45 minutes of presentation followed by 30 minutes of questions and answers. Each question and answer session will be moderated and will follow the rules of assembly (1 Cor. 14). Alan Bonifay and Greg Gay are working with us to plan the topics and notify the speakers. They are planning a balance of topics including exegesis of passages as well as current issues effecting the church today. We hope this early notice will make it possible for many to plan to attend the entire Study. We will send a notice to give details of the topics and speakers in a few months.—Church of Christ, 8885 N. Winding Way, Fair Oaks, CA., Charles Everett and Harvey Hodson, elders.

NOTICE

The Church of Christ (11th Street Acres Congregation) in Tulsa, OK is trying to locate a faithful gospel preacher, who would be willing to work with us for an extended period of time. We expect him to be prudent, have a good biblical contact with individuals to teach them the Scriptures, in hope of leading them to Christ. Also, to devote some time in teaching and training the young people to become effective teachers, song leaders, and possibly future elders. If you are interested in becoming a part of this work, you may call or write to one of the following brethren: Church of Christ, c/o Gene D. Hopkins, 8724 E. 15th Street, Tulsa, OK 74112, Phone (918) 622-4362 or Church of Christ, c/o Allen Romans, 28601 E. 139th St., Coweta, OK 74429, Phone (918) 486-3937. If you need reference concerning the faithfulness of this congregation, you may contact any of the following preachers: Paul O. Nichols, (913) 422-4689; Ronny F. Wade, (417) 883-2315; William St. John, (903) 982-6729; Terry Baze, (903) 561-7420; Joe Hisle, (405) 332-7151; J. Wayne McKamie, (254) 840-3582.

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

On January 2, 1999, David Glenn Hullet and Carisha Faith Osburn were joined in marriage. David is the son of Don and Carol Hullet from the Oklahoma City area. Carisha is the daughter of Glen and Reba Osburn from Oklahoma City. I have known Carisha from the day she was born. She is a fine Christian young lady and has chosen a fine Christian husband. The Hullets will reside at 6050 S. Harvey #169, OK City, OK 73139. They attend services at the Capital Hill Congregation. We wish them years of service for the Lord.—Fred Gamble

OUR DEPARTED

VERNON—J.P. Vernon was born Jan. 7, 1919 in the Blackfoot community near Lebanon, MO and departed this life March 25, 1999 at Cox Hospital South in Springfield, MO being at the time a little over eighty years of age. On May 19, 1941 he was united in marriage to Oleta Robertson, and to this union were born one son and one daughter. J.P. had been a member of the Church most of his life and attended the Mission Hills congregation in Springfield at the time of his death. Aside from our relationship in the Church J.P. was a dear friend. He was a multi-talented man, who enjoyed singing and up until a few years back took part in the public teaching of the church. He was straight forward in his beliefs as well as in his proclamation of them. He will be missed. J.P. had been in declining health for several years, but faced the future without hesitancy or fear. Surviving are his wife Oleta, a son Gary and his wife Cathryn, a daughter Marsha Forsyth and her husband Mike, four grandchildren, six brothers, and a number of nieces and nephews. The memorial service was conducted from the Holman Funeral Home in Lebanon, MO with burial in the New Hope Cemetery where the bodies of many saints await the resurrection. The writer conducted the service.—Ronny F. Wade

McCOMBS—Sister Ruth (Shultz) McCombs was born March 8, 1914, departed this life March 3, 1999, at the age of 84. She was preceded in death by her husband Orley and a son Larry. Orley and Ruth were both members of the Lovejoy Church of Christ at Lovejoy, PA, having been baptized June 24, 1933, by John Fairs Nichols. Ruth had been confined to a nursing home for the past several years due to failing health. She is survived by 6 children and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Ruth will be greatly missed by her family and all who knew her. The writer spoke words of comfort and hope the family and friends gathered at the service.—Eugene Lockard

McKINNEY—Brother Ray McKinney was born December 5, 1924 in Perryopolis, PA, and departed this life suddenly and unexpectedly March 5, 1999, at the age of 74. He leaves behind his wife, Mary (Shaw) McKinney, (who is sister of Tommy Shaw), two sons, David and Randy and 6 grandchildren. Ray was a member of the Pleasant Valley Church of Christ, Indiana, PA. Ray was a good man and he will be greatly missed by his family and all who knew him. The writer spoke words of sympathy, consol-

tion and hope of an entrance into the upper and eternal better home with God.—Eugene Lockard

HERMON—John S. Hermon was born on November 3, 1913 and departed this life January 3, 1999 at the age of 85 years and 2 months. On Sunday morning, while reading his Bible, John closed his eyes in death and peacefully crossed over Jordan. He is survived by his wife, Mildred of the home. John was a long time member of the congregation at 85th and Euclid Streets in Kansas City, Missouri. His gentle presence and smile will be greatly missed. Above all else John was known for his love of the Lord. He and Mildred set the pace for gospel meeting attendance in the Kansas City area. One of my fondest memories of John and his service at the Lord's Table where he would often quote the better part of an entire chapter in preparing the congregation's mind. Without exception my visits to the Hermon home provided wonderful hospitality and conversation about spiritual matters. Our loss is heaven's gain. At the funeral it was my honor to reflect on the impact this Godly man had on the church and the community.—Mike Criswell

McELROY—Justin A. McElroy, 17 years of age, was born April 22, 1981 and died January 22, 1999 after suffering from "TENS" (toxic epidermal necrolysis): a rare allergic reaction to physician prescribed acne medication. Justin was preceded in death by his father, Michael McElroy. He is survived by his mother Alicia McElroy; one sister, Sabria (16); one brother, Jared (12). While the church and community are still in shock we find consolation in knowing that Justin walked with God. Not only so but his faith and godly example pointed the way for others. Justin was unashamed of his commitment to Christ and the Bible. One of his teachers recalled how that as a senior preparing for college entrance Justin refused to apply to schools in areas void of "faithful congregation." Another teacher recalled Justin saying that his most memorable summer was the one he spent travelling with evangelist Richard Reed from Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Justin's rich baritone voice and song leading ability will be missed throughout the Kansas City congregations. Justin was a young man of amazing accomplishment and talent. He was an honor student, a National Merit Finalist, president of his school's honor council, multi-award winner in forensics and music, and the recipient of numerous other academic and civic awards. But while earthly laurels fade perhaps his most enduring accomplishment came, ironically, during the period of his illness and death. Because he was loved by so many his illness served to bond the Kansas City Missouri congregations—perhaps more than any evangelist could have. Never have I seen brothers and sister labor more earnestly together in prayer. Justin's illness also gave the church an opportunity to spread its light to hundreds who had never before heard the gospel. At the final service an estimated 650-700 persons were present to hear the gospel plan. It was my honor to share the service with fellow evangelists John Brewer and Richard Reed. Glory to be God for the life of this young man and for the trial of his passing.—Mike Criswell

CRABTREE—Fannie Ellen Crabtree, age 77, daughter of

Salvatore and Lucy Snyder Realmuto, was born Nov. 17, 1921, near Bendavis, MO. She died March 28, 1999, at her home near Plato, MO following the lengthy illness. Ellen was a faithful member of the Bendavis Church of Christ and attended services as long as she was physically able. She was preceded in death by one son, Freddie Crabtree. She is survived by her husband, James W. Crabtree of the home; one son, James R. Crabtree of Lynchburg, MO; one daughter, Carol Sliter of Maryland Heights, MO; sisters Marie Prock of California, Lois Slavens of Warsaw, MO, and Louise Criger of Springfield, MO; and three brothers, Pete Realmuto of Galena, MO and Phil and Ray Realmuto of California. Services were conducted March 31, 1999 in Houston, MO with beautiful singing provided by members of the Houston congregation. Burial was in McBride cemetery near Competition, MO. I endeavored to speak words of comfort to the family.—Edward Williamson



Arvil Baker, 400 Pistol Creek Rd., London, KY 40741—The Southside Church of Christ in London will have a meeting with Brother Ron Courter, June 9-13. Services are nightly at 7:30 and Sunday 10:30 and 2:30. Everyone is welcome. We look forward to a good meeting.

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820, carlmj@compworldnet.com, April 1—We just closed a good meeting at Eldon, MO. The brethren did a splendid job of advertising and consequently we had visitors from the community every service. It was a pleasure to be associated with Dan Wissinger during the meeting. Dan is a tireless worker for the church and is a great asset to the churches in that area. We also had a good meeting in Shreveport that resulted in one restoration. Wayne Fussell and the brethren at Shreveport also worked very hard inviting people from the community and their efforts paid off with numerous visitors. Our annual March meeting here at home was one of the best ever. We had standing-room-only crowds and the young preachers did an excellent job in presenting their lessons. We are looking forward to our next meeting here with Don King (April 16-25). Recently, we enjoyed hearing Wayne Fussell at Healdton, OK and Doug Hawkins at Lexington, OK. I begin a meeting at Oklahoma City (21st Street) tomorrow night. My schedule for the next few months includes: Cedar Creek, AR (Apr. 16-18), Napoleon, AL (May 2-9 Homecoming meeting), St. Louis, MO (May 20-23), Spring Valley, WV (May 30-June 6), Ceres, CA (June 13-20), San Angelo, TX (July 11-18), Lee's Summit, MO (Aug. 8-15), Abilene, TX (Sept. 12-19), Kansas City, KS (36 & Everett) (Oct. 6-10), Fremont, CA (Oct. 14-24), Covina, CA (Nov. 7-14), Tyler, TX (Nov. 17-21) and Seminole, OK (Dec. 3-5). We continue to request your prayers.

Douglas T. Hawkins, P.O. Box 728, Brodhead, KY 40409—(606) 758-4071-hawkins@kih.net, April 1, 1999—We've been pretty busy the last two months in meetings. In March, we were with the churches in Dothan and Earlytown, AL, Holyoke, CO Lexington, OK and Bridgeport, TX. We thoroughly enjoyed each of these efforts in these places; it was truly our privilege to stay in the homes of Jimmy and Norma Cole; Pete and Helen Knight; Leora Tompkins, and James and June Vannoy. More gracious hosts than these would truly be hard to find. Our TV program out of Lexington is going well. After 6 broadcasts, we've have four letters and two calls. We're anxious to see what happens in the future. Our next meetings will be with the following churches: Spencer, IN (May 2-9), Bandy, KY (May 16-23), Conway, LA (May 30-June 6). As always, we bid the Lord's blessings to the faithful.

Bruce Roebuck, P.O. Box 209, Mt. Home, AR 72654, April 9—Things continue well here in Arkansas. Recently, a number of our young men began leading singing and giving lessons. We are thankful for their enthusiasm and sincerity. We had an enjoyable meeting with Barney Owens here at Mountain Home in March. Though inclement weather plagued us, visitors from the community and brethren from near and far made the meeting. Presently we are preparing to begin a weekend meeting in Aurora, MO tonight. Our schedule for the next few months is as follows: Chestnut Ridge, KY April 28-May 2, Duncanville, TX May 28-30, Sulphur Meeting June 26-July 4, Brazil, IN July 16-25. If any of these fit your schedule come be with us. Please note our new phone number 870-430-5001.

Johnny Elmore, 419 KSW, Ardmore, OK 73401, email: bookman@brightok.net, April 8—On Feb. 13-14, my grandson, Clay Harrison and I were at Cleburne, TX for singing instruction and Sunday worship. We enjoyed the two days we spent with the fine group there. I was at Hillcrest, near Brookhaven, MS for the same reasons March 8-14. It was such a pleasure to be with them again and work with a fine group of young people in improving the singing. I spent a few days March 17-21 at London, KY in singing instruction and preaching for the congregation there. We had a wonderful time working together in our efforts to improve the singing and I learned to appreciate them very much. Stan Elmore spoke to us here at Ardmore on March 28 and we enjoyed a wonderful singing in the southern Oklahoma tradition. It was my pleasure to baptize a young lady here last Sunday. I expect to be at Edmond, OK April 16-18, and St. Albans, WV June 13-20. May God bless our brotherhood.

Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811 Springfield, MO 65808, April 14—The meeting at Liberty, KY (Hilltop) closed with one baptism. We had very good crowds throughout. Cranston and Dorothy Watson from the West Chester congregation in Ohio took their vacation and spent the entire week attending the meeting, which was much appreciated. Next we went to Linville, Ohio. The mountains of Southern Ohio were abloom with spring, a beautiful time of the year. Cooperation from area churches helped with the crowds. In addition we had a number of outsiders attend. Three were baptized the last Sunday of the meeting. It was

good to have several preachers attend both meetings, including Doug Hawkins, Richard Bunner, and Dennis Smith. My thanks to Phillip Scott who started the meeting at Liberty for me. The Lord willing we go next to Waterloo, IA April 21-25, Greenville, SC May 23-30, Kansas City, KS (79th) June 6-13, Greenville, PA June 16-19, and Indiana, PA June 20-27. May the Lord bless us all as we work for him.

Greg Gay 782 L Saybrook Dr., Citrus Heights, CA 95621 April 1, 1999—Our 64th. St., Sacramento's annual Young People's meeting was March 26-28. Matt Trent and Kevin Fox selected the theme, The Excellent Choice... Living The Christian Life, and assigned topics to young men from up and down the state. They did a great job and our building was full nearly every service. We have stayed pretty close to home the last few months with preaching appointments at Auburn, N. Area Sacramento, and Yuba City. We were in Sanger for a weekend meeting and singing instruction January 29-31. We stayed with Don & Lyndell Rowland who are dear friends. Alan Bonifay and I have completed the first phase of planning/scheduling for the Western Preacher's Study to be held August 26-28 at Fair Oaks. The topics are set and preachers notified. This is a project Alan and I have talked about for several years and we are really looking forward to it. We had our Annual Winter Study with the men at 64th. St. during January and February. This year we spent some time on song leading but our main focus was on Leadership. Topics included: Who are Leaders, Speech & Demeanor, Family Values, Study Habits, Time Management, and Money Control. We were blessed with one baptism in January. We recently lost one family. Russell Jones moved to LA and is worshipping with the Gardena congregation.

Jerry Dickinson, 13803 Crosshaven, Houston, TX 77015, Mister JLD@alo.com—I just arrived back home after holding meetings in Tulsa (11th street) and Springfield (Northside). At Tulsa I was privileged to stay with Gene and Bernice Hopkins, where I have stayed several times before, and enjoyed their warm hospitality. When I lived in Missouri I preached for the 11th street congregation on a regular basis and it was good to be with them again. In between that meeting and the one in Springfield I got to visit with my son Jason and his wife Christina in Joplin, a welcome respite. In Springfield I stayed with my brother Billy and his family and it was a real treat to be with them for the week. Exceptionally large crowds greeted us each night. It snowed 14 inches the last Saturday night but we had a fairly good turnout in spite of the weather. During the meeting Smith Bibbens baptized his son Nate. Several other preachers attended the meeting and if I could remember them all I would mention them all by name. Northside is where Irvin Barnes has labored for years, of course, and it was great to be with him again. He is having health problems but he is invaluable to the church there, not to mention, my brother Billy who now works with them. I am looking forward to preaching in the next few months at the following places: San Angelo, TX, April 3-4; Hoyte, TX, April 24-25; Cable Ridge, MO, June 6-13; Blue, OK, June 20-27; Flintville, TN, July 11-18; Seattle, WA, July 25-August 1. I have published a book of sermons that ought

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to be in my hands soon. I have been working on the book for a couple of years and I am anxious to see the finished product. As soon as they are shipped to me I will place an announcement about them in the OPA. May the Lord bless us all in His service!

Don L King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA, 94539, April 12- We were glad to have Brett Hickey with us recently for a week-end meeting. He did a good job and the congregation enjoyed having him along with Louise and the children. Kevin Presley is to be here soon for a week's meeting and the brethren are looking forward to it. Lord willing, we begin this Friday evening in Ada, OK for a 10 day meeting. We have been there a number of times over the years and always enjoy working with them. Fremont has just completed, or nearly so, remodeling our building. It has been quite a job but it looks nice again and we are happy to have visitors, as always. We are still studying, at least part of the time, with some of the younger brethren regarding issues, which have divided the church over the years. We have several teachers now and some younger men who are about ready for Lord's day morning. They are doing pretty well. Fremont has a young congregation with lots of babies. I recall Brother Gay saying that it was hard to out preach a freight train or a baby. I wonder what he would have said about Fremont? We have both.

Billy D. Dickinson, 2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803, bddickinsonjuno.com, March 31— I closed a meeting last Sunday at Oakdale, CA. It had been several years since preaching in that state and it was a joy to return and renew some old acquaintances, and meet some new folks. The church is strong in that area and good cooperation from surrounding congregations helped us to have large crowds during the meeting. Matt Trent is working with Oakdale and is a fine young preacher of the gospel; he has the respect and admiration of the brethren with whom he labors. It was a blessing to have the following preachers in attendance: Bennie Cryer, Alan Bonifay, Richard DeGough, and Ryan Connors. It was my privilege to stay in the home of Philip Permenter. They are dear people who love the Lord, His church, and gospel preachers. There are some changes in my meeting schedule that I need to report. Please note two additions and some changes in dates: April 16-18 at Lawrence, KS, June 16-20 at Cleburne, TX, June 27- July 3 at Lebanon, MO, July 30-Aug. 8 at New Salem, MS, Aug. 27-29 at Ratliff City,

OK, Oct. 2-3 at Jackson, MS, and Oct. 20-24 at Deer Park, TX. We had outside interest in our recent meeting here with Jerry Dickinson and his sermons had that old Jerusalem ring. Snowy weather was a hindrance to the final services, but the meeting left us built up in the faith.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012—We closed a very enjoyable meeting at Washington, Ok., Mar. 28th. We had some excellent crowds with different congregations represented from night to night. Several preachers attended one or more services. At Washington there are several young men who are a real asset to the church there. There was one confession of faults. We are at home now. Here at Kansas City (79th and Kansas Ave.) the congregation has more than doubled since we began the work in April, 1994. We have planted and watered and God has given the increase. We have some wonderful people with whom to work and it is a joy to be associated with them. There were three local teachers when we moved here and the church was having men to come from other places to help in the teaching. We now have eleven teachers who help edify the congregation and one or two more young men who will soon start. We continue to have our gospel meetings. But we seldom have an outside teacher, and as a general rule only when he voluntarily shows up to attend our services. We are all learning and rowing together (1 Cor. 14:31). We discourage men from "moonlighting" using the church for a second income when they have jobs making good money. I have been asked if I still hold gospel meetings. Yes, but I do not conduct as many as I used to because we are concentrating on building up and strengthening the home church, and it is paying off. We are happy to hear of the good being accomplished in different parts of the world. May the Lord bless all our righteous efforts everywhere.

RULES FOR CONTENTMENT

1. *Health* enough to make work a pleasure.
2. *Wealth* enough to support your needs.
3. *Strength* enough to battle with difficulties and overcome them.
4. *Grace* enough to confess your sins and forsake them.
5. *Patience* enough to toil until some good is accomplished.
6. *Charity* enough to see some good in your neighbor.
7. *Love* enough to move you to be useful and helpful to others.
8. *Faith* enough to make real the things and word of God.
9. *Hope* enough to remove all anxious fears concerning the future.

—Selected

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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. LXXIII

LEBANON, MISSOURI, JUNE 1999

NO. 6

LEGALISM: WHAT IS IT, AND IS IT CONDEMNED IN SCRIPTURE?

By GLEN OSBURN

Introduction:

A. "Legalism" is a term that has become popular in recent years. The word is not found in the Bible but is used as an epithet or label to generate prejudice against those who insist upon a strict obedience to God's word.

B. Some denominational adherents use terms such as "legalist" and "Pharisee" to discredit those who insist upon "book, chapter, and verse" for scriptural authority.

C. *The American Heritage Dictionary* defines "legalism" as, "strict, literal adherence to law." Since the word "legalism" is not found in the Bible, we cannot provide a biblical definition. So, the question becomes, "Do the Scriptures condemn a strict, literal obedience to God's law?"

I. PASSAGES OFTEN USED AS "PROOF-TEXTS" TO CONDEMN THOSE WHO INSIST UPON STRICT OBEDIENCE TO THE SCRIPTURES.

A. [Rom. 2:28-29 NKJV] "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God."

1. The purpose of this passage is not to condemn strict observance to God's law, but to show that salvation is not in keeping the Law of Moses, which required strict observance of every facet of the Law (James 2:10-11).

2. The term "the letter" is a term that is unique to Paul's writing. We have to understand the term as he intended it to be understood, not as we would like it to be understood. Paul is the only New Testament writer who uses the term in a religious sense, and it consistently refers to the Law of Moses.

3. The fact that men erroneously use the term "the letter of the law" to refer to the strict observance of any law, religious or secular, does not affect the meaning Paul intended when he used the term.

B. [2 Cor. 3:6 NKJV] "...Who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." 1. It is apparent that "the letter" here also refers to the Old Testament because Paul contrasts it to the "new covenant." 2. The Law of Moses, or "the letter," was a law of death because the Jews were required to keep it perfectly, yet none could (Acts 15:10); it could save no one (Heb. 10:4), and it alienated the majority of mankind — the Gentiles. 3. Note a similar expression in Heb. 10:4. The term "the

blood of bulls and of goats" represents all the sacrifices of the Law of Moses, and embraces representing all the Law of Moses. In hermeneutics this is known as a synecdoche, "a figure of speech by which a part is put for the whole..." (Webster). In 2 Cor. 3:6, "the letter" stands for the entire Law of Moses, and is declared to be ineffective in saving. 4. In contrast, "the Spirit" refers to that which came by the Holy Spirit — the gospel of Christ (John 14:26, 2 Peter 1:2-4). 5. Those who condemn Christians who from faith, teach, and practice strict obedience to the gospel of Christ, would have Paul here saying; "If you keep the letter of the law, that is, if you obey every law and principle of the gospel of Christ, it will kill you spiritually; but if you loosely interpret the gospel and obey some of it, it will save you." How absurd!

C. [Mat 23:23 NKJV] "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone." 1. Notice that Jesus does not condemn the sacrificing of the smallest herbs; rather, He condones it: "These you ought to have done." He, however, condemns the Pharisees for leaving "undone" other laws of God that were equally binding: practicing justice, mercy and faith. Jesus called these "weightier matters" (i.e. more important aspects) part of "the law." 2. Those who condemn what they call "legalism" don't seem to realize that here Jesus actually endorses what they call legalism—strict adherence to law.

II. THE WORD OF GOD INSISTS UPON WHAT SOME CALL "LEGALISM."

A. Far from condemning "strict, literal adherence to law," scripture actually insists upon it.

1. [John 8:30-32 NKJV] "As He spoke these words, many believed in Him. Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'"

a. The term "in My word" refers to all that Jesus commands through His word.

b. If we don't have to "abide in" all that Jesus commands, how do we determine what we have to obey and what we can leave undone? 2. [John 14:15 NKJV] "If you love Me, keep My commandments." 3. [John 14:21 NKJV] "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves

continued on page seven

CONTENTS

Vol. LXXIII No. 6



ADVOCATE

ANNOUNCEMENTS 8-10

Legalism: What Is It, And Is It Condemned In Scripture?	1
What About The Children?	2
The Querist Column	3
Judge Yourself Unworthy	3
When Thou Wast Little	4
Come And See For Yourself	5

FROM THE FIELDS 10-12

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Editorial

WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN?

By DON L. KING

The recent horrifying events in Colorado have captured the attention of us all. Young lives were snuffed out at such an early age. Parents are heartbroken because of the unimaginable loss of children they expected to have with them always. Everyone is stunned and the question "why?" is in all of our minds.

The television news anchors are calling for stricter laws governing schools. More stringent controls for guns, people say. Others are calling for prison sentences for anyone and everyone involved in any way. Law enforcement is taking a hard look at those who may have sold or bought the guns, etc. used in the attack. Many are being questioned as to their knowledge (previous to the crimes) and may well go to jail for a long time.

All of this is well and good. We certainly hope law enforcement can finally get to the bottom of the matter and the guilty ones properly dealt with. However, the "copycats" are already at work. Scares are occurring in many places over the nation. Police will likely have their hands full for a long time.

What is the problem? How do such terrifying events take place at the hands of those who should be enjoying the prime of their youth? Why are mere children killing people? Youngsters not yet in high school have committed unimaginable crimes. Can the problem be identified? We believe it can.

Our society underwent radical changes in World War II. Women by the thousands went to work producing war machinery. Once the need was past, the situation remained pretty much unchanged. Soon, our economy demanded more than the husband's income. In many places it is now virtually impossible for a family to buy a home with only the husband's income. As result, many of the nation's children are raised by babysitters.

The home itself is in shambles in America. Over half (some say) of all marriages end in divorce. Children are the victims again! According to reports, it is becoming unusual for children to have both of their natural parents by the time they get to junior high school. They have often been victims of verbal, physical or sexual abuse and sometimes all of the above.

However, even in homes where everything is reasonably normal there are often major problems. Too many have been allowed to speak to their parents in any way they chose. When they went to school, they were not required to bow to the authority of teachers, etc. Little by little, authority has been removed from their whole world. Anyone who dared to discipline them would himself have been disciplined. Frankly, it isn't difficult to imagine how we have hardened criminals within the bodies of children.

What is the point of this writing? It appears that many of the nation's ills can be traced to broken and dysfunctional homes. It would be amazing if many of the problems the

continued on page eight

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: If a member of the church commits one of the sins named in 1 Corinthians 5, and does not repent, but chooses rather to leave the church; must the church withdraw from the person, though he, (or she) no longer attends? If the answer is yes, but brethren fail to do so, does this permit individual members to freely associate with the guilty person as they did before the sin was committed? If we are not permitted to associate with them (eat meals, etc) does the restriction last until the person repents and comes back to the church? (CA)

Answer: The discipline demanded by Paul in 1 Corinthians 5, concerned one who was committing incest by living with his step-mother. The sin was horrible. Equally bad, was the attitude of the Corinthian church. They chose not only to overlook the wrong being practiced, but were puffed up in its regard. They were proudly tolerant of their broadminded views. Hence, Paul brought authoritative judgment to bear upon the guilty party. He also charged the church to "deliver" the individual unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (v.3-5). The proposed discipline was designed, first of all, to bring the man to his spiritual senses, and secondly, to effect the salvation of his spirit. Paul knew full well that the man could die in this condition, and were that to happen his destiny would be sealed forever. That is why decisive action was necessary. The apostle then proceeds in verses 6-8 to show that the discipline was also necessary in order to maintain the purity of the church, for a little leaven would leaven the whole lump. The threat of the sin spreading was real. If nothing were done not only would this man be lost, but possibly others would be also. The reputation of the church was at stake as well. If nothing were done the message would be loud and clear: "we tolerate sin." The situation presented by the querist is obviously different from the one addressed by Paul in these verses, in that the guilty party has separated

from the church, and the church is evidently not "puffed up" regarding the sinful actions of the one involved. In a situation like this, must the church proceed with withdrawal of fellowship? I cannot say that we are under obligation to formally withdraw from one who has left the church, but I do believe further action is mandated. It may well be that, to some degree, the guilty has lessened the impact of his (or her) actions on the church by leaving. It does not follow, however, that the church has no further obligation in such a situation. Since the person is unrepentant, their soul is still in jeopardy. The individual needs to be brought to their spiritual senses. They need to be saved. If the church does nothing, we are in effect failing the individual who is continuing in sin. We must also remember that discipline is broader than the censure of the guilty individual. The reputation of the church must be upheld and protected. A church that fails to take any kind of action when such a situation exists is plainly not doing its duty. A failure on the part the leadership to step up to their obligation, however, does not give individual members the freedom to associate with the guilty party as though nothing has happened. Remember, Paul had written in an earlier epistle (not preserved) that they were not to keep company with fornicators (v. 9-11). There was to be no fraternal fellowship with those guilty of such a lifestyle. A brother (or sister), who is committing fornication, cannot be "complicated with" whether they are in the church or have left the church. We cannot continue "business as usual." The sinful party needs to be aware of our disapproval of their actions and conduct. We make them aware by refusing to socialize with them, and by reproving, warning, and pleading with them to repent and return to the Lord. How long must we withhold our fraternal fellowship? Until they repent, however long that may be. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade PO Box 10811 Springfield, MO 65808)

JUDGE YOURSELVES UNWORTHY

By EDWIN S. MORRIS

In Acts 13:45-46, the Jews spoke against those things spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. After these Jews had done this, Paul told them that the word of God was first spoken to them, but when they judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life, they would preach to the Gentiles. We want to notice, and repeat, that the Scriptures say that these people judged themselves unworthy. How? They rejected the teachings of the gospel and refused to accept it. I wonder today, when one refuses and rejects the teachings of God's word, if he does not judge himself. I am well aware that we are taught not to judge, but at the same time I am aware that we may be known by our fruits. The judgment that is condemned is that which is rash, harsh and censorious. Jesus says that by their fruits you shall know them.

Today, if someone comes to us with a false doctrine and we refuse him and his doctrine, are we judging? Do we not know him by his fruits? We are taught not to receive

such, neither bid him God speed. Today, if a man causes divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which we have learned and we avoid this man, (Rom. 16:17), are we judging? Has not this man who caused the division judged himself unworthy thy of everlasting life? We are not to have fellowship with any of the unfruitful works of darkness.

Any doctrine that is contrary to the teachings of the Bible is darkness. Is the use of individual cups, Sunday School, instruments of music in the worship service a part of the doctrine of Christ? If we believe to practice such is wrong and a person comes to us who has been practicing this which we believe to be wrong, are we to receive this person into our fellowship with out any repentance, confession or prayer? I was talking to a person not long ago and he said he did not know how that we could tell a person who comes to us wanting to worship with us that we could not fellowship him. I simply replied that we do not fellowship

these innovations, and that the man was not in fellowship before he came wanting to worship with us. I cannot worship where these innovations are practiced and I feel that anyone who worships with these is in error and worshipping unscripturally. Now, this individual has not wronged me individually, but he has wronged the church which I am a part of. I once worshipped where they practice the use of individual cups in the communion, and when I changed I repented and confessed to the church that I was wrong in my practice and wanted their prayers and God's forgiveness. I have often heard used, and use myself, the example of the man who owed the groceryman \$100.00, and one day decided to start paying cash. He said credit was no way to buy groceries and he would pay cash from now on. This did not relieve him of that back debt. He needed to pay this back debt in order to get things straight. We have used this about baptism, that it was to take care of past sins when we become a child of God. Now, what about a person that has been worshipping wrong and he comes and says I am not going to worship that way any more; from now on I will use the scriptural way? What about these wrongs he has committed in the past? What cleans that slate? We are taught to confess our faults one to another and pray one for another. Now, did we judge this man or did he judge himself? A man asked me one

time if I thought he would be lost for practicing these innovations. After he pressed me for a definite yes or no answer I told him I thought a person that practices these innovations would be lost. He replied, "you are judging." I in turn asked him if he thought a drunkard would be lost. He replied, "yes." I in turn told him he was judging. Actually, neither of us was judging. Actually, neither of us was judging because those in error and sin simply judge them selves.

In conclusion, I want to say that I believe that if a person is truly interested in his soul's salvation, and sees he is wrong, we will not have to beg or plead with him, but he will readily want to make things right. If he is truly convinced that the innovations he has practiced are wrong, he will want to make it right. I once worshipped where they used individual communion cups and I visited a congregation that used one cup, and they called on me to take part. I never did go back because I felt they thought I was all right. I visited another and they did not call on me, and not only that, they explained to me their belief and it was not long until we changed our position. We wanted forgiveness for what we believed was wrong.

Brethren, we cannot follow after liberalism and expect to please the Lord.—*From OPA, May 1966*

WHEN THOU WAST LITTLE

By HOMER L. KING

"Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night, and he said unto him, Say on. And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel?" (I Sam. 15:16, 17)

The above memorable words were spoken to King Saul by the Lord through the man of God, Samuel, and 2900 years ago, yet these words are as appropriate and forceful today as when spoken. We need to consider them very carefully and heed the warning. Remember that King Saul had been sent on a mission by the Lord, but he failed to carry out the instructions of the Lord, disregarding the word of the Lord in order to please the people. The Lord through Samuel ask him:

"Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord?" (verse 19). Saul replies, "The people took of the spoil, etc." Samuel answers:

"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obey the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken then the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is an iniquity and idoltry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king" (Verses 22 and 23).

The above is a solemn warning to all who would take matters into their own hands to deviate from the "Old Paths," is the way of the Lord, as revealed in His word; but I wish at the time to deal especially with the question that Samuel put to Saul, viz.: "When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel?" (Verse

17). Oh, what a searching question! "When thou wast little"—not just merely little but "little in thine own sight." Yes, while he was "little," while he was humble, while he was meek, while he was "poor in spirit," God exalted him, making him head of the tribes and king over Israel. This ought to be a lesson to every preacher, to every leader, and every teacher in the church, yea, and a lesson to every Christian from the least to the greatest, that as has been said in a paradoxical manner, "The way up is down, and the way down is up." When Saul was humble, "little in his own sight," God lifted him up, but when he became big in his own sight, God humbled him. Take warning, brother!

Humility, "little in thine own sight," is no doubt one of the greatest, the most admirable, beautiful, and Christlike of all virtues, yet the least practiced. The New Testament clearly teaches that we cannot be full of self-seeking, "vain glory," and conceit, and be His disciples. The ungodly greed for money, lust for power, popularity, "uppermost seats in the synagogue," etc., in the world and in the church, is a shame and disgrace to the religion of the meek and lowly Jesus. The haughty spirit is a stench in the nostrils of Jehovah! No selfishness, no worldly pride, and not sense of superiority every marred the character, nor darkened the brilliant and humble life of the lowly Master. There is simply no place for the "bighead" nor the "big headed" in the kingdom of the Christ. To whom does God look for leadership in His work? "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word" (Isa. 66:2) "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3), and, "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5). What promises to the meek!

After all, the apostles of our Lord were just men, sub-

ject to mistakes, the same as we. In the very shadow of the cross, they had disputed about who should be greatest in the kingdom. Hence, Christ taught them, thus:

"If any man desires to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all" (Mk. 9:35). "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matt. 23:12). In writing to the Roman brethren, Paul said: "Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10). This advice and instruction heeded by the preachers would often save the church from factions and division. It is a fearful and disgraceful thing for one to be for Paul, one for Cephas, and another for Apollos. When such happened at Corinth, Paul said: "Are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (1 Cor. 3:3, 4), yes, and to be carnally minded is death. So long they ought to think; so long as some are selfish and lustful, and so long as some feel that they are superior to others intellectually and otherwise, having overconfident in their own strength and ability, we may look for a factitious spirit manifested among brethren.

May we as brethren do as James says: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up" (James 4:10), and as Paul says: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). With hearts filled with pride and conceit, it is impossible to serve the Lord in an acceptable manner.

Knowing our own weakness and imperfections, let us all "put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any;

even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Col. 3:12, 13).

One has said: "Position hunters and place seekers are weights in the church and retard the growth and development of the kingdom of Christ. We need men as humble as children and with the characteristics of a guileless child, free from malice, to build up the church of God. Such will never have to seek a position; the position will seek them." How often have we seen young men climb rapidly into useful, able, gospel preachers, and so soon as they become efficient and really great in their field of work, the praise of men, lust for money, power, position, etc., cause them to be lifted up with pride and conceit, and down they go, for "pride goeth before a fall," as the wise man said.

May the God of all grace help us all to really see ourselves as He sees us. I pray the Lord that He will help me to really become and remain "little in my own sight," humble, meek, gentle, kind, and longsuffering toward all of my fellow laborers in the gospel; for I know that if we be lifted up with pride and conceit, we cease to be of use and service to the Lord and the church.

"If one should break the letter,

Yea, spirit of command,

Think not that thou art better;

Thus may'st not always stand."

Now, keep us, Dear Lord, humbly and meekly at the feet of Jesus, and may we always sincerely endeavor to emulate the humility, meekness, love and longsuffering of the meek and lowly Jesus. Help us all to ever remember what Abraham of old said to Lot: "Let there be no strife between me and thee * * *, for we are brethren"; I do earnestly and humbly pray.

COME AND SEE FOR YOURSELF

By BARNEY OWENS

Some things in life have little meaning and these we are able to trust the judgment or opinion of others, but there are other things which are of such magnitude that we dare not even trust our closest friends or loved ones; these we must have firsthand knowledge or evidence. We can make decisions that pertain to this life that may be incorrect and we bear the consequence for weeks, months, or even years to come. While this might be depressing, what of the things which have eternal consequence as they pertain to the next world? Above all things these need evidence.

And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them, and saith unto them. What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi...where dwellest thou? He saith unto them. Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day.

...Phillip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, we have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, and son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him. Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Phillip saith unto him. Come and see. (Jn. 1:37-39, 45, 46)

Since the possibility exists that we may be mistaken, the admonition of these passages is that we discover firsthand the truth we all desire and seek. When the two disciples asked Jesus where He dwelt, rather than tell them, He asked them to take the time and go to the trouble to know the

truth themselves. When Nathanael demonstrated that his mind was made up that "nothing good could come out of Nazareth," rather than argue the matter with him, Philip wanted him to see the evidence for himself. Like both these examples, there are certain things that you and I will never allow another to prove for us, but to our own satisfaction we must prove them, which can only be done by "seeing" for ourselves. This I believe the only way to convince certain people of things that are divine—they must "COME AND SEE" for themselves.

Now, there are some people who are so close-minded that they refuse to examine for themselves the evidence. What about you, dear friend, is your mind like that of Nathanael, so closed that you will not weigh the evidence? Your opinion is right and from it you will not be moved? Well, I hope that you will pause a moment and ask yourself, "WHAT HAVE I TO LOSE BY EXAMINING THE EVIDENCE?" With that resolve, I ask you to "come and see for yourself" what is the truth about divine and Heavenly things. I thank you in advance for so doing.

Is It Hearsay Or Firsthand Knowledge?

How many things have we accepted as true when in reality they are but hearsay? In no other field of activity is this more apparent than religion. A man or group of men may say a certain thing is right, or that it is the thing to

practice and hundreds flock to engage in it, thinking that it pleases God. Often, public opinion determines one's course. The majority has seldom been right when it comes to the things of God. Often, public opinion determines one's course. The majority has seldom been right when it comes to the things of God. Should we seek approval from men as a standard of correctness of God's eyes? Such things may be put generally under the heading of "hearsay." Is our soul no more valuable than that? Is that sufficient? I think not, rather we should have the information necessary "firsthand."

The Queen of Sheba heard of the wisdom of Solomon, but that did not satisfy her; she wished to see for herself, so:

She said to the king, it was a true report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom: Howbeit I believed not their words, until, I came, and mine eyes had seen it: And, behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: For thou exceedest the fame that I heard. (II Chron. 9:5-6)

This is a worthy example to all of us, and I heartily recommend it to all. She had heard, but she CAME and SAW the fact of this matter, which far exceeded anything she had been told. Doubtless, you have heard many things that the Bible is reputed to teach, but is that satisfying to you? Is it not better for you to COME and SEE for yourself what the Bible says or does not say? I suggest that you will be amazed to the extent that you, like the ancient Queen, will declare "the one half has not been told."

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, He asked an important question of His disciples. Read with me Mt. 16:13-14:

Whom do men say that I am? And they said, some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

That was pure "hearsay." Nothing more nor less. Then Verses 15-16:

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.

In other words Jesus was saying, now I know what you have heard about me, but I am not interested in "hearsay," I want to know what you have SEEN as a result of your COMING to follow me. What is it that you know "firsthand?" In the final analysis, it does not matter what others might think or say, what is important is what we know.

Some Things That We Need To Investigate To Know

This subject is unlimited as far as seeking out things which most people have neglected investigating for themselves. The following are some that have been discussed at one time or another in these pages under different headings, but remain at the list's head. Multitudes go by "hearsay" in their regard. It is hoped that you will consult Bible teaching in these matters.

The Church Revealed In The New Testament

COME AND SEE with your own eyes the teaching of the Bible respecting the Church of Christ. Among other things, the Scriptures testify in regard to it the following:

1. The Lord promised to build His church, Mt. 16:18. You have heard that one church is as good as another. Is that true? Is a church built by man as good as the church

built by Christ?

2. Jesus Christ is the Head of His church, Col. 1:18. All authority abides within the head, just as is true of the head of a non-religious institution. Christ was given all authority by the Father in Heaven, Mt. 28:18. Everything we practice religiously is directed by Christ, Col. 3:17. We should have a "thus saith the Lord" for everything. Is that not easily seen? Are the churches which have some man or group of individuals as good as the church with Christ at the head? Which church has Christ as head?

3. The church of Christ is the fullness of Him, Eph. 1:22-23. That means that the church functioning in this world accomplishes the will of Christ and does His work. The reason is that the church is the Bride of Christ, Eph. 5:23-25. As a faithful wife is a compliment to her husband, so the church compliments Christ. Is it a compliment to Christ to wear another spiritual name? Is it a compliment to Christ to engage in a fellowship which does not honor Him?

4. Christ is the Savior of the church, Eph. 5:23-25. Often one hears the statement, "The church does not save you." An utterance containing more truth was never uttered. And while that is truth, it also remains a fact that He Who is the "SAVIOR" saved someone or some thing, and that which the SAVIOR SAVES IS THE CHURCH. Do you wish to be a member of the church Jesus SAVES?

5. The saved are added to the church, Acts 2:47. These people had obeyed the words of Peter to be saved, and, upon obeying, they were added to the church. The conditions of salvation are the conditions of church membership. Please don't overlook that! Do not depend upon the "hearsay" of men who proclaim that once a man is saved he should seek a church to be a member of, such is not taught in the Word of God, rather the SAME CONDITIONS THAT SAVE A PERSON AT THAT SAME MOMENT GRANT MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCH. If a church demands things to be done in addition to the steps of salvation to be a member of their church, then stop, COME AND SEE what the Bible teaches. "Hearsay" will profit us nothing, personal knowledge of the Bible will grant fellowship with God.

Baptism

COME AND SEE, Dear Reader, what the Word of God has to say upon this subject. It really does not matter what others have said, nor what you have thought upon this matter, what is important for both of us is the truth expounded in the New Testament.

1. Baptism is for the remission of sins, Acts 2:38. It is pitiful how men misuse this simple passage, rather than just take it for what it says. Repentance and baptism are joined together by the conjunction "and." This we use everyday in a variety of ways and we know that it joins two things which are equal to the conclusion. If I were to purchase a loaf of bread for \$1.00 and 25 cents, I know that 25 cents is not equal to \$1.00. Yet in this statement it is equal, because I cannot have the bread with the \$1.00, and at the same time I must have the 25 cents. Remission of sins is promised upon "repentance" and "baptism." It is not my place to argue whether baptism is as great as repentance, in fact I would submit, because for me, at least, "repentance" was more difficult than "baptism." However, the latter in this statement of Peter's is equal to the former, as both are essential to obtain remission of sins. Do you

want remission of sins? Then you must repent AND be baptized. That is not 'hearsay,' that is what your Bible says.

2. Baptism is the point at which the new life begins, Rom. 6:3-4. The reason for this is one becomes a new creature by entering Christ, II Cor. 5:17, and it is baptism that puts us into Christ, Gal. 3:27. The new life begins at the new birth, Jn. 3:3. The new birth is in water baptism, Jn. 3:5. Men have proclaimed that one should be baptized after he is born again, after he is saved, after he is in Christ. Such statements are "hearsay." Once we COME AND SEE in

the Bible itself, we have "firsthand knowledge" of the truth. What about your feelings, have they come from "firsthand knowledge" of what the Bible says, or have they developed because of "hearsay?"

Concluding Remarks

Solomon was not the only wise person in the land, as the Queen of Sheba demonstrated her wisdom by not taking the word of another. She was wise in seeking wisdom where it was to be found. Will we be less wise? Divine wisdom is found only in the Word of God, II Peter 1:3.

LEGALISM: WHAT IS IT, AND IS IT CONDEMNED IN SCRIPTURE?

continued from page 1

Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

4. [John 15:10 NKJV] "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."

5. [1 John 5:2-3 NKJV] "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome."

6. [2 John 1:6 NKJV] "This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it."

B. The Holy Spirit, through the writers of the New Testament, demands a strict, literal adherence to the "law" of Christ (1 Cor. 9:21).

1. [Gal 1:10 NKJV] "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a servant of Christ."

a. To paraphrase Paul's question, "Am I trying to get men to amend their lives to God's ideal, or am I trying to get God to accept men as they are?"

b. Those who want to do less than God demands to avoid "legalism" are trying to do just what Paul said we shouldn't do — get God to accept less than what He has commanded.

2. [James 2:18 NKJV] "But someone will say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works."

a. The word "works" here refers to doing the things God has commanded.

b. Since doing what God has commanded shows our faith, doing less than all God has commanded demonstrates less than complete or mature faith.

3. [1 Pet 4:18 NKJV] "Now if the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

a. Who are the righteous? In Luke 1:6, Zacharias and Elizabeth are said to have been "righteous" because they were "walking" (i.e. living) "in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."

b. If those who have obeyed "all the commandments and ordinances" are scarcely saved, that is, saved with no room to spare, how can those who do less than the Lord has commanded be saved? That was Peter's question.

4. [Mat 28:20 NKJV] "...Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen."

5. [Acts 10:33 NKJV] "So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God."

a. If God does not demand full and complete obedience to everything He has commanded, why did Peter say it was necessary for Cornelius and his family and friends to hear "all the things that are commanded you by God?"

6. [Luke 17:10 NKJV] "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'"

a. If doing "all those things which you are commanded" still leaves us "unprofitable servants" what can be said of those who do less than they are commanded?

b. Jesus is here saying that, even though we keep His word completely and fully, we still have not earned salvation; it is still a matter of grace (Titus 2:11-12).

7. [1 Cor 9:20-21 NKJV] "to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law" a. Paul is here implying that, even though he is no longer under the jurisdiction of the Old Law, he is always under obligation to keep the commands of Christ.

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Some have given a prejudicial connotation to the word "legalism" for the purpose of implying that all who insist on doing what God has commanded have violated the spirit of Christianity.

B. By labeling as a "legalist" those who insist on obeying the commands of Jesus, they hope to marginalize their impact on discussions that concern fellowship issues among brethren.

C. Even though we must insist upon keeping the commands of Jesus, we should not embrace or endorse the label of being a "legalist" or "legalism" for these are non-Biblical words that carry man made definitions which do nothing but contribute to strife in religious discussions.

D. Also, may we never endorse any doctrine which teaches that man should feel justified in doing less than what God requires.

1. [James 4:17 NKJV] "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin."

E. No matter what men may say, the word of God remains sure and unchanging, and will judge us "in the last day" (John 12:48).

1. [Rev 22:14 NKJV] "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of

life, and may enter through the gates into the city."

2. [Titus 2:11 NKJV] "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men."

3. [Heb 5:9 NKJV] "And having been perfected, He (i.e. Jesus) became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him."

EDITORIAL

continued from page 2

Church faces today are not also from similar sources.

Some of us can remember when divorce was nearly unknown among Church members. We can recall when it was a bit of an oddity even in the community! As the old saying goes, "we would watch one until he was out of sight." Now, many have endured the heartbreak of divorce. One need not travel far and wide to encounter it. There can be little doubt that broken homes have been the cause of difficulty for the Church. Many who misbehave as Christians likely misbehaved as children at home. Solomon said: "foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." (Proverbs 22:15) Again, "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." (Proverbs 29:15) We might add that his father might also be brought to shame. No wonder Paul commanded, "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4) What an awesome responsibility parents face!

Preachers and teachers must spend more time encouraging young people in the pursuit of Christian homes. The Church of Christ in 1999 can be no better than the homes of her members. As goes our homes, so goes the Church. If our homes are cesspools of worldliness,

spiritual apathy and with no respect for authority, the Lord's Church will certainly reap the harvest of such irresponsibility and sin. Far better to teach a young man or lady how to build a Christian home, founded upon the Word of Almighty God than to have to deal with the divorce after it occurs.

Young people who come from solid Christian homes just naturally want a similar home for themselves after marriage. How to have it? Young brother, sister, be absolutely certain that you marry a Christian. The only way to have Christian homes is for those in the home to be Christians.

One thing is certain: the problems facing the USA in 1999 can be traced back to poor homes. If the Church allows her homes to be wrecked by the devices of Satan he will wreak havoc among the children of God for many generations to come. What are your children seeing, hearing and learning in your home? As the poet said:

*The soul of a child is the loveliest flower
That grows in the garden of God.
It climbs from weakness to knowledge and power
To the sky from the clay and the clod.*

*To beauty and sweetness it grows under acre;
Neglected 'tis ragged and wild.
'Tis a plant that is tender and wondrously rare,
The sweet wistful soul of a child.
Think on these things. -DLK*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

July Will Be A Special Issue

The July OPA will be a special issue. This means there will probably be no field reports, announcements, etc. The theme will be: "WHAT IS WRONG?" Johnny Elmore is getting it together as we go to press. Subscribers will receive their papers in the mail as usual. However, we hope to have extra copies available for sale at the 4th of July meetings. The price has not been determined yet. However, it will be as low as we can manage. Below is the planned content. Why not make plans to pick up a hundred (or several hundred) copies for use in tract racks or in door to door work?

What Is Wrong?

What Is Wrong In Religion

By Johnny Elmore

What Is Wrong With The Doctrine Of Faith Only?

By Jerry Dickinson

What Is Wrong With Denominationalism?

By Kevin Presley

What Is Wrong With Instrumental Music In Worship?

By Don L. King

What Is Wrong With Sunday School or Bible Classes?

By Ronny F. Wade

What Is Wrong With Individual Cups In Communion?

By Billy Dickinson

What Is Wrong With Contemporary Worship?

By Bennie Cryer

What Is Wrong With Institutionalism?

By Carl Johnson

A New Book

Retelling The Greatest Stories Ever Told is the title of a new sermon book published by Jerry Dickinson. The book contains fifteen sermons based on various stories from the Old and New Testaments. The price is \$10 plus \$2 shipping. You can order the books from Jerry at the following address: Jerry Dickinson, 13803 Crosshaven, Houston, TX 77015. E-Mail MisterJLD@aol.com.

Brethren, Can You Help?

Recently, a congregation in California who has been supporting several preachers in the Philippines for a number of years had to drop out. Their support will end in September 1999. This is an urgent need! Can you help? Our preacher receives \$350 monthly, another receives \$100. The Philippine work is among the greatest efforts in the world today. It is truly worth your consideration. Many are being baptized every year and several have been converted from digression. If you are willing to be involved in this work, contact Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, e-mail old_paths@juno.com. Be sure to include the underline between the words old and paths. Otherwise, the address will be invalid. Please, let us hear

from you right away. DLK

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 Kenneth E. Cowan Civic Center, 500 E. Elm. The meeting will be conducted by evangelists Billy D. Dickinson, Springfield, MO and Douglas T. Hawkins, Brodhead, KY. Sponsored by the Lee's Summit Church of Christ. For additional information call 1-417-589-6288, 1-417-589-6281 or 1-417-589-2647.

Fifty Years of Service

The book *Fifty Years of Service* by Paul O. Nichols, contains an autobiography, articles, and reports from the *Old Paths Advocate*, as well as full sermons and sermon outlines preached by the author over the past fifty eight years. Many today are "drinking from wells they did not dig, and eating of vineyards they did not plant" and it might be of interest to learn of the history of the church and the men who helped to defend the truth and what we practice today. Some of the younger generation could benefit to see what we have been through in order for them to have the heritage that they enjoy today. Parents and grandparents are getting this book for themselves and their families and have been very encouraging with expressions of appreciation. The price of the book, *Fifty Years Of Service* is \$15.00 per copy postage paid. You may order from Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012.

New 1999 Church Directories

New 1999 Church Directories are ready to order from Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808. \$2 each + postage.

OUR DEPARTED

PARKER—William T. "Bill" Parker Jr., was born Dec. 28, 1919 in Kansas. He departed this life on Sept. 17, 1998 at his home in Canon City, Colorado at the age of 78. Bill had been fighting cancer for only a short period of time. At his passing he requested that no service be held, only a viewing of the body was offered before he was laid to rest in Mountain View Cemetery southeast of his home. Bill was raised in Nebraska and Colorado. His parents were William T. and Florence A. (Shirk) Parker. On Aug. 31, 1947 he married Verna Z. Zinn. In 1950, Bill moved to Canon City, Colorado. He is survived by his wife, children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, great nieces and great nephews. Bill was a leader of the church and will be greatly missed by those who knew and loved him.—Mike Middick

FANCHER—Lois Allie Hammett Fancher was born on Sept. 16, 1919 in Wellington, Texas. She departed this life March 10, 1999 in a Wichita Falls, TX hospital at the age of 79 yrs. and 5 months. She was preceded in death a few years back by her husband, Ervin Fancher. Lois was a faithful member of the Crestview Church of Christ until the time of her passing. She always left "early" for the services and for some time had the reputation of "being

the first one there." Many of the saints and relatives were recipients of her seamstressy, her quilts won the blue ribbons at the local fairs. Two of her grown daughters and their children attend the Crestview congregation, but there was a time when Lois was the only one of her family faithful in attendance, but it didn't daunt her faith and good works. She was reserved and godly, independent, chaste, industrious, of a meek and a quiet spirit. She was content with her God-given role in life. The family honored her request that I speak at her memorial service, which I did on March 12 before a large audience at the Lunn Colonial Funeral Home. The songs were beautifully rendered led by Charles Goodgion. We patiently await the resurrection and reunion.—Jimmie C. Smith

HARRIS—Funeral services for Hattie Ethel Harris, age 74, of Clinton Okla. were held Friday, Feb. 5, 1999 at the third street Church of Christ in Sentinel, Okla. Sister Harris was born Feb. 7, 1924 in Kenison, Texas to Daniel and Ora Helen (Janes) Sexton and passed away Feb. 2, 1999 at her home in Clinton, Okla. She lived in Okla. around Hollis until her marriage to Andy Verdean Harris in 1943 they moved to Sunray, Texas in 1952 and lived there until 1986. They traveled until 1990 and then established their residence in Clinton, Okla. They were members of the Third Street Church of Christ in Sentinel, Okla. Sister Harris was preceded in death by her parents, her husband Andy, on June 6, 1997; one sister and one grandchild. Survivors include three sons, Dean Harris of Tuttle, Okla., Don Harris of Dumas, Texas, and Richard Harris of Yukon, Okla.; two daughters, Rita Upton of Hardin, Texas, and Debra Vasquez of Amarillo; Texas; two brothers Daniel Sexton of Amarillo, Texas and James Edward Sexton, of Hudson, Florida; one sister Dorothy Gilliam of Clinton, Okla.; 13 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren. There was a large crowd of family, friends and brothers and sisters in Christ present. The beautiful singing was done by two of her grandsons, Matt Upton & Greg Harris, Pat Everett and Gayle Hanson. Burial was in Sentinel cemetery beside her husband Andy. Officiating was Charles Pruitt of Okla. City and the writer.—Louis Hopkins

PRINCE—It is with sadness and regret that we must chronicle the passing of another Prince in such a short time. In a matter of a few months, 3 have gone on. Vivian Prince Rowe, Gordon, and now Calvin, their youngest brother, leaving Annie Pearl Mann, the last of a large family down here. Brother Calvin Clay Prince was born June 30, 1926, in Randolph County, Ala.; he, with the angels rallying, went to Paradise, March 25, 1999 in Birmingham, after a valiant fight to live a little longer down here. It was my honor to stand with Lynwood and Jimmie Smith on March 27 at Napoleon, Ala. meeting house to say a few words in respect and admiration for my brother; he had asked several years back that I do that, indeed an honor for me. Such a man was he—Christian, a true Southwestern gentleman, devout, committed to the Christ and His church, honored citizen in the community where he was born, grew up, obeyed the gospel, married, reared his noble family, preached and lived the gospel; he was this writer's friend indeed; I considered him one of my best. It was 3 years ago that he came to where I preach

the gospel; I am so thankful now that we asked and he consented. I do not know everybody, I do not know everything for sure, but I know this precious brotherhood pretty well, but I do not know of anyone who has done for the church what Calvin Prince and his precious wife, Jeanette, his wife of nearly 52 years, have done. They have reared 8 children, 5 sons and 3 daughters; please note this dear reader, all of them faithful in the church; and remarkably, listen, all of the in-laws, spouses of the 7 who are married, are faithful in the church. Calvin and Jeanette have done something wonderful, uniquely wonderful; and though grateful, they would be the last to boast. I am so blessed that folks like this have crossed my path, and I have crossed theirs. Well over 900 signed Calvin's register; this speaks loudly for him, his wife, his children and theirs, the whole family. There were nearly 200 floral arrangements of varied and beautiful descriptions: I have

not seen the like. This again says something about these precious folks. In the midst of simple, by elegant surrounds, Calvin was borne the "last mile of the way" down here, in Alabama's beautiful, rural countryside, to the meeting house where he and his people have worshipped many years; such a pretty, pristinely-kept, not extravagant house it is, where enough gospel has sounded forth by the many who have preached there, to save a million worlds. His active bearers were precious grandsons; his honorary bearers were brothers in Christ; you never heard prettier singing; the crowd was overflowing. Ronnie, Tim, Glenn, Sidney, Kenny, Wilda, Rita, Kathy are blessed to have a such a "Daddy" as they affectionately called him; and such a sweet Mother, a noble example of courage and faith in sorrow. The whole church and the world need to know that such a man as Calvin Clay Prince has walked among us down here.—Don McCord



Brett Hickey, P.O. Box 6506, Ventura, CA 93003; (805) 658-7860; e-mail: brett.hickey@juno.com; May 1 - In recent weeks, we have picked up new studies from the state prison and from passing out door hangers. Joyce Flores' daughter Kim being diagnosed with brain cancer and the death of Robert Brancato jolted the Ventura congregation, but brotherly love is helping to heal these wounds. We enjoyed our brief meetings at Lodi and Fremont. The brethren at both places encouraged us. It was good also to be associated with the following preachers: Alan Bonifay, Ryan Connor, Bennie Cryer, Richard DeGough, Don King and Matt Trent. The meeting at Atwater resulted in two confessions and one baptism. Rick Arnold - the 38-year-old son of Richard and Bernice Arnold - obeyed the gospel. Mothers who continue to weep and pray for their straying children can take heart. During the week we were able to have studies with people who met in the community and with out-of-duty family members. Alan Bonifay and Richard DeGough will assist local brethren in working these leads. Brethren from Turlock, Modesto, Fremont, Oakdale, Clovis, Bakersfield, Sanger, Stockton, Benicia, Cereia, Manteca and Ventura were good to support the Atwater meeting. Over the next six months, Lord willing, our travels will take us to Mt. Home, AR June 17-19; Hartwell (Huntsville, AR) June 20-27; Allen, TX; Conway, LA September 12-19; Marion, IA October 10-17. We hope to see many of you at the 4th of July meetings at Sulphur, OK and Lebanon, MO.

Douglas T. Hawkins P.O. Box 728 Brodhead, KY... (606) 758-4071... May 5, 1999 — Recently, the last part of April, we were with the church in Sharonville, OH for five days. This was our first time to be in the state of Ohio for a meeting. As anticipated, we enjoyed the meeting a great deal. As they do every preacher that goes there, the brethren treated us wonderfully. It was a real treat to get to know

the folks better in that area. Bro. Barney Owens has lived there for a long while and continues to labor faithfully with them. Lori and I enjoyed our stay with him and Bea. They are such fun to be with. Presently, we are in a meeting at Spencer, IN. We are making our home with Bill and Becky McCutchen. We've not seen any outside interest yet in the meeting, but the brethren are faithfully coming from night to night. Our next meetings will be with the churches in Conway, LA (May 30-June 6) and Scotland, AR (June 23-27). Come if you can. May the Lord bless us in our work for him.

Jimmie C. Smith, 5100 Rail Road, Harrison, AR, May 10; e-mail: cjsmith@alltel.net.— In Feb. I spoke one Lord's day at the Lone Rock, AR congregation and was warmly greeted by the congregation along with several adult visitors. In March I conducted a five day meeting with the brethren in Nashville, TN. It was only my 2nd congregation to speak for in Tenn. The crowds were good and one took his stand for the truth from the practice of cups/classes. The congregation has some fine young leadership that faces the same kind of problems that older leaders either face or ignore. The next week we were saddened by the loss of our dear bro. Calvin Prince from Napoleon, AL. I'm sure his passing will be chronicled elsewhere in this paper. Last fall he came and spent six days with us in our home, and we loved it. In April I was with the little congregation at Ben Davis, MO for a weekend and stayed with the Edward Williamsons. We had good crowds and the congregation has seen some growth. It all added to an enjoyable weekend. We're getting ready for our meeting beginning next Sunday with Ron Courter. If the Lord wills I will be with the faithful at Jackson, Miss. over the Memorial day weekend, and with the brethren at Columbus, GA. during the middle of June. May God bless our meetings during these perilous times.

Kevin W. Presley, Rt. 2 Box 166, Kinston, AL 36453 (334) 898-1301 May 4, 1999—1999 has been a productive year. Our work at home continues to progress well. The television program continues to receive new correspondence EVERY week. I am presently preaching a series on innovations, hoping that the digressives will show

some interest. In Feb/Mar we had two wonderful meetings. Bro. Doug Hawkins held a meeting at the new church in Dothan, and also a meeting at Earlytown. At Dothan, there was a young man who contacted the television program for further study. He came to the meeting and was baptized. We continue to study and work with him on a regular basis. In time, he can be a great asset to the church. At Earlytown, one was restored. Doug's preaching was timely and very well delivered. I enjoyed spending time with him and his wife Lori. Bro. Charles Marsh and his family will be living in the Dothan community beginning very soon. We are delighted about that, knowing that they will be a huge asset to our new congregation. In March my meetings for the year began. It was a joy to be with my brethren in Piedmont, AL and Jacksonville, FL during that month. Both meetings were well attended with some community interest. I enjoyed spending time with Ricky Martin, Gene Grant, Terry Studdard, Mark Deathrige, J.W. Kornegay and Phillip Prince during these meetings. Bro. Phillip is doing a good work with the church in Jacksonville. They have a number of young, zealous families there insuring a strong future. The Piedmont congregation continues to uphold the truth under the capable leadership of their elders. In April, I was delighted to return to my grandparent's old home congregation in Bakersfield, CA for a meeting. The church at Planz Rd. is certainly thriving in a number of ways. I was impressed with the evangelistic efforts they are putting forth. We had a wonderful meeting with large crowds every night. My thanks to the many who came from various places around the state. The singing was absolutely inspiring! I was glad to see preaching brethren Brian Elliot and Matt Trent. The meeting closed with one restoration. Richard DeGough recently held a good meeting at the Lowery congregation near here. I love Richard and esteem him highly for his sound, doctrinal preaching and his kindly demeanor. I look forward to being with him in California in May. Speaking of which, my next meetings are in Fremont, CA (May 17-23) and Turlock, CA May 24-30). It will be good to spend time with Bro. Don King while at Fremont. Please pray for our work!

Anthony Brockett, 4504 Connaught East Dr., Plainfield, IN 46168, (314) 837-8795, ABBRockett@aol.com, May 10—The work of the Lord in the Indianapolis area continues to advance at a steady pace. We have been blessed with an increase in numbers lately, with a family from Texas who moved here at the end of April. We have had a good number of visitors lately, showing a steady amount of outside interest. Some of our more interesting studies of late have been with members of a local cups and classes congregation, and a local cups and classes preacher. We pray for positive results from these endeavors. I am looking forward to conducting the Hamilton, Ohio Young Speakers Meeting—May 16-18. We have been blessed with an abundance of Gospel meetings in the state of Indiana in the past couple of months. It has been a pleasure to attend some of them. We are looking forward to the Sulphur and Lebanon meetings as they rapidly approach. Please pray for us in our labors here.

Barney Owens, 8782 Meadowview Ln. W. Chester, OH 45069—Since last reporting it has been my pleasure to

hear Walter Hunter and Ron Alexander. I have been in meetings with the churches at Imperial NE and Birmingham, AL. Each was a joy. Our meeting is soon to begin here with Doug Hawkins preaching. My next is with Wayne, WV (April 30-May 2), then to Valliant, OK (June 5-13) and Sentinel, OK (July 11-18). If your vacation plans have not been set, please make plans to be with and help us in these efforts. Of course, if you are in driving distance you will be welcomed. Prayers for the meetings are always appreciated.

Carl M. Johnson 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820, carlmj@compworldnet.com, May 13—I just returned home from conducting the annual Homecoming Meeting at Napoleon, AL. There were several folks who were conspicuous by their absence due to illness or death. The Prince family who derives from Napoleon has lost three family members (Gordon, Vian, and Calvin) within the last six months. Consequently, the Homecoming on the second Sunday of the meeting was an emotional one. We had good attendance at the meeting, however, and I enjoyed the opportunity to work with these good brethren again. Since my last report I have also conducted meetings at Cedar Creek, AR and Oklahoma City 21st Street, resulting in one restoration. Don King held us an excellent meeting in Ada last month. He did an superb job preaching the gospel and we had very good attendance. Three were baptized and several confessed faults during the meeting. I am scheduled to preach three services at home this week, and next week I am to be in St. Louis, MO for four services. God bless the faithful everywhere.

Ryan J. Connor, 1549 Black Oak Drive, Stockton, CA 95207—May 3—The church here in Stockton continues to grow and develop. Early this year one of our young ladies, Kristin Davis, was baptized into Christ—a wonderful start to our year. We enjoyed a weekend meeting here at Stockton with brother Matt Hayes and his lovely wife, Kristi. Brother Bennie Cryer and I are busy in the work. My home studies with various members of the congregation, along with Bennie's studies are beginning to show some effects in the interest and attendance here at Stockton. Our local teachers are continuing to develop, and some of our men have started to use their talents in teaching this year. I am intensely proud of our young people. They are a good group, and a light for the Lord. The meeting season has swung into full gear in this part of the country. I have had the good pleasure of hearing some good gospel preaching. We are looking forward to our meeting with brother Aaron Risener here at Stockton, June 13th-20. I have had the opportunity to preach at several congregations in the area thus far this year—Fair Oaks, Clovis, Auburn and Santa Rosa. My wife, Shannon, and I are looking forward to travelling through the mid-west this summer. Lord willing, we will be in Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas, preaching at various congregations. We enjoy being among our brethren of like precious faith. I have one meeting scheduled for September 24th-26 at the congregation in Clovis, CA. May God bless us all.

Ed Bullard, Rt. 1, Box 26, Tupelo, OK 74572 (580)845-2239—Our first meeting at Denison, TX in several years

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE (USPS 407-560)

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took place April 11 - 18. The speakers were Doug Jones, David Risner, John Tidmore, Bud Dismake, William St. John and myself. Several congregations came and assisted us. I did some personal work before the meeting. The Sunday before we had 26 for morning worship. The first Sunday of the meeting 34 were present and the last Sunday we had 42. We had visitors at every service. Everyone thought this type of meeting was good, and this might be the way for some of the smaller churches that cannot afford a preacher to have meetings. We do have some more meetings like this planned. You can contact Bud Dismake, 1610 Four Corners Rd, McAlester, OK 74501, (918) 426-4313 or myself at the above address. We do ask for your prayers.

James H. Hensley, 2169 S. Beach Rd., Prescott, MI 48756, The work in Prescott continues at a somewhat slow pace. We have a few people from cups and classes attend quite often. Some refuse to attend because our building does not look like a church house. Of course, we know the building is not the church. Lord willing, we plan a tent meeting July 11-18 with Brother Luther Rose of Beattyville, KY. There will also be guest speakers as they attend. If any of the brethren plan to attend, let me know and we'll try to find a spot for you to speak. Our congregation is small and we pay \$250.00 monthly on the building which means we have very little left to fix up the building. Any help you can give us will be appreciated. My health has been bad lately but we are some better now. We knew when we came here that the work would be long and hard. Lord willing, we will continue on in the work. We need your prayers. May God bless His people everywhere.

Don L. King 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA, 94539 May 1, e mail: old_pathsjuno.com. We just returned from a good meeting at Ada, OK. Good crowds and interest prevailed throughout. Three were baptized and two confessed wrongs, to God the praise. We appreciated that Joe Hisle and Carl Johnson were there during the meeting. Their presence contributed a lot. It was also good to see Johnny and Sally Elmore who came over from Ardmore. Area congregations attended very well and what a blessing that is. While there we were glad to stay with Darrell and Rosa Gould again. They could not have treated me better. I had stayed with them several times in the past and it was good to go back. Our next is to be at Jacksonville, FL May 26-30 for their Memorial Day meeting, Lord willing. We have gone there many times over the years and look forward to a profitable effort. Kevin Presley is to hold Fremont's next meeting May 17-23. We are looking

forward to that and hope to see many of you here. Pray for the Church everywhere.

Richard De Gough, 1907 Tully Road, Hughson, California, 95326, April 22, 1999—The meeting with the Jonesboro congregation meeting on Fielder Road in the Atlanta area was very enjoyable for me. It was my first time to be with them. The attendance was excellent, the brethren hospitable and kind in every way possible. A special thanks to Don and Josie Snow who opened their home to me. They know how to care for a preacher, and may God bless them and the Church in their work. There were preachers present every night, for which we give thanks. Don Snow, Kevin Presley, Gene Grant, Richard Nichols, Rick Martin, Wayne Kornegay. The meeting in Lowery, Alabama was enjoyable also. The brethren were so good to me, and we renewed old friendship, and met new ones. I visited brother Chapman Grimes and Sarah. Brother Chapman is very ill but still has the cause of Christ foremost in his heart. May God bless Sarah as she cares for him lovingly day by day. My visit with brother Vester Reynolds was encouraging. He has some health problems but is optimistic about the Church, expressing his love for all his brethren. The Church at Lowery has a great future with such good brethren who meet there guiding her. It is good to be home again with the Turlock church. My special thanks to brother Kevin Presley, a mighty preacher in word and deed. He cared for me, attended many nights of the meeting, carried me around, and kept me in his home. My thanks to Griffin Lowery who gave me a car to drive, and all the brethren for their hospitality. I am enjoying the preaching of brother Brett Hickey in Atwater. We look forward to our May meeting with Kevin Presley. God bless all.

Johnny Elmore, 419 KSW, Ardmore, OK 73401, bookman@brightok.net, May 7—I enjoyed being at Edmond, OK April 16-18 to speak on the role and the qualifications of elders in two lessons. I commend the brethren at Edmond for their interest in this vital topic. I was impressed with the goodly number of young families there and their zeal for the church. I enjoyed being one of the speakers in a short meeting at Norman, OK April 23, and also getting to visit with Doug Edwards. I heard two good sermons from Don King in his meeting at Ada, OK. We have had three more baptisms here since last report—a husband and wife and another lady. Last Wednesday night, I spoke on the qualifications of elders at Ratliff City. I hope to be at St. Albans, WV, June 13-20 and Ada, OK July 30-Aug. 9.

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. LXXIII

LEBANON, MISSOURI, JULY 1999

NO. 7

WHAT IS WRONG IN RELIGION?

By JOHNNY ELMORE

It must be obvious, even to a casual observer of the religious scene today, that something is drastically wrong. On one hand, we live in an era of the mega-church, congregations with memberships numbered in the thousands. These churches build large, expensive buildings, complete with gymnasiums, family recreation centers, day-care operations and other facilities, to which people flock in throngs. New groups with new names spring up around us continually. Denominations of every kind abound in every city and hamlet. But, on the other hand, all of this religious activity seems to have very little impact on the conduct of men and women. We live in moral climate in which unrighteousness is overlooked and ignored. The sins that caused God in former times to wipe out entire cities and nations abound and the great mass of people excuse and justify such things. Why don't the churches have more influence over the way men and women live? Why is it that men have no sense of purpose and direction? Why is it that men see nothing in their religion worth sacrificing and dying for? I certainly do not claim to have all the answers to these questions, but there are a few things that are very clear.

Many Are Being Led By Blind Guides

Jesus taught that "if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matt. 15:14). In a recent survey of 10,000 preachers, eighty per cent could not agree that the Bible was inspired of God, fifty percent did not accept that Jesus was born of a virgin, and eighty percent did not believe that Jesus is the Son of God. These are shocking statistics. How can men who doubt the integrity of the word of God be trusted to lead the people in a moral, upright fashion? After all, if the Bible did not tell the truth when it affirmed the virgin birth, when it claimed to be the inspired word of God, and when it recorded the resurrection of Jesus, why would we think it would be a safe guide in matters of morality? To complicate matters, these leaders are not being held accountable by the people because the people themselves are too busy and preoccupied to search "the scriptures daily," whether these things are so (Acts 17:11).

No Biblical Authority For Religious Practices

One of the worst problems is that so many do not see the need of biblical authority for religious practices. The chief priests and elders of the Jews in Jesus' day were quite ignorant in many ways, and yet they understood the

importance of authority. When Jesus taught in the temple, they asked Him, "By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority?" Jesus regarded that as a fair question and offered to tell them where He got His authority, if they would tell Him if the baptism of John was from heaven, or of men (Matt. 21:23-25). Men must have authority from God for religious practices. But, in our time, when people are asked for authority for such practices as instrumental music, Sunday school, individual cups in the communion, more than one loaf on the Lord's table, and a host of other things, their reply is: "We like it." But the apostle Paul wrote: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus . . ." (Col. 3:17). "In His name" means "by His authority. How does the Lord authorize religious practices? Peter said, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11).

Disrespect For The Lord's Church

In this century, many people—a great number of them preachers—have shown utter disrespect and contempt for the church. People have been told so many times that "the church is not going to save you," and "there's nothing to the church" that many have subscribed to that opinion. It is somewhat amusing to hear the same preachers begging people to attend their churches. If there is nothing to the church, why work so hard to get people to attend? When the Corinthians turned the Lord's Supper into a common meal, Paul asked: "Despise ye the church of God?" (1 Cor. 11:22). Remember, Jesus purchased the church with His blood (Acts 20:28). To despise the church is to despise the price paid for it. The church is divine. Jesus built it (Matt. 16:18). It was built according to God's pattern (Heb. 8:5). Disrespect is shown when men violate that divine pattern by creating denominations and factions, by changing the name, the government, the law (the New Testament), the worship and the mission of the church. Disrespect is shown when the purpose of the church is changed from evangelism, edification and benevolence to entertainment, recreation and social.

Controversial Issues Avoided

A contributing factor to the deplorable religious conditions today must be the demand that controversial issues be avoided. In the first century, the apostle Paul's command to Titus was to "rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" (Tit. 1:13). His command to

CONTENTS

Vol. LXXIII No. 7



ADVOCATE

What Is Wrong In Religion?	1
By Johnny Elmore	
What Is Wrong With Sprinkling For Baptism?	2
By Jerry Dickinson	
What Is Wrong With The Doctrine Of Faith Only?	3
By Barney Owen	
What Is Wrong With Denominationalism?	4
By Kevin W. Presley	
What Is Wrong With Instrumental Music?	5
By Don L. King	
What Is Wrong With Sunday School or Bible Classes	6
By Ronny F. Wade	
What Is Wrong With Individual Cups In The Communion?	7
By Billy D. Dickinson	
What Is Wrong With Contemporary Worship?	8
By Bennie Cryer	
What Is Wrong With Institutionalism?	9
By Carl M. Johnson	
What Is Wrong With Open Fellowship?	10
By Douglas T. Hawkins	

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Timothy was to "reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). But in our time, it is as the rebellious people of Isaiah's time who said, "Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits" (Isa. 30:10). If anything besides love, love and more love is mentioned, people complain about negative preaching. The preachers of the primitive church were not afraid to condemn errors in religion and when preachers and Christians of our time fail to do that, it is one of the things wrong. Jude 3 states that we are to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

I have mentioned only a few of the things which are wrong in religion today. Please read with discernment the following pages written by earnest brethren who have sincerely striven to point out some of the things wrong in religion. It is our desire to see men and women take a stand for that which is right and cannot be wrong.—419 KSW, Ardmore, OK 73401, bookman@brightok.net

WHAT IS WRONG WITH SPRINKLING FOR BAPTISM?

BY JERRY DICKINSON

In 1311 a council of the Catholic Church convened in Ravenna, Italy and the most controversial issue debated was whether to accept sprinkling, along with immersion, as an acceptable mode of baptism. Up until this time, even babies were immersed by priests. It was only on rare occasions, when someone was deemed too ill to get to a baptismery or a pool of water, that the priest was allowed to sprinkle water on a person in place of immersion. But now many church leaders were arguing that sprinkling ought to be just as acceptable as immersion.

There was a long debate. At last it was decided that from that point on, in the Catholic churches, sprinkling was just as acceptable as immersion for baptism. What do you think about that? Do you think that just because some church leaders took a vote and decided that sprinkling is an acceptable mode of baptism that makes it so? Even more, do you think that the Lord recognized that vote? Can men, by voting, decide what is and is not acceptable to the Lord?

What is wrong with sprinkling for baptism? The answer, as simply as I can make it, is this: sprinkling is not baptism. **Sprinkling is not baptism!** You cannot sprinkle water on someone and call it baptism, not scripturally, that is. Baptism, as taught in the Bible, is accomplished by immersing, dipping, or plunging the person beneath the water, and then raising that person up out of the water. That baptism is immersion can clearly be established in three ways.

1. The Meaning Of The Word Baptize

Baptize is from the Greek word, *baptizo*. The translators anglicized the word, making it baptize. However, every single Greek lexicon that I am aware of defines the word *baptizo*, "to immerse, to dip, to plunge." The primary meaning, then, of the word *baptizo* is to immerse, dip or plunge.

The word baptize means to immerse, and when you sprinkle water on someone you are certainly not immersing

them in water. If you are a priest or a preacher, and you want to sprinkle water on a man or woman, or a baby for that matter, go ahead. But, my friend, do not call it baptism! Call it what it is—sprinkling. Sprinkling is not baptism.

2. The Context Demonstrates That Baptism Is Immersion

"And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins" (Matt. 3:6). In other words, they were baptized in water. If you substitute the meaning of a word for the word itself, it should make sense. Let's see. They were immersed in water. That makes sense. They were dipped in water. That is sensible, too. They were sprinkled in water. Does that make sense to you? You may sprinkle water on someone but you cannot sprinkle someone in water. John immersed these people in the river.

In Acts 22:16, Saul was told, "Arise, and be baptized. . . ." If Ananias was just going to sprinkle water on him, why did Saul have to arise? Why not just sprinkle him where he kneeled? Obviously, he needed to get to a pool of water where he could be immersed. John did his baptizing where there was much water (John 3:23). If all he needed to do was to sprinkle a few drops on each person, why did he choose a place where there was **much water**?

"Therefore," writes the apostle Paul, "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" (Rom. 6:4). What a beautiful picture indeed! Whenever a person is immersed beneath the water, we see a likeness of the burial of Jesus and when that person is raised up out of the water, we see a coming forth of Jesus from the dead.

My son, Derek, raised cocker spaniels. Every once in a while would die. He did not go out in the backyard and lay the puppy on the ground and just sprinkle a little bit of dirt on the body. He had more sense than that! He completely covered it with dirt. Baptism is a burial! Sprinkling a few drops of water on a person is no more what it means to be buried with Christ in baptism than sprinkling a few grains of sand on a dead body is burying that body. "Buried with him in baptism . . ." (Col. 2:12).

How clear can language be? Baptism is a burial!

3. Even Impartial Witnesses Admit That The Early Church Immersed

The testimony of the following eminent men, whose followers today accept sprinkling as a mode of baptism, demonstrates that every scholar of any reput admits that immersion is the only form of baptism practiced by the church in apostolic times.

(1) Martin Luther: "The name baptism is Greek; in Latin it can be rendered immersion, when we immerse any thing in water, that it may be all covered with water. And although that custom has now grown out of use with most persons, yet they ought to be entirely immersed and immediately drawn out, for this, the etymology of the name seems to demand."

(2) John Calvin: "The word baptize itself signifies immerse; and it is certain that the rite of immersing was observed by the primitive church."

(3) Brenner, a learned Roman Catholic scholar: "For thirteen hundred years, was baptism generally and regularly an immersion of the whole person under the water; and only in extraordinary cases, a sprinkling or pouring with water. The latter (sprinkling) was moreover disputed as a mode of baptism, nay even forbidden."

All these scholars, and others that could be added to the list, declare that immersion was the practice of the early church. It was not until 1311 that baptism by sprinkling was officially accepted in Catholic churches. Of course, there are many protestant churches that now sprinkle converts as well. Who gave these churches the right to change this ordinance and commandment given by the Lord Jesus and His apostles? Are you willing to stake your soul on the traditions and commandments of men? If you were sprinkled as a child, or later as an adult, my friend, you were not baptized at all! You need to be immersed in water for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38). I urge you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, to be baptized in the scriptural way without delay. May God give you the opportunity and the courage to do it.—13803 Crosshaven, Houston, TX 77015, Mister JLD@aol.com

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE DOCTRINE OF FAITH ONLY?

By BARNEY OWENS

Looking into this subject requires some factual determination of the leading statement as to exactly what we are searching an answer to.

Salvation

The subject at hand has to do with salvation from sin. Jesus Christ came into the world to secure for humanity the means of redemption, remission of sins, or salvation. The "doctrine of faith only" has a particular slant on how to obtain such, and, therefore is the teaching that I find erroneous and shall attempt to show why it is wrong.

Faith Only

Is there such a thing as the "doctrine of salvation by faith only?" Yes, there are at least two ideas often taught that leads one to this conclusion. However, one of these, strictly speaking, is not "salvation by faith only."

(1) From the *Book of Discipline* (Methodist), Article 9: "Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a

most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort."

(2) Another prominent denomination, in all the teaching of her preachers, exhorts sinners, "Only believe and thou shall be saved." Yet in all fairness, these believe that "repentance" must precede "faith," so, salvation is not by "faith only," but does come at the point of believing. You might say that such is symmetrical, which I shall not pause to discuss, but I do wish to be fair in representation of the matter.

(3) These are the same in that they agree that "faith" is the point of salvation, without anything else being required by the Lord or done by the one believing.

The New Testament Addresses Faith Only

Our subject does not require us to look through the glasses of implication. The "Spirit has spoken expressly." Presenting the case of Abraham's righteousness, James stated, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified,

and not by faith only" (James 2:24). Hear it, please! We are **not** justified by "faith only."

Faith Is An Absolute Prerequisite To Salvation

It is not to be assumed that faith is not necessary to salvation, nor that those who contend that one is not saved the "moment he believes," teach that one can be saved without faith. The Scriptures declare that we cannot please God without faith (Heb. 11:6), that the gospel is God's power to save everyone that believeth (Rom. 1:16), and that the one who believes and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:16). Other thoughts could be marshaled in; these should be sufficient to declare the necessity of faith.

Faith Is Not The Point Of Salvation

Other things as well as faith are affirmed necessary to salvation, yet one is not saved the moment these things occur. For example, "repentance" is deemed a part of man's redemption. Without "repentance," Jesus said, one will perish (Luke 13:3,5). Should we go about proclaiming that man is saved by repentance only? That would constitute false doctrine, although one cannot be saved without repentance. Why so? Because repentance is not the point of our sins being taken away. Another example is "confession of Christ." The Lord affirmed that a failure to confess Him would result in being denied (by Christ) before the Father (Matt. 10:32,33). Should a person build a doctrine called "Salvation By Confession Only," would that be right? Certainly not! While faith, repentance, and confession of Christ are all necessary to be saved or to have the remission of sins, none will save alone. None are the point of salvation.

At What Point Does Obedience Save Us?

Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). We are told of the jailer at Philippi who believed (Acts 16:32). Upon being instructed in the word of the Lord, he was baptized the very same hour of the night (vv. 33,34). If faith alone would save, why the urgency of baptism? It appears that faith worked in baptismal obedience.

After Jesus resurrected, Peter responded to the question of those on Pentecost wishing salvation, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . ." (Acts 2:38). Those receiving his word were baptized the same day (v. 41). If one is saved at the point of repentance, why the rush to be baptized?

Philip, preaching to a nobleman who had been studying the ancient prophet to make a decision about Christ and being assured the prophet spoke of Jesus, confessed Christ, saying, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). The preacher and the man both went into the water where baptism took place and the man went on his way rejoicing (vv. 38,39). Surely the preacher rejoiced at hearing the confession, yet the nobleman rejoiced only after being baptized. Why the delay in rejoicing?

Saul of Tarsus had seen the Lord, had been struck blind, and was led into Damascus where he engaged in prayer and fasting for three days. When a preacher came to him, he said, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Why had his sins not been removed? Clearly, baptism is necessary to new life (Rom. 6:3,4).

These Examples All Agree On The Point Of Salvation

The point at which salvation is obtained is when one obeys the Lord in baptism. This does not lessen faith, or repentance, or confession of Christ. Nor does it magnify baptism. It is simply the Lord's plan. Thus Peter states, "The like figure where unto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3:21).

What Is Wrong With The Doctrine Of Faith Only?

It is in the word "only." When one is told "only believe," that is false teaching because it excludes other things that are necessary in God's plan to save the human race.—8782 Meadowview Drive, West Chester, OH 45069-3429

WHAT IS WRONG WITH DENOMINATIONALISM?

BY KEVIN W. PRESLEY

We hear it everywhere we turn. "I just don't know what to believe" and "I am so confused religiously!" It should not be surprising to observe such reactions from the masses when there are literally hundreds of denominations all vying for attention and recognition as being the church that Jesus established. The Bible student who is honestly seeking for the church of the New Testament is aware that something is drastically wrong with what you see in the world of "Christianity" today. Nearly two millennia ago, however, the apostle Paul said, "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace" (1 Cor. 14:33). Near AD 33 Jesus fulfilled His earlier promise to build His church (Matt 16:18). His apostles referred to it as "the body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12:27), of which Paul said there is one (1 Cor. 10:17, Eph 4:4, Col 3:15). So then, why so many "churches"? The simple answer is found in man's unwillingness to adopt the New Testament as his only guide in faith and practice. When men depart from the teachings of the Bible, division ensues (1 Kings 18:17-18). Hence, we see more than 1000

denominations all teaching doctrines that conflict with one another and with the teachings of Christ. Surely, this is not pleasing in the eyes of God! So, what is wrong with denominationalism and what is its cure?

"Denomination" — A Nonbiblical Term And Concept

The word denomination is not to be found in the Bible. The term "churches" as referring to conflicting religious organizations is also foreign to the word of God. It is not only absent in the sacred writings but is contrary to what is revealed therein. The word church is only mentioned in two ways. Universally, it occurs in respect to every saved individual throughout the age of grace. (Matt 16:18) Locally, it refers to congregations of "like precious faith" throughout the world (Rom. 16:16, Rev. 1:4). Any ecclesiastical organization larger than the local church but smaller than the universal church is unscriptural. Denominations claim to be smaller than the universal church because most acknowledge other denominations as being acceptable to God. On the other hand, they are

larger than the local unit because it takes many congregations to form a denomination. You will only read about congregations of the church of Christ in the New Testament. (Rom. 16:16)

Division Is Condemn By God

The Bible not only demands unity among Christ's followers, but also gives a platform upon which to unite the Bible. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). (Also note Rom 15:6, Phil 1:27, 2:2). We are to be of the same mind, which is the mind of Christ (Phil 2:5, 4:2). His mind is revealed to us through the teachings of the apostles (1 Cor. 2:16). Therefore, Christians are to be unified upon the doctrines of the Bible. To be otherwise is to be carnal and not spiritual (1 Cor. 3:3). Denominationalism teaches just the opposite!

Denominationalism Exalts Men Rather Than Christ

The sovereign rule of Christ finds its throne in heaven. After completing His earthly work in the scheme of man's redemption, He ascended to God's right hand in heaven where He sat down to rule and reign over the church, His kingdom. Paul said, "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18). Denominationalism refuses to allow Christ to sit in his rightful place of authority over his kingdom. Christ built his church. Denominations were founded by their reformation leaders who introduced new theologies upon which those organizations were formed. Men such as Martin Luther, John Smith, John Wesley, and others began many mainstream denominations. They are governed, not by the Bible only, but by conventions, creed books, catechisms, and disciplines. The doctrines of those men who rule over them are emphasized over the teachings of Jesus Christ. If this were not true, then you would not see these denominations in existence, but rather, one body of believers united upon the words of the New Testament.

Paul accused the Corinthian brethren of honoring men over Christ and spoke divine words of disapproval toward them (1 Cor 1:12-13). The church of the Bible finds its source of authority in heaven and not in an earthly place of ecclesiastical headquarters.

Denominationalism Substitutes Human

Names For Christ

In reference to Christ, Peter declared that "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Paul concurred by stating that the family of God is named of Christ (Eph 3:15). For every denomination, there is another name introduced. Names mean something in every respect in which they are given. Some denominations are named after some practice they embrace, some man that they honor, or some extraordinary doctrine that they emphasize. However, Christ's church is not identified by any of these designations. His church honors Him as their head, recognizes Him as its builder, trusts Him as their savior, and remains faithful to Him as His bride. Therefore, she wears His glorious name (Rom. 16:16).

The Church Of Christ Is Not A Denomination

We who are identified with the church of Christ do not consider ourselves a denomination. We were not established by man. We have no creeds or practices not authorized by the New Testament. We wear no human names. Our simple plea is to restore New Testament Christianity in every aspect. Our directive is only to "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). The unity for which we strive finds its basis in the teachings of Christ and his apostles (Eph 4:3-6; John 17:20-21).

The malady of denominationalism will find its remedy only when men one by one lay down the doctrines of men and return to the teachings of God's book. We humbly plead with you, dear reader, to do just that and strike hands with us upon the Bible and return to primitive Christianity!—Rt. 2, Box 166, Kinston, AL 36453, letthebiblespeak@mciworld.com

WHAT IS WRONG WITH INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC?

By DON L. KING

In Colossians 3:16, Paul said: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Again, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19).

As we read these passages it is interesting to note that not one word about any form of instrumental music is mentioned. The plain command is simply to sing. For nearly seven hundred years, that was enough to satisfy men. However, Satan was already hard at work devising departures from the word of God.

Departures have occurred in three major areas: organization, doctrine and worship. Little by little the organization of the church was altered until finally a complete apostasy had occurred. Remember that the changes took place over a long period of time. Once the organization itself was altered it was a natural consequence

to change the doctrine, or teaching, of the organization. These changes were also made over a long period of time. Of course, there were those who objected, but they were finally worn down. Soon, few noticed that major changes had been made in the worship itself.

History tells us that the first organ to be introduced into the worship of any body of people claiming to be Christians was about 670 years after Christ. Pope Vitalian I brought it into the Catholic Church. It caused so much confusion that it was removed and reintroduced about the year 800 A.D. Many years later as the denominations were being formed (during the Reformation) more debates took place. Even denominational preachers opposed the use of [instruments] music. I have a book published by the Presbyterian people in 1888 in which it is condemned in no uncertain terms. Now, it is universally accepted by the denominations as though one could read it on about every page of the Bible.

There are several arguments made in favor of the

instrument in worship. However, the one we wish to notice is one that is made from a supposed study of the Greek Language in Ephesians 5:19. The latter portion of the verse reads: "... singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." We are told that the expression "making melody" is from the Greek verb *psallo*. This term appears in the New Testament five times. In 1 Corinthians 14:15 (used twice), Romans 15:9, and James 5:13, it is translated "sing." In Ephesians 5:19 it is translated "making melody."

Some tell us that the verb *psallo* means to play an instrument. Many lexicons could be quoted but we will read from W.E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. Under the word "melody" (verb) we read: "*Psallo* (Greek spelling) primarily to twitch, twang, then, to play a stringed instrument with the fingers, and hence, in the Sept., (Greek version of the Old Testament, DLK) to sing with a harp, sing psalms, denotes in the N.T., to sing a hymn, sing praise; in Eph. 5-19 "making melody"...." (page 58).

First, notice that the verb *psallo* means in the New Testament to simply sing. You see, the word once carried with it the thought of an instrument. In the Old Testament that was the case. However, by the time the New Testament writers used the term it had lost that meaning and meant only to sing! It would be a serious mistake to force the Old Testament meaning on a word that a New Testament writer used with the newer meaning in mind. When Paul used the word, he could only have had in mind the idea of singing. That was all that the word meant in New Testament days. Any worthwhile lexicon will say the same.

However, some still insist that it specifies an instrument. Notice that W.E. Vine plainly says the word *psallo* is a verb. What part do verbs play in language? They express action, existence or a relation between two things, according to Webster. However, they define nothing! We use nouns to define things. Every verb must have an object or noun. However, the object of any verb is not a part of its definition. For example, notice the general verb "run." One can "run" a race, but the term "race" is not the

definition of the verb "run." So it is with the Greek verb *psallo*. One can make melody on an instrument, of course. However, the instrument is not the definition or meaning of "making melody." If Paul simply tells us to *psallo* (make melody), then we would be at liberty as to how we do so. However, the object of the verb *psallo*, (making melody), has as its object the noun "heart." That is the instrument God defined for us to use. In other words, Paul not only told us to make melody (*psallo*, to twitch, to twang, to cause to vibrate, etc.), but he also specified the instrument upon which we are to *psallo*! It is our hearts. Yes, it is possible to *psallo* an organ, a piano, or other stringed instrument. However, to do so will violate the specific command to *psallo* our hearts. The making melody must be upon the human heart to obey the God of heaven. So, we are not left at liberty at all. It is not a matter of whether or not we wish to use an instrument. It won't do to tell us that the instrument is an aid to our singing. The truth is that it is another kind of music. Singing is vocal. Playing is instrumental. That is two kinds of music. God commanded music and it must be made in our hearts. So, you see, the kind of music is commanded. It is vocal. Not instrumental. To use any man-made instrument is to flatly disobey God's command.

Paul commands us all to sing and make melody in our heart. Frankly, I am very glad the term does not designate a mechanical instrument. What if it did and I couldn't play it? Whatever the term says, it says to everyone! If it includes the instrument, then all must play. Happily, it means only to sing and make melody in our hearts and everyone can do that.

When Alexander Campbell was asked about the subject he said: "To all whose animal nature flags under the oppression of church service, I should think instrumental music would not only be a desideratum but an essential prerequisite to fire up their souls to even animal devotion. But to all spiritually minded Christians such aids would be as a cowbell in a concert."—1931 Chadbourne, Fremont, CA 94539, old_pathsjuno.com

WHAT IS WRONG WITH SUNDAY SCHOOL OR BIBLE CLASSES?

By RONNY F. WADE

In the year 1780, in a part of town known as Sooty Alley, Robert Raikes, editor of the *Gloucester Journal*, gathered a few children together to teach them reading and the church catechism. On November 3, 1793, some thirteen years later, he made known to the world his scheme of Sunday schools through the columns of the paper which he edited. Within four years it would grow to include over 250,000 children. While Raikes receives the major credit for the idea of Sunday schools, some believe that it should really be shared by a number of clergymen. The idea spread rapidly throughout religious circles of the day. There was, however, some opposition, but not strong enough to stall the new movement.

Today, throughout the world, people of most religions practice or utilize some type of teaching arrangement that can be traced back to the beginnings of the Sunday School Movement. Many, if not most, think it strange that anyone would oppose the teaching of the Bible in Sunday school

or Bible classes. "What in the world could be wrong with that?" they ask. There is obviously nothing wrong with teaching the Bible. We are commanded to do that. Surely there is nothing wrong with instructing children in spiritual matters. Why then, is the Sunday school an unscriptural arrangement for such teaching? The answer is quite simple: such an arrangement is without divine authorization. There is no Bible for such a practice. It was not taught or practiced by our Lord, nor was it utilized by the early church. The apostles did not endorse such a practice, in fact it was totally unknown in New Testament times. It is therefore wrong for the following reasons:

I. Sunday schools or Bible classes violate the Bible pattern for the public teaching of the Bible. The pattern for the common assembly is exemplified numerous times in the New Testament scriptures. Acts 14:27, "And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them. . . ." Acts

15:39, "So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had **gathered the multitude together**, they delivered the epistle." Acts 20:7, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples **came together** to break bread, Paul preached to them. . . ." 1 Corinthians 11:10, "When ye **come together therefore into one place**, this is not to eat the Lord's supper." 1 Corinthians 11:33, "Wherefore my brethren when ye **come together to eat**, tarry one for another." 1 Corinthians 14:23, "If therefore the **whole church be come together into one place**, and all speak with tongues and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?" Hebrews 10:25, "Not forsaking the **assembling of ourselves together** as the manner of some is. . . ." All of the above passages speak of the **church coming together** for the purpose of teaching the Bible and observing the Lord's supper. Not one verse in the entire New Testament teaches that the church ever came together and arranged into classes for the teaching of the Scriptures. If so, where is it? From these scriptures, we see a pattern emerging, i.e. **one man at a time, speaking to one audience**. Never do we have two men speaking at the same time. That would be confusion and confusion is condemned (1 Corinthians 14:33). Neither do we find the church arranging into simultaneous classes to teach spiritual truths. For proof of this notice the following scriptures: Acts 3:11-12, "Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, **all the people ran together to them in the porch** which is called Solomon's greatly amazed. So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people. . . ." Acts 2: 1,4 "When the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were **all with one accord in one place**. . . And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. . ." Acts 4:31, "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were **assembled together**; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spoke the word of God with boldness." We could go on and on, but this is sufficient to prove our point. People in New Testament times were taught the word of God in public gatherings in an undivided assembly, with men only doing the teaching.

II. Sunday schools or Bible classes are wrong because they violate Hebrews 10:25.

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together. . . ." The word "together" translates a Greek word *episunago* (verb form) which means according to J.H. Thayer "gather together into one place. "To gather together into one place." (George Ricker Berry). The noun form of the word is *episunagoge* and according to Berry means "a gathering together in one place." Thus, in Hebrews 10:25, we have a command to not forsake the gathering together into one place for the purpose of being exhorted. According to Thayer, Hebrews 10:25 speaks of the religious assembly of Christians. These Christians have come together into one place. They have not been divided into classes. They have not been segregated. To do so is to violate the passage.

III. Sunday schools or Bible classes are wrong because one cannot find: the name of Sunday school, the practice of Sunday school, the idea of Sunday school, or any regulation for Sunday school anywhere in the Bible. One cannot speak where the Bible speaks and uphold this arrangement for teaching. We are taught to speak "as the oracles of God. . . ." 1 Peter 4:11. In addition to the above, one cannot find anywhere in the Bible a congregation teaching the Bible in classes. There is no principle for a systematic arrangement into classes for the church. There is no command, statement, example or necessary inference for such a practice. If there is, let someone produce it. If such cannot be found, then let the practice be forsaken.

IV. Sunday Schools or Bible classes are wrong because the church never came together and utilized such an arrangement. We find the church coming together for edification in Hebrews 10:24-25, for worship in Acts 20:7, to hear the word of God preached in Acts 11: 26, to discuss church problems in Acts 15:3 1, to discuss foreign efforts in evangelism in Acts 14:26-27, to determine how to best do benevolent work in Acts 6:1-6, for prayer Acts 4:3 1, and for discipline in 1 Corinthians 5. **Where do we find the church coming together to arrange into classes for the teaching of the Bible?** Friend, we don't. To do so is to practice what is neither commanded nor exemplified in the word of God.—P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808, rfwade@juno.com

WHAT IS WRONG WITH INDIVIDUAL CUPS IN THE COMMUNION?

By BILLY D. DICKINSON

Why would anyone make the above inquiry? Who would dare question the scripturalness of individual cups in the observance of the Lord's supper? From its conception and introduction into the religious world, the practice of individual cups has fostered a healthy amount of skepticism and opposition, as the following quotation from J.W. McGarvey demonstrates: "The fresh and verdant fad of the individual communion cups, which is all the rage now with church members who care more for 'keeping up with the procession' than for following the example of our Lord, has received a black eye recently from two sources. A Methodist bishop has refused to use them when brought forward where he was to officiate, and the General Conference of the Methodist Church, North, has forbidden the use of them to Methodist churches" (*Christian Standard*), June 25, 1904). Did McGarvey give an

accurate description when he described individual cups as a "fresh and verdant fad" that was rejected by members of the Lord's church and denominational people when first introduced? Yes, such a description is a historical fact!

1 Cor. 4:6 warns us "not to go beyond the things which are written" (ASV). Since the Bible shows that Christ used "a cup" in instituting the sacred feast, we have the duty to question a practice that is diametrically opposed to what is revealed in the Scriptures. For the sake of your soul and doctrinal purity, are you willing to look at the accounts of the Lord's supper and see what is actually authorized? There are thousands of Christians who oppose individual cups for the same reason McGarvey gave in his quotation — "following the example of our Lord." Let's consider why numerous congregations around the world use one cup in distributing the fruit of

the vine. What is wrong with individual cups in the communion?

A Violation Of The Divine Pattern

Individual cups are unauthorized in the Lord's supper because they violate the New Testament pattern. If the Bible is accepted for what it says, it is unnecessary to prove that Christ used only one cup when He instituted His supper. After all, Matt. 26:27 declares: "And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, Drink of it, all of you" (RSV).

Although apologists for individual cups often assert that we can't know how many drinking vessels Jesus used, other statements made by them prove that assertion to be disingenuous on their part: (1) They say that if it could be established that the Lord used only one cup, it wouldn't prove a thing. Oh, really? If that's true, why do they fight the obvious so zealously? If they are secure in their position, why don't they admit what the Bible clearly says— "He took a cup." They know it does matter! Once they admit that Jesus used one cup, half of the battle has been lost, and they dread defending a practice that is admittedly not a part of the scriptural pattern. (2) The absurd quibble is made, "I am the real 'one cup man.'" I believe in one cup for the whole world." What? The man who uses and defends individual cups is the real "one cup man?" Thanks for that information, because we wouldn't have known it otherwise! To begin with, this argument unwittingly activates the church universal. However, the church in its universal sense is only a spiritual relationship; the Bible does not speak of any universal function of the church. Partaking of the Lord's supper is something we do in a congregational capacity, when the local church assembles together, and each communicant is to "eat of that bread and drink of that cup" (1 Cor. 11:20, 28). That's the pattern violated by individual cups. It surely speaks volumes that everyone wants to be known as the "one cup man" and no one wants to be branded with believing in more than one cup! Why do they feel

uncomfortable with the image of believing in more than one cup? Because they know one cup is all the Bible speaks of— "A Cup," "The Cup," "This Cup," & "That Cup" [Matt. 26:27; Mark 14:23; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 10:16; 1 Cor. 10:21; 1 Cor. 11:25-28].

What does "cup" mean in Matt. 26:27? The Greek word *poterion* is defined by lexicographers as a drinking vessel or a drinking cup— See Young, Berry, Liddell and Scott, Robinson, and Greenfield. Thayer defines it as "a cup, a drinking vessel," and he places cup under literal usage in Matt. 26:27 (Page 533). He also says on page 510: "*Pino ek* (drink out of) with a genitive of the vessel out of which one drinks," and Thayer cites Matt. 26:27. When one takes the position that "cup" in Matt. 26:27 does not refer to a drinking vessel, that person has either knowingly or unknowingly set himself at variance with the scholarship of the world!

Individual Cups Destroy The Concept Of Communion

"Individual communion cups" are a contradiction in terms because communion denotes a sharing together or a joint participation. How can you have individual/joint participation? One loaf and one cup in the Lord's supper cannot be mere incidentals because their use represents a unity or oneness — a beautiful symbolism destroyed by a plurality of loaves and drinking vessels: "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? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" (1 Cor. 10:16-17). The NIV renders it: "Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf." Paul is saying that the use of one loaf and one cup in the communion symbolizes unity. Individual cups, then, must represent the very fruit they have produced since their introduction into the Lord's church—*division!*—2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803, bddickinson@juno.com

WHAT IS WRONG WITH CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP?

By BENNIE CRYER

A friend of mine who is a fine Christian and a contractor was called by a denominational church to bid a job of refinishing the inside of their building. Since he had done work there before he noticed that their communion table had been moved out of the way to the side of the building. When he asked why it had been moved he was told that they had decided to have three worship services on Sunday morning. One was for the old timers who wanted to worship according to their traditional pattern. The second was for those who wanted to dress down in more comfortable clothing and perhaps modernize their service in a limited way. The third was for the younger generation who wanted a more contemporary worship with a rock band, hand clapping, swaying with the music, etc. Of course, the communion table did not fit in with this so it was shoved off to one side.

This example happened in a denominational church. We are not surprised when something like these changes take place there because they decided a long time ago that correct doctrine and sound, scriptural practices were no

longer necessary. But it is surprising when similar things begin to creep into the churches of Christ that have at least paid lip service to the requirement of a "thus said the Lord" for any practice in their worship service. We need to be more aware of such practices and make sure our worship is the kind that pleases God and is acceptable to Him. More than that, we need to sit up and take notice that there are a few in our ranks that have attempted or would like to try to move our worship services in this direction. Sometimes the changes are so slight they are almost undetectable. The devil knows that any attempt at a broad, sweeping change would be challenged and defeated. What are some of these desired changes and what is wrong with having a more contemporary worship service that would excite the worshippers in a greater way and would appeal more to prospective members from the world?

Worldly Changes That Are Desired

There is a desire to restyle not only our worship services, but also the plan of salvation and the organization of the

church. These changes have been going on for years in many of the liberal churches of Christ. Books have been written warning us about those who desire and are promoting these changes. Such books as *Behold The Pattern*, by Goebel Music, *The Restoration: The Winds of Change*, which is a lectureship directed by Jim Laws, *Piloting The Straits*, by Dave Miller, and perhaps the one with the most ominous title is *Change Agents and Churches of Christ*, by William Woodson all give portentous warnings about changes that are being attempted right now to bring about revised practices in worship in order to better appeal to the present generation of younger adults and teenagers. A partial list of the desired changes is found on page 181 of *Piloting The Straits*:

These changes include the areas of church music, lifting up hands, handclapping, drama, female leadership, observing religious holidays, dedicating babies, the Lord's Supper, Sunday night cluster groups and children's worship, preaching style and worship environment.

A brief glance and study of these changes indicate that their direction is away from God and toward man and the desires of his flesh. Those interested in making these and similar changes are interested in the things that please man instead of the things that please God. It has gotten to the point where man with his feelings has become the focal point of worship. It is more important to please man than it is to please God, Galatians 1:10. The necessary requirement for a practice in worship is an affirmative answer to the question, "Does it make the worshipper feel good?" Take, for example, the practice of hand clapping.

Hand Clapping

This practice has crept into religion in a plurality of forms. Sometimes it is used as a rhythmical accompaniment to singing. As such it is a violation of Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 that requires only the voice and heart. It is in the same category as other forms of instrumental music and is an addition to God's word. At other times it is used to express approval for a performance by a preacher, soloist, quartet or other group singers. Such applause of a human action or performance that is scriptural or unscriptural is unworthy in an assembly

designed by God to worship Him only. Such adulation is a violation of Matthew 4:10. But, says one, "Our hand clapping is nothing more than a person saying 'Amen' when we agree with a speaker or performer." Such people forget there is a scriptural time for saying "Amen," I Corinthians 14:16, and no scripture can be given in the New Testament for hand clapping.

Church Music

Entertaining the worshippers has become the goal of many religions today in order to attract new members and keep the young interested. It is not uncommon to hear of rock bands, etc., being the main attractions at religious services. This exciting entertainment is just exactly what the world is looking for in religion. In commenting on such practices and condemning them Adam Clarke in his commentary on Amos 6, Vol. 4, p. 684 wrote in 1826 A.D., "In the light of such a text, fiddlers, drummers, waltzers, etc., may well tremble, who perform to excite detestable passions." He was writing about those who would bring instruments of music into the house of God. Neither is it scripturally right to sing praises to God accompanied by sounds made by using one's voice or other body parts to mimic the sound the mechanical instruments of music make.

The Remedy

A scriptural church service may seem boring to you. If this is true the remedy is not in changing God's plan for your worship of Him, but in learning to become excited about doing exactly what God wants you to do. Remember, it is not the purpose of the worship service to entertain you. It is arranged for you to worship God and to be edified. Dave Miller wrote in *Piloting the Straits*, pg. 217:

May God help us to resist the impulse to change with the times in an effort to remain culturally relevant. May God help us to find contentment and satisfaction in simple, unpretentious New Testament worship. May we rediscover the heartfelt fulfillment and genuine excitement that can only come from simple submission to the words of our great God and Father.—144 San Rocco Circle, Stockton, CA 95207, btcrayer@aol.com

WHAT IS WRONG WITH INSTITUTIONALISM?

By CARL M. JOHNSON

The term "Institutionalism" in this article refers to the practice of establishing extra-church or parachurch organizations through which the duties of the local church are fulfilled to preach the gospel to the lost, edify the congregation, and minister to the needy. It is the contention of this author that the practice of churches establishing and financially supporting parachurch organizations such as missionary societies, orphan homes, nursing homes, and hospitals in order to discharge the duties incumbent upon local congregations is a violation of God's eternal purpose for the church (Eph.3:8-11).

Sometimes the word "church" is used in a universal sense (Matt.16:18; Eph.5:25-27), and other times it is used to refer to the local congregation (1 Cor.1:1; Rom.16:16). Perhaps a failure to distinguish between the universal church and the local church is responsible for a great deal

of misunderstanding concerning the organization and work of the church.

God says nothing in His word about any type of universal organization of the church. He does, however, give clear instructions about how to organize the local congregation, and He also tells us the duties of the local church. The necessary conclusion is that God intends for the church to function through the local congregation and not through a universal organization, nor some kind of extra-church organization.

Paul establishes God's pattern for the organization and work of the local church:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: (Eph.4:11-12)

The apostles and prophets were given the task of divine revelation—making known the will of God. Their work has been providentially preserved in the New Testament, and today we have access to it in its completeness. The primary work of evangelists is to preach the gospel to those who have never heard it, while pastors and teachers are assigned work within the congregation. The terms “pastors” (Eph.4:11), “bishops” (Phil.1:1), and “elders” (Acts 20:17) all refer to the same office.

In verse twelve Paul outlines the work this divine organization is to accomplish. It includes: “the perfecting of the saints,” “the work of the ministry,” and “the edifying of the body of Christ.”

The word “perfecting” (*katartismos*) means “to equip the saints for service” (Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich 419). This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The word from which “perfecting” is derived, however, is found thirteen times and clearly shows what the leaders of each congregation are to do for “the saints.” They are to: teach (Luke 6:40); equip with everything good (Heb.13:21); supply what is lacking (1 Thes.3:10); prepare for use (Heb.10:5); form, mold, and shape (Heb.11:3); mend and repair (Matt.4:21); correct faults (2 Cor.13:11); restore a fallen brother (Gal.6:1); and function harmoniously (1 Cor.1:10). The word “perfecting,” therefore, defines what is necessary to train Christians in right living and acceptable service to God.

The word “ministry” (*diakonia*) is defined as “service” (Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich 183). Vincent says the prevailing sense of the word “is spiritual service of an official character” (858). The word includes providing food (Luke 8:3); waiting tables (Acts 6:2); ministering to the hungry, etc. (Matt.25:44); serving as a deacon (1 Tim.3:10); and preaching the gospel (1 Pet.1:12). The word “ministry,” therefore, includes service offered in behalf of anyone who needs help regardless of whether the need is spiritual or physical.

The third item in Paul’s outline of the mission of the church is “the edifying of the body of Christ.” “Edifying” (*oikodomeo*) is also translated “building up” (Vincent 858). This word describes the ultimate goal of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry. When all the body members are put to work, the body grows and matures (verse 16). Jesus came into this world to serve others (Matt.28:20), and Christians must learn that service is the key to their own spiritual maturity.

Because God has given us this pattern for organizing and discharging the work of the church, it must be sufficient to accomplish His purposes, and we are obligated to be faithful to it (Heb.8:1-5). To deny the sufficiency of the local church, and to insist on establishing extra-church organizations to carry out the church’s mission, is to reject the wisdom of God (1 Cor.1:25-31).

A careful examination of the churches in the New Testament shows that they did all of their work and fulfilled their God-given mission without having to create extra-church organizations. Each congregation:

- Had its own organization through which to function (Phil.1:1).
- Raised its own funds by the contributions of its members (1 Cor.16:1-2).
- Supported evangelists to preach the gospel (1 Cor.9:14; Phil.2:12-15). In every instance of Paul’s receiving help, the money was sent directly to him (Phil.1:5; 2:25; 4:18).
- Sent out preachers to strengthen, edify, and help weak churches (Acts 11:22-24).
- Provided for their own needy (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35; 6:1-6).
- Cooperated with other congregations who had a greater need among their own members than they could supply by sending contributions to the elders of such churches through their selected messengers (1 Cor.16:1-4; 2 Cor.8 & 9).
- Was edified by its own members (Eph.4:14-16; 1 Cor.14:26; 12:22-27).

Thus each congregation carried on its own work through the organization God gave it. There is not an instance in the Scriptures where churches of Christ ever used any human organization as a medium through which to function in doing its work.

When churches establish and financially support human organizations such as missionary societies, orphan homes, nursing homes, and hospitals to do the work of the church, they rob themselves of the strength they would receive if they functioned properly. By reducing themselves to organizations involved only in corporate worship and in raising money to subsidize the human institutions doing their work, congregations abdicate God’s divine pattern and are in violation of His eternal purpose for the church.—*1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820, carlmj@compworldnet.com*

WHAT IS WRONG WITH OPEN FELLOWSHIP?

By DOUGLAS T. HAWKINS

In recent years, there has been some controversy over who we are rightly in fellowship with and who we are not. About thirty years ago, in the late 1960s a movement based on ecumenism (a movement seeking to achieve world wide unity among religions through greater cooperation and improved understanding) made great inroads into the churches of Christ. Advocates of this movement heralded their pithy slogans of “unity in diversity” and “fraternity based upon common paternity” to coalesce the coalesce of a divided brotherhood into one broad fellowship. The basic tenet of their doctrine sought to forge an alliance between the individual fellowships among the churches

of Christ.

As most well know, several distinct fellowships exist within the churches of Christ, to say nothing of the Christian Church and the Disciples of Christ. Even though we share a common heritage with these other churches within the restoration movement, the faithful children of God are not in fellowship with them any longer. Why? The purpose of this brief article is to point out that reason along with the fallacies of “open fellowship.”

What Is Fellowship?

The word *fellowship* simply means a joint participation

or a sharing in common. When the Bible refers to "the fellowship," it basically refers to the common share of the blessings and responsibilities that Christians have in Jesus Christ. "The fellowship" is the complete whole of what every faithful Christian supplies and partakes of in part. Of the Gentiles, Paul said that they "are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (Eph. 3:6, ASV). Paul states three things of the Gentiles in this passage that are true of all Christians. We are: 1) fellow-heirs of the inheritance; 2) fellow-members of the same body, the church; 3) fellow-partakers of the promises and blessings in Christ. Each statement represents a particular facet of the fellowship that all Christians have in Jesus Christ through the gospel. Christians then are members of the same body, fellow-citizens of the same kingdom, and children of the same family. The fellowship represents the share that all Christians have in the work, worship, and association of the church. Read Eph. 2:11-3:9 for the details where Paul "makes all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery."

The Basis of Fellowship

In 1 Cor. 5:12, 13 Paul distinguishes between those "within" and those "without". Based on this discrimination, judicious reasoning insists that there must be a clear charter to determine who is included and who is excluded from the fellowship. In other words, there must be a clear way to establish the boundaries of the fellowship to know where it begins and where it ends.

In 1 John 1:3,6,7 the apostle John establishes what fellowship is conditioned upon. From what he writes, we learn; 1) Scriptural fellowship is the effect of the apostles declaring what they say and heard. 2) Fellowship with one another results from our fellowship with the Father. (Boys within the same family are brothers because they were born of the same parents or were adopted into the same family. The same is true within the family of God. We have a common parentage, making those in the family of God brothers and sisters in Christ.) 3) The fellowship is conditioned upon a continued walk in the light. 4) Walking in the light means that we practice the truth. (Since walking in the darkness is equal to not practicing the truth, the patent corollary is that walking in the light means that we do practice the truth.) Logically then, the fellowship is circumscribed by what has been declared by the Lord and the apostles and is based upon a faithful practice of the truth. A host of other passages teach this conclusion: 1) In John 8:31, Jesus said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." 2) In 2 John 9, John said, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abides in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." 3) In 1 Cor. 16:13, Paul said, "Stand fast in the faith." 4) In Romans 16:17, Paul said, "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." 5) In Acts 2:42, the early church continued steadfast in the "apostles' doctrines." 6) In 1 Cor. 11:2, Paul said, "Keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you." 7) In 2 Thess. 2:15, Paul said "Stand fast and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle." 8) In Eph. 4:2,5, Paul said that the unity of the Spirit is that there is "one faith." 9) In Rev.

22:14, John said, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life." Isn't it reasonable that if disobedience to the commandments of God precludes one from the tree of life that it also precludes him from the fellowship? And yet, in spite of everything the word of God says about this matter, some insist on opening the fellowship to men who "walk in darkness," have "transgressed the doctrine," have caused "division contrary to the doctrine," have "departed from the faith," and are not "continuing in the Lord's word." What's wrong with that?

The Error of Open Fellowship

There are a number of obvious errors to this view and practice. First, open fellowship lessens the authoritative force of the truth. If I can fellowship men that do not respect the limitations and teachings of God's word as I do those who do respect it, what good is the Bible's instruction? Secondly, open fellowship undermines the basis of true unity. Scriptural unity can be achieved through each of us adhering to the word of God. To open the fellowship to men outside the word of God is to place fellowship in the realm of subjectivity. Thirdly, open fellowship alloys "the faith" by mixing it with the commandments of men. Fourthly, open fellowship causes confusion among the saints. We can neither mind nor speak the same thing (1 Cor. 1:10), much less strive with one mind for the faith of the gospel (Phil. 1:27). Is it wrong to use instruments in worship? People with an open fellowship would get several different answers. Fifthly, open fellowship makes us guilty of the error's consequences. Those practicing open fellowship makes us guilty of the error's consequences. Those practicing open fellowship become responsible for every poor soul that is misled by the error (2 John 10,11) Sixthly, open fellowship will lead to further departures from the truth. A small leak in a dike will eventually turn into a torrential flood because the small stream will cause the wall to give totally away. The same is true of fellowship with error. The next step is to practice it ourselves. The real question that has to be answered is, is it wrong to disobey the commandments of God? If it is, then to have fellowship with those that disobey the commandments of God is definitely wrong. If it doesn't matter whether or not we obey what is written, then the word of God is useless. After all, if I cannot determine what God wants of me from his word, what good is it?

Final Word of Warning

We will never successfully convince anyone of their error, and that they must forsake it if we have fellowship with them while they persist in it. J.W. McGarvey, a well-known restoration preacher, opposed the use of instrumental music in worship, but he indiscriminately preached for those who used the instrument and those who did not. Someone said, "While he preached against the organ he went where they used it and his influence went with his fellowship instead of with his teaching."

Ron Halbrook poignantly concluded the McGarvey and fellowship portion of his book, *The Doctrine Of Christ And The Unity Of The Saints*, by saying. "In regard to McGarvey and instrumental music in worship, the lesson to be learned is that we cannot successfully combat error by fellowshiping it because our influence will go with our fellowship." Brethren, if that does not sound the alarm

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of the danger in extending fellowship to people or churches in error, I do not know what will. It is a grave mistake for faithful Christians to extend fellowship to people or churches that have transgressed the doctrine of Christ, i.e. churches that use instrumental music, women teachers, Sunday school, individual cups etc. The reason we do not participate with those who hold digressive and

denominational views is not because we do not love them, but because we cannot teach them the error of their ways while giving them approval in fellowship. The reason we do not ask them to participate with us is for the same reason. Such not only undermines the sacred bond of our fellowship, it is a sin and makes one guilty of their error.—
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THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

I. Who are the members of the New Testament church?

1. The saved. (Acts 2:47)
2. Penitent, baptized believers. (Acts 2:37-41)
3. Obedient believers of all nations. (Acts 10:34,35; 1 Cor. 12:13).
4. The unbaptized were never members of the Church of Christ.
5. Members of denominational churches are not members of the New Testament church
6. Infants and others incapable of believing are not members of the New Testament church

II. How do people become members of the New Testament church?

1. Penitent believers are baptized into Christ and the Lord adds them to the church. (Acts 2:38-41).
2. They do not "join the church." The Lord adds the saved to it. (Acts 2:47).
3. They are not "voted into the church" after they are saved.
4. They do not "transfer their membership" from Judaism, paganism or denominationalism, but obey the gospel of Christ and the Lord adds them to the church. (Acts 2:36-41).

III. The members of the church are called "Christians." (Acts 11:26).

1. They have access to all spiritual blessings. (Eph. 1:3).
2. They receive precious promises. (2 Pet. 1:4; 2 Cor. 1:20).
3. They have rewards. (Rev. 22:12-14).

IV. If they sin or fall away, they can be restored to God's favor.

1. Simon, who had been scripturally baptized, committed a sin and was told to repent pray to God. (Acts 8:13-24). His prayer would have been a confession.
2. Confession, with repentance and prayer, brings God's forgiveness. (1 John 1:9). Why not determine to be a member of the church you read about in the Bible?

— Adapted

Special Issue Of Old Paths Advocate

This month's issue of the *Old Paths Advocate* is a special issue. Extra copies of this issue have been printed and are for sale for \$25.00 per 100 copies. The subscription price of this paper is \$7.00 per year. If you would like to subscribe to this paper or buy extra copies of this issue, please contact Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539. Or call (510) 651-1842.

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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. LXXIII

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NO. 8

FELLOWSHIP AND UNITY-IN-DIVERSITY

BY JERRY CUTTER

The subject of fellowship and unity-in-diversity continues to be a problem in the church. Strangely, the two words contradict one another and yet a continuing effort is being made to combine the two. Fellowship has to do with association, communion, contribution and sharing in anything actively or passively.

As for unity-in-diversity, it is an unscriptural term and violates every scripture in the New Testament having to do with fellowship. Fellowship is involved in the communion (I Cor. 10:16), the contribution (Rom. 15:26), the teaching (Rom. 16:17-18; II John 9-11), and morals (Eph. 5:11). Christians are not to be "partakers" of sin, but are to separate themselves from sin (Rev. 18:4). When Paul taught the things "concerning the kingdom of God," and "divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples" from the group (Acts 19:8-9). Paul did not practice unity-in-diversity, and neither did our Lord. Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." Then Jesus explained what he meant (Matt. 10:32-40).

Unity-In-Diversity

Just what is unity-in-diversity? Religiously, it means we should accept those who are in error, to be consistent, because we all sin in some areas. The following quotation will summarize the doctrine, and is taken from a letter recently sent to me. "It is impossible to find two brethren in the whole brotherhood who agree on every Bible passage and issue. To some extent then we have to agree to disagree or practice unity-in diversity." This doctrine became very popular a few years ago, and the result was the brotherhood divided over it, with some 10% of the preachers embracing it. Many churches were lost and many of the preachers went far away into denominationalism. The reason for this was, the doctrine does not allow a stopping place when it comes to error.

The term unity-in-diversity has a nice sound. However, and few seem to know this, it is a political concept. Before the birth of Jesus, the Roman Empire began to develop. Many diverse cultures and nations were involved in the Roman Empire. Thus, "the Roman world-state, by embracing through its brilliant administrative machinery the goal of unity-in diversity, gave men a conception of one universal culture based on peace and order which they had never had before, and which remained with them for some fifteen hundred years. This conception passed into

the Catholic Church and later to the medieval Holy Roman Empire" (Civilization past and present, 3rd edition, Scott, Foresman, p. 177). Many years earlier, God had foretold through Daniel (chap. 2) what would happen to the Roman Empire as a result of its diversity.

Agreeing To Disagree

The brother quoted above says to be consistent we have to agree to disagree, or practice unity-in-diversity. The fact that we all sin, and if we say we don't we make God a liar (I John 1:8-10), does not mean that we must fellowship every sin that comes along. The reason is, it is one thing to commit a sin, which we all do from time to time, and another to continue in sin. John makes a careful distinction between the two. In I John 3:1-10, we learn that "whosoever committeth sin (that is, continues to sin) transgresseth also the law" (v. 4). Or, that "He that committeth sin (or, continues to sin) is of the devil" (v. 8); or, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin (or, continue to sin); for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (v. 9). Chapter one is concerning committing a sin, recognizing it, repenting of it, confessing it (1:9), and being free of it. Chapter 3 is concerning one who continues to sin, recognize it, or is made aware of it, and continues in it. Surely, one can see there is a difference between confessing a sin and continuing to sin.

Often Romans 14 is used to justify unity-in-diversity. However, Paul is not instructing brethren on how to fellowship sin. But that is what some brethren try to make Romans 14 teach. He is instructing concerning matters involving religious liberty, and the Christian attitude one should have toward another in these matters of liberty. This chapter has been distorted to teach many things far from the truth, such as, errors in worship, keeping of pagan holidays, including Christmas, etc.

Fellowship and Sin

Scripturally, we have no right to fellowship any sin, not even in our own lives. Why brethren cannot see this is a great mystery. If I have sin in my life, and come to recognize it, or it is called to my attention, I am obligated to repent of it, and confess it to God (I John 1:9). When it comes to others' sins, under the guise of unity-in-diversity, I cannot fellowship their sin either. No sin can be fellowshiped. We cannot actively live a life of sin (I John 3), and we must actively oppose those who do (Eph. 5:11). Also, we can be in fellowship with error by simply

continued on page seven

CONTENTS

Vol. LXXIII No. 8



ADVOCATE

ANNOUNCEMENTS 8-10

Fellowship And Unity-In-Diversity .. 1

Thus Saith The Lord 2

The Querist Column 3

Between The Altar And The Temple ... 4

The Cause In California 5

Nehushtan 5

FROM THE FIELDS 11-12

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Editorial

THUS SAITH THE LORD

By DON L. KING

As far back as we can recall, it has always been important to stand on a "thus saith the Lord." No matter what the subject has been, our brethren insisted that the Scriptures be the standard. We thank God for such brethren who realized that in no other way could the Church be stable and resistant to digression. When men began to invent innovations to "aid" the work and worship of the Church the cry was, "What do the Scriptures say?" When the innovators came along with their instruments of music, brethren opposed them and rightly so. The reason was that there were no Bible grounds upon which to use them. It was correctly argued that instrumental music was another kind of music than the one specified in the Scriptures. Brethren stood for the Bible way in opposing them along with the individual cups and Bible classes or Sunday schools. Still, the Lord's Church was eventually divided over the innovations. The battle has raged for a long time.

For many years it was understood that those who insisted on the innovation were the cause of the division. They were marked and avoided as Paul commanded in Romans 16:17. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."

However, in the "modern" world, such reasoning is often called into question. Now, there are those who would argue that we should seek some common ground of fellowship. We read in their brotherhood papers of unity meetings where brethren from both sides get together and try to love each other into fellowship. We are told that "love" should be the basis of fellowship rather than conforming to the Word of God. How does that line of reasoning fit Romans 16:17?

We recently heard of a church member who had completely disregarded God's law. The sin under consideration is plainly mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:11. Paul is plain there. Our social activities are to be restricted. The Apostle said, "with such an one no not to eat." One brother asked another what he should do. Did he receive Bible advice? Of course not, he was advised to ignore the situation and love the guilty one back to the Lord. Did it work? No, the person is farther away now than ever before.

What is the problem? Are we not allowed to "love" a guilty person? Of course we are. Did not Jesus gather the publicans and sinners to him in Luke 15? Yes, he loved them and wanted them to be forgiven. However, Jesus had no intention of overlooking their sins. The parable he spoke in verses 4-32 is ample proof that he believed the lost should be retrieved from their sins. He said in verse 7, "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." When does the "joy" take place? Do the angels in heaven rejoice because we love the sinner? Not at all, they rejoice when repentance

continued on page eight

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: I have heard that some denominational people teach that 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, 1 Timothy 2:9-2 and 1 Peter 3:3-5 do not apply to us today, but were for the harlots of that day. Is there a biblical or historical basis for this teaching? Does 1 Timothy 2:9 forbid Christian women from wearing gold or pearls or braided hair? (TX)

Answer: There is historical evidence that harlots often had their hair shorn off as punishment for their whoredom, or adultery. Clarke in his comments on 1 Cor. 11:5 says "This was, and is, a common custom (i.e. the wearing of veils) throughout all the east, and none but public prostitutes go without veils. And if a woman should appear in public without a veil, she would dishonor her head—her husband. And she must appear like to those women who had their hair shorn off as the punishment of whoredom, or adultery." Some in an effort to deny or get around what Paul teaches about long hair on women have claimed that "the shame of cut hair" was a reference by the apostle to prostitutes who had their hair cut. Since that practice is no longer current, they reason that for a woman to cut her hair is no longer a shame, and therefore no violation of the law of God. The problem with this reasoning is evident. It was a shame for a woman to cut her hair (be shorn) because it was against what both nature and revelation taught (1 Cor. 11:13-15), not because prostitutes were customarily shorn. The Christian woman according to Paul was to "let her hair grow." E.M. Zerr in his commentary on First Corinthians makes an interesting and insightful observation on verse 14 when he says "Sometimes a quibble is made by asking just what it takes to constitute long hair. In the first place, the statement of Paul remains in the text, and it is as much the obligation of the quibbler to answer the question and prove his answer, as it is that of the one who insists on observing the teaching of the apostle. However, for the benefit of the sincere inquirer, I will state that the Lord has given us a clear-cut definition of what constitutes long hair, in the stipulations for a Nazarite which included long hair. The passages that state the law on it are Numbers 6:5; Judges 13:5; 1 Samuel 1:11. These all require that no razor is to be used on the head, hence by long hair the Lord means hair that is as long as nature makes it. If a man cuts any of it off he ceases to have long hair. By the same token, if a woman cuts any of her hair she also ceases to have long hair in the sense the apostle is using the term, and thus she does that which is a shame." The two latter passages, offered by the querist, deal with the outward adornment of women. The New King James Version renders 1 Peter 3:3-4 as follows "Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair,

wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God." This rendering clearly shows that Peter is not saying that it is wrong for a woman to arrange her hair or wear gold. It is wrong, however, if that is all she is concerned about. The Christian woman should be concerned with far more than how she appears outwardly. The women in this context are admonished to live godly lives so that they can influence their husbands to become Christians. One way this is done is to pay primary attention to their inner spirit or being. The harlots of the day would hardly fit such a context so could not be the subject of the writer's intent. The scriptures do, however, mention the attire of a harlot in Prov. 7:10 "And there a woman met him, with the attire of a harlot, and a crafty heart." It would seem that certain attire, or lack thereof, can identify one as this kind of evil person. That is all the more reason that Christian women should be careful not to wear garments that are suggestive or revealing. Unfortunately some women often reveal more than they intend. In the Timothy passage Paul tell us, first of all, what is "not" to be the case i.e. "not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing," then he tells us what is desired i.e. "but that which is proper for women professing godliness." There is a type of dress that is "proper for women professing godliness." If that is true, then the opposite would be also i.e. there is a type of dress that is "not proper" for women professing godliness. I have often wondered how a woman in a mini-skirt or bathing suit could talk to a sinner about Christ. What weight would such a conversation carry? How meaningful would it be? This passage also points to the danger of "over dressing." Again, it should be pointed out that the apostle is talking to Christian women of that day, not harlots or sinners. This teaching is just as appropriate and applicable today as it was then. Modest apparel in many places is fast becoming a thing of the past. Short dresses, low cut dresses, shorts, bathing suits, tight fitting garments, are all designed to call attention to the body of the wearer. The scripture says that is wrong. Gaudy clothing or accessories that are designed to attract attention, especially of the opposite sex, are also condemned by the apostle. It is as wrong to "over-dress" as it is to "under-dress." It is a sad day when women feel that they must attract someone by "outward appearance" rather than with "a meek and quiet spirit which are very precious in the sight of God. All three of these passages apply to women and men today, and should be heeded. Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808

BETWEEN THE ALTAR AND THE TEMPLE

By CLOVIS T. COOK

When Zechariah stood above the people, after the spirit of God had come upon him, he said: "Thus saith God. Why transgress ye the commandments of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper?" Because you have forsaken the Lord, He hath also forsaken you" (2 Chron. 24:21). Now for this

straight talk and stern rebuke, they stoned him in the name of the King, in the court of the house of the Lord. Jesus says: "From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple" (Lk. 11:51). What a place to be cut down! In between the two,

in the court yard he was slain.

The Altar

Noah, perhaps, built the first altar of which we have any mention (Gen. 8:20). It became sacred and hallowed, as did certain places, by religious association; e.g., where God appeared, as in Gen. 12:7, etc. There were many kinds and sizes of altars, and were used for more than one purpose. In this study, however, we are thinking of it in the sense of worship. In Rev. 11:1, John was told to arise and measure the altar. This language of course must be taken metaphorically. There are those who for years have accepted what we believe the Bible teaches about true worship. They accept the fact that there are certain items of worship, and that they must be carried out in a certain way. That the Bible is the measuring reed or rule, but which these items must be measured is a matter for which we have contended through the years. But, more recently we have begun to hear that if two people agree on one certain point they form a party, and must be condemned for doing so. Some seem to think that if he thinks along the same lines of another, he is being influenced and is not a free-thinker. This all seems so immature and void of reasoning to me. For example, if one cup was right fifteen years ago, what ever made it wrong then makes it wrong now. If we could not call on cups and class advocates fifteen years ago, what makes it right to do so now? Do we still believe that cups and classes are wrong, but they who believe in, and practice them, are alright? If I can call on a brother of this persuasion one time, to lead a song, a prayer, or do the teaching, I can do it twice. If I can do it twice, then who are you to tell me when I must quit? If indeed, I can do it at all, why bother to change him? John was told to measure the worshippers as well. I think they should be measured, and tried before they are called on in our services; not called on, then talked to, about the matter.

The Temple

This Temple that John was told to arise and measure, evidently has reference to the church, and is figurative as well as the foregoing. There are those that accept the church, but do not accept her manner of worship. They are in between the church and its worship. There are those who apparently accepted the worship as we believe the Bible teaches, for they worship with us on occasions, but do not accept the name Church of Christ, and perhaps a few other things pertaining to the church. There are many like Zachariah, who are caught between the church and its worship, the altar and the Temple. They halt between two opinions. As the prophet Elijah said, how long will you do that? (1 Kings 18:21). The man who claims he still believes in one cup and no classes, but who will warm his restless hands at digressive fires, has to do more than just say so to convince me. These lukewarm folk of the Laodiceans in Rev. 3:16 did not look so good to the Lord. This soft approach made the Lord sick at his stomach and He said, "I'll spew thee out of my mouth."

The In-Between

There have always been to lines of argument since I have been in the church. One, the conservative and the other a more liberal one. The old "candystick arguments" we all used to make have become obsolete. The free-wheeling, free-dealing, and free-thinking liberal minded ones have ruled them out. When men in whom you have im-

plicit confidence tell you that they can no longer use Amos 3:3 in connection with Phil. 3:16, brother, it is time to be shaken. I believe the Lord wants His children to walk by the same rule, be alike, act alike, talk alike, etc. The idea that all two people have to do in order to walk together, is just agree to do it: e.g., if two men should meet at an intersection and ask each other where they were going, and they find out they are both going to the same place, and one says, "Why don't we just walk along together," and the other one says, "It's alright," then they have complied with Amos 3:3, is just simply making the passage teach nothing at all. These two men could walk side by side all the way into the city and never say a word to each other. Never have any agreement of any kind. Since there is not one thing specified upon which they are to agree, then it must teach in this specific case complete upon which we must agree. The Lord prayed for us all to be one. The early Christians were of one mind. What a terrible place to be caught at the judgement. To be so near and yet so far. To be in-between, lukewarm, almost, but not altogether. To be accused like the smart lawyers of Luke 11:52 who would not enter themselves, nor permit those that would to enter.

Some seem to think that those who oppose the use of a man who has been of the cups and classes persuasion, until he has repented, confessed his wrongs and has prayed for forgiveness, constitute a faction. Strange indeed, is it not, that those who believe you can take such a person into the fellowship before he repents, confesses and has prayer are not guilt of creating a faction? It looks like a faction fighting a faction according to their own logic.

This matter not only catches many of us in-between but also many congregations as well. Many brethren just simply do not know what to do about calling a preacher of whom it is said, that he is too liberal toward unscriptural practices, and those that preach such. If it is hear-say, they are slow to act. Let me ask you something brethren: : If it concerned your car, family, land or house, you would find out rather quick like, wouldn't you? If I were in doubt concerning a preacher or brother as to whether he is walking in the light of truth, as we understand it, I would just simply ask him. If he chose to ignore me, I wouldn't call him. It's just that simple. John said, "Not every spirit, but try the spirit to see whether they are of God," and I say, you brethren, hold the balance of power in your hands. Why? Simple because if a man who holds the dangerous and more liberal views towards those who advocate cups and classes is not called and supported, he cannot get very far. While on the other hand if he is called and supported, you lend him a helping hand and must share the dubious honor (?) of contributing to his cause. Brethren, know your preacher. You say, "I know all the preachers," but do you? You are in the driver's seat, brethren. I am afraid of this in-between position. We are on a one-way street, headed for Heaven. It's called the straight and narrow way, Matt. 7. I do not know too much about the middle of the road course, but I do know that it beats trying to drive on both sides of the road, at the same time. Did you ever try that? If you meet one of this kind, brother, you are in trouble. This is a dangerous driver. Would you like for one like this to teach your child to drive?

Let us not be alarmed. Let us hold the fort. Let us pull together. Let us contend for the faith. As we have said for

the last forty or fifty years, "They shall not pass."—OPA Oct. 1965

PAGES FROM THE PAST

THE CAUSE IN CALIFORNIA

By HOMER L. KING

I began visiting the state of California in about 1925 or '26, by acting as moderator in the Cowan-Fuqua debate, near Montebello, on the "Class System of Teaching."

There were about 4 or 5 faithful congregations, known to me, in the state at that time. About ten years ago I did considerable work in the state with about the same number of congregations. However, since that time the cause has grown from 4 or 5 to about 26 faithful congregations, and the membership has more than doubled in many of these congregations in the last three years. This represents a phenomenal growth for the cause of Christ in California.

While considerable credit for the above spread of the faithful church is due to the westward movement of brethren from the Middle States of the San Joaquin Valley and other sections of California; yet a greater part of the credit must go to the combined efforts of the faithful few, who decided to co-operate in putting a faithful preacher into the field and to "hold up his hands" while he was out preaching the gospel. Not only did they co-operate in putting a faithful preacher into the field and to "hold up his hands" while he was out preaching the gospel. Not only did they co-operate in a financial way, but they co-operated by their prayers, songs and their presence at the meetings, regardless of distance. It is not unusual for brethren to drive a hundred miles and more to meetings in California. As I complete a survey of the greater part of the churches in this state, covering a period of two months, I am deeply impressed by the marvelous spirit of co-operation, which now pervades the spiritual atmosphere here. It surpasses anything I have ever experienced in the gospel field. It thrills and fills my soul to see such zeal, devotion, co-operation, love and unity as now exists. May such never cease to the end, I humbly pray. Large, interested crowds have greeted me nearly everywhere. The welcome has been most cordial and warm wherever I have gone. The hospitality and support have been wholly adequate and beyond for our needs, for which we are very grateful.

Now, what has been accomplished in California, no doubt in my mind, could have been accomplished in any of the middle states, if the same efforts have been put forth, and the same plan employed. They had a plan and they

worked that plan, and the Lord blessed in the work. Unto the Lord be the glory!

For the past few years from three to five preachers have been engaged, from out of the state, and they, with the help of a number of preachers who reside in the state, have carried on the work. Not so many mission meetings were conducted, nor so many new congregations established the last few years as in the past, because it became apparent that it was very necessary to consolidate the gains and more firmly establish the weaker congregations. Time has proved the above idea a wise move, as nearly all of the congregations are much stronger in the faith and in numbers.

The field in California is fortunate in having such staunch gospel preachers residing here, as Brethren T.F. Thomasson, John Reynolds, Claude T. Springs, Jim Russell, Gayland Osburn, Abe Smith, C.H. Lee, Paul and Nelson Nichols, and now added to that number is Brother Orvel Johnson, who was restored to the fold March 7. We believe he will be much help in the cause. Others who are beginning to preach some are James Winchester, Verlin Elliot, Jesse French, A.J. Mason, Walter Jones, a Bro. Davis, E.A. Newman, possibly others. Then, Brethren Ervin Waters, Chester King, Paul Nichols, and Clovis Cook are engaged full time in the field. All of the last named preachers are too well known to need introduction here. They are doing very good work in building up the cause in general. It was my happy privilege to meet all the above named preachers during my survey of the state, which was, indeed, a pleasure I shall never forget. Is it any wonder that the cause in this state is going forward, which all the above co-workers pulling together?

From January 25 to March 21, we visited the following congregations for one or more days, preaching one or more sermons: El Centro, San Diego, Los Angeles, Montegello, Stockton, Lodi, Ceres, Sanger, Orange Cove, Poplar, Corcoran, Yuba City, Graton, Greenfield, and Glendora. Some others invited us, but we did not have the time. We were treated royally at all places. May the Lord bless all the faithful brethren who extended to me and my family such Christian hospitality in their homes. We shall never forget the brotherly kindness manifested to us while in California in 1948.—OPA, April 1948

NEHUSHTAN

By JERRY DICKINSON

"He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense unto it: and he called it Nehushtan." (II Kings 18:4)

Hezekiah was one of the greatest of all the kings of Judah. In fact, the writer declares that, "after him was none like

him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him." (II Kings 18:5) A marvelous commendation indeed! Hezekiah was just a young man of 25 when he began to reign and looking around his kingdom he saw that idolatry, paganism, and heathen worship were rampant. He at once decided to stamp out anything and everything in the land that deterred the people from a true conception of God and

with determination, courage, and grit he went about the business of reforming the nation. It is interesting to note the forms of paganism and heathenism that he worked to eradicate. 1. He removed the high places. These "high places" were altars built up off the ground with steps leading up to a pinnacle where sacrifices (sometimes human sacrifices) were offered to Baal or another heathen deity. "Thou shalt not go up by many steps," declared the Lord, when you offer a sacrifice to me. In other words, the altars the Israelites were to use were not to be like these heathen high places, nor certainly were they to offer up babies as burnt offerings as the pagans sometimes did. When Hezekiah looked around, however, he saw high places all over the land of Judah. He sent out his soldiers and servants and they tore them down. 2. He brake the images. These images were idols or graven images that the pagans worshipped or looked to for protection and favor. Some of the images were in little temples people had erected and some were in their homes. "Thou shalt make unto thee no graven image," declared the Lord in the Ten-Commandment Law. In other words, do not follow the pagans in their false and corrupt conception of the true God. These images were scattered throughout Judah, and once again Hezekiah sent out his soldiers to round them up and destroy them all. 3. He cut down the groves. Certain trees were sacred to the pagans. In Jeremiah 10: 1-6 Jeremiah warned the Israelites to, "learn not the way of the heathen." He then describes the cutting down of a tree, decking (decorating) the tree with silver and gold, and fastening it with nails so that it cannot move. Sounds a bit like a Christmas tree, doesn't it? No, I am not saying that when someone puts up a Christmas tree and decorates it in their house they are worshipping the tree - I certainly hope not! I simply point out (what I think everyone knows) that the Christmas tree is derived from pagan practice. At any rate, the heathens considered trees sacred and these groves were the places the priests and priestesses of Baal consorted to practice the immoral and unchaste rites of the religion of Baal. All sorts of sexual rites were practiced, as a part of that heathen religion, in those groves. Hezekiah, one more time, sent out his soldiers, with their axes and saws, and they cut down the groves.

No wonder, then, the Bible says there was none like him, before or after. But now comes the strangest part of the reformatory campaign of good King Hezekiah. Not only did Hezekiah see the high places, the images, and groves, but he discovered that the people had begun to burn incense to the serpent Moses had made in the wilderness. This is, I repeat, one of the strangest things ever in the history of Israel. The story of this brassen serpent is recorded in Numbers chapter 21. The children of Israel had been wandering in the wilderness for 39 years. The Lord, of course, had determined, because of their unbelief, that they would wander for 40 years, until all those above the age of 20 who had come out of Egypt were dead. This was the 39th year of their sojourn in the wilderness of sin.

All along they way Israel has complained and chided with Moses and God. In fact, from the Exodus to the crossing into Canaan they murmured no less than 13 different times. There are 13 specific times when the Bible says they murmured against the Lord and against Moses. God provided for them and blessed them, so much so that

even the soles of their shoes never wore out, but still they complained and bellyached. They were in a wilderness without food, but God provided miraculously by sending manna from heaven every day. Every morning they could go out and gather enough of the heavenly bread as they needed for the day. Still they grumbled.

As a matter of fact, the complaint in Numbers 21 had to do with the manna. It was an extremely difficult and circuitous route they had recently been travelling, and I suppose this put the people in a worse humor than even they usually were. They come to Moses and chide with him saying, "Our souls loathe this light bread." Now, when they talked about light bread they did not mean what we mean by light bread. They were not talking about light bread as opposed to corn bread or whole wheat bread - no, they were referring to the manna which the Lord sent to them every morning. "We are sick and tired of this manna," is what they were saying. By light bread they meant that the manna was not satisfying - it was stomach cheating bread. "We loathe this manna. Give us some real food to eat!" Oh, what ingrates! Oh, how they insulted the grace of God when they so complained against his gracious provision for their very sustenance! How did the Lord react to their contemptible ingratitude? The Bible says he sent fiery serpents among the people, many were bitten, and many began to perish. It is interesting, I might just say right here, that this is the last time the Israelites murmured against the Lord during their sojourn in the wilderness. They did not again murmur or complain (not out loud anyway) after this horrific encounter with the snakes. That would be enough for me too! I do not like snakes, any kind of snakes - poisonous, non-poisonous, even rubber snakes.

Several years ago when I was a fifth grade teacher our school took four classes of fifth graders to Sea Arama in Galveston, Texas. Besides all the sea animal shows and exhibits, there was also a snake show in the park. We took the kids in, seated all 100 of them in some bleachers, and then the snake handler came out to start his performance. First, out came a rattlesnake. He let the snake crawl all around his neck and he even gave the serpent a kiss. "I've been bitten by this snake several times," he told us, "but I am just about used to it by now." I shook my head, thinking how crazy a person must be to keep handling a rattlesnake after being bitten several times.

Next he took out a giant boa constrictor that looked to be 12 feet long. He called several students and teachers down out of the bleachers to help (he did not call me down I am glad to say) and lined them up behind the huge snake. When he gave the signal they all lifted the snake up off the ground. He handled several more snakes before finally bringing out a basket with a lid on it. He also got out a long hooked rod and then got very quiet. "I have a cobra in this basket," he started, "and he is very temperamental. I may bring him out, or I may not, depending on how he looks to me. Now, sometimes I open this lid and he jumps out. If he jumps out and heads for the bleachers don't worry, I will get him with this hook." I thought to myself, "It is every kid for himself! I am not going to get between anybody and a cobra!" When he raised the lid, however, he closed it up quickly and would not bring the cobra out. I think everybody, except me, was disappointed.

I know one thing, if every time I complained, God sent a snake after me I would shut my mouth and never complain again. It is noteworthy, moreover, that this is the last time the Israelites murmured against the Lord. Be that as it may, it is at this point, with the fiery snakes biting and killing people, that the Israelites ask Moses to ask God to take the snakes away. The Lord, however, tells Moses that he will not take the snakes away. Instead, the Lord provided a remedy. Moses was instructed to make a serpent out of copper and put it on a pole in the midst of the camp and all who were bitten could be saved if they would look at that serpent on a pole. Not merely looking, of course, but acting and looking by faith! Sure enough, all those who looked (obeying by faith) were healed and did not die.

When Jesus talked with Nicodemus about the new birth in John 3 he stated, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the son of man be lifted up; and I, if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." Just as those Israelites looked and lived, so all men today must look, by faith, to Jesus, and to the plan of salvation he offers, to be healed from sin and live spiritually.

Hezekiah began to reign in Judah some 700 years after Moses had raised up that serpent in the wilderness. Over 700 years had passed. Someone, however, had obviously saved and preserved that serpent all this time, and when heathenism and idolatry spread throughout the land that serpent was brought out and set up on its pole again. And, incredibly, the people were burning incense to it! Can you believe it? Hezekiah, no doubt, was horrified and he had that brassen serpent destroyed. Listen, that took gumption. You talk about a relic. Talk about an antique - the brassen serpent made by Moses in the wilderness some 700 years before. But, he destroyed it.

"It is Nehushtan," declared Hezekiah as the serpent was being destroyed. That curious word, Nehushtan, simply means, a piece of metal. What Hezekiah was saying was, "This copper serpent is just a piece of metal. It is not a god! It has no intelligence! It cannot speak, or hear, or heal in and of itself. It's a piece of metal!" And then to make his point, he melted it down and destroyed it.

What a great lesson for us, even today. Hezekiah determined that anything that deterred his subjects from true religion was Nehushtan, and therefore had to be removed and destroyed. What is deterring you? Your job? Your husband or your wife? Tradition? Whatever it is, or whoever it is, it is Nehushtan. It is not worth going to hell! Give it up and destroy it - not literally, of course, but in your heart. Remove that thing or that person, in your affection, that is deterring you from serving the Lord. I thank God that I have met people, all over the country, who have given up jobs, given up past teaching and tradition, and stood fast, even when assailed by family members.

I know many who left churches where they once worshipped with family members and friends because they were convicted they could no longer worship where individual cups were used. It is hard to leave tradition, friends, and family. But, in essence, these people were saying, "It is Nehushtan!" It is not worth going to hell. Nothing must deter us from serving the Lord!

No wonder, then, that Hezekiah, was a great king. He looked around and anything and everything that he saw that deterred the people from the truth he determined he would eradicate. May our resolve be the same as was his. May we have the conviction and the gumption to say as well, "It is Nehushtan!"

FELLOWSHIP AND UNITY-IN-DIVERSITY

continued from page 1

not opposing it (II John 9-11).

Moreover, one does not have to commit a sin to be guilty of a sin. We can be guilty of sin by simply having pleasure in them who do sin. Read carefully Rom. 1:28-32. Paul says that "they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do that do them."

Every sin requires an action, but every sin does not require the same action. Some sins require formal action and others simple rejection. For instance, in Matt. 18 Jesus gives us instruction on how to treat a brother who sins against us. Instructions are given on how to treat the immoral in I Cor. 5, and the heretics in Titus 3. It must be noted that the action differs concerning each of these sins, and it is a mistake to mix the actions all together and come up with a master plan to be applied to every sin imagined.

Every sin does not require a formal action. That is, when something is sinful, and we make it known that it is sinful, and that we do not fellowship the sin, and no one else believes we do, then, in most cases, we have done all we can do scripturally. This would include missing the assembling (Heb. 10:25), men having long hair, and women cutting their hair (I Cor. 11:1-16), worldliness (I John 2:15-17), etc. I cannot scripturally fellowship any sin, or associate with another in such a way as to make him believe

I fellowship his sin, or to make anyone else think I might fellowship the sin. In these matters, this is as far as we can go. (The digressive, for the most part, know why we don't fellowship their errors, and we should always conduct ourselves in such a way that they or no one else will think we do. Rom. 16:17-18.)

It is important also to remember that the Lord makes a careful distinction between the faithful and the unfaithful in any one church. In Rev. 2:18-25 some were guilty of gross immorality and others refused the immorality (v.24), for instance. In Revelation 3:15, "a few" in Sardis were still faithful. In III John, there was in the same church the well beloved Gaius, along with the malicious and evil Diotrephes. In the local church we do not stand or fall as a congregation, but as individual members in that congregation.

Unfortunately, when it comes to the corporate worship and there is error in the worship that cannot be corrected, then we have no choice but to leave that church.

Conclusion

Every sin does not require a formal action, or disfellowshipping, but every sin does require an action, and that is whether the sin is in our life or in that of some other Christian. In short, no sin can be fellowshiped (if one can, name it), not even in one's own life. And, finally, one must make a clear distinction between committing a sin, repenting and being forgiven, and continuing in sin.

EDITORIAL*continued from page 2*

takes place. According to the modern theory, they should rejoice because we love them so much that we don't expect them to repent! Some would advise us that we just continue to use them in the services and hope that as time goes by they will learn better. Where is the logic? When your child misbehaves, do you ignore it so that he will later learn better? No, most of us use some type of disciplinary action so that he learns better immediately. When our children were small, we sometimes spanked them when they misbehaved. We did so not because we hated them but because we loved them. The point is that genuine love moves one to use discipline. Discipline should be used because of love rather than instead of love.

I love those who have gone off into digression. I pray for their return to the Bible way. I know we can have unity on a thus saith the Lord. The only other way we could have unity is for me to compromise my own convictions and move away from what I believe with all my heart. Most will admit that to worship with one cup, one loaf, and no instruments of music or Bible classes is all right. It is safe, they admit. Why is it safe? The answer is simple; we can read it in the Book! We know where our worship came from. We don't look to Rev. J.G. Thomas, G.C. Brewer, Robert Raikes or the Pope of Rome as the founder of what we practice.

Our brethren are often accused of "driving the wedge." They point to us with an accusing finger and blame us for the division. If only we had been more loving. If only we had been willing to compromise there would have been no division. It is strange that they can all see that when the instruments of music came along and brethren opposed them, they were standing for the Bible way. Everyone can see that those who insisted on the instrument over the objections of good brethren were the cause of the division. Those who fought the innovation were merely protecting the purity of the Church. However, there is a big switch when it comes to the cups and classes and women teachers.

In that case it is those who objected to their use who caused the division! Why is it that when one stands for what the Bible teaches he is accused of causing division by some, even though they admit that what he stands for is Scriptural? Brethren, give us a "thus saith the Lord."

Some years ago, a man who had taught the truth fell away from the Lord. Later, he said to another, "If the brotherhood had been willing to move just a little, I would not have had to leave it." The brother replied, "If you had been willing to move just a little you would not have had to leave!"

A long time ago, some brethren left us in a progressive or "liberal" movement. They scoffed at those who remained behind. Many of these folks soon spent what similarity to Christ they had in indulgences in denominationalism. Today, some are away from religion entirely. Most are involved in the denominations. With them, the religion of the Christ is cheapened to the levels of man-made religion. They are now in the same condition as the prodigal when he hired himself out to feed the swine. Unlike him, however, they are feeding on the husks and contented. Progressive? Progressive, indeed! Real progress is returning to the Father's house where He waits in hopes of their return.

We are accused of being merely a party or faction and preaching a "party line." If preaching what the Bible plainly says is a "party line," we plead guilty. It is no longer a source of amazement to me that one can read it right out of the Book and still be accused of fostering a faction. When we read our worship and fellowship right from the Book of Books, we are willing to accept whatever names and insults Satan may invent. He may call us "old fogies and ignorant." We shall continue to trust in the Word of Almighty God.

Yes, we love those who are away. We love them too much to overlook their sins. We dare not devise a scheme whereby we rejoice until and unless the angels do so. Jesus said that happens when they repent.

Think on these things. DLK

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Church Directory Changes

There are two mistakes in the new 1999 Church Directory that you need to make note of. First of all-Abilene, Texas. The Lytle Acres church is listed, but should have been deleted. They no longer meet. The South Park Church was inadvertently deleted by the printer. This church still meets at 1634 Palm St. Sun. 10:30 AM and 6 PM and Wed. at 7:30 PM. Contact Johnny Snow 725 S. San Jose, Abilene, TX 79605 (915) 692-8633 or Jackie McCarty at (915) 692-8874. Please make this change in your new directory.

Also in the Preachers List. Alton Bailey is not moving. He still resides at 410 Ginger Circle, LaGrange, GA 30240, (706) 882-1114. Please make this change as well. Also, delete Courtlandt Manor, NY, they are no longer meeting.

New 1999 Church Directories Ready

Order your new church directories now, from Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808. The di-

rectories are \$2 each plus postage. 1 to 3 directories, postage is \$1.13, 4 to 6 is \$1.60, 7 to 10 is \$2.09, 11-15 is \$3.00, 16 to 20 is \$3.75, 21-25 is \$4.50. For quantities over 25, just send the amount on the label.

Thank You From Buddy Brumley

Dear brethren and sisters in Christ,

Please allow me to express my deepest appreciation for your prayers, phone calls, letters and loving concern during my illness. As you may know by now, I had a heart attack followed by quadruple bypass surgery of the heart. The operation was very successful and recovery is coming along just fine. The Lord willing, I plan to visit Mexico in October and Russia in the spring of 2000. I am convinced we serve the most loving people on this earth.

Love, in Christ
Weldon Buddy Brumley

The Special July Issue

At this time, we are sold out and cannot accept any more orders. DLK

1999 Missouri Labor Day Meeting

Harrisonville, Missouri

The Congregation at Harrison would like to invite you to the 1999 Missouri Labor Day Meeting. Our theme for the meeting will be, "God's Plan For The 21st Century Christian." This theme will be divided into many sub-topics such as God's Plan For...Creation, the Home, Teenagers, Personal Finances, Salvation and many more. The preachers scheduled to teach are, Ronny Wade, Paul Nichols, Richard Reed, John Pruitte, Kevin Presley, Mike Criswell, Aaron Risener, Smith Bibens, Terry Baze, Stan Elmore, Ron Alexander, Taylor Joyce, and Don Pruitt. Harrisonville is located fifty minutes south of downtown Kansas City, Missouri and an hour, forty-five minutes north of Joplin, Missouri on US Hwy. 71. The congregation is very excited to host this meeting and wants to personally invite you to come to Harrisonville. There are several motels in the area, but most of all we would like to open our homes to out of town visitors. For more information contact Larry Bradford at (816) 779-6135 or Terry Yotter at (816) 537-8298.

My Position On Carnal Warfare

I cannot participate in military services in any form, directly or indirectly, in combatant or noncombatant service because:

1. My duty and obligation to my God is superior to all other obligations (Acts. 5:29; Matt. 22:37).

2. My God in the Bible forbids that I engage in carnal warfare in the following references:

"Put up they sword," "For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:52)—Jesus.

"My Kingdom is not of this world" (Jno. 18:36).

"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (2 Cor. 10:3, 4).

"Love your enemies" (Matt. 5:44); "Turn the other cheek" (Matt. 5:39).

"Recompense to no man evil for evil" (Rom. 12:17).

3. To enter any military branch or service, combatant or noncombatant, I would be compelled to "swear" (take an oath), but the Bible forbids that I do so ("Swear not at all"—Jesus, Matt. 5:34).

4. To enter any military service I would be compelled to be yoked with unbelievers, which is forbidden—"Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14).

5. To be in any branch of military service in anyway, I would be a part of the organization and would therefore have fellowship in the service, but such is prohibited; thus: "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11).

6. To serve in anyway in the military service, I would be deprived of obeying the command to assemble on Lord's day to worship God in the Bible way, at least part of the time, hence would disobey God (Heb. 10:25; Acts. 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1,2).

Therefore, I cannot conscientiously engage in carnal war in any form or branch, and for the above reasons, I authorize my name to be listed in support of the above principles.

Van Franklin Stone, III, 6000 Vickie Dr., Columbia, MO 65202

Lucas Ray Peek and Marty Gene Peek, R.R. 2, Box 19F, Norman, IN 47421

James Dustin Peek and Caleb Shane Peek, R.R. 16, Box 500, Bedford, IN 47421

Justin Leroy Hunter, R.R. 2, Box 330, Heltonville, IN 47436

Eric Tyler Watson, Rt. 1, Box 278, Ada, OK 74820

Joshua Melton, A.P. 20026, Comayaguela, D.C., Honduras, Central America

Jason Meser, 2740 Finch Wy, Hartford, TN 37153

OUR DEPARTED

GRIMES—Louie Chapman

Grimes, son of J. C. and Carrie Grimes was born in 1913, in Geneva Co. AL and departed this life May 19, 1999, while a patient in Mizell Memorial Hospital, Opp, AL. Chapman was married to Sarah Whigham in 1939 and to this union were born three sons. After his obedience to the gospel, he became active in church work, preaching as opportunity presented itself throughout the southern half of Alabama, as well as in Georgia and Florida. He was instrumental in helping establish a number of congregations throughout that area. He was a man who possessed a winsome personality, and a unique ability to gain both the admiration and respect of other people. He was very talented and could have been, in life, most anything he desired to be. First and foremost, however, he wanted to be a Christian and to that end he labored throughout his life. For many years he worked as leader and preacher in the church at Lowery, AL. I first met Chapman as a young lad of fifteen. He impressed me then, and never ceased doing so as long as he lived. In 1998 my wife and I spent two months in Opp. We were with him and Sarah almost daily during that time. The hospitality of his home was legendary. I could never count the number of nights I have slept there or the number of meals I have eaten at his table. He was a joy to know and a pleasure to be around. He will be greatly missed by his family and the church in that area. Those surviving include his wife Sarah, his three sons Joe, Louie, Bill, and five grandsons, along with a host of brothers and sisters in Christ, and many friends. The funeral service was conducted from the Lowery meeting house with burial in the Lowery Cemetery. Brother Lynwood Smith and this writer conducted the service.—Ronny F. Wade



JOY—F. Elizabeth "Snooky" Joy, was born March 20, 1921 in Old Glory, Texas. She died on May 11, 1999 in El Centro, CA. Sister Joy was 78. She had been a loving and faithful Christian for well over 50 years. Her husband Bro. Earl Joy, "Cowboy," preceded her in death in 1986. Her son, Dennis Earl Joy, also preceded her in death.

Survivors include daughters Nellie Hickey of Allen, TX and Sue Renaud of Imperial, CA., sisters Margie McBride of Imperial, CA and Gaye Sorenson of Yuma, AZ, 8 grandchildren: Brett, Bart, Dennis, Tommy, Rhonda, Mary, Troy, and Roy Lee, there were also 8 great-grandchildren. Brett, Bart, Dennis, and Louise Hickey provided the beautiful singing. The late Bro. and Sister Wright were a great influence in the Joy's spiritual life. Sister Joy was a great help in the establishment of the church in Mexicali, Mexico in the 70's. Her works do follow her. The writer and Bro. Brett Hickey spoke words of comfort and warning—James A. Hickey

MARTIN—Brother Bobby Martin, a member of the church in Marietta, GA, passed away May 22, 1999 at the age of 68. He was the ninth child born to William A and Nina Shellnutt Martin. Survivors include his wife Martha, son Rickey, daughter-in-law Jane, two grandsons, Matt and Ben, and one sister Millie Tammaro. Bobby worked most of his life in the textile industry. He was a hard worker and worthy of his hire. The funeral was held May 24, 1999 at the church in Marietta. Brother Lynwood Smith and Brother Ronny Wade spoke words of comfort to the family and friends. The beautiful singing was done by fellow Christians from LaGrange, GA; Jonesboro GA; Napoleon, AL; and Trussville, AL. Pallbearers were his two grandsons and other male members of the congregation in Marietta. Daddy will be missed by his family and friends. (Submitted by Rickey Martin)

HICKMAN—Larry Alden Hickman was born Aug. 19, 1934, in Boise, Idaho, the son of David William and Janette M (Howell) Hickman. He departed this life March 23, 1999. He grew up in Yakima, Washington, where he attended Terrace Heights Grade School and Moxee High School. He married Mary E. Doud on July 3, 1955 in Yakima, Washington. They moved to Corvallis in 1970 and lived in the Corvallis, Stayton, Lebanon, and Albany area since then. He had worked as an auto mechanic. He obeyed the Gospel, being baptized into Christ in April, of 1955. The one who baptized him was Amos Doud, who later became his father in law. Larry was considered a faithful member of the Church of Christ at the time of his death. The writer had the honor of performing the marriage between Larry and Marry. It was also an honor to have been acquainted with him. Whenever a gospel meeting was being held within reach of their home, you could look for Larry and Marry to be there. Larry was always ready to do what he could for the church. Just a short time before his death, he had helped with the installation of a hot water heater at the church house in Albany. Larry is survived by his wife: Mary Hickman of Albany; his children: Linda C. Hellums of Lebanon; Marvin D. Hickman of Salem; Lora A. Howard of Vancouver, Washington; and Lynette M. Hickman of Salem; 13 grandchildren; his brothers: Dallas Hickman of Yakima, Washington; and Glen Hickman of Springfield; and his sisters: Lorretta Wilsey of Yakima, Washington; and Illa McCumber of Canon City, Colorado. He was preceded in death by his daughter: LeeAnn; his son: Larry Michael; and his sister: Lavora Powers. The writer conducted services at the church building in Albany, Oreg., March 26, 1999. His body was

laid to rest in the Waverly Cemetery, at Albany.—Gayland Osburn

EAVES—Mary Ann Eaves was born Nov. 13, 1925 near Enterprise, OK. She passed this life April 23, 1999 and was laid to rest in the very small graveyard at the Enterprise Community. Sister Eaves and her husband Earl made their home in Atoka, OK. She had been a long time member of the faithful Church of Christ. Her seat in the second row on the north side of the building will now be empty, and oh how she will be missed. It was such an honor for the writer to speak words of warning and comfort for this virtuous woman. She is survived by her husband, Earl, one sister, six children, 20 grandchildren and 25 great-grandchildren.—Ed Bullard

THOMPSON—Thomas E. Thompson, a faithful and devoted member of the Longwood Church of Christ departed this life on May the 19th, 1999 with his family at his side in Sanford, Florida. Brother Edison was born on September 23rd, 1915 in the small country town of Samson, Alabama and was raised in and around Geneva County. He was the youngest of three children born to Will and Dulcie Thompson. On April the 15th 1938 he was united in marriage with Levelle Burkett, and for the next sixty-one plus years were faithful companions to one another. To this union was born three sons, Bobby Ed (deceased), Cyrus William, and David Michael along with one grandson, Timothy Michael and one great granddaughter, Ashley Morgan Thompson. Brother Edison came to the knowledge of the truth the first part of March in 1958 through the very able preaching of Brother E.H. Miller. From that point on he began to take on a major role in the work and worship of the church and was one of several who labored tirelessly to build what is still known today as the Longwood Church of Christ. He brought countless lessons from the pulpit, and his influence and inspirations continue to live on. Brother Lynwood Smith, a long time friend and brother in Christ spoke words of comfort and encouragement to the family and the many friends that knew and loved him. Those words spoken by Brother Lynwood touched our hearts and brought tears to our eyes, but those tears of sadness will one day, we know, turn to tears of gladness, when we all meet again on some "Bright Morning." The singing was led by our brethren from Jacksonville, Phillip Prince, Flora Prince, and Davey and Lyn Sessions. It was beautiful and highlighted the services. The family would like to express their deep and sincere appreciation from the many cards and phone calls received from across the country and the lovely flowers that filled the church with their beauty, but most of all for your prayers that gave them the strength to endure such a sad occasion. We are reminded in the Book of Psalms, if by reason or strength our years be four score, yet in their strength, labor, and sorrow and soon it is cut off and we fly away. Brother Edison will be missed.—Larry C. Pate

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Douglas T. Hawkins, Rt. 1, Box 717, Mt. Vernon, KY, June 1, 1999 – Presently, I am with the church in Conway, LA. The meeting has started with great enthusiasm. Area churches are super in helping one another in their meetings. The last year has been quite difficult for the congregation at Conway, with Billy Orten's passing and all. Despite their backsets the brethren continue forging onward. Bro. Miles King has been assisting the churches in this area since Billy's death. Too, I am so impressed with various men over the brotherhood who dedicatedly lead in the church's work, despite their busy and demanding schedules. I'm happy to write of them because I deeply appreciate their sacrifices for the cause of Christ. Bro. Todd Risinger, with others, are to be highly esteemed for their commitment to the Lord's cause in this area. These men do not work to be praised, but they nevertheless should be praised and respected for how diligently they work. I've believed for a good while now that men like these are the backbone and the mainstay of the church. I'm staying with sister Peggy Orten and appreciate her kind hospitality. Before Conway, in the middle of May, I closed a meeting in Bandy, KY. It was my first time to be with the brethren there. Naturally, I have come to appreciate them a great deal. This month Lori and I plan to be with the churches in Brookhaven (Pearlhaven), MS July 11-18 and Chateau, OK July 21-25. God bless the faithful in his service.

Jimmie C. Smith, 5100 Rail Rd., Harrison, AR 72601, July 10, E-Mail: cjsmith@alltel.net – We enjoyed having Ron and Barbara Courter in our home and for our meeting in May. I then was in Jackson, MS for their Memorial Day meeting where some 12 congregations were represented with eight from Mississippi. To say the least it was a very enjoyable meeting with more interest than I have ever seen in Jackson. I was thrilled to assist my brother-in-law, Stephen Jones, in baptism. In June we were with the congregation in Columbus, GA where one confessed faults. They are quite small in number but very loving and hospitable and doing their best. We were able to attend one night of LaGrange's homecoming meeting which was very enjoyable. After the early closing service at Columbus I preached to a large crowd at Napoleon, AL where two confessed faults. I stayed over on Monday night for study and baptized a young woman. The Lebanon meeting was very enjoyable and well conducted by Billy Dickinson and Doug Hawkins.

Kevin W. Presley, Rt. 2, Box 166, Kinston, AL 36453, (334) 898-1301, letthebiblespeak@mciworld.com – I just returned home from two enjoyable meetings in California. It was a pleasure to preach at Fremont for a week. It is inspiring to see a congregation so full of young families. I was glad to visit with Don and Patsy King throughout the week. Don is loved and respected by the brethren there and by myself. My thanks to Rodney and Alice Moyer for their warm hospitality and helpfulness. Next, it was a thrill

to hold the Memorial Day meeting in Turlock. It was nice to preach to crowds of 300-400 on the weekend. These brethren host a wonderful meeting that draws people from all over the state - and without gimmicks and all kinds of activities! I appreciate the zeal and conservatism of this sound church. Bro. Richard DeGough does a great work there. I count him and Glenda as good friends and their hospitality made the week simply fly by. The meeting closed with one confessing faults. My thanks to all who come to both places. Here at home things continue to go well. I baptized a man in his 30's this week who has been attending services some. He will be a great asset to the new church in Dothan. He has three children and hopefully his example will have a good influence on them. Charles Marsh has moved to Dothan, and his family will soon arrive. We are so glad to have them here. Charles is a knowledgeable and capable leader and we will benefit from his presence. These developments make the new work in Dothan exciting. The television program continues to air and generate weekly response. Ronny Wade is to hold our summer meeting in Dothan, August 22-29. Finally, it was good to hear Brandon Stephens in a meeting at Pansey in May. He did some fine preaching and had several baptisms and confessions. I would recommend him and his preaching anywhere! My next meeting will be at Manteca, CA in August. (6-15) Come if you can. Pray for the Lord's work here and elsewhere.

Joe Hisle, Rt. 4, Box 188, Ada, OK, 74820 – The annual meeting at Sulphur was a great meeting. Bros. William St. John and Bruce Roebuck did a really good job in conducting the meeting. Preaching was above average and the singing was inspiring, it was a treat to be there. It has been some time since I have reported and much has happened. We enjoyed a meeting in Little Rock, AR after several years absence. The church has experienced a "revival" there due to the zeal of some young members who have taken a lead in the work. The meeting closed with one young man being baptized. We appreciated the support of Bro. Miles King. Miles always brings enthusiasm to a meeting. Next we enjoyed a short meeting with the church at Galey, OK, just a few miles west of Ada. We always enjoy these brethren and appreciated the opportunity to be with them. From Galey we went to the 85th and Euclid congregation in Kansas City, MO where we made our home with Beth and Mike Criswell. It was a pleasure to spend time with them and to enjoy the fellowship of this church. It was good to have Bro. Paul Nichols in attendance during the meeting. This meeting closed with two baptisms. From MO we traveled deep into the heart of TX, for a meeting at the Vance Jackson congregation in San Antonio. It was a pleasure to renew old acquaintance and work with these brethren. Bro. Merl Helwig attended the meeting before he had to leave for a trip to Venezuela. Merl works tirelessly in his efforts to carry the gospel to Spanish speaking people. He needs to be remembered in your prayers for his safety and success. The meeting in San Antonio closed with one lady being baptized. Bro. Don King held us one of the best meeting that we have had in Ada for years. He preached the "old path" of obedience and service to God. This kind of preaching gets results! We had three baptisms. Following is the remainder of my schedule: Marietta, GA, July 10-18; Wayne, WVA, July 25-Aug. 1; Chapel Grove, TN, Sept. 1-5, (This is the Labor Day Meeting, you'll come); Collins, MS, Sept. 19-26; Spencer, IN, Oct. 3-10. Please

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remember us in your prayers.

Johnny Elmore, 419 KSW, Ardmore, OK 73401, bookman@brightok.net, July 8-Sally and I and three grandchildren were in St. Albans, WV for a meeting June 13-20. It was a wonderful experience to stay with Lawrence and Madge Lore and visit with all the members during the meeting. The times we spent together will be treasured for a long time. On the last day of the meeting, we baptized two young ladies who were taught by Kenneth Thompson of the Piney View congregation. Visitors came from several area congregations which helped out tremendously. We attended part of the meeting at Sulphur, OK before going on to Lebanon, MO for that meeting. At this writing, we have a meeting in progress here with Don Jackson. Next, I hope to be at Ada July 30-Aug. 8.

Ronny F. Wade PO Box 10811 Springfield, MO 65808 July 8- The meeting in Greenville, SC closed with one baptism. I spent the last two days of the meeting in the hospital while Dr's ran tests. My thanks to Brother Ricky Martin and Anthony Brockett who filled in for me. Also to the brethren at Greenville for their care and understanding during a very difficult time. Our next meeting was in Kansas City at the 79th St. church on the Kansas side. Paul Nichols works here and is respected by everyone. The church has taken on new life and is working diligently for the Lord. The meeting closed with three baptisms, one restoration, and one confession of faults. Currently we are in a meeting at Claxton near Competition, MO. Crowds have been good so far, and we are hoping for good results. The Lord willing we go next to Norman, OK July 30-Aug. 8, then to Dothan, AL Aug. 22-29 and London, KY Sept. 12-19. Please remember us when you pray.

Greg Gay 7821 Saybrook Dr., Citrus Heights, CA 95621 July 7, 1999 We were in a meeting at Tyler, Texas June 20-27 where Terry Baze works with the congregation. The members attended well, plus many shared their faith with their friends and neighbors by inviting them to the meeting. By the end of the meeting over 40 outsiders had attended, many more than once. We also had visitors from congregations in Athens and the Dallas area, plus a contingent of 17 came from Shreveport one night including Wayne Fussell who baptized me many years ago and holds a special place in my heart. We stayed with Terry and Becky Baze and had a great time visiting them and the many others who were hospitable to us during the week. Next we enjoyed two days of the Sulphur, OK meeting. I had not been there since I was a teenager. Then we went on to Lebanon for the balance of that great meeting. Our work at 64th. St. in Sacramento continues. We had one recent baptism, bringing our total to 15 in our three years of working here.

James A. Hickey, 805 Sandy Trail, Allen, TX 75002-972-396-8968.- The past year I have been teaching Spanish at the local High School and preaching in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. This includes Allen, my home congregation, Bridgeport, Weatherford, and the Spanish churches at Garland and Dallas. I recently had the privilege of baptizing George Hill, he is 83 years old. At Allen we have also seen two teenagers baptized into Christ. Recently two brethren, that had been out of duty, were restored to the Faith. We have also gained one of my students from the High School and his mother. In June we sent Bro. Julio Rodriguez to Mexicali to work for two weeks. Nine people were restored to the faith. We are now trying to develop leadership there. We are also looking for a Spanish-speaking preacher to work with the Mexicali brethren for a year or so. Please contact me if you know of a faithful man that wishes to preach the Gospel there. We thank the churches that supported Bro. Rodriguez in this labor. We continue to receive responses from the Short-wave radio broadcasts over World Wide Christian Radio (WWCR) in Nashville, TN. Let me know if you can pick it up in your area. It is heard all over the western 4:30 p.m. hemisphere. Friday, 4 over 15.685 KHZ (Spanish), Sat. at 10:00 a.m. over 15.685 KHZ, and every Sunday at 1:30 p.m. over 12.160 KHZ. We thank Council Hill, OK for the support of this effort. One of our brethren here, Ralph Noack, just returned from the work in the Dominican Republic, where he assisted Bro. Helwig. Pray for us.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr, Fremont, CA 94539, June 16, E Mail: old_pathsjuno.com. Since the July issue was a special OPA we are behind in the reports. May 26-30 we were at Jacksonville, FL in a good meeting. Folks came from several areas and states. The brethren worked hard to make the meeting a success and two were baptized. It was my pleasure to stay in the home of Flora Prince where we have stayed through the years. It was good to be there and see the brethren again. Brother Phillip Prince is working among them and doing a good work. On the way to a meeting at West Chester, Ohio, we were able to attend the last several days of the 4th of July meeting in Lebanon, MO. Large crowds were in attendance and a good attitude was manifested by all. We began in West Chester on July 4. Crowds were small in the beginning but improved as the week went by. Area congregations helped out. It was great to see preaching brethren Barney Owens, Brian Burns and Bill Ferguson who attended through the week. Pat and I made our home with the R.H. Renners, old friends, and could not have been treated better. We lived and worked among those brethren thirty years ago and always enjoy going back. There were two baptized and seven restored, God be thanked and praised. We look forward to Springfield, MO (Mission Hills) August 15-22. Please pray for the work everywhere.

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. LXXIII

LEBANON, MISSOURI, SEPTEMBER 1999

NO. 9

PART II WANTED - "GOSPEL PREACHERS"

By RICHARD DEGOUGH

There is no doubt in my mind about the need for preaching in this world of darkness where sin abounds and millions are lost, having never heard the message of salvation that can save them from hell. Gospel preachers, God's men, are compelled by the love of Christ to preach the gospel. The Lord ordained that it should be preached to "all nations and "every creature" Matt. 28:19, Mk.16:15. Preaching may be a waste of time to the unlearned and unconcerned of our age, and it might even seem foolish to the educated of this present age, but God has chosen the "foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." I Cor.1:21, Rom. 10:13-15. There is no alternative. Now, substitution at given times and various occasions might seem proper to us if we use human reasoning, but to follow God's plan is to **preach**. Studies seem to be the order of the day, and while they have their place, I'm afraid more emphasis is placed on them than heralding the gospel by preaching. I study with individuals in a private way as many do, and we must, but remember brethren, that gospel meetings (mission and otherwise) are not out of vogue and especially they are in tune with the will of God. I hear preachers talk of being sent to a "study" by the congregation where they live and work, but I do not hear of very many if any, being sent to assist several preachers in a mission effort to a community where there is no Church of Christ. (true Church) Countries and states need the gospel, congregations need the preaching and too often the experienced, sound, proven faithful, aged preacher is left sitting at home because we have decided "his kind" is no longer useful in the work we have planned.

Simplicity In Christ

We preachers must be vigilant, always aware of the wiles of the devil. He would have us turn away from the simple truth of the gospel unto another which of course would not be the gospel of Christ. The tendency to experiment in order to get the message into men's hearts is a human weakness, because it is based on finite wisdom. Paul wrote the Corinthians of his fears about them having their "minds corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." II Cor.11:3 He gave them the example of the serpent beguiling Eve through his subtlety. Its easy to substitute the wisdom of man for the simplicity of divine truth. Let me say there is the temptation to express our thoughts in our words when most of the time we can speak, using the Scriptures, God's wisdom. Peter said: "If any man speak, let him speak as

the oracles of God..." I Pet.4:11 An Oracle is a divine utterance. Heaven has spoken in every age. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." II Pet.1:21. "...spake in times past by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son..." Heb.1:1-2. The apostles of the Lord spoke by inspiration, having received the promise from on high. Jno. 15:26-27, 16:13-14, I Cor.2:4,10-13, Gal.1:12, speaking "as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts 2:4. "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth..." I Cor.2:13. "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." I Cor.2:4-5. Paul wrote that the Scriptures are inspired (God breathed) "...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." I do not want to be misunderstood, for I believe illustrations and examples that are given while preaching can have a wonderful effect reinforcing the word of God. They can contribute by helping us understand the truth. My point is, that they should not make up the whole of our preaching in lieu of the Scriptures which are able to make us "...wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." II Tim.3:15. Mr. Daniel Webster once said: "When a preacher took his text from the Bible and preached from the newspaper, he preferred to stay home."

The Preaching We Must Do

I know that we have decisions to make that requires wisdom and understanding, and often on my part perhaps I make the wrong one when preaching. We preach to the lost about salvation in Christ because they are in sin, and unprepared to meet God. Paul said; "...we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." II Cor.5:14. "...dead in trespasses and sins..." "And you, being dead in your sins," Eph.2:1,5, Col.2:13. The sinner was not born "dead in sin." For Paul said: "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God:" "...so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;" Jesus said: "...Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." Rom.3:23, 5:12, Jno.8:34. Our preaching then, is aimed at the sinners heart,

continued on page seven

CONTENTS

Vol. LXXIII No. 9



ADVOCATE

ANNOUNCEMENTS 8-10

Part II WANTED - Gospel Preachers . 1

Speak Evil Of No Man 2

The Querist Column 3

The Second Coming Of Christ 3

Stop, Look And Listen! 5

Disciples Of The Lord 6

FROM THE FIELDS 10-12

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Editorial

SPEAK EVIL OF NO MAN

By DON L. KING

The brethren in Crete were an unruly lot. The congregations seem to have been numerous and quite lively but plagued with disorders, lack of organization, no scriptural rule and even guilty of many excesses. Sometime after the Church was planted, Titus was left there by Paul to set in order the things that were wanting. (Titus 1:5) Indeed, there was much to do! History tells us there were many Jews but the Gentile population outnumbered them. Titus, then, was the perfect choice to work there. According to Galatians 2:3 Titus was a Greek. His heritage was Gentile. Paul chose the right preacher to work among the brethren, no doubt about it.

The work before Titus must have been huge. From historians, we learn that the character of the people was generally somewhat unsteady, insincere, and quarrelsome. They were given to greediness, lying, and drunkenness, to name a few of their problems and the Jews who had settled there appear to have become even worse than the Gentiles. In the midst of this ungodly nation, Titus is left to teach the brethren to become more spiritually minded. He has the chore of carving from amid the carnage of Satan, a people whom God will call His own. Paul reminded Titus, in chapter 2:14,15 that Christ had given "Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Titus, then, has quite a job ahead of him. At the time Paul wrote Titus, Nero was in power. He was a notorious persecutor of Christians. Paul had himself experienced the hand of Nero by being imprisoned and would soon do so again.

In spite of the terrible persecutions against Christians, Paul commands that brethren "... speak evil of no man...." That is incredible isn't it? Would we be willing to obey? **Are we willing to obey?** We are not involved in politics in America and are not threatened by those in power, God be thanked for that. As a result, most of us are not in the habit of "speaking evil" of the rulers today. However, Paul said: "speak evil of **no** man." (Titus 3:2)

It is sad that members of the Church sometimes speak evil of brethren. Preachers need to be careful also. In Ephesians 4:31,32 Paul wrote: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." The brethren in Ephesus were bitter, Paul said put it away from you, stop it. Brethren were angry with one another, Paul said, stop it. Brethren were speaking evil of one another, Paul said, stop it. Some had malice in their hearts for another and Paul condemned that also. Does this mean we can't rebuke a sinful brother or sister for their sin? Of course not, but it **does** mean we can't do it with malice, anger, bitterness and hatred. **Brother, it is one thing to go to a fellow**

continued on page eight

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Is there any difference in "giving thanks" for the loaf and cup and "blessing" them? (TX)

Answer: Matthew records the institution of the Lord's supper thusly: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it; and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it" (Matt. 26:26-27). Observe that the "it" following the word "blessed" in the KJV is in italics, meaning that it is not in the original and was supplied by the translators. In most of the later revisions, "it" is omitted, so that, the verse reads, as given in the ASV "Jesus took bread and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the disciples..." Luke's report of the same incident omits all reference to "a blessing," merely stating: "and he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave to them" (Luke 22:19). Mark says: "And as they were eating, he took bread, and when he had blessed, he brake it, and gave it to them (Mark 14:22). If we parallel these accounts it becomes apparent that the phrase "and blessed" of Matthew and Mark is equivalent to Luke's "and had given thanks." To "bless" is to simply "give thanks." There are a number of impressive named writers who believe that Jesus did not "bless the bread," but blessed God. Adam Clarke says: "The terms, in this case, are nearly of the same import, as both blessing and giving thanks were used on these occasions. But what was it that our Lord blessed? Not the bread, though many think the contrary, being deceived by the word "it", which is improperly supplied in our version. In all the four places above (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul), whether the word blessed or gave thanks is used, it refers not to the bread, but to God, the dispenser of every good." Macknight concurs in his comments on 1 Corinthians 10:16 saying "Which we bless, literally, for which we speak good words of praise and thanks, as is plain from Chap. 11:24, where this blessing is interpreted by the giving of thanks. The phrase here, denotes the whole communicants joining together in blessing God over the cup, for his mercy in redeeming the world, through the blood of Christ." To these, according to Barnes, may be added the names of Bloomfield, Grotius, and Vatablus. Guy Woods says "Jesus did not bless the bread, he blessed God, just as he did not give thanks to the bread, but to God. The word bless is used of God's favors toward us, and of our praise and thanksgiving to him for such favors; and these ideas are

involved in his action here." There are others, however, who believe that more is involved in the phrase "The cup of blessing, which we bless." They see here not only thanksgiving, but a benediction as well. Hodge argues "So the cup of blessing is the cup which, by the benediction pronounced over it, is set apart from a common to a sacred use." Barnes also discounts the claims of Macknight and others when he says "The more obvious signification is, that there is a sense in which it may be said that the cup is blessed, and that by prayer and praise it is set apart and rendered in some sense sacred to the purposes of religion." It seems to this writer that "blessing" and "giving thanks" essentially refer to the same act. And that in the process of giving thanks we ask God to bless the bread and the cup, to the purposes given them by God. The practice of "blessing" and/or "giving thanks" is also demonstrated in the miracle of the loaves and fishes. "And he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake the loaves; and he gave to the disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all" (Mark 6:41). The same rendering is given in Matthew and Luke. However in John we read "Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down. (John 6:11). It is clearly evident that the words "blessed" and "having given thanks" carry the same meaning. The "blessing" here, was an expression of thanksgiving to God for the food. Often today, when we eat our meals, someone will say "would you like to say the blessing?" We understand this to mean, just as in the two previous situations, "would you like to give thanks to God for the food we are about to consume." The giving of thanks by the one serving at the table of the Lord is an important part of the service. We are not told exactly what was included in the prayer of Jesus as recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. We do know that Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 explained that the cup was the communion of the blood of Christ and that the bread was the communion of body of Christ. We all share in the bread by breaking and eating and we all share the cup by drinking from it. The giving of thanks should be to the point, rather than a long, drawn-out affair that never really touches on the real purpose of what we are doing. To so ramble detracts from the beauty and simplicity of the supper itself. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P. O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808 e-mail rf Wade@juno.com)

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

By RICK MARTIN

With the year 2000 fast approaching there is much talk about the second coming of Christ. It is a subject that has always received a lot of attention. Many religious leaders of the past have tried to predict the time when Christ would return. There are many different views with regard to the end time and the return of Jesus Christ.

In 1833 William Miller began to teach that he had figured out when the Lord would come. He predicted that on October 22, 1843, the Lord would certainly come. With

this prediction he started a movement called the Second Advent Movement. Some 50,000 people left mainline religious groups of that day to enter this movement. When October 22, 1843 arrived it is said that some people got on the top of their homes or barns to get a running start to meet the Lord in the air. When midnight came, the Lord had not returned. Miller then said that he had made a mistake in his addition and that Jesus would return the following year. Of course, that day too came and passed

without the return of our Lord.

William Miller would have done well to read the Bible. Passages such as Matthew 24:36, Matthew 25:13, and I Thessalonians 5 tell us "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." Thieves don't write you a letter or call you on the telephone to let you know they are coming. Jesus said "In such an hour as ye think not, the son of man cometh" and that no man knows the day or the hour when the Lord shall come.

In 1874, Charles T. Russell, began to teach the Millennial Dawn Movement and to set dates for the Lord's Coming. Those who followed him in the Watchtower Society have set various dates through the years, only to see these dates come and go without the return of the Lord. We see that it has not just been modern televangelists setting dates but many people have been interested in what they call "the last days."

Hebrews chapter 1 mentions the "last days" in which Jesus is to be the spokesman for God. Many people say that the "last days" are about to come. Such people are mistaken because the "last days" are already here. We are living in the "last days." In Acts 2, Peter quotes what the prophet Joel had said eight centuries earlier about what would come to pass in the last days (Acts 2: 16-17). Beginning in I Timothy 4: 1 and in II Timothy 3: 1, Paul warns Timothy about what is happening in his day, which he calls the "last days" and he warns him to be on guard. When men base their teaching about the coming of Christ on the concept that he'll come in the last days and they will soon be with us, they are misapplying the scriptures. No one knows when Christ will come and we have been in the last days for nearly 2000 years. The "last days" refers to the Christian era, which began with the death of Christ.

Men may try to predict the time of His coming, but the fact is no one knows. The only thing we know is that He is coming and since we do not know the day or hour, it is imperative that we always be ready.

There is a lot of teaching today that he will come again to do a number of things: to end the Battle of Armageddon, to set up His throne in Jerusalem, to sit on David's throne for a thousand years. What does the Bible say about this?

Notice a statement made about Christ nineteen centuries ago. Luke 1:32-33 says, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." This is speaking of the first century onward. Psalms 24:9-10 says Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory." Daniel chapter 7 says, that when the Son of man passed through the clouds unto the ancient of days, he would receive a kingdom. In Acts 1, Jesus ascended from Mount Olivet, he passed through the clouds unto the Ancient of Days and he received a Kingdom. The everlasting doors of heaven opened wide to receive him home. In Revelation 17:14, which was written at the end of the first century, he is referred to as the "King of Kings and Lord of lords"—written in present tense. I Timothy 6 says the same thing. He is ruling and reigning now over his kingdom.

We are told that when Jesus comes again every eye shall

see him (Revelation 1:5). In Ephesians 1 we are told about the power God gave him when he raised him from the dead, that he is sitting at the right hand of God and all things have been put under his feet. How could Jesus have more power than that? He is not coming back to show his power or that he is a king, or to establish a kingdom. The Apostle Paul writes in I Corinthians 15, that Christ is reigning now, and shall reign till the last enemy, death, is put under his feet. Then he will take the Kingdom and deliver it up to God. The end of time is not going to be when he takes possession of the kingdom, but rather at that time he will give it up. This is the opposite of premillennialism. He is not even coming back to earth. We are told in I Thessalonians 4 that Christians will meet him in the air. According to II Peter 3 this earth and the works that are in it shall be burned up. Hebrews 1:12 tells us it will be rolled up like an old garment, and cast aside.

What exactly will occur when the Lord returns? Listen to the Lord himself (John 5:28-29) "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." This passage along with Acts 24:15 affirms, that there will be one resurrection of dead, composed of both the good and the bad. II Thessalonians 1:8 says, "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." If he is going to take vengeance on unbelievers when he comes, how can there be two resurrection as some say?

In the Great Commission according to Matthew, Jesus told his disciples to preach the gospel to the end of the world and then said, "I will be with you." If the tribulation and rapture theory believed and taught by so many is true, then this statement of the Lord cannot be obeyed. According to that theory the righteous will be raptured seven years before the end of the world.

The Bible nowhere teaches the concept of a secret rapture. II Peter 3:10, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." That certainly does not sound like it will be secretive or quiet.

Some televangelists talk about a restoration of physical Israel. What about this theory? A strange thing about the premillennial theory is that it gives special advantage to Israel. Romans 10:12 says, "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him" Romans 2:11 says, "For there is no respect of persons with God." To claim that partiality will be extended to a certain race of people when Jesus comes is in direct opposition to what he accomplished the first time.

This theory has as its basis Romans 11, but once again, the Scriptures are misapplied. Romans 11:26-29 says, "And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness for Jacob; For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sakes, but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes, For the

gift and calling of God are without repentance." When Paul talks about the Deliverer that would come he is quoting Isaiah 59:20. When Isaiah wrote it seven centuries earlier it was future tense, but when Paul quotes it, he speaks in past tense. The saving would come through the redeemer out of Zion. Jesus came out of Zion; notice Romans 15. Jesus was raised to reign over all men as he came out of Zion. Anyone who is going to be saved will be saved through Jesus Christ.

When Paul speaks of "Israel" in Romans 11 he is referring to the church. In Romans 2:28 he says, "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly." Romans 9:6-7 says "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel; Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called." Galatians 3:7 says "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same

are the children of Abraham." "All Israel" means those who believe in Jesus Christ, both Jew and Gentile. The Jews were taken out of the way to open the way for Gentiles to come in. Believers which make up the true Israel of God will be saved.

When Jesus comes, he will not be able to be more of a Savior than he was the first time. The only thing left for Jesus to do when he returns is to gather his saints and to pronounce condemnation on unbelievers.

Jesus has already established his kingdom. Colossians 1:13 tells us that the church at Colosse was in "the kingdom of God's dear Son." The seven churches of Asia were called a kingdom of priests under God (Revelation 1:6; 5:10). If you are in the church, you are in the kingdom.

The second coming of Jesus Christ will certainly be a great event. We need to do everything in our power to be prepared for his return.

STOP, LOOK AND LISTEN!

By CLOVIS T. COOK

I remember when I was a boy there was posted at many railroad crossings a sign that read: "Stop, Look and Listen!" To heed this sign sometimes meant the difference between saving one's life and losing it. It became necessary to stop, so that one might be able to see and hear a little better. If one proceeded to go on trying to look and listen, without stopping, he increased the danger. Is it not strange indeed that we would erect signs, and heed them to save a physical life, but pay so little attention to the signs that can save a spiritual one?

Stop!

Webster says to stop means: "To cease motion. Quit doing something." When the children of Israel get out on their wilderness journey, under the leadership of Moses, their chosen leader, they soon found themselves being pursued by Pharaoh, and his mighty army. They could not turn back into the jaws of Pharaoh's army for that would have been suicidal. The natural urge of course, was to run! This, they couldn't do for the Red Sea lay before them. When they cried to Moses, he said, "—stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord—" (Ex. 14:13). It is paradoxical to think that one can escape danger that seems to be upon him by merely standing still. We want to get out of its way. We want to go on. But the danger sometimes is not in what pursues us, but rather, in what lies before us. It therefore becomes more dangerous to move on without the command to do so, than to stand still and wait for the word of authority to go forward. Too many people become impatient when they have done only that which they have been commanded to do, and move on seeking human improvement. Individual cups, classes, etc. are living proof of this fact. It is not enough to worship God with one cup as the early Christians did, so many have to go on beyond the command of Matt. 26:27, and add the individual drinking vessels. If we cannot recognize when we have reached the end of a commandment, and stop, and wait for the word to direct us further, where will we finally stop? Brethren, there must be a limit as to how far we may go, and still not violate the will of the Lord. It seems to me that the innovations that have crept into the worship in many churches today are far beyond this limit. Stop? Apply the brakes!

Fire the retro-rockets and slow down. Cease motion beyond that which is written. Quit doing anything that you cannot prove to be right in the worship. This must be the common ground for unity.

Look!

Now, since we have established the fact that we must stop until we receive the word to go, then let us look to see what it says. First, let us give our eyes a treatment. Let us doctor them a little that we may see better—"—anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see:" (Rev. 3:18).

In Num. 21:8, Moses erected a fiery serpent of brass upon a pole, and it came to pass that they who were bitten by the serpents in the land, could look upon this serpent of brass and live. Sometimes the difference between life and death is the failure to see or look.

In Gen. 9:11, God put a rainbow in the cloud so that when we look upon it we may remember His covenant, that He made with man saying that He would destroy the earth no more by water. The man that does not understand this might look at the rainbow forever and not see the agreement in it.

In Jas. 1:25, "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he bring not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." What good would it do us to take a good look into the law of liberty and do nothing? We need to take a good look to see where we are going. Is the road clear ahead? Where will this road lead to? Is it the right road? It seems easy to look at certain things and see no wrong in them, if they are what we want to do most. I have always believed that if we look hard and long enough we will find the answer to our problems on fellowship, unity, etc. Recently, I took a look at the fellowship question, and let it be known through the columns of this journal what I saw, with which some did not agree. I look at Amos 3:3 where the Prophet said, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" There seem to be some who believe this to mean that you just simply agree to disagree. I have looked again and find that Adam Clarke, Vol. 4, page 676, said of Amos 3:3, "While ye loved and served me. I dwelt in you and walked among you. Now ye are become alien-

ated from me, your nature and mine are totally opposite. I am holy, ye are unholy. We are no longer agreed, and can no longer walk together. I can no longer hold communion with you. I must cast you out." The Bible says, "And Enoch walked with God" (Gen. 5:22). Could it be said of a man that he walked with God, but was never in agreement with Him? Would God allow it? Could he be one with God and not be in agreement with Him? If this will not work with God, how can it work with one another? There must of necessity be some common rule, other than human reasoning, to bind our hearts and hands in this great work.

Listen!

"So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). James said let every man be swift to hear in James 1:19. And Jesus said this people's ears are dull of hearing (Matt. 13:15). Listen, our faith depends on what we hear, for we walk by faith and not by sight, and what we hear comes from the word of God, or the wisdom of men. The former is God's rule to govern us, the later is man's rule which serves only to confuse and divide us. If God has made a rule to govern His people, what is it? If we can settle on what the rule is, which we must all agree is His word, can we agree that we must all abide by it? Does it teach two different things at the same time for His people to practice? What is a rule anyway? Webster says: "an established guide for conduct, procedure, etc.;" also, "a set of regulations in a religious order." Listen to Paul in Phil. 3:16, "Nevertheless, whereto we have already at-

tained, let us all walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." Of the word, "rule," in W.E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary* page 306, he says, see "province" page 227 and this word is translated from the word *kanon* (cannon). This word, "Originally denoted a straight rod, used as a ruler or measuring instrument, or in rare instances, the beam of a balance, the secondary notion being either (a) of keeping anything straight, as a rod used in weaving, or (b) of testing straightness, as a carpenter's rule; hence its metaphorical use to express what serves to measure or determine anything. By a common transition in the meaning of words, that which measures, was used for what was measured; thus a certain space at Olympia was called a *kanon*. So, in music, a *kanon* is a composition in which a given melody is the model for the formation of all the parts. In general the word came to mean or serve for anything regulating the actions of men as a standard or principle." Can you think of anything that can better do that than the Bible itself?

There are far too many people that are ready to say, "You listen!" We do not want to listen, we want to do the talking. We do not want to listen to wise comments, concerning the Bible; we want to be the commentator. We could all do ourselves a little good by just simply doing a little more listening and a little less commenting. No one can make the Bible mean more than it says. If you Stop! Look and Listen!, the soul you save, might be your own. -OPA, March 1966

DISCIPLES OF THE LORD

By GERALD R. BARRETT

In Matthew 28:18-20 we read: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Jesus Christ at this time had been given all power in heaven and earth and commands the apostles "to teach all nations." This word teach can be translated disciple or make disciples and is much clearer in meaning as to the responsibility of those who were commanded to "Go" and for all who were made disciples. (See also the word taught in Acts 14:21) The word disciple is not used much in contemporary English so what is the meaning? Literally, the word means a learner. The apostles were given a grave responsibility to "Go, and make learners of all nations." By preaching the gospel it would be a call to all within their voice to a life of learning about Jesus Christ and His commandments.

Learning of the Master and His way then must be a desire on our part. Not just for knowledge but a desire to know so that we might do. In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." The phrase "and learn of me" is our focal point here, but the figure of taking His yoke is a beautiful figure of our submissive life in Christ. The whole verse is a universal invitation to all to come and submit their all to

Him. In verse 28 it is a command for us to learn of Him along with the promises of rest, an easy yoke and a burden of the Lord that is light. Jesus said we must take His yoke, that is, it is a deliberate act of the disciple. We might ask what is meant by this yoke. In the days in which Jesus lived, animals of burden were yoked together for the purpose of plowing (Deut. 21:10), threshing grain (Micah 4:13), and to carry burdens (1 Chron. 12:40). The yoke was a small transverse bar made of wood with two hallowed portions on the lower surface at opposite ends. These hallowed portions would rest on the necks of the two animals. This yoke is a figure of subjection and servitude and Jesus the Lord said it was His. By taking His yoke-the Lord's yoke-we willingly submit to His authority. The promise concerning that yoke is that it is easy and that the Lord's burden is light. In our submission to Him we are commanded to learn of Him. How often do we look to the gospel - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John just to read and learn about the Master? To read of His life and how He lived upon the earth with mankind. He met people and taught them on a daily basis. We learn of the character and integrity of this man so that we might learn to be like Him as we walk down life's pathway. Truly, if we are disciples we will learn all that we can to walk as the Master walked.

As mentioned, it is our responsibility as disciples to learn and to teach. As Peter was commanded to preach the gospel so we today must be a people who continue in the great commission as well as continue in our study of God's word to learn His will so that we might be obedient to God.

Many of us upon our obedience to the gospel were on

fire for the Lord and we couldn't quench that fire no matter how much we read and studied the Word. Let me ask the question now after a few to many years since our conversion, are we fired up to read and study as we once did? And if not, can we find a reason for the low burning embers or the pile of cold ashes? Perhaps we became frustrated at our attempts to learn and we did not quite understand what the Word said. I find that for myself, when I became frustrated, I did not stop and think upon what I read. How many times do we lack understanding because we don't read. And more, we read without the desire to understand, being overwhelmed with an idea that God's word is too hard to be understood.

Let's backup for a moment with this question, can God's word be understood. To ask such a question is to answer it. The only logical answer is yes. Don't take my word for it, listen to what the Master said. In Mark 12:26 we read, "And as touching the dead, that they rise: **have ye not read in the book of Moses**, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?" Jesus was condemning them for not reading which left them ignorant to the word of God. Jesus expected His disciples to be a reading people. Again the Master says in Matt 19:4-6, "And he answered and said unto them, **Have ye not read**, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." If we fail to be diligent in reading the Word can we truly be disciples of the Lord? Let's look at one more for good measure. In Luke 10:25-28 we read, "And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, **What is written in the law? How readest thou?** And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." Notice that Jesus expected from this Jew, one of the lawyers of the law, that he was to read with an understanding. The lawyer was right when he answered but Jesus pointed out to him just knowing didn't get the job done. He had to act with what he knew. He had to do! What we learn is that we are to read. We are to read that we might understand. We are to read that we might

understand so that we will be able to do that which is commanded of our Lord. I hear people say that they just can not understand the scriptures. From the above scriptures we find that our Lord says that this is just not true. It's that we don't put forth the effort to read with the desire to understand. And many times it's because we don't put forth the effort to read. Reading is vital to a life in Christ for those of us who have been blessed with an education. Are you taking your education for granted?

It is important for the disciple, if talented, whether privately or publicly, to teach others concerning the will of God. The great commission, even though spoken to the apostles, was given so that everyone in every age may have the hope of eternal life. And that eternal life is apprehended by seeking and serving the Lord. However, we realize that without the gospel, the word of God, being taught to the unbeliever and to the converted there would be no hope for that individual. In Romans 10:13-15 the apostle Paul speaks of this idea. Paul says that both Jew and Gentile have the opportunity of gaining the riches of eternal life from the Lord. How? By the Preacher! The preacher preaches the "gospel of peace." The preacher preaches that which is to be believed. The preacher preaches about Him who is to be called upon by the sinner. The preacher preaches about the Lord Jesus the Christ, the son of God. The preacher preaches something to be obeyed - the Gospel (Romans 10:16). The preacher preaches the faith - the word of God (Romans 10:17).

Not every one has the talent to be a preacher, a public orator of the gospel. And not every person is qualified to be a public teacher. God does not allow women to publicly preach nor to serve as public teachers (I Corinthians 14:34). But He does allow women to teach in a private manner (Acts 18:1). It is even commanded of women (older women) to teach privately (Titus 2:3-4).

I've heard brethren say that they just can't teach, but when speaking with them in private they taught many times better than I've heard publicly. True, some have stage fright and can't teach publicly. Others have physical illnesses (high blood pressure, heart problems, etc.) which become worse from being in front of an audience. And again it is true, some do not live lives worthy of standing before others in public to teach the things of God. But woe unto the one who is able and talented and they do not! We as disciples have a certain ability to learn and to teach whether publicly or privately. May we use our talents to the glory of God as disciples of the Lord.

PART II - WANTED - "GOSPEL PREACHERS"

continued from page 1

to convince him of the joys of eternal life, promised to those that love God, and to warn them about the terrible eternal punishment of hell "prepared for the devil and his angels." "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men;..." II Cor. 5:11. Our preaching is to the saved, encouraging them to "...walk even as he walked." "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;" Col. 1:10. "That ye might walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." I Thess. 2:12.

"Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Jude 21. Our preaching is to the backslider, the fallen, who often is so ashamed of his sins that he is reluctant to come back again. He needs to know that he is in the bondage of sin again, for he has been "overcome." "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning." His standing with the Lord is deplorable, yet the Lord loves him, and is "...longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." II Pet. 2:19-20, 3:9.

Paul's Charge

"Preach the word," first and foremost, and, be "instant," that is to be ready, perserving. "In season," every opportunity. "Out of season," whether or not it is the opportune time for mankind. "Reprove," to find fault with, correct, "Rebuke," to tax with fault, censor severely. "Exhort," to admonish. All of these the man of God must give attention too. It is not the most pleasant thing to do, but must be done to keep us right with God. The important attribute that we must have is longsuffering. While carrying out Paul's charge it must be with longsuffering, patient

forbearance, slowness in avenging wrongs. Also, with doctrine, the whole round of teaching, the doctrine of Christ, the word of God. Be ready to accept the fact that some will "...not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." II Tim. 4:2-4. Such is Paul's charge, so with our "loins girt about with truth," we strive to discharge our responsibility as gospel preachers. "Speaking the truth in love," and with love in our hearts for the souls of all men.

EDITORIAL

continued from page 2

Christian in an attempt to get him to repent of a sin. It is quite another to go over the country or congregation assassinating his character with evil statements. You are not likely to bring him to repentance that way! Brethren everywhere must understand that sort of action is sinful.

Again, in 2 Timothy 2:24,25, Paul wrote: "And the servant of the Lord must not strive (be quarrelsome DLK); but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth,"

This command is given to Timothy, a preacher of the Gospel. Does it not also apply to us? Isn't it *still* wrong for a preacher who is a "servant of the Lord" to be quarrelsome? Certainly it is. ***We must understand that there is a vast difference in reproofing, rebuking, and***

exhorting (2 Timothy 4:2) and just plain being disagreeable. We need preachers, teachers and church leaders who will hold the line of truth with no compromise whatsoever. However, may God forbid that they be quarrelsome, looking to fight and cause trouble. God forbid too, that any of us are guilty of just flat speaking evil of one another. We know this occurs, but it needs to stop. Those who do such things are hurting the Church for which Christ died.

It is easy to go from place to place telling what we heard at the last place. Remember, brother, if what you are telling is "evil speaking" you had better not tell it. Better to tell the guilty persons about it, ask for their repentance, confession, prayer for forgiveness, and then bury it.

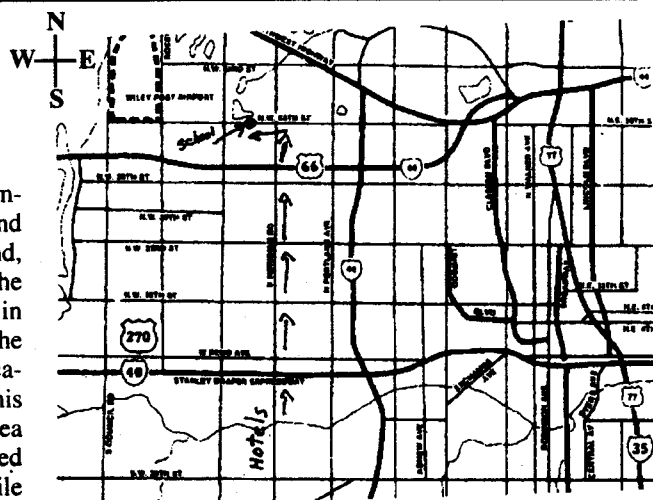
If we could all hew to the line in these matters as we do in others, the Cause of Christ would undoubtedly prosper and spread.

Think on these things. DLK

ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Year's Meeting 1999

The New Year's Meeting will be held this year December 26-31 at Putnam City High School auditorium, and will be sponsored by the Oakwood church of Edmond, OK. A change in location was necessary because of the increasing numbers attending. Last year, the number in attendance on the last night exceeded the capacity of the auditorium restricted by the State Fire Marshal. The capacity at Putnam City (1700) will allow for growth this year and in the future. For those familiar with the area around Reno (or I-40) and Meridian, the school is located approx. four miles north on Meridian, and one half mile west on NE 50th Street. The theme for the meeting has been chosen and submitted to Brother Lynwood Smith so he can prepare the song books. The theme for the meeting is "JESUS CHRIST, the same Yesterday, Today and Forever." For those needing immediate information on hotels, you may contact brother Rick Sprague of the Oakwood congregation. (405) 330-2829. New motels have also been added to the list which are located on NW expressway, which is two to three miles north of the high school, and also on Memorial Road which is six to seven miles from the school. Look for updates in future issues. Come and join us this year!—The Oakwood Congregation.



time, we will raise the price to \$10.00 per year. We welcome subscriptions and renewals at the current rate until that time. The paper is still a genuine bargain at \$10.00 a year. Several papers that we receive are in excess of \$20.00 per year. Remember, please, ~~that~~ no one associated with the paper receives any pay whatsoever for their labor. If this were not the case, the *OPA* would cost much more and it would be impossible to send it out for \$10.00 a year.

For the time being, we make this offer: Anyone who sends us 10 subscriptions in one mailing will receive theirs free for one year. We need more brethren to work for the paper. Remember that the paper goes all over the world. (Now on the internet also). Many of the foreign works in progress today have started through the *OPA*. Few papers are older. *Old Paths Advocate* has been in publication since January 1932. H.C. Harper began the paper under the name "The Truth" in 1928 with the same format still in use today. Can you help the paper? If so, you can help in a great work.—The Publishers

Please Make Note In Your Church Directories
New York...

Courtlandt Manor, NY (no longer meets) - Miles King

Our Helpers Notice!

We appreciate the effort upon the part of many of our friends and loyal workers for the *OPA* to try *every* month to increase the circulation and usefulness of the paper, and we thank you more than words can express. But, we have some who work by spurts, they "blow hot and cold," work "spasmodically." They will send a very encouraging list one month, and then their name is conspicuous by its *absence* on our list. We appreciate every effort, even if it is but once a year, yet it is the faithful plodding that really counts in the long run. You will see the names of certain workers in *every* issue with an encouraging list. We know they work in *every* meeting, *all the time*, to help the paper. Of course, we all know, that you will hold meetings now and then, where you will fail to get subs, no matter how hard you work, but when preachers hold meeting, after meeting, from place to place and never send in a sub, well, we can't help but wonder if they haven't forgotten to *mention* the paper. We should have an average, of at least 100 subs, *every* month, if we are to keep growing. Brethren, let us have your name *every* month with one or more subs to the only paper of its kind.—Publishers, *OPA* Nov. 1942

OUR DEPARTED

HOWARD—Kimberly Howard was born November 18, 1963 and entered into rest July 22, 1999 at Davis, California. Survivors include her mother, Joyce Flores of the Ventura, California congregation, two brothers Rick and Bobby from the LA area, and grandparents Earl and Flora Helvey from the 64th St. congregation in Sacramento. In 1990 Kim had surgery for a brain tumor and was successful in recovering to continue her education in animal science, eventually getting her doctorate degree. Unfortunately, her tumor returned and she was taken at the young age of 35. Kim and her mother were especially

good friends and traveled and visited a lot together. Kim worked at the University of California in Davis at a laboratory and was active in a local dog club showing and winning prizes regularly with one of her dogs. A large number of friends attended the memorial service held in her honor.—Greg Gay

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

WELLS-HUTCHINSON—Sunday afternoon, May 23, 1999 Michael Wells and Karen Hutchinson were married at the 64th. St. building in Sacramento, California before a large crowd of relatives and friends. Mike and Karen are among our newer members but they are a good example to the rest of the congregation to always be at worship. For example, they stayed for the Sunday evening service the day of their ceremony before starting their honeymoon. I appreciate them for that. They worked through pre-marital studies with me and I was honored to be asked to perform the ceremony to unite them in marriage.—Greg Gay

BAREFOOT-ARNEY—On the morning of July 31, in the presence of many well-wishers and friends, it was my good pleasure to say the words joining Alex Barefoot and Janis Arney in marriage. Allen and Lexie Barefoot of Rockwall, TX and David and Jacque Arney of Oklahoma City are the parents of those young people. The ceremony took place in Boulevard Wedding Chapel, Edmond, OK. The couple will live in Texas, and we wish them a happy married life of service to Christ.—Johnny Elmore.

TRENT-DePONTE—Friday evening, June 11, 1999 Matthew Trent and Megan DePonte were married in a beautiful outdoor setting in Turlock, California before a crowd of several hundred relatives and friends. Matthew is the son of Geary and Janet Trent of Sanger. Megan is the daughter of George and Cheryl DePonte of Oakdale. The singing was performed by the bride's sister Stacie, the groom's brother Andy, and Matthew. Matthew is one of our fine young gospel preachers, currently working with the church at Oakdale, CA. I have known Matt and Megan's parents and grandparents for many years and count them as dear friends in Christ. I was honored to hold pre-marital studies with Matt and Megan and to perform their ceremony.—Greg Gay

BRADFORD-DAVIS—On June 12, 1999, at a large gathering of relatives and friends, and loved ones, John Bradford and Sarah Davis were united in the creation of a new home. From the size of the gathering for this, afternoon wedding in Climax Springs, Missouri, John and Sarah have obviously made many friends along their way. The music was beautifully done by Larry and Barbara Bradford and friends of the couple. The couple will make their home in Harrisonville, Missouri, attending the congregation of the Lord's church there. John is the son of James and Rosalee Bradford. Sarah is the daughter of Donnie and Judi Davis. They are a great couple and worthy of our admiration. They will be an asset to the Lord's church for many years to come. It was my honored privilege to officiate for them.—Kenneth R. Middick

MIDDICK-DICKINSON—On May 13, 1999, Stephen R. Middick and Amanda R. Dickinson were united in marriage at Silver Dollar City's Wilderness Church in Branson, MO. A few family members and friends gathered in the small log church house, built in the 1800's, to witness the exchanging of vows. Both the bride and groom are children of gospel preachers. Stephen is the son of Ken and Denise Middick of Seneca, MO and Mandy is the

daughter of Billy and Judy Dickinson of Springfield, MO. Ken officiated at the ceremony. We are confident that a new Christian home has been established where Christ comes first and the church will be blessed by this union. Stephen and Mandy presently reside at Joplin and are members of the Seneca congregation. May the Lord bless them with a long and fruitful relationship.—Billy D. Dickinson



Kenneth R. Middick, P.O. Box 869, Seneca, MO 64865, (417) 776-2028—The Lord's church in the Seneca area continues to thrive. We have made some additions to our group this year and we continue to enjoy peace and unity at home. We have been blessed with good gospel preaching in the area and the edification from our gospel preachers is appreciated. Anyone that spiritually suffers in this area has very little excuse when it comes to hearing the gospel. We, at Seneca, have postponed our home studies until fall when schedules get settled once again. We enjoy several opportunities for edification that are not afforded everywhere. We ask your prayers in His service.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, August 9, 1999, e-mail: old_paths@juno.com—It has been nice to be a home for a bit. One confessed wrongs here recently. We enjoyed Travis and Shirley Cook paying us a visit for a few days. Travis and I played together as boys in the Ozarks many years ago. It was nice to spend time together again. Lord willing, we are to be in Springfield, MO beginning August 15th and continuing through the 22nd. (Mission Hills congregation). We look forward to a good meeting and we heard a good sermon in Manteca last Saturday night. Lord willing, we will get to attend more this week. The special July issue is completely sold out. We originally printed 3,000 extra copies to have at the 4th of July meetings. All 3,000 sold at Lebanon. We had 2,000 more printed and they sold within five days. Another printing is underway, watch for details. Thank you very much for your patience.

Johnny Elmore, 419 KSW, Ardmore, OK 73401, bookman@brightok.net, Aug. 8—We just closed a ten-day meeting at Ada, OK. The crowds were consistently good, with visitors from ten area congregations, but we had no additions. It was very enjoyable to be back in the city we once called home, and to visit with Joe Hisle, Carl Johnson and all the local members. We look forward to having Jimmie Smith in Ardmore Sept. 24-26. After the morning service on the 26th, the basket lunch served by the members, singing will be 2:30 P.M., followed by the evening service at 3:45 P.M. I expect to be at Harrison, AR next for a meeting Oct. 3-10.

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820, carlmj@compworldnet.com, August 6—Since my last report, I have conducted meetings in St. Louis, MO, Spring Valley, WV, (one restoration), Ceres, CA (one baptism), and San Angelo, TX. I had not been to St. Louis for many years, but it was a pleasure to be with these brethren, to see their beautiful new building (the former Chain of Rocks meeting house was destroyed during the great St. Louis flood a few years ago), and to preach to a near-full house each service. I made my home with Steve and Shelly Meents, and enjoyed them immensely. The brethren from the other St. Louis congregation, including preaching brother James Kees, gave us good support. My next meeting was at Spring Valley, WV. I enjoyed this effort very much. One man who had been out of the church for several years was restored during the meeting. Thanks to preachers David Smith, Dennis Smith, Wyn Baker, Bill Ferguson and Charlie Ross for helping us during the week. Our meeting at Ceres, CA resulted in one baptism. We had good crowds including preachers Ron Jordan, Tommy Jackson, Brian Osburn, Richard DeGough, Alan Bonifay, Greg Gay, and Matt Trent. My wife Phyllis and my brother and his wife (Benny and Sondra) flew out and joined us for the last half of the meeting. Their presence was a big help and the brethren treated them royally. Our last meeting was in San Angelo, TX. There were no visible results, but we had excellent crowds including several folks from the community. We had excellent support from the Midland-Odessa-Andrews and Abilene areas, including fellow preachers C.A. Smith and Johnny Snow. Johnny Elmore is currently conducting a meeting for us at Ada, and is doing his usual superb job of preaching the gospel. Lord willing, I begin a meeting tomorrow night at Lee's Summit, MO. Please continue to pray in our behalf, and God bless you all.

Douglas T. Hawkins, Rt. 1 Box 717, Mt. Vernon, KY 40456, (606) 256-8148, (hawkins@kih.net) August 2, 1998—Since my last report to the *OPA*, we have been with the churches in Scotland, AR and Pearlhaven, MS. Both meetings were very enjoyable. Bro. Miles King continues to work faithfully with the church in Scotland. At the meeting we had 18 outside visitors to attend, which attests to the churches' influence in that area, helped greatly by Miles' congeniality. I do believe that Miles must be some kin to Will Rogers, at least distantly. He too has never met a man he didn't like. I appreciated Miles and Johnette's hospitality and enjoyed their company very much, having made my home with them during the meeting. Bro. Tom Acton continues to preach in that area among the neighboring congregations as well, aiding the cause of Christ wherever he goes. In MS, our crowds were pretty good throughout the week. It was wonderful to see all of

our friends from that area again. Bro. Cullen Smith accompanied us for a few days during the first of the meeting. He manifests a deep concern for the church and a burning desire to preach the gospel. May the Lord bless him in all of his efforts. Right now, I'm with the Hillside congregation in Pocahtontas, AR. The meeting just got under way yesterday. Jason Harris and I went to visit people who have attended recent meetings in hopes of getting them to visit us again this week. Jason, a young man of 17, also has a strong desire to preach the gospel. Our next meetings will be in Mt. Home, AR (Sep. 12-19) and Hartwell, AR (Sep. 19 pm-26).

Miles King, Rt. #1 Box 115, Scotland, AR 72141 (E-Mail mtkingcei.net)—The last part of June we had a good meeting at Scotland with Bro. Doug Hawkins doing the preaching. We had visitors from the area and also brethren who attended from other congregations. During July Bro. Gene Grant and I were in the state of New York for 2 weeks. We were in Courtlandt Manor for the last service meeting in the home of the Gregg Whittakers. The Whittakers have moved to Kansas City and will be meeting with the brethren at 85th and Euclid. We commend them for their interest and efforts for the Cause of Christ for nearly 10 years in New York. Gene Grant and I held gospel meetings in the American Legion Hall at Kingston, NY for a week and also made visits and home studies while there. We are thankful for the brethren who made our trip possible with prayers, support and encouragement. We appreciate the association and zeal of Frank and Barbara Breush and also Bro. Paul Beckham. The church continues to meet in the Breush home and welcomes brethren who visit in New York. The past two weeks Bro. Richard Nichols has been in our area at Cedar Creek and Little Rock. I was glad to be associated with Richard and hear him preach in Little Rock. Our gospel meeting starts this week at Miami, OK (Aug 7-15). This fall I'm looking forward to meetings at Birmingham, AL (Oct 13-17) Flintville, TN (Nov. 5-7) and Paducah, KY (Nov. 12-14). Our meeting at Scotland, AR with Shelby Taulbee is September 24-26.

Richard DeGough, 1907 Tully Rd., Hughson, California, 95326—August 10, 1999—I am enjoying the preaching of brother Kevin Presley at Manteca. He is powerful in his delivery, and sincerely loves the souls of all. Kevin believes what he preaches, and I love him and his good wife, Bethany. My prayer is that they, and all the young preachers will have a long life to preach the gospel. We have reason to rejoice of late because of five precious souls obeying the gospel. Three in Turlock, and two in Atwater. Two made confessions for sin. This certainly encourages all of us, and God gets the glory. We are at peace and striving to take advantage of every opportunity to do good. It's a privilege to study the Bible two nights a week with brethren who show an interest in learning and increasing their ability to be useful men in the congregations. I attended the meeting in Sulphur, and was blessed to hear good preaching by so many preachers. We renewed old acquaintances with so many we love. William St. John and Bruce Roebuck did a fine job taking care of the meeting. I preach regularly at home and in Atwater. I look forward to being with the brethren in Fremont the 29th of

August. We look forward to the California Labor Day meeting in Lodi. Please come and be with us. May the Lord bless the brotherhood in every way possible.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Court, Bonner Springs KS 66012, Aug 3—In June the congregation which meets at 79th and Kansas Ave. Kansas City had a meeting with Ronny Wade doing the preaching. We had good crowds and interest with cooperation from other congregations in the area and several outside visitors. There were three baptisms, one confession of fault and one restoration. This year Wilma and I were able to attend only three services of the Lebanon meeting due to the pending arrival of our new grandson. Cheryl and Kevin presented us with a beautiful little boy June 30th. We were in a meeting at Mountain Grove, MO July 17-25. It was an enjoyable meeting during which we had fourteen other congregations represented and several of our fellow preachers honored us with their presence. The Lord willing we will have a meeting at Kansas City, Sept. 21-26 with several young men from various places doing the speaking. We are expecting large crowds. Come and enjoy the meeting with us. The Lord bless all the faithful everywhere.

Jimmy Vannoy, 105 Sunset Circle, Corsicana, TX 75110, July 31, 1999—During the month of July I worked in the cities of Lubertsy and Moscow, Russia I was sent to do this work by the congregation in Corsicana, TX. Congregations who supported this work financially were Medina, TX, Bridgeport, TX, Healdton, OK, Muskogee, OK and Knoxville, GA. Harrisonville, MO provided expense money for Kostya for a year. I believe the best measure of the success of a work is the opportunities to teach the word to those who are interested. We had so many opportunities that it was almost overwhelming at times. Everywhere we went, opportunities to teach presented themselves. The opportunities even came as we were walking. One woman expressed her desire to be baptized while we were waiting at the bus stop. God blessed us with eight baptisms. Five of them were from the English lessons we taught, using the Bible as text. Three of these were a husband, wife and son. Another was a student last year. I have now gone to Russia seven years in a row, and every year I have used the free English lessons as a method of reaching the lost. Every year, this method has brought about multiple baptisms. The people want to learn English, and when they attend, they are introduced to the Bible. Those with honest hearts accept it and obey. I believe it is the best method to reach the lost in Russia. If you would like information, please call or write. I was assisted by two Russian preachers, Kostya Alekseev and Sergei Govozdevu. Their hard work made everything possible. Also, we have now baptized 22 people in our work at the county jail. One ex-prisoner is now leading songs, giving five minute talks and leading prayers. Contact me if you would like to start working in the jail.

Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808 e-mail rf Wade@juno.com, Aug. 13—The meeting at Claxton, near Competition, MO closed with four baptisms. We had good crowds and interest. Next we were at Norman,

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OK. Our crowds were generally very good, but hindered some by sickness and other meetings in the area. One confessed faults. It was good to be associated with Jerry Harris and Doug Edwards, both of whom are members at

Norman. The Lord willing we go next to Dothan, AL Aug. 22-29, then to London, KY Sept. 12-19 and Jacksonville, FL Sept. 22-26. May the Lord bless all those who faithfully labor for Him.

OPEN THINE HAND WIDE

By Ed Bullard

In Deut. 15:7,8 God teaches that the hand is to be open wide. He also teaches in Lev. 19:9,10 that the corners of their fields were to be left even the fruit trees were not to be picked clean. Verses 33,34 tells us that the food left in the fields and vineyards was for the strangers, the sojourners and the poor. Paul teaches in 1 Cor. 10 that these things were ensamples, that they are written for our admonition. Today, instead of leaving the corners of our fields and the fruit trees with food on them, we see signs like "Keep Out," "No Trespassing." In our cities we see signs like "No Visitors," "Keep Off The Grass." God has not changed. John 3:16 tells us God's hand is still open wide. Rom. 5:6-11 teaches that Jesus had his hands open wide. He died for us while we were yet sinners, even before we were born. The apostle Paul had his hand open wide. In Cor. 9:19-23, He was made all things that he might save some. For more evidence we read in 2 Cor. 11:16-28, Paul did much suffering. Yet above the suffering he had a love for all the Churches, verse 28. So many today don't even care for their home congregation, let alone all the Churches. I've seen many people just go visiting, leaving their home congregation to struggle. I've seen people move away and really let their home congregation struggle, even have to close its doors. Matt. 6:33 teaches that we are to seek first the Kingdom of God. We cannot serve God and Mammon, Matt. 6:24. I believe it's time that we, as Christians need to put the Church first. I believe we can do this by opening our hands wide. Paul teaches that we are to abound in this grace anyway, 2 Cor. 8:12. I realize there are many things we can do to open our hands wide but if we would open our hand wide toward our small struggling congregations it just might be these congregations could overcome and become strong. I know some people who have assisted in meetings at various places. Those efforts have always been appreciated. If our preachers would go to some of these congregations, hold them a free meeting, do a little personal work, etc., then with the members and visiting members helping in the singing, etc., again they might overcome and become strong. Paul tells us to provide for his own, 1 Tim. 5:, I'm going to mention 9 congregations in 9 states where I have preached. Had they had some help from their own, the doors of these congregations just might still be open. Jetmore, KS, Dover, AR, Phoenix, AZ, Delta, CO, Stroud,

OK, Montebello, CA, Albuquerque, NM, Purcellville, VA, Newton, IA. I realize there are many more congregations that have closed their doors. I believe it's time we all, our preachers included, open our hands wide. We have had so many to move away until we are very small and we are struggling. We appreciate all of those planning to help us.

Reprint Underway

The special July issue of *Old Paths Advocate*, which we have been sold out of is currently being reprinted in booklet form. The booklet will be available in about a month with the price to be announced in the October issue.

ROTHSCHILD'S MAXIMS

Attend carefully to all details of your business.
Be prompt in all things.
Consider well, and then decide positively.
Dare to do right, fear to do wrong.
Endure trials patiently.
Fight life's battles bravely, manfully.
Go not into the society of the vicious.
Hold integrity sacred.
Injure no man's reputation or business.
Join hands only with the virtuous.
Keep your mind from evil thoughts.
Lie not for any consideration.
Make only worthwhile acquaintances.
Never try to appear what you are not.
Observe good manners.
Pay your debts promptly.
Question not the veracity of a friend.
Respect the control of your parents.
Sacrifice money rather than principle.
Touch not intoxicating drinks.
Use your leisure time for improvement.
Venture not upon the threshold of wrong.
Watch carefully over your passions.
Extend to every one a kindly salutation.
Yield not to discouragement.

(Selected by Mrs. A. J. Bunderson)
OPA 1948

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. LXXIII

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NO. 10

THE FELLOWSHIP

By TERRY BAZE

In the introduction of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, he writes, "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9). By virtue of the fact that our sins have separated us from God, He has invited us to be reconciled to Him and have fellowship with Him through the gospel of His Son Jesus Christ. The fellowship that Christians enjoy in Christ encompasses the entirety of our Christian experience. We have communion or participation with one another in Christ, in the graces of His Spirit and in the glories of the heavenly kingdom. We are also called to share in His trials and sufferings, and are subjected to temptations and vicissitudes similar to His (1 Pet. 4:13; Col. 1:24; Phil. 3:10). The life we share with Christ while we are relegated to life on earth is an earnest, or down payment of the full inheritance and glory which awaits us (Eph. 1:14; Rom. 8:17; 1 Pet. 1:4). We shall participate in His final triumph at the resurrection and in the glory which is prepared for us.

It is both sad and curious that we often seem to know more about withdrawing fellowship than we do extending and experiencing fellowship. It seems to me after having preached for twenty-one years in this great brotherhood, both confusion and inconsistency abound as to how we should incorporate the principles of biblical fellowship into our daily experience. Biblical fellowship is not simply a matter of Christians sharing refreshments, visiting, or playing together. While such activities may certainly be included in the periphery of the broad spectrum of fellowship as defined and exemplified in scripture, our fellowship is quite shallow if confined to such things.

Fellowship demands community. The fellowship we have with Christ in His body necessitates a sharing, joint participation, or association with others in the community. 1 John 1:3 says, "That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." The fellowship we enjoy is, if you will, both vertical (between God and us) and horizontal (between brethren). This fellowship is established and maintained by our walking in the light of God's word. John says, "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 Jn. 1:7). The apostle also writes, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth

(1 Jn. 1:6). The key to whether or not one continues to walk in the light, thus maintaining fellowship with both God and the church is found in the context of 1 John. Verses eight through ten of chapter one reveal that John is not speaking of sinlessness. All of us sin. The issue is whether or not we make sin our habit and fail to repent and confess our sins. Those living in sin are not walking in the light. Those who sin and confess their sin are walking in the light, so long as they do not make sin their lifestyle or habit.

There are levels of fellowship found in scripture. Galatians 2:9 states, "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised." At the time this event took place, all parties understood they shared in the blessings of being Christians and were in fellowship with one another. Extending the right hand of fellowship in this passage was a token of fellowship or favor. The "pillars" in the church at Jerusalem, thus publicly acknowledged Paul and Barnabas as fellow-laborers, and expressed the utmost confidence in them. They were thus recognized and authorized by the apostles in the work of spreading the gospel to the world. This was probably done in a public manner in the presence of the church, possibly at the Jerusalem council referred to in Acts 15.

An example of extending the right hand of fellowship might be when a man is ordained an elder in a congregation where other men already hold the office. The elders would likely publicly welcome their new peer and recognize him as one of their office. A level of fellowship would exist among them that is not extended to all who are in the general fellowship of the church. The diversity of gifts and offices existing within the body makes it incongruous that all share the same function or role in the body. Those who are song leaders have something in common or fellowship that the others in the congregation do not share. This does not in any way, however, take away from the fact that both song leaders and those who are not are in complete fellowship with one another in Christ.

Brethren have often used men in the services of the church to lead a song or prayer to show they are in fellowship. On the other hand, they have not allowed them to take part in the services in order to exercise punitive

continued on page seven

CONTENTS

Vol. LXXIII No. 10



A D V O C A T E

ANNOUNCEMENTS 9

The Fellowship 1

Here And There In 1948 2

The Querist Column 3

The Internet 3

The Nature Of Man - Part 1 5

The Eldership 6

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Editorial

HERE AND THERE IN 1948

By HOMER L. KING

Bishops And Deacons—I presume that about all of our readers agree with the series of articles, which have appeared in the OPA, by Brother Gillis Prince, also what Brother Gay has written. I want to go on record as being in favor of the appointment (ordination) of both elders (bishops) and deacons in every congregation; **provided** said congregations have brethren in their membership who possess **every qualification** mentioned in the New Testament (See 1 Tim. 3 and Tit. 1:1-11). I understand that the word "must" in verse 2 of 1 Tim. 3, introducing, and antecedent to, the qualifications, applies with equal force to every qualification. Therefore, only such men as possess every qualification should be chosen and appointed. Such men will please the Lord and will be a blessing to any church.

Warning!—Let us not become over-anxious, impulsive, and excited into thinking that a congregation cannot exist without the above officials, or that we cannot carry on the work and worship of the church without bishops and deacons, and therefore, hastily and blindly, rush into the appointment of men who do not have all the qualifications. To do so, according to my understanding of the Scriptures and my own observation, is to make bad matters worse. The appointment of unscriptural bishops and deacons will not make for a Scriptural congregation. Remember, brethren, the Apostolic order was not, first—bishops and deacons, and second, the congregation; but **first the congregation**, and **second**, the officials. The officials were appointed in the **existing** congregation and from its membership. I repeat, **do not appoint brethren**, no matter how well beloved or how much they desire the office, until they possess **every qualification** as mentioned in the Holy Scriptures!

Development!—I have been wondering why we do not see more and hear more about developing men into the qualifications of bishops and deacons. Before we can appoint or ordain these officials, in just about every congregation that I know, we shall have to grow or develop men with the Bible qualifications. Now, do not misunderstand me, we have many good Christian men in the congregations, but that also does not mean they are qualified for officials in the church, no more than it means they are qualified to preach. Ordination or appointment will make neither. They **must be qualified**. As I see it our concern at the present is **not how to ordain** bishops and deacons, but now to encourage brethren in every congregation to be the extent that they will develop into the qualifications of such officials. As a red-headed preacher once said: "The way to have a rabbit pie is to first catch the rabbit," and our trouble right now is where to find the rabbit. It looks as if we shall have to grow some. Brother Gillis Prince has touched a chord in his last article that deserves a more careful study and exposition that has before been reached.

continued on page nine

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Is it scriptural for money out of the Lord's treasury to be used to build picnic shelters or to provide meals for brethren and visitors in attendance at a large meeting? Can this be considered "spreading the gospel" or "assisting needy saints?" (TN)

Answer: The work of the church is threefold i.e. (1) evangelism, (2) edification, and (3) benevolence. In evangelism the church is responsible for the preaching of the gospel to the lost (Mk. 16:16; Romans 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:21). In edification, the church is responsible for developing its own spiritual strength. To this end God set offices in the church for the equipping or perfecting of the saints (Eph. 4:11-16). In benevolence, the church is to relieve the needs of the saints for whom it is responsible. We are not responsible for the needy of the world. Were that the case, we would have an impossible task, one that would render the church unable to carry on any other work. The scriptures guide us not only in who we should help, but how we should help them as well (Acts 2:44-45; 1 Tim. 5:16; 1 Tim. 5:8; Acts 6:1-6; and Romans 15:26). I do not know of any work God has given the church other than the three things mentioned above. The church is not in the business of making money, social reform, secular education, or recreation. Building picnic shelters is not a work of the church any more than building gymnasiums. One is just as scriptural as the other. To so use the Lord's money is to mis-use it. ***Feeding brethren at a big meeting or church dinner is equally unscriptural.*** That is just simply not a work of the church. People attending such a meeting cannot be classified as needy saints, and it would take quite a stretch of the imagination to believe that building picnic shelters is in any way "spreading the gospel". There are a number of big meetings among us that are held every year. Some of them date back over fifty years. I have never known of a single instance where brethren used money out of the treasury to pay for the food served at those meetings. Brethren, as individuals, provided the food for their fellow Christians, and that is exactly as it should be. I know of a few places where shelters have been built under which the people gather from time to time to eat and enjoy the association of one another. Not a single one of them (to my knowledge) was built with funds from the treasury. All were built with donated labor and material, and that is exactly as it should be.

Question: What are the appropriate ingredients for the communion loaf? Are there ingredients other than baking powder and yeast that have a leavening effect? What about salt or soda? (TX)

Answer: Since Jesus instituted the Lord's supper during the feast of unleavened bread (see Exodus 12:8 for a description of this meal), we conclude that the bread used must have been unleavened. The scriptures do not give us an exact recipe for making the loaf to be used in the Lord's supper however, since it must be unleavened, we must conclude that all leavening agents such as yeast, baking powder, baking soda, and any other agent producing leavening, cannot be used. The basic meaning of the word leaven, is "ferment." Hence, leavened bread is bread that has a fermenting agent in it. In Old Testament times this was accomplished by exposing a lump of dough until it fermented by yeast. Part of this lump was then taken and placed in other dough until it fermented also. Using leavened bread in the altar services was forbidden under the law. "No meal offering, which ye shall offer unto Jehovah, shall be made with leaven...(Lev. 2:11). Thus far we have discovered what unleavened bread must **not** contain. Now let us consider what it may contain. First of all the basic ingredient is flour. In Bible times flour made from wheat, barley, speltz and rye were all available. Since the Bible does not specify what kind of flour was used, neither should we. It is equally out of place to argue over whether the bread should be made from whole grain or refined flour. So long as the process and ingredients result in "unleavened bread," it is acceptable. Another ingredient necessary for the making of bread is a liquid. Water, oil, etc. are both acceptable. Neither produces fermentation or leavening. The same is true of salt. A dash of salt will not make the bread leavened. Salt was used in grain offerings that were clearly shown to be unleavened (Lev. 2:13). To insist that salt be used, however, is unwarranted. One important point to be made is that the Lord used "bread." He did not use "dough." I am very concerned about the number of places where the bread is not sufficiently baked. Instead of "breaking bread" you almost "pull" bread. This is not right. The bread should be baked to the point that you can break it without shattering it. As brother Homer Gay used to say "Jesus said bread, he did not say toast, nor did he say dough, he said bread." Some need to learn that lesson today.

THE INTERNET

By GREG GAY

In the ancient past information traveled only as fast as people were able to travel from place to place. For example, 2 Sam. 18:18-33 is the story of how men ran from the place of battle to the place where David the King was waiting to give him the news his son Absalom had died.

And David sat between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes and looked and behold a man running alone (2 Sam. 18:24).

This was a common way of sharing news. A person could run to report a verbal message, as in the case of the scripture just cited, or one can carry a written message as he traveled from place to place, as in the case of Bathsheba's husband Uriah, the Hittite, who carried a letter from King David to Joab, the commander of battle. If you recall, the letter he carried was Uriah's own death sentence (2 Sam. 11:14-15). So, what does all this have to do with the Internet? The Internet takes common means of communi-

cation and entertainment and makes them accessible in a new way. For example, writing letters is not new. Letters have been written for thousands of years as we know. But now, it is possible to write, send and receive letters to and from computers using the internet. Not only possible, but also very easy. You see, in many ways the Internet is not anything new. What is new is the ability to combine so many known means of communication and entertainment into one medium. I don't think it would be wise to say the Internet is another hula hoop. I believe it is here to stay and will only become more and more common in years to come.

Communication Using The Internet

Several types of communication are available via the Internet. We will look at some that are very common.

The Internet allows one-to-one individual communication. Each person typing in the other's address can send mail via the computer at the touch of a few keys. Mail is then sent, much like sending a letter through the mail, only it is sent instantly and without the cost of postage. The only cost incurred is the cost of the phone service from your computer to the server computer that connects you to the web. When I sign on to AOL if anyone has sent me any messages there is a spoken message that says, "You've got mail."

Who can you send mail to? Anyone with an Internet address anywhere in the world. I've sent messages to people in Africa, Russia and across the United States.

The Internet also allows instant communication through chat rooms where multiple individuals are on the Internet at the same time sharing a common site sending and receiving messages that appear on the screen instantly for all who share that site to see. Except for very special cases, I believe these to be dangerous and an absolute waste of time. I'll have more to say on this in a few minutes.

The Internet also allows the sharing of information through web pages, or home pages. This is where anyone with the funds to do so: person, company, organization, or government entity, can own their own site on a server computer and post information of their choice. Access to sites may be password protected for limited access, or not protected so anyone can access the posted information at any time.

Why Be Concerned?

Why Should Christians Examine The Internet?

Every time a means of communication or entertainment may possibly become part of our lives, I believe we must look at it closely to see if it is to be embraced, avoided, or somewhere in between as the Lord's people. After all, we don't want to be surprised by something that is wrong.

Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices (2 Cor. 2:11).

Since there is really nothing new in what I have talked about, many would think, what is the big deal, the Internet just allows you to do a lot of things that have been done before. But, with that, I believe there are some dangers we need to consider.

Dangers Of The Internet: It Is Highly Addictive

The Illinois Institute for Addiction Recovery reports "Internet addiction is described as an impulse control disorder which does not involve use of an intoxicating drug

and is very similar to pathological gambling."

The Illinois Institute further says:

Signs of Internet addiction include the following:

1. Preoccupation with the Internet. (Thoughts about previous on-line activity or anticipation of the next on-line session.)
2. Use of the Internet in increasing amounts of time in order to achieve satisfaction.
3. Repeated, unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop Internet use.
4. Feelings of restlessness, moodiness, depression, or irritability when attempting to cut down use of the Internet.
5. On-line longer than originally intended.
6. Jeopardized or risked loss of significant relationships, job, education or career opportunities because of Internet use.
7. Lies to family members, therapist, or others to conceal the extent of involvement with the Internet.
8. Use of the Internet as a way to escape from problems or to relieve a dysphoric mood, (e.g., feelings of hopelessness, built, anxiety, depression.)

What Makes The Internet So Addictive?

The Center for On-Line Addiction says:

The Internet itself is a term which represents different types of functions that are accessible on-line. Generally speaking, Internet Addicts tend to form an emotional attachment to the on-line friends and activities they create inside their computer screens. They enjoy those aspects of the Internet which allowed them to meet, socialize, and exchange ideas with new people through highly interactive Internet applications (such as chatting, playing on-line games, or being involved with several news groups). These virtual communities create a vehicle to escape from reality and seek out a means to fulfill an unmet emotional and psychological need.

On the Internet, you can conceal your real name, age, occupation, appearance, and your physical responses to anyone or anything you encounter on-line. Internet users, especially those who are lonely and insecure in real-life situations, take that freedom that quickly pour out their strongest feelings, darkest secrets and deepest desires. This leads to the illusion of intimacy, but when reality underscores the severe limitations of relying on a faceless community for the love and caring that can only come from actual people, Internet addicts experience very real disappointment and pain."

(This article is a part of Greg Gay's presentation at The Western Study held at the Fair Oaks, CA congregation in August of 1999. There are many good qualities about the internet, but it also has some evil qualities. The Internet is the medium Satan may use and is using to create problems in the brotherhood doctrinally and morally. In the next issue Bro. Gay will write about internet issues such as, "If I spend all my time chatting on the internet does God care?" There he discusses how chatting on the internet may lead and, in fact, has led to touching. This is one of the Internet's most dangerous fruits of its abuse. It has already broken up homes among us. He will also discuss "Dating on the Internet." Parents, church leaders, as well as individuals should be extremely interested in this series of articles. BTC)

THE NATURE OF MAN - PART 1

By RYAN CONNOR

Introduction

The Psalmist David gazed into the heavens, seeing the stellar lights and the moon shining above. Overwhelmed by the magnitude of the created universe, the feeling of insignificance swells up inside of him. David can not help by wonder at God's interest and care for man, who seems so small a part of God's creation. He knows that God has made man to have dominion over His creation, and has crowned man with glory and honor. Why? What is so special about man?

In Psalm 8:4 David asks the ponderous question: "What is man?" Answering the question is vital to a purposeful existence. Perhaps, modern times have brought so many distorted views concerning the nature of man that it is more difficult than ever to answer this ancient question. Nonetheless, the word of God must be the lamp to our feet and the light of our path in the pursuit of understanding the nature of man. The Bible has much to say on this subject, much that contradicts the various views espoused by the non-believing world. Medical science, biological, and anthropological studies help humanity in many ways—it cannot be denied. However, only the Bible, the revelation of God the Creator, can be a sure guide to answering David's question.

"What is man?" The popular answer to the is question would be, "Anything he wants to be!" The evolutionist views man as nothing more than some kind of high-class animal. He strips away from man his dignity and moral integrity. Materialistic religionists view man as wholly mortal. When this earthly life fades away in death there is nothing left for the materialist (Like the dog Rover, when he dies, he is dead all over). The Calvinist views man as a cog in the great wheel of God's predetermined will, denying man free will, and making man a helpless victim to God's arbitrary decisions made before the foundation of the world. The hedonist views men and women as playgirls and playboys. The pursuit of pleasure at any, and all, costs in the principle expressed in this view that says, "let us eat, drink, and be merry today for tomorrow we die." This kind of thinking pervades our society. This is why rape, incest, sexual immorality and homosexuality are common occurrences—sometimes condoned by groups of society.

All these false and conflicting ideas concerning the nature of man must be swept aside and displaced by the Biblical view of man. Believers must have a strong conviction on this subject to overcome the error that exists in the world. Preachers and church leaders must send out the message of truth, "pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). The biblical view of man, like a breath of fresh air, is distinct and purposeful. Man did not originate from slime, but from the sublime hand of the Creator.

Man: A Dual Or Triune Being

Man is often pictured as a dual or two-fold being in the Scriptures. The juxtaposing of "body and soul" (Mt. 10:28) or "body and spirit" (2 Cor. 7:1) as we have in the scriptures emphasizes the essential nature of man in terms of

material and nonmaterial (cf. Mt. 26:41; 1 Cor. 5:5; 7:34; 1 Pet. 3:3-4). The apostle Paul speaks of the outward man, who is perishing, and the inward man, who is being renewed day by day (2 Co. 4:16). Solomon speaks of the body returning to the dust and the spirit returning to God who gave it (Eccl. 12:7). James affirms that "the body without the spirit is dead" (Jas. 2:26). The Lord Jesus speaks of those who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Jesus further warns that we ought not to fear such as these. "But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell," says Jesus (Mt. 10:28).

Sometimes, whenever a distinction is made between soul and spirit (i.e., 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 4:12), man is pictured as a triune or three-fold being. It is sometimes alleged that soul and spirit are interchangeable terms. Sometimes the word soul is used to designate the spirit, but it is not strictly synonymous with the word spirit. C.R. Stam comments,

"The spirit and the soul both being immaterial and being closely interrelated (as both are with the body) have some of the same functions ascribed to them in the Scriptures and are sometimes spoken of interchangeably (though never synonymously) but in addition to 1 Thess. 5:23 there are several other passages of scripture which indicate clearly that they are not one and the same (p. 21)."

The Hebrew writer implies that the difference between soul and spirit may be difficult to discern. However, it can be done. Indeed, there is a difference between soul and spirit. The Bible says, "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). Notice that this scripture insists that soul and spirit can be divided. That there is a difference between "soul" and "spirit" is clear from Paul's use of the Greek adjectives *psuchikos* ("soulish") and *pneumatikos* ("spiritual") in 1 Corinthians 2:14-15 and 15:44 (Hiebert, p. 269-70). In this latter passage, with respect to the believer's body, the apostle Paul writes, "It is sown a natural (Lit., SOULISH) body, it is raised a spiritual body."

The most technical depiction of man's nature is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:23. The apostle Paul prays, "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The NKJV and NIV omit the first and in this verse (for readability reasons, no doubt). The NASB, RSV, and the KJV retain at the two ands. Clearly the apostle is here praying for the sanctification of the entire individual and it should be noted that he uses two ands to emphasize the fact that the spirit and soul and body are all distinct parts of the whole man. This point is critical to understanding the triune portrayal of man in this scripture. The apostle teaches here that the whole man consists of three distinct parts: spirit and soul and body. D. Edmond Hiebert, commenting on this verse, says,

Hebrews 4:12, however, suggests that it is very difficult to distinguish between spirit and soul. Scriptural usage indicates an overlapping of functions. Nor need we try to

keep them in watertight compartments. Students of scripture are not agreed as to whether the distinction between spirit and soul in our passage is substantial or functional. Trichotomists hold to the former, dichotomists to the latter.

We agree with those who...conclude that this triple designation, most naturally understood, presents a trichotomous view of human nature, "taking in the sense that Paul here distinguishes three aspects of the Christian's personality, his life in relationship with God through the 'spiritual' part of his nature, his human personality, or 'soul,' and the human body through which he acts and expresses himself" (p. 270).

Attempts to undermine the plain teaching of 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Hebrews 4:12, making soul and spirit interchangeable (man, therefore, a two-fold being only) are futile. William Hendriksen spans five pages in a footnote to explain away the clear three-fold distinction made in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 (p. 146-150). The gist of his argument is simply a rhetorical piling up of words for emphasis is rejected by Ellicott with the remark that such a position is 'plainly to set aside all sound rules of scriptural exegesis' (as quoted by Hiebert, p. 269). Anthony Hoekema argues that Hebrews 4:12 should not be taken to mean that soul and spirit can literally be divided:

The language is figurative. The next clause indicates the intent of the author: he wishes to say that the word of God judges "the thoughts and attitudes (or intentions) of the heart."...This passage, in fact, is in many ways parallel to a text from Paul: "He (the Lord) will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's

hearts" (1 Cor. 4:5) (p. 208).

We may grant this to be true, even for the sake of argument. Nonetheless, consider an explanation from E.W. Bullinger in his noted work *Figures of Speech Used In The Bible*,

"A passage of God's Word is quoted: and it is met with the cry, 'Oh, that is figurative'—implying that is meaning is weakened, or that it has quite a different meaning, or that it has no meaning at all. But the very opposite is the case. For an unusual form (figura) is never used except to add force to the truth conveyed, emphasis to the statement of it, and depth to the meaning of it (p. vi)."

J.D. Phillips says in his booklet *The Voice Of One Crying In The Wilderness*,

"But it must be ever remembered that the figurative force of the word can never get us away from the literal definition: for, as Mr. E.E. Knoch, maker of the Concordant Version of the Bible, correctly says: "The literal meaning of a term should never be deducted from its figurative usage. The figurative force depends on the literal definition. This must be fixed first" (*Course in Sacred Greek*, p. 20) (p. 16)."

Several other scholars take the dual, two-fold, or dichotomous position concerning the nature of men (i.e., Hodge, Strong, Thiessen). It would be an easy task to produce quotation after quotation of scholars who hold that man is a bipartite (two-fold) being. Still, the simple fact of the matter is the apostle Paul says that the whole man is made up of three, not two, distinct components.

In Part II, we shall discuss the body and soul of man.

THE ELDERSHIP

By GILLIS PRINCE

As I write on this subject, I realize that it is, and has been, one of controversy. I am conscious that, perhaps some of my readers will not agree with every idea or sentiment expressed, but it shall be my earnest desire to write only those things which I believe God's word to sustain.

We have learned that the duties and qualifications of an elder is important. Nothing can grow or flourish with a man on the job who is disqualified, and in the church as well as otherwise, poor ruling produces poor government. Some believe that the eldership ceased, and that we are better off today without them. Why should any believe that we are better off without elders today? Here is the answer. In most places our elders have done such a poor job that it is enough to disgust any Bible student. They may have zeal, but like Israel of old, "they are ignorant of God's righteousness."

Paul says, "Let elders that rule well be mounted worthy of double honor" (1 Tim. 5:17). This statement from the apostle would cause us to believe that Paul knew some elders would not rule well. Hence, in this article we want to notice the duties of an elder and his functions toward the church. We have already learned that an elder is to teach, guide and rule the flock.

The church is pictured in the Bible as a "fold," or "flock" (Jno. 10:16; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2). Then, the elders are the shepherds over the church. Jesus, the greatest teacher that the world has ever known, taught a wonderful lesson

(Luke 15), concerning the lost sheep. May I say, that since the church is styled "a flock," the members would of necessity be the sheep. "Jesus spoke a parable unto them, saying, what man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lost one of them, both not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until 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 unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." Elders, do you practice this? Have you been to see why Brother Jones was not at church last Lord's day? Yes, you heard that Brother Smith's daughter went to the picture show, and to the swimming pool, but you did not teach against Christians going to such places, and "those who sinned" you did not "rebuke before all that others might fear." Why did you fail to do this? Was it because you were afraid you would offend them? Paul says, "If a man be over taken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness" (Gal. 6:1). When brethren lost their tempers over a matter, and are on the outs with each other; quit the church, and are out in the world, have you gone after them and restored them to the fold; thus bringing about a reconciliation between them? Have you been to talk to the drunk-

ard in the ditch? May God help your shepherds (elders) to study and meditate on this lesson until it is believed and put into practice.

In most congregations the whole setup is this: The elders (if any) have quit trying to rule, gone to sleep on the job, and are fellowshiping about every kind of ungodly things. Yes, they have let the bars down, and instead of the church being in the world, the world is the church. They call an evangelist for a weeks meeting, and this happens once a year. Then, they expect him to restore all the erring, and to settle all the trouble in one week, that they have stirred up in twelve months; and if he does not get the job done, he is branded, and classed as "not much of a preacher."

But, now let us turn the canvas around and look at the other side of the picture and notice the duty of the church to the elders. The church is supposed to be in subjection to the elders; but, instead many are unruly; and "when the elder gives the young people a lesson against worldliness, they are ready to say that it is none of his business where they go, or what they do. Paul says, "Remember them that have the rule over you" (Heb.13:7), but someone says, "that it talking about our civil rulers." But, read the rest of the verse: "Who have spoken unto you the word of God." Brethren, have our civil rulers spoken unto us the word of God? "Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." Then, in verse 17 of the same chapter, "Obey them that for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." It is the duty of an elder to rebuke and chasten. Then, it is the duty of the church to obey. "For whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son, whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not, but if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." Then, when the members of the church are being chastised by its leaders, they should allow themselves to be exercised thereby and be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live.

In 1 Tim. 5:17, Paul sets forth the idea that there are two kinds of elders, and says, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." The apostle is here talking about a preaching elder, and some have asked the question, "Should an elder be supported?" When one is giving his time to the study of the word, and "laboring in word and doctrine" with the congregation, then I say that such an elder ought to be supported by the congregation. "For the scripture said, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn and the labourer is worthy of his reward." But says one, "Did not Peter say that an elder should take the

oversight not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." But notice Paul says concerning the preaching of the gospel, that if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward. So, the laborer is still worthy, I have a reward. So, the laborer is still worthy of a reward.

For the sake of some who are confused over the words, "Bishop," and "Elder," I give the following from the authorities:

"Bishop" – the word originally signified an "Overseer" or spiritual superintendent. The titles bishop and elder, or presbyter, were essentially equivalent. Bishop is from the Greek, and denotes one who exercised the function of overseeing. "Elder" – The original government of the Hebrews was patriarchal, where the head of the family exercised the supreme rule over all of his descendants; his married sons doing the same with their children and other descendants, but still remaining subordinate to the supreme head. At the father's death his firstborn succeeded him in supreme headship. Naturally, only men of mature age came into these positions, hence, the designation elder. In that way Jacob was the head of all who went to Egypt with him, although his sons had families of their own. From this came (1) the great influences of the older people of the nation: (2) the division of the Israelites into tribes with a head, chief, or prince over each as whole; (3) the general use, in other nations as well as the Hebrews, of the term "elder" as an official title for those who as representatives of the people made all their decisions.

The earliest mention of elders as a political body is at the time of the Exodus. The seventy elders mentioned in Exodus and Numbers were a sort of governing body, a parliament, and the origin of the tribunal of seventy elders called the Sanhedrin or Council. There were also, after the founding of towns and cities, those who were put at the head of affairs who could not always derive their authority from their position in the tribe. There were also called "elders" and they served as Judges, to decide both civil and criminal causes.

The Sanhedrin was a supreme council, serving as a court of appeal, and having a general oversight over the inferior courts and general affairs of the nations. In the new Testament church the elders were the same as the bishops. It was an office derived from the Jewish usage of elders or rules of synagogues."

So, we see that the word "elder" is derived from "men of mature age," and their work is to fill the office of bishop. So, Paul says, "not a novice," which means a beginner; an inexperienced person. "For such will fall into the condemnation of the devil." God give us more men who have reached maturity in the knowledge of His Eternal Word.—Wedowee, Ala. (Submitted by Bennie Cryer, OPA, Sept. 1948)

THE FELLOWSHIP

continued from page 1

measures or to show they do not extend fellowship to that individual. There are many inconsistencies in this practice and it often does more harm than good for the cause of Christ. Brethren should not feel slighted, offended, or hurt, because they are not called to take a leading part in the worship services. If I don't call on someone to lead a song

because I feel he is not appropriately dressed, it does not mean that I have no fellowship with him. Our sisters are never called on to take part in a public service of the church, but it certainly doesn't mean that we have no fellowship with them. It would obviously be wrong to call on a brother whom the church had scripturally withdrawn from, but otherwise, it is simply a matter of expediency and autonomy as to whether or not the leaders of a congregation

call on someone.

Some of the scriptural expressions of fellowship in the church include: taking the Lord's Supper together (1 Cor. 10:16-17); contributing to the needs of saints (Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:13; Heb. 13:16); and supporting the preaching of the gospel (Phil 1:5). When Christians participate in these activities together, they are in fellowship with one another. When Christians refuse to participate in these activities together, they are not in fellowship with one another. There is a difference between withdrawing fellowship from or excommunicating a member of a congregation as a disciplinary measure and refusing to participate with an individual in his sin or a congregation in their sin. The Bible is clear that there are some sins that, should they go unrepented of, demand discipline. The fornicator in 1 Corinthians 5 was to be withdrawn from to the extent the congregation was to put him away from them, have no company with him, or even eat with him. There are several specific sins a Christian might commit, that, should he refuse to repent of, and be unwilling to confess, the scriptures demand a congregation to withdraw from such a brother or sister with the purpose of saving their soul. Not any and every sin that a brother might commit, however, demands such punitive measures be taken. Any sin that one will not repent of, may cause him to lose his soul, but only certain sins are specified that demand a congregation to withdraw fellowship from the guilty party.

Adultery is one of the sins identified under the heading of sexually immoral persons in 1 Corinthians 5:11. Jesus clearly spoke to this issue in Matthew 5:32, 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; and Luke 16:18. We must realize that anyone living in an adulterous marriage should be publicly withdrawn from should they refuse to repent by ending their unlawful relationship. It is neither lawful or expedient for congregations to use such people in the worship, for they should have no fellowship with them. Many congregations feel they have done their duty by simply not calling on the adulterer in worship services, but as we've already explained, the Bible *demand*s we should put them away and refuse to even eat with them.

What should our response be toward those congregations who allow adulterers to remain in good standing with the congregation and not only refuse to discipline them, but call on them to lead in worship? We do not find anywhere in scripture where one congregation withdraws fellowship from another congregation, or from one of the members of another congregation, for that matter. Withdrawal of fellowship is for the congregation to exercise discipline within their own congregation, but if they refuse to do so, we have no obligation to take part in their evil deeds. In fact, we are to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them" (Eph. 5:11).

The same principle applies to our brethren who worship in error. There are many brethren today who are falling rapidly into apostasy. The times have long since passed when our differences consisted in the way we distributed the loaf and cup in the Lord's Supper. Many churches of Christ have followed after their denominational neighbors to the extent that you can hardly tell them apart. The digression from the pattern to observe the Lord's Supper and women teachers in Bible classes has continued with nearly wholesale departures from the truth. We are seeing

women preachers, instrumental music, charismatic tongue speaking services, children's churches, doctrinal changes and more, incorporated into mainstream digressive Churches of Christ. The church of Christ of the American Restoration movement that attempted to pattern itself after the New Testament church, has, for the most part, become the Church of Christ denomination. Our response to these brethren should be that we refuse to accept the changes they've made. *We should have no fellowship with them in their sins and, furthermore, we should expose their sins.*

It baffles me that there are some today who practice the New Testament pattern of worship and yet maintain they can and should extend fellowship to those in digression by calling on them in their services. *Why should a congregation deem it expedient to set up such an one to take a leading role in the worship of the church, when no one in the congregation would go commune with the individual at his home congregation where they worship in error?* Neither would any in the congregation contribute to their treasury, or support their preachers. In reality, they do not experience any fellowship with digressive brethren, except that they pretend to extend a pseudo fellowship on occasion by calling on someone with whom they experience no practical, scriptural fellowship at all. Where is the expediency in such a practice? Especially is this damaging, when a congregation engages in this type of practice with the result being that faithful congregations who worship scripturally cannot conscientiously participate in any meaningful fellowship with them.

But what of the church in Sardis? Revelation 3:4 says, "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy." I have heard many appeal to the church in Sardis claiming that since some in Sardis had not defiled their garments we should not reject the church in Sardis from our fellowship, so to speak. The only complaint the Lord had about Sardis, was that their works were not perfect and they were just about dead. Nothing is said of them extending fellowship to those who were not in fellowship with God. Nothing is said about them digressing from the pattern of worship. To hold up the church at Sardis as an example of who we should fellowship says nothing one way or the other about how we should treat congregations who extend fellowship to adulterers or those steeped in digression.

The fellowship of the believers is precious. There are so many marvelous expressions of God's grace in the fellowship to which He has called us. Our fellowship with one another is not to be marred by lives lived in sin. Adultery is not to be accepted in the churches of Christ, but rather rebuked and disciplined. When brethren, who by either ignorance or choice, depart from the pattern of New Testament worship and follow the broad way of digression, we should realize there is nothing useful or expedient in offering expressions of fellowship which in reality do not exist. Such confusion is woefully inexpedient. May we exercise care and caution that we extend fellowship as prescribed in scripture and that we refuse it when God tells us to. May we also strive for consistency in fellowship. Consistency demands the same prescription for every individual living in adultery - the withdrawal of

fellowship should they refuse to repent. Congregational autonomy is a double-edged sword. If a congregation refuses to discipline adulterers under the guise of autonomy, we have no obligation to participate in their sin. If men choose to use them in their services, we have

no obligation to participate. If men or congregations choose to extend a spurious fellowship to digressive brethren by calling on them, we do not have to participate. Above all else, let's do our best to let the word of God determine the liberties and boundaries regarding every subject.

EDITORIAL

continued from page 2

That is, that bishops who devote all their time to the work of the church should be appointed by the church. I believe the idea is supported by the Scriptures.—HLK (Submitted by Bennie Cryer)

Subscription Price Must Increase Soon

It will soon be nine years since we were forced to raise the subscription price of *Old Paths Advocate*. Time has taken its toll. Our publishing costs have been steadily rising. The costs of paper, printing and postage have risen to the point where we must soon raise the price again. We regret that this must be done and hope no real inconvenience will be felt by anyone. Our plans are to hold the current price of \$7.00 until the January 2000 issue. At this time, we will raise the price to \$10.00 per year. We welcome subscriptions and renewals at the current rate until

that time. The paper is still a genuine bargain at \$10.00 a year. Several papers that we receive are in excess of \$20.00 per year. Remember, please, that no one associated with the paper receives any pay whatsoever for their labor. If this were not the case, the *OPA* would cost much more and it would be impossible to send it out for \$10.00 per year.

For the time being, we make this offer. Anyone who sends us 10 subscriptions in one mailing will receive theirs free for one year. We need more brethren to work for the paper. Remember that the paper goes all over the world (now on the Internet also). Many of the foreign works in progress today have started through the *OPA*. Few papers are older. *Old Paths Advocate* has been in publication since January 1932. H.C. Harper began the paper under the name "*The Truth*" in 1927 with the same format still in use today. Can you help the paper? If so, you can help in a great work.—The Publishers

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Special July Issue

The special July issue "What Is Wrong In Religion" is being reprinted in tract form. The booklet is approximately the size of the church directories. The printing is limited, however, and you should get your orders to us as soon as possible. The price will be \$35.00 per hundred plus postage. If you wish single copies they are fifty cents each up to 100 copies plus postage. We have gone to considerable trouble and expense to make this possible. We are counting on you to use these tracts for your church tract racks, personal work and mailings. The materials in it are of invaluable aid to anyone doing personal work. Please don't forget to send the amount of postage back to us. Just look on the package and read the amount. Then, send that amount back to the address you ordered from. You may order from: *Old Paths Advocate*, c/o Kendall Cook, 1978 N. Farm Rd. 89, Springfield, MO 65802. Let us hear from you soon.

"Passing It On"

In 1995, it was my joy to put together a book of sermons by M. Lynwood Smith that he called by the name above. The book contains fifteen of Lynwood's best sermons as they were preached at various places in his meetings. It also has pictures of only a few of the many people he was working with in preaching and songwriting and a short biography of his life. As one who has seen thousands and thousands of books, I can truly say that the quality of this book is as fine as I have seen anywhere, with superior paper and binding. The book is paid for and at the writing, a good supply remains. One bookseller on the net has a used copy price of \$49.95. All proceeds from this point on will go directly to Lynwood, who has other

printing endeavors in mind. In my opinion, his book should be in the home of every Christian, but it also makes a great gift for a birthday, a young preacher, a graduate, a newly-married couple, a friend or a neighbor. Put it in the church library or the city library. (Make sure it will be put on the shelf.) While supplies last, we will send it postpaid and tax paid for \$19.95. Send orders to Pathway Books & Bibles, P.O. Box 1183, Ardmore, OK 73402 or directly to M. Lynwood Smith, 2789 Loyd Star Lane NW, Wesson, MS 39191.—Johnny Elmore

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 by our readers.



Johnny Elmore, 419 KSW, Ardmore, OK 73401, bookman@brightok.net, Sept. 8, 1999—Last month, we heard Billy Dickinson at Ratliff City, and Cullen Smith at Wichita Falls, TX. I spoke at the Texas Labor Day meeting on 4th. We look for Jimmie Smith this month for a week-end Sept. 24-26. The correct date for my meeting at Harrison, AR is Oct. 6-10, 1999. Please come if you can.

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820, carlmj@compworldnet.com, Sept. 6—We had a wonderful meeting at Lee's Summit, MO in August. Our crowds were

kind of slim the first two services, but they grew steadily, and the last service of the meeting may have been our largest crowd. We had numerous visitors from the community and from surrounding congregations, including several preachers who helped us out. There were two young men who were baptized during the meeting. I made my home with Dave and Lela Doing, who have been long-time, dear friends of ours. My meetings schedule for the remainder of the year includes: Abilene, TX (Sept. 12-19), Kansas City, KS (36th & Everett—Oct. 6-10), Fremont, CA (Oct. 17-24), Covina, CA (Nov. 7-14), Tyler, TX (Nov. 17-21), and Seminole, OK (Dec. 3-5). May the Lord bless us all in His service.

Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808, e-mail: rfwade@juno.com, Sept. 7—The meeting closed at Dothan, AL with good crowds and one confession of faith. Brother Kevin Presley is doing a good work here. We had upwards of twenty-five visitors from the community during the meeting. Prospects abound. This is largely due to the very successful television program the churches sponsor in this area. We were able to attend the Labor Day meeting in Harrisonville, MO. I don't think I have ever attended a meeting so well planned and executed as was this one. Good crowds and preaching prevailed throughout. The Lord willing we go next to London, KY Sept. 12-19, Jacksonville, FL Sept. 22-26, Lodi, CA Oct. 10-17, Sacramento, CA (64th St.) Oct. 17 (pm)—24, Bakersfield, CA (Planz Rd) Oct. 25-31, Mitchell, IN Nov. 11-14, Cassville, MO Nov. 19-21. We look forward to all these meetings, and pray God will bless our efforts.

Miles King, Rt. 1 Box 115, Scotland, AR 72141, E-Mail: mtking@cel.net, Sept. 8—I was glad to be with the brethren at Miami, OK for a 9-day meeting during August. It was so good to see good attendance from the surrounding congregations. This past weekend I attended the Labor Day meeting in Harrisonville, MO. These brethren went "all out" to have a good meeting. It was very enjoyable! Notice the change in some dates for some meetings. We are looking forward to Bro. Shelby Taulbee being with us this next week for a 3-day meeting (Sept. 17-19). Then Terry Baze will be here at Scotland October 8th thru 10th. Our meeting at Flintville, TN will be Oct. 29-31 at Birmingham, AL Nov. 3rd thru 7th and Paducah, KY Nov. 12-14th. I'm also looking forward in taking part in a meeting at Shreveport, LA Oct. 22nd.

Anthony Brockett, 4504 Connaught East Dr., Plainfield, IN 46168, e-mail: ABBrockett@aol.com, Sept. 6—We've had a busy summer in the Lord's work. It was a pleasure to be in Hamilton, OH to host their Young Speaker's Meeting, May 16-18. There was a fine line up of young men, and the meeting was well attended with as many as seven states represented. The hospitality of Bill and Ruth Ferguson and the Hamilton congregation was an enjoyment and inspiration to all who were there. Next, we went down to Georgia, where I preached for the saints at Temple and Jonesboro. It was good to be with them again. During the course of the summer, I also had the privilege of preaching at the following locations: Ada, OK; Pleasant Grove, IN; and Mitchell, IN, along with our regular appointments at Harrodsburg and Bedford. Big meeting time has come and gone once again, and, as usual, it was a joy to preach at the Sulphur and Lebanon meetings—to see so many old friends and meet new ones.

As for the home front, we had a good meeting in mid-July with George Battey. It was well attended, with upwards of 60 in attendance the last weekend. This was a great encouragement to the congregation. We appreciated especially the good support from sister congregations. Our next meeting will be in Glen Ellyn, IL—Oct. 29-31. If you are in the Chicago area then, come and join us.

P. Duane Permenter, P.O. Box 80687, Midland, TX 79707, Sept. 9—Since last reporting, I have held meetings at Harrodsburg, IN, Glendale, AZ, Chapel Grove, TN, Clovis, CA, Tucson, AZ, and these meetings resulted in eight baptisms—to God be the glory! I have also preached at Stockton, and Oakdale both of which are in CA. It was my pleasure to attend the Texas Labor Day meeting and enjoy the singing and preaching of that gathering. The work in Midland continues to develop as we work for the Lord in this part of the vineyard. Nov. 19-21, the church in Midland has scheduled a meeting young men doing the preaching at each service. We look forward to this effort and are working hard for its success. Our crowds have been smaller than normal of late due to many people taking summer trips. My continued meeting schedule will be Brazil, IN Oct. 21-Nov. 7 and San Angelo, TX, Dec. 11-12. Please continue to pray for the work and may God bless the faithful.

Alton B. Bailey, 410 Ginger Circle, LaGrange, GA 30240, Phone (706) 882-1114 or (706) 882-0385. E-Mail: abailey@mindspring.com. Please note my address has not changed. There was a major error in the 1999 church directory in the preacher's list. It had under my name "moving to Farmerville, LA." This statement was under the wrong name. I am still receiving phone calls about that, please make a correction in your directory. It has been several months since I have written in the OPA. I have been reminded by several about that. I will try to do better in the future. Things continue well around LaGrange. We have six teachers/preachers in the congregation who do a wonderful job with their teaching. Some of whom are fully capable of preaching full time if they chose to do so. We had a wonderful "Homecoming Meeting" here in June. To the best of our ability we invited everyone who once lived in LaGrange to come home for this meeting. The building seats 300. Some services the building looked filled to the maximum. There were three speakers at each service except Lord's Day Morning. We used the preachers/teachers that once lived in LaGrange and were members of this congregation. The meeting met and surpassed all our expectations. I continue to hold one or more meetings each month. At this writing I am with the Lynnville, OH congregation Aug. 15-22. The meeting got off to a good start. I was privileged to hear Bro. Don McCord three times in his meeting at Napoleon, AL last week. My next meetings are as follows: Radnor, W.VA Sept. 19-26, Bandy, KY Oct. 17-24, Panama City, FL Nov. 19-21. Should you be in the area of any of these meetings please come and be with us. We look forward to our fall meeting with Bro. Ron Alexander Oct. 2-10. Please continue to pray for us and our work.

Joe Hisle, Rt. 4, Box 188, Ada, OK 74820—I have just returned home from the Labor Day meeting in Chapel Grove, TN. It was truly a great meeting. We had in excess of 600 people in attendance with at least 15 states represented. During the course of the meeting 14 different preachers spoke along with 9 young preachers that spoke on Sun-

day afternoon. A tremendous effort was made by the Chapel Grove congregation to make this the best meeting possible. No expense, or effort was spared to insure the success of the meeting. The hospitality extended to the visiting brethren was outstanding. You need to put this meeting on your calendar for next year. Since last reporting, Bro. Johnny Elmore held us a meeting here in Ada. As is to be expected, Johnny did an excellent job. It was a treat to hear him preach the gospel in the way that only Johnny can do. I have been involved in a gospel meeting in Marietta, GA where it was my great pleasure to stay in the home of Rick and Jane Martin and boys. They are living examples of the term Southern hospitality, I could not have had a better more comfortable place to stay. We are also happy to report one lady was baptized during the meeting. From GA we traveled to Wayne, WVA. We have been to Wayne for several meetings over the years and it is always a joy to renew old acquaintances. I made my home with Wyn and Michelle Baker. It gives me a special pleasure to visit in the homes of young Christians that I have watched grow up and take their place in the Lord's work. Wyn is working with the Wayne Congregation and doing them a really good job. Next our schedule takes us to Collins, MS, Sept. 19-26 and Spencer, IN, Oct. 3-10. We request your prayers.

Kevin W. Presley, 105 Montrose Ct. #45 Dothan, AL 36305 (334) 678-8999, letthebiblespeak@mcworld.com. Sept. 2-Please note our new address and phone number. After being recently married, my wife Bethany, and I traveled to California to hold a meeting for the brethren at Manteca. The meeting was definitely a highlight in this year's schedule. We had over one hundred in attendance nearly every night. Probably between 30 and 40 outside visitors attended and the meeting closed with five being baptized. The singing, association, and enthusiasm all made the meeting very enjoyable. Alan Bonifay lives and works among these brethren and does a fine job. The success of the meeting can largely be attributed to his diligent efforts there. Our thanks to Melvin and Lynette Lee for their wonderful hospitality. Also it was good to have several area preachers attend the meeting one or more nights. Upon returning home, we began a gospel meeting at the church in Dothan with Ronny Wade. I can't say enough about optimism and excitement the meeting generated. The building was nearly filled to capacity on several nights. Ronny's preaching was right on target and was received well by all. Somewhere around twenty-five community visitors came with some frequenting the meeting several times. There are at least six of them that I feel will lead to results in the coming days and weeks. The work in general continues to go well. Our weekly television program continues to generate regular response. One man was recently restored at the Earlytown congregation. He has terminal cancer. Even though he is unable to attend regularly, we are thankful that after many years he has taken interest in his soul. We hope his wife will return to the church soon as well. The remainder of our schedule includes two more meetings. We will be at Longwood, FL, Nov. 6-15; and New Salem, MS, Nov. 24-28. We also look forward to having Lynwood Smith for a meeting at Dothan October 6-10. Come if you can!

Jerry Dickinson, 13803 Crosshaven, Houston, TX 77015, MisterJLD@aol.com-Since my last report I have held several meetings which were richly blessed by the Lord. I had a great meeting at Cable Ridge, MO where I made my home

with the Bentch's and was, as usual, treated grandly. I also got to visit a bit with my brother Billy during the meeting, always a treat. My next meeting was in McAlester, and my what a meeting that turned out to be. The three congregations in McAlester have consolidated and everyone is working hard to preserve unity, love, and cooperation. It was one of those meetings where everything came together at the right time and the Lord blessed us with wondrous results. There were 8 baptisms and 9 confessions. I stayed with Bill and Christine Verner, dear friends for well over 30 years. Next, I was in Flintville, TN where I have preached many times before. I stayed with the Mann's and enjoyed their excellent hospitality. We had a good meeting and it was great to see Johnny Fisher and Paul Walker during the meeting. Then I was in Seattle, WA, my first time with the church hospitality. I baptized one young person in Puget Sound. David and Paula Stands and their children came and stayed most of the meeting. They were a great asset to the meeting and I enjoyed running around Seattle with them. We have a meeting that begins here tonight with Bob Johnson and we are looking forward to some good preaching. I am to be at the following places in the next few months: Sandgrove, TX, September 10-12; Joplin, MO, October 1-3; Arlington, TX, November 5-7. God bless all those who everywhere call on the name of the Lord according to his Divine Will!

Bennie T. Cryer, 4635 Larkin Rd., Live Oak, CA 95953, September 9-The work is the church in Stockton continues to do well. We will be moving from Stockton to work with the Olivehurst, CA congregation around October 1. Please note our new mailing address above. It has been a pleasure to work with the Stockton congregation the last 15 years. The elders, James Mason and Gene Youngblood have been doing good works in the congregation and also with the Hawaiian work they have taken on. It has been a joy to serve under their leadership and Joann and I have mixed emotions about moving from such a fine group of people. Ryan Conner will continue his work with them. He has progressed so much and is using his talents well. We will be coming back here to teach from time to time. Aaron Risener held us a good meeting in June of this year with one baptism. I attended and participated in The Western Study at the Fair Oaks congregation in August. It was well attended and proved to be a very worthwhile study. They will sponsor it again next year in August and selected Don King and myself to work with them in organizing the study and participants. Lodi held the annual Labor Day meeting here in California. They did such a good job handling the huge crowd that attended. It was a very encouraging meeting and bodes well for its future. Four members from Waipahu, HI church attended the meeting. I worked with the Escalon, CA brethren in a meeting August 18-22. We had good attendance and special interest among the young men in the congregation that want to use their talents well as they grow in their service for the Lord. It was a pleasure to work again with Bro. Homer Saltee in this meeting and stay in his and Juel's home once more. They treated Joann and I real well. May God continue to bless all of you.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, e-mail: old_paths@juno.com. September 13-The meeting with the Mission Hills congregation in Springfield, MO closed with no visible results. We pray the Lord that good was accomplished. It was wonderful to see so many from

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various places we have known through the years. It kept us busy visiting with brethren through the week. Their hospitality was outstanding. If I recall, about ten preachers were there one or more times which is always appreciated. It was my pleasure to stay with Ronny and Alfreda Wade for most of the week and then out to Travis and Shirley Cook's where we enjoyed a reunion with several family members. Crowds seemed to be very good with cooperation from near and far. We lived in Springfield in the early to mid fifties while my father worked to establish the church. So much has changed but it is good to know there are many strong Christians in that city now. We are presently with the congregation at Oakdale, California having begun there yesterday. The building was full both services and we enjoyed having a number of visitors from area congregations. We pray the meeting will result in good being accomplished. If the Lord wills, Bennie Cryer and I will make a trip to work with the brethren in Hawaii about the 9th of October, we ask you pray for us.

Billy D. Dickinson, 2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803, bddickinson@juno.com, Sept. 1—It has been a little over a year since we moved to Springfield to labor with the North Area congregation. The church is at peace; we have visitors almost every Sunday; the Lord has blessed our efforts with three baptisms since the month of May; the church as a bright future if we can keep things going in the right direction. It has been a joy to work with Irvin Barnes, and I appreciate all his help in getting settled into a new work. Doug Hawkins and I conducted the annual fourth of July meeting in Lebanon, MO this year. It was a great spiritual feast. We used around 50 preachers and our largest crowd was Friday night (July 2)—approximately 1200 people in attendance. Since last reporting, I've conducted meetings at Lawrence, KS, Cleburne, TX, New Salem, MS and Ratliff City, OK. It is always uplifting to hold meetings where preachers live and labor, and I am a better person for having spent time with men like Melvin Blalock, Lynwood Smith, Cecil Smith, Tony Denton, and Lonnie York. I have two meetings left on my schedule, both in October: Jackson, MS and Deer Park, TX. Brethren, we are marching toward the year 2000. Let's strive for purity in every aspect of our lives!

Alan Bonifay, 523 Jessie Ave., Manteca, CA 95337, abonifay@aol.com—We have had a busy and enjoyable summer. June 30th we left home and traveled to Sulphur, OK for the annual meeting. It was good to be there again for only the second time since 1980. Then we journeyed on to San Antonio, TX to visit my folks. I preached several times at the Vance Jackson congregation in San Antonio, and one at McGregor, TX. It was good to visit old friends at both places. July 18-25 we held a meeting in Neosho, MO. Roger and Sue Owens and their family made us welcome in their home. The congregations in that area are blessed with a large number of interested and active young people who are a credit to their parents and their congregations. We appreci-

ated the attendance of several preachers: Roy Lee Criswell, John Anderson, Nelson Nichols, Richard Frizzell, Ken Middick, Steve Ramsay and Stan Elmore. We had a great time and look forward to returning there in two years, Lord willing. After returning home we began to make final plans for our meeting here at Manteca with Kevin Presley. August 6-15 Kevin held us a great meeting. His preaching was sound and five souls obeyed the gospel. Crowds were large, ranging from 120 to 175. All of the preachers in this area attended well to support the preaching of the truth. A special young guest from afar was Daniel Smith, who came from Mississippi to be here once again for our summer meeting. Amazingly—how time flies! My family and I have been working with the wonderful church at Manteca for eight years now. The Lord has richly blessed the congregation through the years, both numerically and spiritually, a gift for which we are grateful beyond measure. August 26-28 Greg Gay and I conducted the first annual Western Study on Thursday evening Michael Fox spoke on the Tabernacle and Types of Antitypes. On Friday, we had five sessions: Ryan Connor—The Nature of Man; Alan Bonifay—Romans 5:12-21; Franklin Harris—Approaches to Revelation; Matt Hayes—The Prologue to John's Gospel (1:1-18); and in the evening, Bennie Cryer—Disfellowship (and various related issues). On Saturday we had four more sessions: Matt Trent—2 Thess. 2:3-12 and the Man of Sin; Gay Gay—The Internet (various issues and dangers); Greg DeGough—Does God Have An Individual Will For Me?; and Raymond Fox—Worship and the Command to Assemble (Heb. 10:25). All of the topics were well presented, and the question and answer sessions were enjoyed by everyone. The young men who spoke for the first time in this format (Ryan Connor, Frank Harris, Matt Trent, and Matt Hayes) each did an excellent job—by any standard. We were gratified by their obvious study and evident growth as preachers. The crowds were large beyond our expectations, and people were enthusiastically supportive and interested throughout the entire study. The Fair Oaks congregation (Sacramento area), hosted the study and they did a great job. We could not have had better cooperation than we had from their elders. Fair Oaks plans to host the Western Study again next year, if the Lord wills (Aug. 24-26, 2000), and have asked Don King and Bennie Cryers to direct it. We look forward to the next study here in our state. It should become one of the highlights of our year as time goes on and more Christians hear of it and grow to appreciate its value. Last weekend (Sept. 1-5) Lodi, CA hosted the California Labor day meeting. Their theme was "Back to the Basics," and various fundamental topics were assigned to the speakers—and a very good idea it was. The preaching was great! Matt Trent preached the final sermon on the Judgment. It was a masterpiece. Fifteen persons responded and several of them were restorations to the faith. Two others responded earlier in the meeting as well. All in all things are going very well throughout the congregations in this state. Pray for us in His work.

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. LXXIII

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NO. 11

THE END OF THE WORLD!?!

By DON McCORD

The caption appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine January 18, 1999. It was pictured on a sign hanging on the back of a robed individual with a cross in his or her right hand extended upward with the followings: "Y2K Insanity. Apocalypse Now! Will computers melt down? Will society? A guide to MILLENNIUM MADNESS." In the index under "Cover" is "Counting Down to Armageddon." Among other things, you read, "Jerusalem: As the year 2000 closes in, so do the cults." The article pertaining is full of gloom and doom, glaring misunderstanding, misinterpretations of the "Revelation of Jesus Christ," what men call the battle of Armageddon, what men call the Millennium, what men call the Antichrist, so-called "touchdown sights" for the Lord's return. Interesting, somewhat whimsical, but sensible, on page 62, you read: "Historians now place the Nativity (the birth of Christ) no later than 4 B.C., the year King Herod died. By that reckoning, the 3rd millennium would have commenced no later than 1997. You missed it." That should trim down to size those who are making so much of January 1, 2000, with their false prophesying, their misinterpretation of the Scriptures, their misleading the unwary.

I kindly invite your attention to a scriptural focus on the matter. It is more than self-evident that the world has lots wrong with it, but this has been true since "The Fall," and will be true until "time shall be no more." False prophets have come with their fanciful speculations, and have gone with them, the world none the better. The world knows virtually nothing about the Scriptures; the world is long on fantasy, short on fact; I speak here of the religious world. I kindly, candidly speak of Protestantism, Catholicism, cultism, denominationalism, sectism, digression in worship and organization. Man-made religions, the world generally do not understand the church, the kingdom, true worship, God the Creator, Christ the Messiah, the authority with which Christ speaks and mandates; and directly related to our theme here, they do not understand "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." All of this is at the root of much that is written and spoken today, so misleading and even alarming to those who do not know better. They seem not to understand that this is our Father's world, that He and His Son are in control, and do all things well. "And by Him all things consist (cohere, hold together)" (Col. 1:17). Praise Him, His matchless power, foresight and care!!

"Now to 'The Revelation of Jesus Christ,' not 'The Book of Revelation,' 'The Book of Revelations,' 'The

Revelation of John,' 'The Revelation of John the Divine,' 'The Revelation of Saint John the Divine,' but 'The Revelation of Jesus Christ,' what it is called in Rev. 1:1; why not use that title? People need to understand the following, if they ever understand, as best men can, this wonderful book. At the very core and circumference are Christ, the Father, and the Holy Spirit. From beginning to end is the church, sometimes persecuted terribly, but always protected and glorified. The saints, though persecuted, misunderstood, they are ever protected and at center stage. The Christ, the Victor, ever walking, living, riding, is ever most Preeminent in every episode. The reader, the student is ever mystified, even confused, until he sees the prologue, the epilogue and the seven parallel episodes, all ending in the judgment and condemnation of the wicked. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" was never, is never, to and for the world, including the false religious world: oh yes, sometimes of them but not to them; it is always and preeminently to the church, to the Lord's people, and for the Lord's people. Those to whom it was first written were in the midst of terrible persecution that Christians in our day cannot imagine; they needed assurance that all is going to be well, that the Christ Whom they loved is what He claims to be, and that He and His church are and will be victorious, the winners in the end of every battle, trial and temptation; the "truth though crushed to the earth will rise again, the eternal years of God are hers," and that "error wounded writhes in pain, and dies among her worshippers."

In the *Time* article, not all is doomsayer nonsense. That some computer glitches will occur January 1, 2000 is possible in some places, "the Y2K (that's the year 2000) computer bug," they say. Christians, that is penitent, confessing-Christ, baptized believers, members of the Lord's church, surely know that our Father, His Son, our Savior, High Priest, Protector are in control and will ever be. Christians have never let the heathen raging, and the people imagining a vain thing, shake their faith. You read, "Hell starts Jan. 1, 2000, when the lights go out"; "an alignment of the planets in May 2000 will burn up the earth" —don't you ever believe it. When men start setting dates of doom and destruction, you can rest assured they know not what they talk about. History proves this; days of doom were set in 1845, 1846, 1914, 1931, 1940, 1952, 1975; false prophets then, false prophets now. Don't you believe them for a minute, dear reader. The Divine Mind

continued on page five

CONTENTS

Vol. LXXIII No. 11



ADVOCATE

ANNOUNCEMENTS 7-10

The End Of The World 1

Did Christ Preach The Gospel

Or the Law? 2

The Querist Column 3

The Internet-Part 2 4

FROM THE FIELDS 10-12

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Editorial

DID CHRIST PREACH THE GOSPEL OR THE LAW?

By DON L. KING

It has always seemed pretty obvious to this writer that Jesus preached the gospel of the Kingdom of Christ. No one denies, I'm sure, that He also answered questions and dealt with matters regarding the law. The 8th chapter of John furnishes one of many such instances when the woman who was caught in adultery was brought before Him. The Scribes and Pharisees quoted the law to Him. The law, they said, required that she be stoned to death. However, they wanted to know what He said. Jesus simply quoted the law to them as found in Deuteronomy 17:7, and told them who were without sin to cast the first stone. The individuals, who were before Him, feeling guilty simply left. With no accusers the case was to be thrown out and it was. His final statement to her was, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." (John 8: 1-11)

However, when Jesus gathered the multitudes together was He usually teaching the law of Moses or the gospel of the kingdom? This is an important question because a misunderstanding or wrong application of the teachings of Christ can result in a false doctrine being taught.

In Mark 1:14,15, Mark says, "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel."

This was near the end of John's life (John the Baptist) and obviously before the church was established. Yet, the Lord was preaching the gospel. Not only was He preaching it but He was also commanding the people to change their ways (repent) and believe it. This was preparatory to His building the church. If He was going to build His church He had to establish His doctrine first. Teaching must always come before one believes. The teaching of Christ was done with authority too. Matthew 7:29 says, "For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Even though He had not yet built the church, He preached the gospel with authority from Heaven.

On the mount of transfiguration when Peter made his foolish statement about building three tabernacles, one for Christ, one for Moses, and one for Elias (Elijah), God answered him from a bright cloud and said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." God was letting them all know that the time for the teaching of Moses and other Old Testament characters was past. It was time to hear the Son now, and again and again we find Him preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.

In Matthew 9:35 the Book reads: "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom..." It is small wonder that Jesus became unpopular with the Jews. After all, He was teaching a doctrine that was different and

continued on page six

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Why do some people think it is necessary to assemble on Sunday morning, while they are on vacation, but will miss the Sunday night service? (CO)

Answer: I cannot answer for everyone, but would assume that many who fail to return for the Sunday night service do so because they feel it is not a divine arrangement, and therefore it is not wrong for them to miss. They evidently see nothing wrong with attending to other matters, they feel are more important at the time. The Scriptures teach by both command and example the Lord's day assembly for breaking the bread (Acts 20:7; Heb. 10:25). This is God's arrangement, and faithful disciples will plan to be present everytime this gathering convenes. In addition to this assembly, the church in the New Testament came together at other times as well, for various purposes (see Acts 11:26; Acts 15:30-31; Acts 14:27; Acts 4:31 etc.) These meetings were important. In them, they discussed problems, foreign evangelism, prayed, and taught the people. Those who failed to attend robbed themselves of a golden opportunity to participate in a spiritual experience. The same is true today. Those who try and get by on a one time a week religion actually cheat themselves. A failure to attend may actually say more about our heart than our body. Obviously we are not present, our bodies are missing. But why? Could it be that the church and its interests and work is secondary to other things such as a vacation, a ball game, a weekend at the lake, or some other type of entertainment? If so, we have failed to put the church first (Mt. 6:33) and have allowed something else to take its place. A grave mistake to say the least.

Question: Should we miss our own congregational services to attend gospel meetings at other congregations? (MO)

Answer: The Scriptures teach that we function as members of local congregations and not the church universal. The elders are commanded to take the oversight of the flock (Acts 20:28). This merely reinforces the fact that everyone needs to be identified with a local church, as a member of that flock. In New Testament times travel was not what it is today. Christians in some areas are able to travel to several churches (time wise) on any given Sunday morning. But, is it wrong to do so? I cannot say it is wrong, however it may not be wise. If a congregation has a program of work going, it would seem to me that every member of the congregation should be interested in assisting and staying with that work. In some churches leadership needs to be developed. It is extremely difficult to do so when those who are potentially leaders go off on Sunday morning to some other congregation. In some areas, churches regularly "trade" teachers, and some of those teachers are seldom at their home church. It seems to this writer that the answer to the above question is one of good judgment and common sense. If we are going to build up the congregation of which we are a member, then

we need to be there.

Question: Is it scriptural or permissible to use the church treasury to give assistance to members who are in need, but who in the past have been inconsistent in their attendance of Lord's day morning services? (KY)

Answer: The answer to this question and the problem it presents will require some sound and wise judgment on the part of those called to deal with it. Since I do not know the parties involved I can only answer in general terms. First of all it should be observed that everyone in need is not automatically eligible for help from the church treasury. Regarding certain widows Paul wrote in I Timothy 5:3-4 that it was first the responsibility of the family to care for them, rather than the church. If, however, this person was really a widow, and left alone he said she must "trust in God and continue in supplications and prayers night and day." In verses 9-10 he continues "Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, and not unless she has been the wife of one man, well reported for good works; if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work." I doubt very seriously that a widow who decided to periodically miss the Lord's day worship to go fishing, or on vacation, or just stay home and relax could be described as "diligently following every good work." We would probably have no difficulty in deciding that she should not be helped from the treasury of the church. By the same token the man in 2 Thess. 3:10 who failed to work and support his family was not worthy of help from the church. In fact Paul commanded that he be withdrawn from, and declared that if he did not work, neither should he eat. These two situations clearly show that certain conditions of faithfulness were required before one could be helped by the church. But what about one who, as the querist says, "is inconsistent in their attendance at the Lord's day service"; should the church help them? The answer, I believe, lies in why they are inconsistent. If they fail to attend worship simply because they had rather be somewhere else or doing something else, I find it hard to believe that the church sustains any obligation to financially help them. In fact what the church needs to do is teach them "the way of the Lord more perfectly." Unfortunately some people use the church for a crutch. When they get in trouble they want help. When behind on bills they want the church to take up the slack. This is not right. The church is not and should not be responsible for people who half-heartedly live the Christian life, then when confronted with a difficult situation of a financial nature, want the church to step in and relieve them. On the other hand, if there are those who are in genuine need, and who faithfully serve the Lord, and meet the requirements given in the scriptures, then the church is certainly justified in rendering assistance to them. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, PO Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808)

THE INTERNET - PART 2

By GREG GAY

If I spend all my time chatting on the Internet does God care?

Chatting on the Internet is where computers are connected in such a way that messages are delivered instantly back and forth to each other. It is a real-time on-going written dialogue between two or more individuals. It is different from sending mail via the Internet in that the messages are continuously displayed on the screen. It is much like being on the phone with a conference call where many people at once can contribute to the conversation only the participants in a chat are sitting at their computers typing on their keyboards. Participants also have the option to go to a private room where just two people have a private chat instantly back and forth with each other.

Talking leads to touching

In the book, "Too Close Too Soon," the way men and women develop relationships is illustrated. A chart from page 22 follows which gives the Comparison of the level of Commitment and the progression tendencies for men and women in a relationship.

COMMITMENT LEVEL	PROGRESSION OF RELATIONSHIP	COMMITMENT LEVEL	PROGRESSION OF RELATIONSHIP
SOCIAL	(MARRIAGE)	SOCIAL	(MARRIAGE)
	ADDICTED TO		ADDICTED TO
	REGULAR		REGULAR
	PASSION		PASSION
EMOTIONAL	PETTING	EMOTIONAL	PETTING
	COMMITTED TO		ATTACHED TO
	DEFENSIVE OF		CARESSING
	CRY OVER		KISSING
PHYSICAL	LONG FOR	PHYSICAL	TOUCHING
	ATTACHED TO		COMMITTED TO
	CARESSING		DEFENSIVE OF
	KISSING		CRY OVER
SOCIAL	TOUCHING	SOCIAL	LONG FOR
	INTIMATE		INTIMATE
	CLOSE		CLOSE
	CASUAL		CASUAL
FRIENDSHIP	ACQUAINTANCE	FRIENDSHIP	ACQUAINTANCE

Notice from the order, women become emotionally attached after the social phase. Once a woman feels like she knows a man and can trust him the relationship then proceeds into physical areas. At a certain point when people have talked many times and shared hour after hour with another person they are going to want to progress to the next stage of the relationship. That means touching. Where are men in this chart? They were ready for touching after the social phase. So, men would start pressuring the woman in the chats that they need to meet. Why? So they can touch. That is why we hear of children and teens running away from home to meet someone they have been chatting with on the Internet. It is a tragedy when a child or a teen runs away from home, but not just children are doing this. A few years ago at 64th. St. we had a lady from the southern part of the state attend worship with a man who was not her husband. She had left her husband of over 20 years and moved north to be with the man she had been chatting with on the Internet for a long time. One thing that scared me to death is this: she was not ashamed of what she was doing. She came to church without shame with her Internet lover. I know of several in the church who have left their

spouse for someone they met over the Internet. Brethren, chatting on the Internet is very dangerous and I seriously question whether or not any married Christian should have anything to do with it. I'll talk about unmarried Christians in just a moment.

Perhaps you, like me know of married people whose marriage is gradually being torn apart because of the Internet. Perhaps you, like me know people in the church who are talking to people all over the world while their family is being destroyed. They are true to the chart, after much talking, they have to meet so they can touch. This is very frightening to me! Remember, this is an illusion of intimacy. Therefore, anyone trying to talk to such individuals to help them will be met with many excuses, but no shame. This becomes a "strong delusion that they should believe a lie" (2 Thess. 2:11).

Dating on the Internet

The Internet makes it possible for married men to spend hour after hour getting to know women they are not married to and married women to spend hour after hour getting to know men they are not married to. When that happens out in the open we call it "wrong." But when it is on the Internet we call it a "chat." That is not a chat-that is a date. Let me tell you, I think there is a grave danger here, a very grave danger. I don't believe a Christian has any business chatting with people they don't know. Period.

Many "chatters" will say, "I know these people, I chat with them all the time, they are my friends." To which I reply, No, these people are not your friends. You are keeping them from reality just as they are keeping you from reality. This is an escape from reality and an illusion of intimacy. To such I say, you have no business with a modem in your computer and should discontinue anything to do with the Internet. We need to recognize these people have serious problems with denying reality and they need psychological help. If these people would put the same efforts into their spouse and their children and in serving their congregation the church would be much better off.

Don't be deceived into thinking, "I'll chat with these people then I'll be able to counsel them, or I'll be able to study with them, or I'll be able to convert them via this medium. I believe that is very, very dangerous and very unlikely to happen.

There is an appropriate amount of time a man may visit with a woman who is not his wife and a woman may visit with a man who is not her husband. Beyond that, we should be uncomfortable. If any married woman among us went to a corner of the building and visited with a man for a couple of hours we would look to see who she is visiting with to make sure it is appropriate. If she were visiting with her father or one of her physical brothers, we would think nothing about it. If she were visiting with her husband, we would think nothing about it. But, if she were to spend that much time with just about anyone else we would think it strange and not appropriate. There had better be a very special reason for that conversation.

As a preacher of the gospel and as someone who works with troubled relationships it is not uncommon for a woman

to want to talk with me at our gatherings for an extended period of time. I try to make sure I always remain in sight of the group and protect my relationship with my wife by sharing with her exactly what the conversation involved. In private, I won't see a woman alone in a troubled relationship situation or in a study situation. It would not be appropriate because of the appearance of evil.

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil (I Thes. 5:21-22).

Our young people, single men and women who know each other, do join in a chat room in a password protected site where you have to have the exact address to access the site. I believe this can be compared to our young kids standing around visiting after church. As long as the group stays together, I believe this can be OK as long as nothing inappropriate is said and as long as everyone stays in the group. The minute two people of the opposite sex leave the group, that is like a date and the same safeguards apply. If someone unknown has joined the group no one, not even of the same sex, should go to a private room with them. No reasonable young person would leave the group of kids they know and get in the car of a stranger and drive off for a night on the town. Why? Because we know our mother's advice is valid, "Don't talk to strangers." The same advice applies on the Internet. If you are going to chat, stay in the group of the people you know and don't talk to strangers. How do we meet and get to know people? In a very safe, controlled environment. The Internet removes those controls and Satan is waiting to take advantage of us.

Sadly, I have heard of some of our young people being taken advantage of by strangers because they had an illusion of intimacy that had been fostered by the Internet.

Are there any chat's that are OK? Perhaps. A family I know has a private chat group just for family members. That can be OK in my opinion because they have a knowledge of who they are talking too and the circle is very limited as to who can be a part of the group. Past that, I would be very careful.

All must examine whether or not such chatting is a good use of our time. Television networks are concerned because viewership is declining due to the Internet. If a person has usually spent a lot of time watching TV and now spends that time on the Internet there has just been an exchange of one time-wasting medium for another in my opinion. However, constant Internet use is worse to me than television especially if the computer is in another room because it means a family member has withdrawn from the family. Because of that, I believe even watching television together is much preferred to the separation that

may be caused by using the Internet.

See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil (Eph 5:15-16) Married people who spend untold hours chatting on the Internet end up defrauding their spouse because of the time and emotional commitment that is given to others. That leads to a loss of intimacy in the marriage condemned by the following passage:

The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband; and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency (I Cor 7:4-5).

Those who have left

I mentioned one lady I know who left her husband for her Internet lover. That is not the only one I know of. I know of at least two other ladies who have left their spouses as well as some young people who have been ensnared by someone they met over the Internet. I know of individuals who have lost their spouse to someone they met over the Internet and then turned around and found a new spouse on the Internet.

Can Internet chats between strangers lead to romantic involvement? We know the answer to that is yes. Can Internet chats between strangers which lead to romantic involvement make successful marriages? Let me answer this very carefully. If the couple depends on the Internet relationship to be the basis of their relationship and carry them through life, I don't believe the relationship will be successful. Here is why. If 1 out of 2 marriages ended in divorce before the popularity of the Internet when people got to know each other mostly on a face to face basis the odds of a relationship being successful based on an Internet romance are roughly the same as finding a good biscuit at the bottom of the slop bucket. While it is statistically possible, I believe it will be very, very rare.

Remember, when a couple believe they know each other because of Internet chats, they have an illusion of intimacy. If their relationship is to succeed, it would only be because they discard the value of anything done on-line on the Internet and start over as strangers, because that is what they are. Their on-line time sets up a fantasy world environment where the delusion created by the Internet is often so strong that a person refuses to believe they don't know this person well. If the couple is willing to start over and begin a face to face, carefully controlled courtship, they may end up having a successful relationship.

THE END OF THE WORLD!?!

continued from page 1

controls this; presumptuous, pompous, fallible men seem not to understand this self-evident fact, Christians do understand this!

As 2000 approaches we will hear more of what the *Time* article mentions and more. Some follow, with what we hope is a Bible perspective:

-- The Kingdom — that the kingdom will be established in the city of Jerusalem at some future time with Christ ruling from an earthly throne is nowhere taught in the

Scriptures; the contrary is plainly taught. Christ promised: "Verily, I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1) In Acts 2 this fulfillment is plainly revealed to Daniel 2:44, "And in the days of these kings (the Roman kings) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed...and it shall stand forever." So it was; John could say in Rev. 1:9 that he, nearly 2000 years ago, was "in the kingdom." The fanciful idea that Christ came to establish the kingdom, but there was a change of plans, and instead the "church age" was put in its place, is nowhere for sure

found in Scriptures; strange indeed that Christ nor the apostles ever wrote of such a thing, positive proof indeed that the so-called "church age," is in the mind of men and not in the mind of God.

-- The Antichrist" — much ado about this as we approach 2000. No where is a man so-called in the Book, including "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." Surely Christ or the Apostles would have mentioned such a one. As men have it, he is to arise from the European common market, some man, to engage in some carnal conflict with the Christ, the Prince of Peace, is repugnant to every Christian on the earth. Christ settles such in John 18:36, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." You will find "Antichrist" only in John's writings; read 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7 — this is the Bible record. John tells us there are many Antichrists and they even existed in his day - no such thing as "the Antichrist"; the last one that he is supposed to be, that I have read, is the U. N. Secretary-General. Ridiculous! Don't you believe it, dear Reader.

-- Armageddon — What a word! You would think by what you read and what you hear that Christ and the Apostles talked of "the Battle of Armageddon" on every page of the inspired record. The fact is, they never did. "Armageddon" is in the Book one time, and not a battle, but a place (Rev. 16:16). To the ancients it meant a battleground, so to the Christians to whom "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" was written; not a carnal battleground in the Revelation, but figurative, for the spiritual battle that rages in the here and now, between right and wrong, the truth and error; do you wonder why truth in worship and organization is held in such disdain by those in digression, In the world, denominationalism? Do you wonder why it is so hard to plant the church in so many places? It will get worse and worse during the "little season" (Rev. 20:3, 7). Tougher times ahead for the truth and the church, but the Most High watches over with His watchful eye, never you

forget!! The church, "she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners," so wonderfully prophetic in Solomon's Song (6:10).

-- The Millennium" — men talk, write of this as though it were some unique reality; it is impressive that Christ, the Father, the Holy Spirit, nor the Apostles never mentioned such!! It is man's imagination, some men's, that is, that Christ will reign on the earth for a literal thousand years, a time of peace, a golden age, a spiritual Utopia. No where in the Book is such an idea taught. The word "millennium" means, thousand years; in Rev. 20, six times you read of such a period in time, no doubt a definite number for the indefinite, so characteristic of inspiration. When will men ever learn that the Divine Timekeeper, does not keep time the way men do? Within the context of the end, Peter puts time in perspective like a this, "—one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter 3:8). The "thousand years" of Rev. 20 is no doubt when the "great chain," the Word of God, binds Satan, not robbing him of all power, but specifically "that he should deceive the nations no more". Before the "little book open" (Rev. 10:2) was put into the hands of the people, after having been "chained to the pulpit," he had power to deceive, which he does not have today. Evidently, the "thousand years" are in progress now, the Word binding Satan in the deception sense only, Rev. 20:3 (compare verses 7 and 8) when he loosed and able again to deceive, during the "little season"; again, desperate times for the Church, the Book, Christians, true worship—we must be thankful that the season is "little".

(Note to the reader: What I choose to call the 7 parallel episodes, the following commentaries are helpful: *More Than Conquerors*, William Hendriksen (he calls the episodes, sections or panaramas); *The Drama of Christianity*, S.L. Morris (he calls the episodes, cycles); *Commentary on Revelation*, James Burton Coffman (he, too, calls the episodes, sections)

EDITORIAL

continued from page 2

sometimes even contradictory to the law of Moses and this in their own synagogues!

We have heard of folks who claim the New Testament really begins with the Book of Acts. Of course, we know why. There are things taught by the Lord in the Book of Matthew which they are unwilling to accept. They insist that those things, especially Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 belong to the law and not the gospel. However, Matthew 9:35 says He was teaching the gospel of the kingdom in their own synagogues! Did He deal with the law at all? Of course, but that was not the purpose of His teaching. It is unthinkable that one should teach a doctrine so very different from the law of Moses and not have to answer questions about it. However, what Jesus preached was not the law but the gospel! In John 6:63 Jesus said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; (makes us alive, DLK) the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Jesus said His words would make us alive. That's good enough for me. In the 6th

chapter of John, Jesus had been teaching some difficult things for his disciples to accept. This, in itself, shows that He was not in the habit of teaching the law of Moses. If He had, it would not have been so difficult for them to accept. The reluctance they manifested in verse 66 proves they were hearing some things they were not accustomed to. John 6:66 says, "From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." The next verse (67) says, "Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?" Listen to Peter. He said, "...Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." (John 6:68) Does the law of Moses provide eternal life? Of course not, If it had, the Lord would never have had to come to the world and suffer, bleed and die. Paul said, "But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." (Hebrews 8:6, 7)

The very fact that a second covenant (New Testament) exists is proof that the first one was not satisfactory. There

would have been no reason at all for the Lord to have preached the old law! It had been taught for about 1400 years already. He was obviously interested in presenting His gospel. That was new and fresh. It was often difficult for the Jews to accept because they had the old covenant in their minds. When Jesus contrasted the old law with the new He was not explaining the old. He often contradicted the old law. He was presenting the New Testament. God forbid that men reject anything taught by the Son of God Himself! As the apostle opened the book of Hebrews he

wrote: "God who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these days spoken unto us by His Son whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds." (Hebrews 1: 1,2) One will look in vain to find more majestic language given by Inspiration than the words used here.

May we be content to "speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent." Think on these things. DLK

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Are You Getting The Paper?

We have heard that some of our readers have not been getting their papers as they should. If you have failed to receive yours or know of anyone who has, please tell us. We will see to it that you get the paper. There are several ways you could miss the paper. (1) We may make a mistake in the listing. We try to be careful but mistakes do occur. If your address is incorrect let us know and we will correct it. (2) A mistake may have occurred with the printers. They have to take our computer files and print the address labels. They try to be careful but they may make a mistake. (3) Finally, the Postal service may be at fault. At any rate, if you are having difficulty getting the paper, don't give up. Tell us about it. We promise to do our very best to see that you get *Old Paths Advocate*. We repeat our offer again, if you send us ten subscriptions we will see that you get yours free. Remember that the paper will go up to \$10 yearly in January. You have plenty of time to renew or subscribe for as long as you wish at the current price of \$7. Let us hear from you soon! DLK

The Special July Issue

The special July issue, *What is Wrong in Religion*, is being reprinted in tract form. The booklet is approximately the size of the church directories. The printing is limited, however, and you should get your orders to us as soon as possible. The price will be \$35.00 per hundred plus postage. If you wish single copies they are fifty cents each up to 100 copies plus postage. We have gone to considerable trouble and expense to make this possible. We are counting on you to use these tracts for your church tract racks, personal work and mailings. The materials in it are of invaluable aid to anyone doing personal work. Please don't forget to send the amount of postage back to us. Just look on the package and read the amount. Then, send that amount back to the address you ordered from. You may order from: *Old Paths Advocate*, c/o Kendall Cook, 1978 N. Farm Rd, 89, Springfield, MO 65802. Let us hear from you soon.

Meet Morgan Stripling

I met Morgan Stripling about 2 years ago. He is now 24 years old (single) and seems to be a fine young preacher. Morgan traveled with me to different meetings for a year or more. During that time he also worked with us at Scotland and Little Rock. He also preached at Witts Springs

and held some home studies. During the past 2 years he has made trips to be with the brethren at Lead Hill (Locust cong.) AR. preaching for them on the Lord's Day. During the past year Bro. Morgan has lived at McAlester, Oklahoma and has done a tremendous work and especially among the young people. Recently he has held gospel meetings at Tulsa (11th St.) and Golden, OK. For further reference you may phone me or contact any of the brethren at the above congregations.—Miles King



Treasured Milestone - Golden Wedding Anniversary

On August 29, 1949, Wanda and I were married in a simple ceremony at 8:00 o'clock in the morning, in the living room of Wanda's precious parents, Abe and Bertha Smith, in Azusa, Calif. Gayland Osburn, a single 22-year-old, capably officiated for us. On Sat., August 2, 1999, our children and grandchildren hosted for us a reception, honoring our 50 years, just around the corner and down a ways from where we exchanged our vows; we will never forget them, our precious children and grandchildren, for this respectful consideration. Our loved ones in Christ, relatives and dear friends came to wish us well. The Dresden Plate quilt with all the stitches of hands of love by our sisters is a treasure, along with cards, other gifts, notes, letters, calls and flowers. Our centerpiece, a floral display, accented by 50 yellow roses, was provided by the lovable Calvin Prince family of Napoleon, Ala. Gratitude, sincere, humble, we express to all who sent pictures, messages, tributes, cards for our volumes of "Memories," so skillfully arranged by Wendy, one of our 3 precious daughters-in-law. So inadequately, we say, thank you, thank you, dear and treasured friends. By what you have done for us, we are not only gratified, we are humbled. Again, thank you. For more than one-fourth of these 50 years, I was publisher of *Old Paths Advocate* and editor for many more than that. While publisher, I did not know what I would have done without Wanda. Along the road, it has been my great honor to know sisters who really know what the church is all



about; Wanda, in my humble opinion, is one of them. At the assembly, our best is not good enough for the Lord; therefore, when the service gets haphazard, she, in a woman's place, can get stern, even blunt. About giving, she has taught me more than all others put together; she has been known to deplete the grocery budget to give back to the Lord; this never hurt us; you can tell by looking at us. She would concur with our late friend and brother, Phil Fender, San Antonio, during his lifetime. "If we all gave as we ought, we would have to look for places to use the bounty." In essence he would say. One of Wanda's fondest childhood memories, involves Bro. H. C. Harper, publisher of *The Truth* which later became *Old Paths Advocate*, when he would come to preach at the "Bit Shop," near Healdton, Okla.; University professor, yet humble preacher of the gospel, with his pince-nez glasses, with the chain attached to his lapel, the utter fascination of all the children present. He would leave preaching, to go home with the family, in the wagon, and don a pair of overalls, go to the cow lot, to help her dad milk the cows, late coming home. During these 50 years she has stood by me and I have tried to preach the gospel, at home and abroad over this land, "keeping home fires aglow all alone, for weeks at a time. When we have become obnoxious to one another, in this wonderful venture we call marriage, it never occurred to us that we could terminate our contract short of its expiration date, 'til death parts us. In all honesty, dear reader, to paraphrase Langston Hughes, the poet, married life for us "ain't been no Crystal Stair," but we recommend 50 years of it as the only way to go. I still, as do the children, "arise up, and call her blessed," and believe she does the same.—Don McCord

Congratulations On Fifty Years

On November 28, 1949, Paul O. Nichols and Wilma J. McKeand were united in Ceredo, West Virginia by Nelson Nichols. Fifty years later, this marriage and home are still together and they have wonderful memories. Their Christian influence has helped many other Christians through the brotherhood. Sending any cards or notes of congratulations would be appreciated. Address: 1490 Forest View Court, Bonner Springs, KS 66012

Seeking Preacher

We, the congregation at La Marque, Texas, are actively seeking a preacher to work full-time with us in personal work and in the services of the church. Please submit references if interested to: Dr. John Barfoo, P.O. Box 967, Santa Fe, Texas 77510. Phone: evenings 409-925-8869; days 409-925-1803

Those Individual Cups Reprinted

Brother Richard Bunner with the financial help of the Blue Springs congregation has republished the old tract *Those Individual Cups* by J.W. McGarvey. This material was first organized and published by Bro. J.D. Phillips and later by Bro. Ervin Waters. What Bro. Phillips had to say about this question of individual cups is worth the printing of the tract. As most know, J.W. McGarvey was a well known Bible scholar and member of the church of Christ who lived around the turn of the century, the time when

individual communion cups were the craze and fad in religion. It's really insightful to see what a man of Bro. McGarvey's standing had to say about this innovation. If you would like some of these tracts, let me know. They are free of charge, but you must pay the postage. For \$3 postage, I'll send 50 tracts. Send your request to Doug Hawkins, Rt. 1, Box 717, Mt. Vernon, KY 40456.

Thank You

A great thank you to all congregations and individuals who sent money toward our building. We so greatly thank you. May God Bless all of you, and all the brotherhood for your support. Our building is moving along great, we hope to have it finished in about two months. Thanks!—Doniphan MO congregation

OUR DEPARTED

STEWART—Sister Georgia Reyon Stewart was born Mar. 1, 1909 at Ava, MO; she passed on June 5, 1999, in a beautiful place provided by her loved ones, in Whittier, CA. For years, she and Bro. Stewart were members of the congregation meeting at Montebello, CA, what pillars! After Montebello ceased meeting, it was our honor here at home to have them meet with us, where their daughter, Darlene Dugan has been a long-time precious member. It was such an honor to know Georgia Stewart, humble elegance personified, long silver hair! If you did not know her you have missed a blessing. At 24, she lost her young husband tragically, left with a little boy, and infant daughter. She worked hard to support them. She later married Bro. Otis Stewart to whom she was married more than 60 years. Darlene, among other wonderful things, eulogized her mother like this: "Our mother was absolutely wonderful! She was quiet and soft spoken, and in all the years we were growing up, I don't ever remember her even raising her voice to us." What a tribute! Georgia and Otis Stewart were baptized in northern California's Russian River by Bro. Tim Dougherty, still living, a member of the Lord's church. Oakdale, CA. Sister Stewart leaves Brother Stewart, 4 children, 6 grandchildren, and 7 great grandchildren. It was my distinct honor to try to say words of hope, warning, commendation in honor of his gracious lady at Rose Hills cemetery, Whittier, CA, on the beautiful morning of June 10, 1999. Enough cannot be said for such a one as she, she is one that I expect to meet again on that sweet, eternal morning again, I shall be blessed.—Don McCord

WILLIAMS—Wilbur John and Wilma Faye Williams were murdered in their home in Kansas City, KS. August 3, 1999, by teenage brothers bent on robbery and killing. Wilbur was born at Lebo, KS, March 10, 1920, and was 79 at the time of his death. Wilma was born at Phillipsburg, MO and passed away at the age of 73. Wilbur was not a member of the church of Christ, but Wilma obeyed the gospel when she was fifteen, being baptized by Homer A. Gay. She was the daughter of Claude and Rissia King. Wilma was "of a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God a great price" (1 Pet. 1:4), and like Dorcas, she was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did" (Acts 9:36). Wilbur and Wilma were married September 27, 1948 and had celebrated their fiftieth anniversary. They

leave to mourn their passing two sons, Billy Gene of Basehar, KS and Danny Ray of Bonner Springs, KS; two daughters, Donna Kay Ware of Kansas City, KS and Kathy Sue Catron of Overland Park, KS; also three granddaughters and many other relatives and friends. Wilma will be sorely missed by the congregation of which was a member. It was my honor to conduct the memorial service assisted by Ronny Wade.—Paul O. Nichols

CAMPBELL—Omi Campbell was born in Healdton, OK April 1, 1918 and died at Purcell, OK on Feb. 8, 1999. Omi obeyed the gospel at Washington, OK in 1951 and attended the Lexington, OK congregation. She is survived by one son, Dr. Edward Allen Lee and wife Kay; 5 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren; one sister Billie Morehead of Purcell. Omi will be remembered for her hospitality and loved hearing the gospel preached. She attended many gospel meetings and loved having Christians in her home. Miles King and Bill Davis preached her funeral. She is greatly missed by her friends and loved ones.

SMITH—Vera V. Smith died Oct. 4th, 1999 at Purcell, OK at the age of 86. Sister Vera was born Feb. 16, 1913 in Muskogee, OK to Frank and Daisy Archer. She moved to Washington in her early teens to live with her brother where she met Bro. Allen D. Smith (known to many as "Cude Smith"). They were married Jan. 21, 1934 in Norman, OK. To this marriage were born 3 children, Donald, Pauline, and Dale. Vera was preceded in death by her parents, husband, 2 sons, 3 brothers and 4 sisters. She always loved her flowers and her garden. She was a member of the church of Christ at Washington, OK. She loved the church and her family. She is survived by her daughter, Pauline Longacre of Washington, one sister, Ruby Ketner of Keeler, Texas; 10 grandchildren; 15 great grandchildren and one great-great granddaughter; a host of nieces, nephews and other family members. A graveside service was held at Washington Cemetery on Oct. 6 with the writer speaking words of comfort to family and friends. I was assisted by one young preacher, Bro. Brandon Stephens.—Miles King

THOMPSON—During her 86 years of life, Margaret Thompson of Piney View, West Virginia built an influence that will affect the lives of all that knew her for years to come. Family and friends will sorely miss her love, kindness and hospitality. On August 13, 1999 she departed this life with her family at her bedside. Margaret was the wife of the late Elgie Thompson. Together they built no ordinary home, but a Christian home where love and respect for God and the Church were of ultimate importance. Margaret and Elgie were blessed with five children. Elgie Thompson Jr. preceded her in death. Her surviving children include two daughters, Alma Sampson of Tulsa, Oklahoma and Carolyn Cook of Piney View, West Virginia; two sons, Kenneth Thompson of Beaver, West Virginia and David Thompson of Lanark, West Virginia. She was also blessed with 11 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren and 1 great-great-grandchild. On August 16, 1999 family, friends and her spiritual family in Christ gathered at the church building in Piney View, West Virginia to pay tribute to one of the most Godly women this area has ever known. Saying goodbye was not easy but our sorrow was lightened knowing she had established her hope in Christ. It was my privilege, together with Lawrence Lore of St. Albans, West Virginia to celebrate her life and death in Christ.—David

Smith

SMITH—James A. Smith, age 68, a long-time member of the 19th St. Church of Christ in San Angelo, TX, passed away on July 30, 1999. He had been ill only briefly. His wife, Millicent, and his three children, Margaret, James, and Terry survive him. A sister, Sue McEver, also survives him. James was a good teacher and song leader but really excelled at leading a public prayer. The funeral service was conducted at the 10 St. church building exactly as he had directed. A packed house of friends and brethren sang many songs. Brother James had been a faithful member for many years and will certainly be missed by all.—Dwain R. Morrison

ALLEN—Mary Anna Allen was born April 23, 1930, in Ropesville, TX. She passed from this life August 23, 1999, in Mineral Wells, TX. She was married to Tandy Allen June 24, 1947, and Tandy preceded her in death in June of this year. She is survived by three sons: Clyde, Michael, and Calvin, all of Mineral Wells; two daughters: Sherlene Baeza and Teresa Nickols both of Mineral Wells; 8 grandchildren; two great grandsons; one brother: Lynn Perry; and three sisters: Lera Turner, Gladys Mainard, and Laura Pullum all of Mineral Wells. I had been friends with Mary, Tandy, and their family since they lived in Ada over forty years ago. I knew Mary to be a strong, hospitable woman, who loved the church and her family. She suffered physically a great deal in her last years, but we are confident she is now blessed, resting from her labors, and her works do follow her (Rev. 14:13). It was an honor for me to speak a few words of consolation and caution at the funeral.—Carl M. Johnson

RATLIFF—Ada Irene Ratliff was born June 25, 1901, in Wheeler, Indian Territory. She died August 15, 1999, in Healdton, OK at the age of 98. She was married to Bill Ratliff December 3, 1917, and he preceded her in death July 24, 1964. She is survived by two daughters: Juanita Bray of Healdton, OK, and Polly Smith of Mena, AR; two brothers: Lonnie Knutson, McLean, TX and Youel Knutson, Springfield, MO; six grandchildren, 15 great grandchildren, and 12 great-great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by a granddaughter, Kathy Henderson. As one of her grandsons observed at the funeral, Ada 'was one in a million.' Her life spanned almost the entirety of the twentieth century, and until just a couple of years ago she was independently active and vibrant; her mind sharp and witty; with a retentive memory that had people calling her "a walking encyclopedia of information." I loved Ada for her keen sense of humor, good cooking, genuine concern for others, and love of the church. An overflowing crowd gathered in the church building in Healdton to celebrate Ada's life and pay their respects to her memory. I've never heard more beautiful singing at a funeral than the congregational singing led by Glenn Bray. I was honored to be asked by the family to officiate the service along with Brother Mark Teel.—Carl M. Johnson

HUGHES—Florence Naomi Hughes of Cleburne, Texas passed from this life on Sunday, August 1, 1999 after a brief illness. Naomi was 66 years of age at the time of her passing. She was a member of the South Walnut Church of Christ in Cleburne. Naomi was well known in the North Texas area. She enjoyed visiting neighboring congregations

and attending gospel meetings. A large number from several congregations gathered for her memorial service in Cleburne on the following Thursday. Her father, C.V. Harris preceded her in death. Naomi is survived by her husband, Cecil of Cleburne, and her mother, Lora Harris of Fresno, CA. She is survived by two daughters, Phyllis Arbogast and Barbara Cornell, two sons, Howard Cornell and Kevin Cornell. She is also, survived by two brothers, two sisters, five grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. Naomi will be missed by her family, friends, and brothers and sisters in Christ. The writer endeavored to speak words of comfort and warning to those present.—Melvin Blalock

HEDGECOCK—Leslie Ann George Hedgecock passed away at Logan Regional Hospital on Aug. 21, 1999, due to cancer. She was 50. Leslie was born May 16, 1949, in Stockton, Calif., to Robert and Shirley George. In 1996, she moved to Logan to be closer to her children, Paul Hedgecock and Jennifer Hedgecock Dehek. After high school, Leslie attended beauty college in Santa Clara, Calif., where she graduated in 1971. Leslie struggled with medical problems throughout her life, but remained positive and strong, regardless of the trials she was faced with. Leslie was always supportive of her family and always tried to help in anyway she could. Leslie's hobbies mainly consisted of drawing, reading and spending time with her family. Leslie will continue to be loved and missed by her parents, Robert and Shirley; her children, Paul and Jennifer, friend Bill Hedgecock; her two younger sisters, Lynn and Gail George; and her three grandchildren, Miranda, Christen and Samantha. Graveside services were held at 11 a.m. in the Providence Cemetery.

PEARCY—Verda Evelyn Percy was born December 6, 1917 near Winnipeg, MO and departed this life Sept. 21, 1999 at Springfield, MO. In June 1936, she was married to Orrin Percy, who preceded her in death in 1959. She is survived by a daughter, Paula L. Maxey, of Springfield; two sons, James P. and Kenneth B. Percy, both of Lebanon, two brothers, Wayne Cook, of Laquey, MO, and Paul Cook, of Joplin, MO, a sister, Helen Sharp of Paris, MO, ten grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. Twin sons, Donald and David, preceded her in death. I considered it a great honor to be asked to speak at the funeral service for this sister in Christ. She was a long-time member of the church of Lebanon. She was a jolly person and always concerned and cared for others. She will be greatly missed. Funeral services were from Holman Funeral Home in Lebanon, with burial close to her home near Winnipeg.—Johnny Elmore



David Cauthman, 465 Finley, Montgomery, AL 36104, Oct. 4—I am the new preacher currently working with the church here in Montgomery. Things are going well. We have baptized eight recently, and we hope for more. If you

are passing this way, stop by and see us. Pray for us in the work.

—Ronny F. Wade, PO Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808, Oct. 4—The meeting closed at London, KY with one baptism. Crowds were large with outsiders present most every service. We enjoyed our visits with Brethren Arvil Baker and Phillip Scott, who both work in that area. The last weekend of the meeting Wyn Baker came over from West Virginia and was present for the last three services. It was good to have him. Next we were at Jacksonville, FL. It was a pleasure to be with Brother Phillip Prince who is now working full time in the field. We were encouraged with several visitors who came to be with us. Brother J.W. Kornegay spent the weekend and was a plus for the meeting. In November, the Lord willing, we plan to be at Mitchell, IN the 11th-14th, and at Cassville, MO the 17th-19th. If you are near either of these places, come and be with us. Remember us when you pray.

Shelby Taulbee, 51 Trammel-Boyce Rd., Scottsville, KY 42164—It has been sometime since I have submitted a report to the *Old Paths Advocate*. The congregations here in Kentucky have made advancements. We have placed bulletins in papers stating that we have been searching for a preacher to aid the church in Paducah. Isaac Bunner has accepted this position with great enthusiasm. He will be a great help in the community and church effort. I have recently conducted a meeting at the congregation in Scotland, Arkansas where Miles King and his wife attend. My wife and I enjoyed our visit and stay with the Kings. The attendance was splendid, filled with visitors from the community each evening. I also had the privilege of speaking at the Cedar Creek Church of Christ, which is near brother King's. The brethren of the area seemed to have great zeal in the Lord's work. I hope to hold more meetings in the future. Brother Miles King will be holding a meeting at the Paducah congregation on the second weekend in November, 12, 13, 14. All that are passing thru please come by and worship with us. I ask you earnestly to keep us and the church efforts in mind while praying.

Miles King, Rt. 1, Box 115, Scotland, AR 72141, (501) 592-3956, Oct. 9, 1999—A few weeks ago we had a good weekend meeting with Shelby Taulbee. We are now engaged in a meeting here at Scotland with Terry Baze. We are having good interest in this meeting. Our meeting at Birmingham, AL (Crescent Ridge) is Nov. 3-7 and Paducah, KY Nov. 12-14th. This week I was glad to hear Bro. Glen Osborn one night at Little Rock.

Barney Owens, 8782 Meadowview Ln., W. Chester, OH 45069—Since last reporting I have settled in here at home. A short meeting was enjoyable with the church on Parsons Ave. (Columbus, OH). This was my first with them. The fall will find me next with the Fossil Creek Church (Ft. Worth, TX) Nov. 13-21. Then with the Spring Valley Congregation (Huntington, WV) Dec. 3-5. I am looking forward to these. This month the church here (Sharonville) will have our regular fall meeting. Jimmie Smith is to preach and we are looking forward to his coming. I continually request the prayers of all. Harvesting souls

seems more difficult each year.

Douglas T. Hawkins, Rt. 1 Box 717, Mt. Vernon, KY 40456, (606) 256-8148, hawkins@kihn.et, Oct. 2, 1999—At this writing I am with the congregation in Fair Oaks, CA in the home of Charles and Barbara Everett. The meeting started with good interest and it seems like everyone is looking forward to it. It was good to have brethren Alan Bonifay and Greg Gay on the first night of the meeting. Both of these men are very busy with their respective works and highly respected by the brethren. As of late, I have been with the churches in Choteau, OK; Mt. Home, AR, and Hartwell, AR. We hope and pray that good was done in each place. I appreciate the opportunity to be with all of these brethren. Their hospitality couldn't have been better. Next, we will be with the churches in Liberty, KY (Hilltop) Nov. 7-14 and London, KY Nov. 17-21. Please note the announcement about the publishing of an old tract. May the Lord bless us as we "do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with him." (Micah 6:8)

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct, Bonner Springs, KS 66012, Oct. 6.—We have been having some good crowds at 79th and Kansas Ave., especially at our Lord's day worship services. Sept. 24-26, we had a young speakers meeting in which about fifteen young men did the teaching. They were not assigned subjects, but spoke on things they believed were needed and would be beneficial. The teaching was outstanding and the singing during the meeting was some of the best. The attendance was wonderful, with large crowds at every service. The Lord bless us all in our work for Him.

Greg Gay, 7821 Saybrook Dr., Citrus Heights, CA 95621, October 3, 1999—We were at Jamesville, Missouri near Springfield September 19-26, 1999. Jamesville was one of my monthly preaching appointments in the early 70's when I was a teenager so I really enjoyed going back for the meeting. Dan Paulson has attended there a few years and has just started to work with the congregation full-time. I think highly of Dan. He has helped Ronny Wade with the TV correspondence work for some years and is very active in visiting and studying in the area. He and his sweet wife Robin were my hosts during my stay. I could not have been treated better. One came over from digression during the meeting with more to follow soon we trust. Area congregations attended well and I enjoyed visiting with preaching brethren Dan Wissinger, Billy Dickinson, and Roy Lee Criswell. After the meeting closed the last Sunday I went home with Kent May for a visit and preached at N. Side Springfield Sunday night. It was good to see Ervin Barnes there. Our work at 64th. St. in Sacramento continues. We are looking forward to our meeting in October with Ronny Wade.

Bennie T. Cryer, 4635 Larkin Rd., Live Oak, CA 95953, Oct. 16—Bro. Don King and I just arrived back from Hawaii where we have been the last week. At the request of the brethren in Waipahu the Stockton and Fremont congregations sent us to work with the brethren there on certain matters that had come up. We seemed to have a successful work there and we enjoyed working with Bro.

Danao and Bro. Bayani once more. If you get a chance to visit the Waipahu congregation you will enjoy it very much. Joann and I have moved back to our home in northern California. We are working with the congregation that meets in Olivehurst. This is a small church with much potential and we are looking forward to much growth. We will certainly miss the brothers and sisters in Stockton. We expect to have a close working relationship with them in the months ahead. May God bless all of you.

Ryan J Connor, 1549 Black Oak Drive, Stockton, CA 95207—Sept 6th—The church here in Stockton continues to grow and develop. At the beginning of the summer we enjoyed a wonderful meeting with brother Aaron Risener. We all enjoyed the good preaching and edification during the meeting. Brian Kennedy, a young man who has grown up in a godly and faithful home, obeyed the gospel after the last service of the meeting. My wife Shannon and I spent some time this summer traveling through the mid-west. We were glad to attend the first part of the Sulphur meeting and the last part of the Lebanon meeting. From there we traveled to preaching appointments in Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas. It was a great experience for me. We enjoyed meeting and getting to know so many of our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are especially thankful to Doyle and Nancy Elliott, Marcus and Shonda Ayers, Steve and Sarah Ramsey, Sister Mildred Hermon, Smith and Mitzy Bibens, Wayne and LaRinda Bowan, Jim and Lynn Hyman, and Duane and Lori Permenter for opening the hospitality of their homes to us. We returned home in time for the West Coast Study held at Fair Oaks, CA. I had the privilege to be a part of this good study in presenting one of the topics, and enjoyed being able to hear and be blessed by all the good teaching. The Labor Day Meeting began the following week in Lodi, CA. I enjoyed being able to speak at the meeting, and spend time in fellowship with so many of the brethren here in California. My work here in Stockton with preaching and home Bible studies is in full swing. We have been blessed with two baptisms this year, and we are praying for more of God's increase. I am to be in Clovis, CA, September 24-26, and in El Centro, CA November 26-28. I am looking forward to these meetings.

Dennis E. Smith, P. O. Box 10868, Fort Smith, AR 72917-0868, (501) 452-5896, e-mail: dsmith46@juno.com, September 2nd—Please notice this is my new address and phone number. We will be moving from West Virginia to our new work with the congregation at Fort Smith, AR at the end of September. We will be moving our belongings to our new residence in Fort Smith next week, Lord willing. Our residential address in Fort Smith is: 9208 S. Gary. We look forward to the opportunities of this new work. We look forward to living in "the Ozarks" once again. I was with the congregation at Mozier, IL for a one week meeting in August. Many thanks to brethren who drove many miles to assist with the meeting. Special thanks to Ed and Jolene Bullard of Tupelo, OK and Glen and Roberta VanStavern and Jim and Pat Loudermilk of the Mission Hills congregation in Springfield, MO who all came up to assist and encourage us in the meeting. Thanks also to Eugene and Lucille Anderson for the hospitality of their home

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during the Mozier meeting. Greetings to our faithful brothers and sisters everywhere. May the Lord richly bless you.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, e-mail: old_paths@juno.com, Oct. 16—Bennie Cryer and I have just returned from a week's work with the brethren in Hawaii. We were asked to help them in some matters regarding the congregation in Waipahu, which we were glad to do. It was good to work with brethren Danao, and Bayani once again. It was also good to work with Bennie again. We have worked together quite a lot through the years and he is a worthy partner. Lord willing, we are to be at the Yuba City, CA congregation this coming Lord's day and then look forward to attending our meeting here with Carl Johnson. The next Lord's day, (Oct. 24-31) we are to begin with the Tulsa, OK (11th St) congregation and on to Lebanon, MO, Nov. 1-7. We ask your prayers for us in this work. We hope to be able to hear Ronny Wade in Lodi, CA this evening before their meeting closes tomorrow. May I take this opportunity to remind our preaching brethren to send field reports and articles regularly? It only takes a few minutes to send a report and then brethren everywhere can benefit from knowing your work. Let us hear from you next month. Also, remember that the price of the paper will increase to \$10 yearly with the January 2000 issue. Until then, feel free to renew for as long as you like at the old price of \$7. If you will send us ten subscriptions you may have yours free for a year. We need preachers and leaders to work for the paper. Please announce it when and where you can. It is a good work and needs your help.

Cecil E. Smith, 1285 Lucky Lane NW, Brookhaven MS. 39601, (601)833-4545—It is with great pleasure that I set down to send in a field report of the work here in MS. Just three days ago, on Sept. 10, about 1:15 in the morning, we received a call from one of the brethren in this area who had been studying with his sister and her husband about the importance of baptism. They had reached the conclusion that they needed to be baptized for the remission of their sins "right now." In less than an hour a few of us gathered at the building to witness their immersion into Christ. It is seldom we see such a desire in people today. Especially when we realize that this man was a United Methodist Minister up to the time of his immersion. The very next day he gathered a number of the people that he had been preaching for and let them know of his decision and his desire to follow the Bible. He quoted such passages as Mt. 21:23; Mt. 4:4; 1 Cor. 11:2 and others, showing the importance of the written word. He closed with Amos 3:3 by which he showed unto them he could no longer walk together with them for he no longer agreed with what they believed. Al did an excellent job, especially considering

that he was only about 38 hours old in Christ. Our hearts have been made to rejoice over Al and Kirsha Felder's desire to study the Scriptures daily. The brethren here have also been challenged to a debate as a result and we pray that much good might come in the near future. I hope this inspires all who read it to push the battle in Jesus' name with great zeal and fervor. We have recently enjoyed a good meeting with Billy Dickinson here at New Salem. May the Lord bless the faithful and those searching for the truth. Please make note of our address for we have recently moved from southern Indiana. We certainly miss the good brethren in that area. Please pray for us in our endeavors.

Don McCord, Box 1773, Covina, CA, Sept. 30 —This year's meetings to me have been a blessing; my sincerest, humble thanks to brethren who still let me preach for them. Meetings took me to Phoenix and Tucson, AZ, Porterville, CA, Mt. Home, MO, Temple, GA, Napoleon, AL, Valliant, OK, shorter meetings took me to Ceres and Oakdale, CA. Homes and hearts who gave me shelter: Art Lynch, Don Jones, Nyles Stein, Art Oestman, Crockett Byars, Clayton Fancher, Keith Karr, Ronnie Prince, John Tidmore, Joe Thompson. Visiting men preaching here were Larry Lay, Brian Elliott, Ron Jordan. Our spring meeting was with Ron Courter, who has no peer when it comes to depth and breadth of knowledge; all preachers young and old would do mighty well to sit at his feet for a season, knowledge that only comes from prolonged, consistent study of the Book; I salute him. Next month we have Richard Lechner for weekend meeting; in Nov., Carl Johnson comes for our fall meeting. A meeting not mentioned above is Midland, TX. What a joy to conduct a meeting with an eldership, without question qualified, in men such as Art Oestman and Alfred Baze; what a difference an eldership makes —the Lord's plan, no wonder! Duane Permenter works there; what a man; what an example for all young preachers, in attitude, word, and work! We are at peace here, because of brethren and sisters who love to get along, willing to "seek peace and ensue it," "love one another with a pure heart fervently," "let love be without dissimulation," speak "things which become sound doctrine," "valiant for the truth" in all things. I am honored to have them put up with me, with all the faults and failings I have. Lord, bless the church!

Johnny Elmore, 419 KSW, Ardmore, OK 73401, Oct. 6, bookman@brightok.net—As I write, I am preparing to go to Harrison, AR for a meeting beginning tonight. Jimmie Smith was here at Ardmore Sept. 24-26. For a short meeting, it was good, climaxing with a great singing over the fourth Sunday. The singing in October will be at Healdton, and then back at Ardmore for the fourth Sunday in November.

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. LXXIII

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NO. 12

CHRISTMAS AND ROMANS 14

By JERRY CUTTER

The purpose of this article is not to give the history of Christmas, for that is a well documented fact. Christmas is a combination of paganism, Catholicism and Christianity. The purpose of this article is to see if Romans 14, especially verses 5 and 6, will justify pagan holidays and thus Christmas.

In the New Testament, it is well understood that one is either by nature a Jew or a Gentile. It is also well understood that all Christians are one in Christ, regardless of their birth. However, and for the purpose of this article, it is important that one remember that Gentiles in early Christian usage were generally considered pagans, or idol-worshippers. Gentiles in the broadest sense, though, are non-Jewish people. All Cretians, for instance, were not liars, but the practice was so common among them that Paul agreed with one of their prophets that the Cretians were always liars (Titus 1:12-13). And thus, too, because of their idol-worship, Gentiles were generally considered by Jews as pagans and heathens.

This brings us to the subject at hand, Romans 14 and Christmas. It is understood that Paul is addressing both Jews and Gentiles in Romans 14. Not wishing to misrepresent what anyone has written or said on this important subject, I will quote from what has been written. First, the verses under dispute are Romans 14:5-6a, which state: "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it." A brother, in defense of Christmas, wrote: "The sixth verse of Romans fourteen states that whichever decision he makes about esteeming a day is acceptable to God." This assessment is correct, but only to the point that one remember that Romans 14 is dealing with matters that are not wrong in and of themselves, and thus before Romans 14 can be applied to Christmas it must be proved that Christmas is not wrong in and of itself. The above writer did not seek to prove that Christmas was not wrong in and of itself. The writer stretched what Paul clearly had under consideration, things not wrong in and of themselves, to something that was far removed from Paul's thinking, namely, Christmas.

The above quoted writer, without any proof at all, says: "Therefore, it cannot be successfully argued that the days under consideration were Jewish holidays rather than pagan ones." The writer's conclusion was: "In view of these facts [that is, that it cannot be successfully argued that the days under consideration were Jewish holidays

rather than PAGAN ONES], Paul's express statement is that a brother with a strong conscience—one that is scrupulous but not unnecessarily so—may choose as an individual or a family to esteem one day above another—even Christmas." The bold conclusion by the above writer was: "Having duly considered these matters and discovering no hindrance, individuals may on *their own private initiative* engage in the celebration of Christmas or any other holiday."

PAUL AND PAGAN HOLIDAYS

Christmas is a combination of paganism (idol-worship), Catholicism and Christianity. The above quoted writer agrees that there is a connection between Christmas and paganism but that "it cannot BE SUCCESSFULLY ARGUED that the days under consideration were Jewish holidays rather than pagan ones." The above writer did not say that Paul included pagan holidays in Romans 14, which is what he should have been doing, but rather, he shifted it over and simply said that it cannot "be successfully argued" that Paul did not have pagan holidays under consideration rather than Jewish holidays. Where is the proof that Paul included PAGAN HOLIDAYS in what he wrote in Romans 14:5-6? What the writer succeeded in doing was stating, without proof, that Christians can, on the basis of Roman 14, observe any holiday, even a pagan one. But to observe a holiday is to observe all that goes with it, and all that goes with a pagan holiday includes idolatry, for all pagans were idol-worshippers.

What was Paul's stand on paganism? Was he for or against pagan holidays? Is it an open question that cannot BE SUCCESSFULLY ARGUED? The first thing that the Holy Spirit, Paul and the brethren wrote the Gentiles in Acts 15 was: "That you abstain from meats offered to idols..." (vv. 20 and 29). "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" (II Cor. 6:16). And "how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (I Thess. 1:9). Or, I John 5:21, says: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." Under the Old Covenant, which is, among other things, "written for our learning" (Rom. 15:4 and I Cor. 10:11), we are told to "learn not the way of the heathen (Gentiles - nations)... for the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not, they are upright as the palm tree, but speak not; they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they

continued on page eight

CONTENTS

Vol. LXXIII No. 12



ADVOCATE

ANNOUNCEMENTS 9-10

Christmas And Romans 14 1

Editorial 2

The Querist Column 3

The Internet-Part 3 4

The Nature Of Man - Part 2 5

Bumfuzzled 7

FROM THE FIELDS 10-12

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Editorial

HAVE YOU NOTICED...?

By DON L. KING

As I go from place to place, I am amazed at some of the things I read. Recently, we noticed in a Christian Church publication that some of their congregations have removed the Lord's table from their buildings. This shows an obvious lack of thought for things divine. However, what was interesting was that the fellow who wrote about it was afraid for the future! He remarked that with this liberal tendency, how long would it be before some removed the crosses from within the church buildings?

Very interesting! Here is a fellow who is understandably concerned that his brethren care so little about the Lord's Supper that the table is only in the way. Therefore, it is removed from the building. He apparently saw no reason for alarm that for many years now his brethren have had little concern for the manner in which they observe the supper. The fact that their observance of it has been in an unscriptural manner for the last century didn't seem to concern him. He was accustomed to that, you see. However, the very idea that someone might also remove the cross from within the building was unthinkable.

This fellow, who was obviously well intentioned, equates the cross on the wall with the Lord's table! Have you ever noticed that when one allows the denominational world to "flavor" his religion in one area he soon sees other things as they do? Who would have thought that before the year 2000 such things would be the cause of concern? King Ahaz (2 Kings 16:1-18) learned the hard way that God is not pleased when men dare to move the ancient Landmarks of worship. Brother, there is coming a day of reckoning.

Have you ever noticed that the folks who preach love the most often show it the least? In the mail, in religious papers, in e-mails, etc., comes reminders on a daily basis that we do not show love as we should. The reason we are reprimanded is because we do not agree that brethren can worship any way they please. We insist that the Scriptures be the standard that all live and worship by. When some insist that innovative practices may be used and we refuse their doctrine, we are spoken to, and of, as though we are the "... offscouring of all things... (I Cor. 4:13)

When preachers and brethren depart from the truth, we insist that they do so without us. We also insist that we have the scriptural right and duty to preach the truth in the pulpits and on the printed page. Allow me to be plain: If you desire to include within your fellowship those who practice the use of the innovations (individual cups, Bible classes, instrumental music, etc.) you have gone too far for us. We cannot, in good conscience, fellowship those folks. We believe the Scriptures are plain regarding the worship. A schoolboy can see how the church is to worship. If you don't wish to worship as the Bible says, that is your business. However, when we choose to stay with the Bible way that is our business.

Love is not restricted to being demonstrated by tolerance. Paul said: "But God commendeth (demonstrated, DLK) his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8) If God saw love as some do,

continued on page nine

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Does Romans 16:1 teach that there were deaconesses in the church? What about B.W. Johnson's comment on this verse? (GA)

Answer: The verse in question reads "I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea." The word "servant" translates the Greek word (*diakonos*), sometimes translated "deacon" or "minister" in the New Testament. Its meaning is simply a "servant" or "one who renders service." In I Timothy 3:8-13, it refers to those who qualify and serve in the office of a "deacon." From this usage, we know that the word may be used to refer to those who serve in an official capacity. But, does the word always carry with it the idea of an "official" position? Certainly not, for if it did, all Christians would occupy the "office" since all Christians are servants (Mt. 20:26 and John 12:26). By the same line of reasoning policemen and soldiers would be "official" deacons in the church (Rom. 13:4), as would be Apollos (I Cor. 3:5), and Tychicus (Eph. 6:21). Since it is obvious that all the above mentioned could not possibly be "deacons" in an official sense, some compelling reason must be found in the context to force the conclusion that an official sense is intended. There is nothing in Romans 16:1 that compels us to conclude that Phoebe was in any official sense a "deaconess in the church." There is no doubt that she did, in some capacity, serve the church of which she was a member. It may well be that the degree or quality of her service was such that it merited special mention by Paul, but that is a far cry from establishing or sanctioning the "office" of deaconess in the early church. Some argue that Paul in I Timothy 3:8-13, while discussing the qualifications of deacons, inserts a comment about women that was intended to identify the qualifications necessary for female deacons. Verse 11 reads "Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things (KJV)." The word translated "wives" (*gunaikas*, from *gune*), it is argued, means women, without any inherent reference to marital status. The ASV translates the verse "Women in like manner must be grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things." Hence, these women were deaconesses and these were their qualifications. The arguments fall short, however, in the opinion of this writer, in making the case for such an office. If Paul meant deaconess, why didn't he say "the deaconess must be grave, not slanderers etc." Coffman makes a very astute observation when he says "...significantly, Paul said 'women,' not 'deaconesses,'" with the overwhelming probability that the women in view were the wives of the deacons whose qualifications Paul had just enumerated, and who, unless they also met certain standards, would have disqualified their husbands from serving as deacons." It is also noteworthy that if there is an office of deaconess in the church, it is nowhere clearly stated. Why did not Paul mention it when sending greetings to the church at Philippi? He did mention bishops and deacons (Phil. 1:1). If the word "women" in I Tim. 3:1 does not refer to the wives of deacons, but has a much wider application, that application must be understood in the light of other teaching on the role and work of women in the church as given throughout the New Testament scriptures. The conclusion must be that women may serve the church as Phoebe did (Romans 16:1), and as Euodia

and Syntyche did (Phil. 4:2-3), but there is no biblical evidence that the office of deaconess existed in the early church or was sanctioned by inspiration. Now as to Johnson's comment regarding this. In the *People's New Testament with Notes* he writes, A servant. The word is deacon in the Greek. The word also means "servant," as rendered, but we know that there were deaconesses in the church of the first century, and Paul, in giving her a recommendation, no doubt mentions her office. To say that she was a servant of the church, would convey no special distinction. In the East, where women were so much secluded, deaconesses would be a necessity. I Tim. 5:9,10, evidently refers to them; Ignatius, a companion of the apostles, mentions them in one of his epistles, and Pliny does also, in his famous letter to Trajan, early in the second century." We have already noticed the idea that the word "servant" should be taken in an official sense in Romans 16:1, we will now notice his argument about I Timothy 5:9-10 and the reference to deaconesses by early writers. First of all the widows of I Tim. 5 were more in need of being helped than being in a position to help others. If they had been faithful servants of the Lord, meeting the apostolic qualifications set forth by Paul, they now were worthy of support from the church. Note that they are called "widows" not "deaconesses." Does it not seem strange that such would not be mentioned had that been their "official" designation? It seems to this writer that it takes a great stretch of the imagination to claim that these good women served in any capacity other than that of faithful servants of the Lord whose lives were exemplary and whose good deeds were well known by all. In the absence of additional biblical evidence, what else can we conclude? The letter to the Emperor Trajan to which B.W. Johnson refers reads, in part, as follows: "I judged it so much the more necessary to extract the real truth, with the assistance of torture, from two female slaves, who were styled deaconesses; but I could discover nothing more than depraved and excessive superstition." The word that Pliny used in Latin for "deaconesses" could just as well be translated "servants." He actually only reported that he had tortured (Pliny was an enemy of Christians) two slaves who were called servants by themselves or someone else. As we have already learned any Christian can be called a servant. But suppose from this quotation, or others, it could be established that deaconesses had been introduced into the church of that day, what would it prove? Only that an unauthorized practice, not mentioned in the New Testament, was in existence. I must therefore conclude that B.W. Johnson, though in many ways an excellent commentator, is wrong in his comments regarding this verse.

(Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808, e-mail rf Wade@juno.com)

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THE INTERNET - PART 3

By GREG GAY

THE DARKER SIDE - PORNOGRAPHY

Pornography is not new, but thanks to the Internet it has a new means of distribution. No longer are dirty pictures confined to magazines behind the counter at the convenience store where the covers are covered so as not to offend. Now, such filth is in your face, literally, and easily. I have heard the top requests for information on Internet search engines are sexually related.

Pornography on the Internet can be pictures or live camera action. I was asked to answer the question, is *looking at pornography on the Internet fornication*? While I don't believe looking at Internet pornography constitutes fornication I do believe it is sinful.

There are several sins that describe viewing pornography, whether or not on the Internet. One is lasciviousness.

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness (Galatians 5:19).

Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness (Ephesians 4:19).

For the time past of our live may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelling, banquetings and abominable idolatries: (1 Peter 4:3).

Vine's describes the work lasciviousness as "Excess, licentiousness, absence of restraint, indecency, wantonness." He also says "the prominent idea is shameless conduct" (Page 310).

Such would also be condemned as a "worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world (Titus 2:12).

God intends there to be a privately shared ownership of bodies between spouses.

The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife (1 Corinthians 7:4).

I believe part of what this verse means is a man's body not only belongs to him it also belongs to his wife, and a wife's body not only belongs to her it also belongs to her husband. There are hardly any exceptions to this. One of the few that come to mind would be when we are being treated a by a physician.

Proverbs 5:15-23 proves our standard of satisfaction in all areas of physical intimacy is supposed to be our spouse.

Drink waters of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets. Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee. Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love. And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

Viewing pornography in any form sets up a different standard of satisfaction from that God intends. In fact, pornography becomes the devil's tool because the person

seeks satisfaction with an insatiable thirst for more that will not be quenched. By contrast, God's standard is complete satisfaction with the person to whom we have vowed to be married for life. So, pornography is not for single people because God wants them to save their bodies and their minds for the one they will marry. Pornography is not for married people, because our spouse is to be our standard of satisfaction in intimacy.

ANOTHER DANGER OF THE INTERNET IS: THE APPEARANCE OF CREDIBILITY

Just because someone has their own Website does not mean what they have to share is credible. The Heaven's Gate Cult whose leader and members committed suicide designed Websites as a revenue source. I remember hearing that their own site was very professional in its appearance even though their message and purpose was evil. When I was in high school I learned a typed paper was given a better grade than a handwritten paper, even if the material was exactly the same. Why? Because the typed paper looked better, it looked official.

HOW CAN A WEB PAGE BE CONTROLLED AND WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS CONTENTS?

On the Internet any website can look official. There is no official Church of Christ web page, nor will there be. Individuals may work with congregations who have decided to have a site, such as "The Church of Christ on Exchange Parkway" in Allen, Texas as edited by David Risner. Other sites are owned by individuals, including sites by young people. Virtually anyone today can have their own website on the Internet and post materials of their choosing on their site. The only way I know of to control a site is through influence with the individual or congregation who owns the site. If a website is objectionable the best thing to do is to avoid it all together. It is like a TV channel that presents objectionable shows. You don't have to go there. Just leave it alone. Let the website die the death of obscurity it deserves. But I would recommend this correspondence about an objectionable webpage among us: make two phone calls or write two letters, or two E-mails. One to the individual who owns the site voicing your objection. The second to the leadership of the congregation where they worship telling them what you have seen at the site and that you think it is inappropriate. This is not a private sin that requires us to go privately to the individual. This website is available for millions of people. Go straight to the leadership and expose the wrong for what it is. A website is not a license for the airing of false doctrine that is exempt from the disciplinary process of the church. This is a new area for congregation's leaders to consider but I believe this is important. If a member of the church were to start their own radio program we would not ignore that. Neither would a website be ignored. It too, is a broadcast, just like a radio program waiting to be listened to.

Leaders, what that means is you have to know your flock in this area. You have to know if anyone in your congregation has a website and what they are saying. Why? Because this is a public medium of information that is being broadcast to the world. Now, let me say this. If a congregation would not let a man teach in their pulpit why would they ignore what the same man is spreading from his website? What a person puts on their website if not their

own business, it is not exempt from scrutiny, because of its very public nature.—OPA

THE NATURE OF MAN - PART 2

By RYAN CONNOR

SPIRIT AND SOUL AND BODY

A popular nursery rhyme asks, "What are little boys and girls made of?" The answers provided by this nursery rhyme are not a little less than conventional. Personally, I never appreciated the ingredients of snails and puppy dog tails. Nonetheless, the question is well and proper. Having considered what are the three components that combine to make our human nature, we ought to focus on each one more closely. For emphasis we ought to reverse the order presented in 1 Thess. 5:23, noticing first body then soul and finally spirit.

THE BODY OF MAN

The Bible teaches in Genesis 2:7 that the body of man was formed from the dust of the ground: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (KJV) Before man became a living being ("living soul," KJV) he was a perfect, wonderfully made, but lifeless body. The "breath of life" had to be inbreathed into his nostrils to bring forth life. At death the body returns to dust. Psalm 104:29 states, "You hide Your face, they are troubled; you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. 'What is it that was formed out of the dust? The body. 'Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it" (Ges. 12:7).

It may be noted that the Hebrew word *aphar* rendered dust in their passages is simply defined by Gesenius as: "dust, dry earth" (P. 615). In Genesis 3:15 the implication is that the dust out of which man is formed, specifically, is the ground or soil that he will cultivate for food "in the sweat of (his) face." R.P. Smith comments.

As regards man's body, Jehovah forms it dust from the ground the *adamah*, or fruitful arable soil, so called from Adam, for whose use it was specially fitted, and by whom it was first titled. But the main intention of the words is to point out man's feebleness. He is made not from the rocks, nor from ones of metal, but from the light shifting particles of the surface, blown about by every wind (p. 84)

If we were to chemically analyze our material bodies we would find that in fact the body is made of dust. Don DeWalt makes the following statement:

There are more chemical elements in the earth than in the body of man, but all the elements in man's body are to the earth, earthy. (We have facetiously observed that mixed with a little water your name is mud) (Boatman, p. 352)

Animal creation was also formed from the ground, according to Genesis 2:19. Man, however, has dominion over the animals, and God is interested in man far above the animals, it is not the body of man that interests God so much. In fact, the Bible says, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15:50)

It is evident that the body is liable and subject to death, Paul says, "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lust" (Rom. 6:12). The body is mortal. Furthermore, the body is corruptible, dishonorable, weak and natural, according to 1 Corinthians 15:42-44). As we age our bodies degenerate, and finally die. The Gentiles made idols in the image of "corruptible

man" (Rom. 1:23); clearly indicating that the body is the corruptible part of man that returns to the dust at death. The Greek word rendered corruptible here is the same word rendered perishable in 1 Corinthians 9:25 according to the NKJV.

Death is tied up in the flesh. The Bible affirms in the first chapter of the gospel of John that Christ existed before he became flesh (Jn. 1:1-3). But Jesus Christ became flesh (Jn. 1:14) that He might be "put to death in the flesh" (1 Pet. 3:18). The Hebrew letter explains more fully.

Therefore when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you had not pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come—in the volume of the book it is written of Me—to do Your will, O God.'" "Previously saying, 'Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them' (which are offered according to the law), then He said, 'Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.'" He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God (Heb. 10:5-12, italics-RJC).

Without a body made of the "dust of the ground" Jesus Christ could not have provided the one sacrifice for sins forever. He could not have "suffered once of sins...being put to death in the flesh." This makes it abundantly clear that the body dies, returns to the dust. As the Apostle Paul says, "our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day."

Thank God for the hope we have in Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul declares, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and his mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up to victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory.'" The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:53-57).

We must not relegate the body of a prison or tomb—something from which to desperately escape. Indeed, the body is important and essential. The Apostle Paul explains, "For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a home not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up for life" (2 Cor. 5:1-4). Notice that Paul does not desire to be "unclothed, but further clothed." Our bodies are important, allowing us to express ourselves in the material world in which we live. It is the "earthly house" of the spirit within

us. The illustration of "this tent (tabernacle—KJV) is not accidental. The body of man, which houses the spirit of man is compared to the tent of tabernacle, which housed the Spirit of God, and was carried from place to place by the Israelites as they wandered in the wilderness. John used the same illustration referring to the body of Jesus (John 2:19-21) "Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." But He was speaking of the temple of His body." The Apostle Paul illustrates the body of many similarly. "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me" (2 Pet. 1:13-14, KJV). The body is important, but we can "put off" the body.

Man is not wholly body, but it is an occupant of the body, and as such is responsible for the way he uses his body. The Apostle Paul exhorts, "flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are Gods" (1 Cor. 6:18-20). Man must use his body to glorify God. Man will be "recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10, NASB). So man must take care of his body, providing for its needs and protecting it from potential dangers.

It is true that the Bible teaches that man at death may exist in a disembodied state (Luke 16:19-31, in Abraham's bosom, or in torment; 23:43, in paradise; and Phi. 1:23, with Christ). However, man will not be perfected until he receives a new body (Phil. 3:11-12) D. Edmond Hiebert comments,

The body is the outward, material part of man, the instrument through which the inner life expresses itself, it is an essential part of man as created by God (Gen. 2:7), and in the biblical view, man is incomplete without a body. Our salvation will not be completed until we receive our glorified bodies at Christ's return (Heb. 11:40; Phi. 3:20-21) (p. 269).

THE SOUL OF MAN

The words translated soul in the Bible literally means breath. It is easy to see why this word is used in reference to living creatures, since breathing signifies life. Strong defines the Hebrew word *nephesh* (soul): "properly, a breathing creature."

Soul is used in various ways. It sometimes is used in reference to life after the grave: "For You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption" (Acts 2:27). It is sometimes used in reference to animal life: "Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life (soul)" (Gen. 1:30). These two extremes, represent the very specific usage and the more general usage of the word soul in the Bible. *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*, edited by Wesley J. Perschbacher, lists the following eight meanings for soul (Gk. *psuche*):

breath; the principle of animal life, Matt. 2:20, 6:25; Mark 3:4; Luke 21:19; John 10:11, et al; an inanimate being, 1 Cor. 15:45; a human individual soul, Acts 2:41; 3:23;

7:14; 27:37; Rom. 13:1; 1 Pet. 3:20; the immaterial soul, Matt. 10:28; 1 Pet. 1:8; 2:11, 25; 4:19, et al., the soul as the seat of religious and moral sentiment, Matt. 11:29; Acts 14:2, 22; 15:24; Eph. 6:6, et al.; the soul, as a nest of feeling, Matt. 12:18, 26:38, et al.; the soul, the inner self, Luke 12:19 (Luke 12:23) (p. 444).

It is possible for soul to stand by metonymy for the whole person. The Bible speaks of the "eight souls" that were saved in Noah's Ark (1 Pet. 3:20). Bauer, Amdt, and Gingrich offer as the second definition for soul (Gk. *psuche*): "by metonymy that which possesses life or a soul (s. gen. 1:24) a living creature..." (p. 902). This usage seems more like a sneedoché than a metonymy, but either way it is a figurative manner of referring to the whole person. Guy N. Woods makes the following assessment:

The New Testament equivalent of *nephesh* is *psuchee*, the Greek term translated soul in the Christian scriptures. Of its 103 occurrences in the New Testament, it is translated life 41 times, soul 57 times, three times by the word mind, one by head, one heartily. It is most significant that it is never rendered by the word spirit. Being a generic term, it is used, in the scriptures, to denote (1) life, which man, and beasts, lose at death; (2) the entire person (a living being), Acts 2:41; (3) the seat of feeling, hence, the heart; (4) the immortal nature of man which may, as Thayer declares, "by the right use of aids," secure for itself eternal blessedness. In this sense alone is it properly regarded as designating that part of man which never dies. When thus used. It describes that part of the human constitution which is also denominated spirit, but it by no means follows that soul and spirit are convertible or interchangeable terms. And, where the word soul refers to the immortal nature (as Revelation 6:6-9), the usage must be regarded as figurative. Inasmuch as the spirit is not dependent on breath for life! The life which the soul designates is figuratively regarded as extending beyond mere physical existence. This part of the nature of man is usually called the spirit. (p. 232).

As Woods makes clear, the word soul is a generic term. The word can be used in many ways, but its basic meaning as defined in any Greek lexicon is life, life-principle (BAG, p. 901). The passages that distinguish between soul and spirit have this more specific meaning of soul in view.

The Bible says concerning the creation of man that "the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). The inbreathing of the breath of life might be considered as the first instance of CPR, Adam Clarke comments,

Of the soul if is said, God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, *nismat* (heb 5397) *chaylym* (heb 2416), the breath of LIVES, i.e., animal and intellectual. While this beast of God expanded the lungs and set them in play, his inspiration gave both spirit and understanding. (Adam Clarke, *Computer Software, BibleSoft*, 1998, CD-ROM).

The "breath of life" is under consideration in 1 Kings 17:17, "Now it happened after these things that the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him." This simply meant that the boy had no life left in him. The Bible teaches that before God breathed into the nostrils of man the breath of life there was basically a lifeless body (i.e., dead). Once the breath of life was in man, he became "a living soul." The animals are declared to be "living creatures" in Genesis 1:20, 24. This is no different

from how man is described here in Genesis 2:7. Furthermore, Genesis 7:22 teaches that animals have the "breath of life" in common with man. As we have noticed, the basic meaning of the word *soul* is life, life-principle. Since both man and animal creation can be described as having a soul, (physical life exhibited by breathing) the it cannot be the soul that makes man so special to God.

The Bible speaks of saving souls so much that it may seem strange to talk about the soul dying. But it is proper to understand the soul as dying. The Bible teaches that the blood sustains the life of the body (Medical science has established this as a fact as well). Moses says, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood...for it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life" (Lev. 17:11, 14). Life cannot

exist without blood. Drain enough blood from the body and it will die. Therefore, soul (in its more specific meaning of life, life-principle) in this sense cannot exist apart from the body and is not eternal in nature. Again, we note that Paul says, "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15:50). Both body and soul are connected with earthly life, and cannot exist beyond it. Nevertheless, at the resurrection we are told that "we shall all be changed...and the dead will be raised incorruptible..." We shall receive a new body, a spiritual body fitted especially for our eternal abode.

(In Part three we shall discuss Man's spirit and the image of God in man)

BUMFUZZLED

By JERRY DICKINSON

Driving home one afternoon I heard the following amusing report by a commentator on the radio. "President Clinton," began the commentator, "In a speech today declared that the American public is bumfuzzled because of the constant bickering between the White House and the Congress over the budget. The president said that the public keeps hearing about an unprecedented budget surplus and yet there is bickering about whether we have the money for necessary programs. People must be bumfuzzled, declared the president."

After a dramatic pause the commentator continued. "The real question is," announced the commentator, "What does bumfuzzled mean?" The commentator then had a professor from Pepperdine University come on the air and explain that the word "bumfuzzled" has been around for about 35 to 40 years and is used mainly in the southwestern part of the United States. It is a colloquial word that means confused, dazed, or bewildered. I was raised in the southwestern part of the United States, of course, so I found the whole thing more than a little amusing. I thought everyone knew what the word "bumfuzzled" meant!

This radio report got me to thinking. The reason, the president declared, that people are bumfuzzled is, in his view, there is an inconsistency in the rhetoric of politicians. They talk about a surplus on one hand and then about not having money for programs on the other. I certainly am no politician, and have no desire to be, but I thought, people are bumfuzzled in religion too. And the reason for the confusion and bewilderment is inconsistency between preaching and practice. Religious leaders profess one thing and then practice something entirely different. It is enough to bumfuzzle anybody! Note some examples:

I. Guided by the Holy Spirit, but in different directions. Jesus told the apostles that the Holy Spirit would teach them "all things" and guide them into "all truth." (John 14:26 & 16:13) Truth is always consistent with itself. The Holy Spirit is not going to tell one preacher one thing and another preacher something else. Several years ago I had some Mormons come to my door and I talked with them for a good while. Of course they claimed to be led by the Spirit and to have the truth in religion. I asked them how I could be sure they were telling me the truth. "How do I know you have the spirit of truth?" I asked them? "After all, the Jehovah's Witnesses claim they have the spirit of truth, the Pentecostal groups claim they are led by the spirit, and so forth. All these groups claim to be led by the Holy Spirit into all truth, but they disagree on major doctrinal

points. How can I know who has the truth?"

"Pray to God," was their answer, "And he will tell you we have what all the different groups say." I replied. "They all claim to be led by the Holy Spirit and yet they cannot agree on what the Holy Spirit teaches!" No wonder people are bumfuzzled! Does the same Holy Spirit lead all the different churches in different directions? How absurd! Obviously, the Holy Spirit does not lead them at all. In fact, the Holy Spirit leads no one apart from the message He has revealed through the apostolic writings. How utterly foolish to assert that the Holy Spirit inspired the apostles to write down one thing in the scriptures and then reveals something entirely different and contradictory to some preacher today.

A man was at my house the other day doing some work and he told me his son had been to hear a woman preach. His son went up to the altar to pray, and while there a voice spoke to him, telling him that this woman was a true prophetess of the Lord. The man (knowing I was a preacher) asked me what I thought about that voice. "It was not the Holy Spirit!" I replied emphatically. Surprised, he responded, "Who do you think it was?" "I do not have to answer that, but I know it was not the Holy Spirit!"

He asked me how I could be so sure and I explained that the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write in I Corinthians 14:34,35 that it was a shame for a woman to speak in church. Surely, I told him, the same Holy Spirit would not tell your son this woman was a true prophetess after the Spirit told Paul a woman ought not to be preaching in public. The man was bumfuzzled by my answer. No wonder! When people teach and believe that the Holy Spirit reveals one thing in the Bible and then reveals something totally opposite to people today, it is enough to bumfuzzle anybody. May the Lord help folks to understand that the Holy Spirit speaks to us today through, and only through the written Word of God!

2. There is one church, but unity is impossible. If you think about it, this is exactly what most professed Christians teach and believe. There is only one body of Christ, but that one body is made up of people who belong to churches that are different and diverse in name, worship, organization, structure, and doctrine. There is one body made up of a bunch of little bodies that do not look alike, act alike, sound alike, or even believe alike. It is bumfuzzling! And what is even more alarming, most people believe it is all but impossible to achieve unity in the body of Christ. I repeat that unity is, they believe -

impossible. The man who operated the television station in McAlester, Oklahoma when I lived there back in the seventies told me one time that he even believed that God intended for there to be so many different and differing churches. That way, he suggested, people could be happy in a church that met their needs.

God intended all these differing bodies that claim to be a part of the one body of Christ? That is not what I read in the New Testament! Jesus prayed in John 17 that his followers would be one as he and the Father are one. Jesus and the Father are one in doctrine, practice, and purpose. Jesus did not pray, "Father, let them believe different doctrines, teach contradictory things, worship anyway they please, and practice as pure religion things never mentioned in the Scriptures - even, Father, as you and I."

There is only one body, and the unity of all the disciples and all the churches of Christ is manifest as we "endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:1-4) One time there was a preacher who rode a train to a town to hold a meeting. He picked up his suitcase and briefcase and stepped off the train and started walking toward town. Two boys ran up and offered to carry his bags for him. Mister, we will carry your bags for a dollar each." The preacher consented, gave the bags to the boys, and continued walking. "What are you in town for?" asked one of the boys. "I am a preacher and I am here to hold a gospel meeting," he replied. "Which branch do you preach for?" asked the other boy. "Boys, I do not preach for a branch, I am a branch myself! In John 15, Jesus said, 'I am the vine and ye are the branches.' He was not talking about different churches as branches of the one true church; he was talking about individual Christians. There is only one body of Christ, and I am a member of that body, or if you will, a branch in the vine."

After listening to the preacher's sermonette, one of the boys looked at the other one and exclaimed, "I'll bet you my dollar against yours he's a preacher for the church of Christ!" Hopefully, those of us who are members of the church of Christ are not the only ones left who teach the fact that there is only one body (church), but that is certainly the distinctive teaching of the New Testament. The ideology that teaches the one church of Christ is splintered into hundreds of little churches is a bumfuzzled attempt to justify people practicing Christianity any and every way they desire. It is certainly not what the Bible teaches!

The Bible contains a pattern, but you do not have to follow it. Believe it or not, that is the position held by many in religion today. Yes, the Bible is a pattern for us in our worship and in our service to God, but no, we do not have to follow that pattern. Talk about a bumfuzzled mess! I heard a preacher on the radio awhile back defending his denomination against attacks made by the Charismatics. "Because we do not speak in tongues and shout in our

church," the preacher proclaimed, "Charismatic and Pentecostal people claim we in the mainline denominational church have no spirit. They say we are dead."

"Well," he continued, "I want to share a scripture with our Pentecostal friends. In I Corinthians 14 Paul says that tongue speakers are to speak one at a time, and if there is no one to interpret then the tongue speakers should not even speak in the assembly. Our Charismatic friends need to start following that scripture before they start criticizing us for not having any spirit." Well said, I thought to myself as I listened. But then the preacher went on to say the following. "I am not saying that there is anything wrong with the way our Pentecostal friends worship," the preacher added. "All I am saying is do not criticize us if you are not willing to follow the teaching of the Apostle Paul."

I could hardly believe it. The preacher just pointed out to his Pentecostal friends that they were not following the pattern set down in the Scriptures, and then turned right around and said it did not really matter. The Scriptures furnish a pattern for our worship, but we do not really have to follow the pattern. Does that make sense to you? Me neither! Paul praised the Corinthians because they kept the ordinances as delivered. (I Cor. 11:1,2) Note two things: (1) there are ordinances to be kept, and (2) Paul praised them because they kept the ordinances just as they were delivered to them. Suppose Paul had said, "I delivered some ordinances to the church at Corinth, but if you decide not to keep them, don't worry about it. It does not really matter if you keep the ordinances or not. Do what ever you want to do." How bumfuzzled would the Corinthians have been had Paul said such a thing? Of course, he did not. The Bible does indeed furnish a pattern for us in our worship, work, and service. The Lord certainly intends for us to follow the pattern, or else he would never have given it.

There are many other areas where the inconsistency between profession and practice is bumfuzzling. Christians teach that we believe in peace and the sanctity of human life, and yet how many wars are fought in the name of God. Chaplains preach a sermon and pray in the name of the Lord Jesus, then send soldiers into battle to destroy and kill. We decry heathenism and pagan cultures, and then participate in practices that are steeped in pagan tradition. It is, I repeat, bumfuzzling. Let us do our best to practice what we preach. May the world see Jesus clearly in all we say and do. We are, after all, the best hope people in the world have to see through the confused and bumfuzzled mess that is presented as Christianity today.

Christ has no hands but our hands to do his work today. He has no feet but our feet to lead men in his way. We are the only Bible this careless world will read. We are the sinner's gospel, we are the scoffers creed.

CHRISTMAS AND ROMANS 14

continued from page 1

cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good" (Jer. 10:1-5).

Paul's instructions to Gentile Christians in Ephesian 4:17 was, "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind." The NIV says: "So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do..." James Moffat translates it: "Now in the Lord

I insist and protest that you must give up living like pagans..." Or, the Amplified has it: "That you must no longer live as the heathen (the Gentiles) do..."

We have now SUCCESSFULLY ARGUED that Paul did not include PAGAN HOLIDAYS in what he wrote in Romans 14:5-6.

WHY DO CHRISTIANS KEEP CHRISTMAS?

One of the main reasons why Christians keep Christmas is because the world does. No Christian is keeping Christmas (literally, Christ-mass) because it is found in the Bible, for it cannot be found in the Scriptures, and the

pagan and Catholic nature of it violates what is clearly taught in the Bible. If the world stopped observing Christmas, then Christians would stop, also. Or, if the world even changed the day Christmas is observed, some Christians would follow along. And the fact is, the whole world does not keep Christmas on the same day. The Roman church and the Greek Orthodox keep it on different days. And if Christians did no more than is found in the Scriptures relative to Christmas, they would do no more at Christmas time than they would do any other day of the year.

EDITORIAL

continued from page 2

He would simply have tolerated us in our sins. However, God would not do that. He gave His only Son so that we could be free of that sin. The reason repentance is so important is because God will not tolerate one remaining in sin! The message of Luke 13:3 is plain! Repent or perish.

We cannot speak for everyone; but speaking personally, we can say that we do not speak to or about anyone the

The subject has nothing to do with birthdays, giving gifts, or in the keeping of holidays that in no way violate the Scriptures. The reason why some feel compelled to prove Christmas by the Scriptures is because it is religious in nature, and deeply rooted in paganism and Catholicism. Until it can be successfully argued that one can keep a pagan holiday, no Christian should observe Christmas.

From heaven this strong warning has been sounded: "Come out of her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues..." (Rev. 18:4).

way we are spoken to and of. Brother, if that is your way of showing me how much you love me, my prayer is that you never become angry with me!

One of the identifying marks of love is that it is kind. Paul said: 'Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.' (I Corinthians 13:4) By the way, the meaning of the word "vaunteth" means to brag, a braggart. May God hasten the day when folks don't brag about their love but demonstrate it. Think on these things. DLK

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A NEW TRACT

In July we printed a special issued called "What is Wrong in Religion?" It was well received. Many asked that we put it in tract form. We have done that and it is now ready for delivery. The booklet is 20 pages in length and deals with such things as sprinkling for baptism, faith only, instrumental music, Bible classes, individual cups, etc. The editors of *Old Paths Advocate* cover a total of ten topics. Every congregation needs this tract in the rack at the back of the building. Every preacher needs it to use in personal work. Every member of the church will find the information useful. New members should find the material indispensable to their studies. The price is \$35 per hundred plus postage. Single copies are 50 cents each in quantities less than 100. When you order, look at the postage on the package and send it to us, please. Order from *Old Paths Advocate*, c/o Kendall Cook, 1978 N. Farm Rd., 89, Springfield, MO 65802. We have gone to considerable expense to provide this for the brotherhood. Let us hear from you soon, please. DLK

THE CONGREGATION IN HILO, HAWAII

Due to failing health, Brother Bayani will move back to Honolulu very soon. This means the place of worship will be moved from his home to another place. If you plan to be in Hilo (on the big island) follow these directions to the place of worship. From Hilo airport, when you reach the freeway, turn left and follow Volcano Rd until you reach mile marker 9 1/2 where you should turn right. When you reach the first road make another other turn. The second house on the left side is Brother Bascua's home. The church meets here. We advise that you call Brother Danao in Honolulu prior to your visit. Phone (808) 680-0249.

OKLAHOMA NEW YEAR'S MEETING

The annual Oklahoma New Year's Meeting will begin with the evening service on Sunday, December 26 and end as usual at midnight on December 31. Evening services

will start at 7:30 PM and morning services at 10:00 AM. The meeting will be held in the Putnam City High School which is located at 5300 N.W. 50th Street, in Oklahoma City. For those staying in the hotel complex around I-40 and Meridian Street, go north on Meridian for approximately four miles and turn left (west) a few blocks. You may also refer to a map included with a previous announcement in the September issue of the OPA. Please note that this location is a change from recent years, a move that was required because last year's crowd seriously exceeded the fire code for that building. The meeting is sponsored this year by the Oakwood Church of Christ in Edmond, Oklahoma. A list of hotels offering reduced rates have been mailed to churches. Should that information not be available to you, you may call Rick Sprague at (405) 330-2829. You may also find this and additional information at a church website at: <http://www.newtestamentchurch.org>. The theme of the meeting is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever." If you will be attending the meeting for the first time this year, please write the church a note (Oakwood Church of Christ, P.O. Box 1223, Edmond, OK 73083) telling us where you are from and the names of those in your party. We want to make a special effort to see that newcomers do not "fall through the cracks" and fail to have good association with fellow Christians. We look forward to seeing all of you.—Oakwood Church of Edmond, Oklahoma

1999 PREACHERS' STUDY

Survey of the Old Testament: Part 2 is the topic of the annual Preachers' Study for 1999. The host this year is the congregation that meets on Green Oaks Blvd. in Arlington, Texas, and the dates are Monday, December 20, beginning at noon, through Thursday, December 23, ending after the night session. This will complete an exciting study we began in 1997 in which speakers presented topics on the first part of the Old Testament. This study will begin with the prophet Daniel and will continue through the remainder of the prophets, including a session on the Restoration of Israel; then it will include Esther, an introduction to Hebrew Poetry, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon,

Ecclesiastes, closing with The Silent Years (Between the Testaments). Response to the first study indicated it was very interesting and educational; and we look for the same as we anticipate this year's study. We hope that many preachers and church leaders will choose to be with us. For more information, please call J.B. Spradley (817) 473-9972, Tom Crouch (817) 4572301, or Joe Norton (817) 465-4933.

A NEW BOOK

Drawing Water from the Wells of Salvation is the title of a new book being published by Doug Edwards. Its purpose is to unfold the prophecies of the Old Testament in such a manner that the power and beauty of the New Testament church gleams brightly. It is not designed to answer all of the arguments of the Premillennialist, though it is evident within the text that such a system of interpretation is wrong. It is designed on a more positive note - to explain the message of the prophets concerning the kingdom of God as it is revealed in the New Testament. The cost of the book is \$12.95 plus \$1.25 in postage. Order from Doug Edwards, 104 N. E. 8th Street, Moore, OK 73160

SEEKING PREACHER

The congregation at La Marque, Texas is actively seeking a preacher to work full-time with them in personal work and in the services of the church. Please submit references if interested to: Dr. John Barfoot, P.O. Box 987, Santa Fe, Texas 77510. Phone evening 409-925-8869, days 409-9251803.

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

LUIS-FRENCH—Saturday afternoon, October 16, 1999 Humberto Luis and Kari French were married in a beautiful setting in Redding, California before a large crowd of friends and relatives. Humberto was converted into Christ in Benicia, California a few years ago and is a fine young member of the church. Kari is a wonderful faithful young lady, the daughter of James and Michelle French of Redding. We have many good memories in common with this family. Our oldest son Chris was the ring bearer 'in James and Michelle's wedding 20 years ago. I studied with James and Michelle before they married and I was honored to hold pre-marital studies with Humberto and Kati and to perform their ceremony.—Greg Gay

PRESLEY-LORTON—A large number of friends, loved ones and well wishers gathered July 30, 1999 at the Earlytown meeting house to attend the wedding service for Bro. Kevin Presley and Sister Bethany Lorton. The setting in the rural countryside was peaceful and beautiful. The occasion was supplied with beautiful singing such as we all know and love by a number of talented and close friends. Bro. Bruce Roebuck a close and dear friend stood with Bro. Kevin and his lovely wife stood with Bethany. People from over the brotherhood were there to wish them well. It was indeed a singular honor for me to be asked to perform this service and to witness the pledging of their troths. We wish for them happiness and success in the great work in which they are engaged. They are greatly loved in their community as well as elsewhere. As an old teacher wrote in my autobiography book upon the occasion of my

graduation from high school, "May there be only enough clouds in your life to make a perfect sunset."—M. Lynwood Smith

OUR DEPARTED

THOMPSON—Margaret A. Thompson passed from this old world August 13, 1999 at the age of 86. She was a faithful member of the Piney View Church of Christ and was an inspiration to many. I never saw her with short hair, pants, shorts, a swimsuit or other such things as a Christian is to abstain from doing. She was preceded in death 14 years ago by her husband Elgie Thompson, Sr., a preacher of the gospel. Survivors include four children, 10 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren. One son and a granddaughter preceded her in death. Services were held at the Piney View Church of Christ with Dave Smith and Lawrence Lore officiating.—Submitted by her daughter, Carolyn Cook



Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808, Nov. 10—The meeting closed at Lodi, CA on Oct. 17. We enjoyed seeing many of our friends of years gone by. Jim and Vera Winchester, who have borne the burdens of life as a Christian should, are such an inspiration to me. We made our home with the Dwight Williams family and could not have been treated better. Next we were in Sacramento (64th St.) Greg Gay has done an outstanding work with this church. He is to be commended for his talent, wisdom, hard work, and dedication to the cause of truth and right. He, Cassie and Ty were wonderful hosts and we thoroughly enjoyed the hospitality of their home. Crowds were large and visitors came from all around. A number of outsiders were present during the meeting. These people have a zeal of God. We closed our month in CA with a meeting at Bakersfield (Planiz). Wonderful crowds and cooperation from Brundage Lane. Two made confession of faults. During our meetings we were privileged to visit with a number of preachers among them Don King, Alan Bonifay, Bennie Cryer, Jimmy Winchester, Brett Hickey, Greg Gay, Raney Butler, Don McCord, Brian Elliott, Rodney Watson, Matt Hayes, Raymond Fox, Michael Fox, Ryan Conner, Matt Trent, and Richard DeGough in whose home we spent one delightful night and day. The Lord willing we go next to Mitchell, IN, then to Montreal, and Cassville, MO. Of late here at home we have enjoyed the preaching of Don King at Lebanon and Wayne Fussell at the North Hwy H church here in Springfield. May the Lord bless His Church.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne, Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, E-Mail: Old_Paths@Juno.com; November 15—The meeting at the 11th St. congregation in Tulsa, OK was enjoyable but produced no visible results. We pray that good was accomplished in other forms. Crowds were pretty good with a number of outsiders attending nearly every service. Several from the digressive churches came one or more times for which we were happy. It was good to be with Jack Cutter who lives nearby and also Joe Hisle and Dennis Smith who attended. We appreciated the hospitality of the Gene and Bernice Hopkins home while we were there. We couldn't have been treated better. We also enjoyed the opportunity to preach at the afternoon service at the Broken Arrow

congregation the last Sunday of the meeting. We began on Monday evening, November 1st at Lebanon, MO. This was a first for us. I had preached there many times over the years but had never held a meeting. Crowds were large throughout the week with many nearby congregations in attendance. It was good to be with Don Pruitt, Ron Alexander, Dan Wessinger, David Griffin, Gary Weaver and Ronny Wade, all of whom attended one or more times. We made our home with Clovis and Wilma Cook and were made to feel right at home. We enjoyed a visit with several family members the last Saturday before the end of the meeting. There were four baptisms and one confession of wrong. We give praise and thanks to the Lord for that. November 12-14 we were with the congregation at Ventura, CA where Brett Hickey has been working. He has done a good work there with the help of several others as well. I was impressed with the zeal shown by most of the members. We appreciated Darrell and Gail Brewer coming from Bakersfield along with others. They were a big help. Our thanks also to Rod and Alice Moyer who came down from the Fremont congregation to help out. We had very good crowds with a number of outsiders there every service. One confessed wrong. Our prayer is that good was accomplished in every place. We are home now until the first of the year when it will again be time to go to the Philippines. Preachers: don't forget to mention the paper! We need your help and prayers.

Jimmie C. Smith; 5100 Rail Rd. Harrison, AR 72601, email: cjsmith@alltel.net. Nov. 9; I'm happy to report two baptisms of young men who will be attending the Locust congregation near Lead Hill, AR. Since last reporting I was engaged in an enjoyable meeting at Galey, OK with very good crowds and staying with Ron and Darlene Smith. Darlene was Cindy's teenage pal. Clarence Kessinger still has a good influence at Galey and attended all but three services out of eleven if I recall correctly. We had numerous preachers in attendance, including Johnny Elmore, Richard Frizzell, Ray Kessinger, and Brandon Stephens. Next I was with the brethren at Hillside near Pochontas, AR where we enjoyed the association of the Donniphon, MO congregation brethren, having Ron Heiskel present one night. Jason Harris is a dedicated young laborer. Then I was with the brethren once again for a meeting in Strong, AR. where the congregation is larger and with more young leadership than I've known of since our acquaintance began more than 30 yrs ago. Deaton Norsworthy remains stalwart, and the N. LA congregations remain supportive of the gospel's proclamation, making always for a joyful meeting. I taught the rudiments of music in the mornings and some nights after the services. I enjoyed the presence also of the Post brothers. The fourth weekend of Sept. we were in Ardmore, OK for a meeting and the famous 4th Sun. singing. Crowds were large, the singing was wonderful, attendance from 150+ mile radius, association with Johnny and Sally, although Johnny had to miss part of the meeting to preach a funeral. Johnny and Sally were with us here in Harrison for a five day meeting the first part of October, we thought Johnny did some of his very best preaching. He knows surely that he is loved here and his enthusiasm beamed. We couldn't have enjoyed them more, along with the association of the brethren from our surrounding area who supported the meeting. The third Sunday of Oct. we were with the brethren at Lee's Summit, MO for our annual weekend meeting, then I was off to Sharonville, OH for a nine day meeting, making my stay in the home of Barney and Obeta Owens. It is a joy to preach where people love to hear it, they are still reeling from the loss of Amos and Arley Minks' untimely passing. We enjoyed the association of preaching brethren Bill Ferguson and Brian Burns, the surrounding congregations and the brethren from Indiana. I spent one night in the "hospitality room" of the Loughmiller's enroute. We're glad to be home for a while, the fifteen Sundays and surrounding days in meetings have taken their toll this year. We presently have some new attendees who have promised to study with me. We covet your prayers.

Kevin W. Presley, 105 Montrose Ct. #45, Dothan, AL 36305

(334) 678-8999, November 9, 1999—The work continues to go well in southern Alabama. We have had several visitors at services lately including a young man who has been studying the Bible with one of his co-workers in an effort to determine the identity of the New Testament church. He seems interested and we hope to see him converted. A young man from the Mobile area has also moved to Dothan and is worshipping with us. We are glad to have him. In October we enjoyed having Lynwood Smith for a wonderful meeting. His preaching was top notch and we had several out-of-duty people and other visitors attend. We always look forward to Lynwood being in this area. We are nearing the three year anniversary of our weekly television program here. It continues to generate as much interest as ever. My meeting schedule for the year is nearing its conclusion. I am presently engaged in a meeting with the good brethren in Longwood, FL. We baptized a 19 year old man from the Presbyterian church on the first night and have had several other visitors from the community. These brethren are working hard and it is resulting in an exciting meeting. I go next to New Salem, MS on November 24-28. Pray for the work.

Douglas T. Hawkins, Rt.1 Box 717, Mt. Vernon, KY 40456, hawkins@kih.net, (606) 256-8148, Nov. 10, 1999—In October I was with the church in Atwater, CA. While holding the meeting there, I made my home with Richard and Glenda DeGough, a home known for its hospitality and brotherly love. It was enjoyable for me to be with the brethren there in that area and help them in that effort. Bro. Paul Nichols held our fall meeting in Blue Springs, KY. The meeting was well attended and Paul did some real good preaching. His lessons were very timely and needed by all. The meeting closed with one confession of fault. As a younger preacher, you have to feel a deep-seated respect for these men who have labored so faithfully all their lives to preach the gospel. At present I am with the church at Liberty, KY in Casey County. The meeting has been attended pretty well so far. It's a pleasure to be better acquainted with these brethren. My last meeting for this year is with the church in London, KY (Dec.11-13). We have had a busy fall and are anxiously looking forward to the next few months at home over the winter. Bro. Richard Bunner and I have been following up the TV leads in this area lately and plan to do more as things develop. I'll not burden you with this news very much, but for all whose interested, Lori and I have found out that we're having a baby boy and he's due around March 30 (Lord Willing) ... he! he! Naw! I'm not beaming with pride - I've just had to see three buttons back on my shirt!! May the Lord bless the faithful in his service!

Brian Burns, 6891 Goshen Rd., Goshen, OH 45122, (513) 722-0728, bsrbsb@juno.com—Oh how time flies brethren. My family and I have been back in the states for over two years, and in some ways we feel like we have just arrived. In other ways it seems that we have always lived here in Goshen Ohio. The work here in Goshen goes well and we give God the thanks. Though not large in number the congregation is large at heart and interested in the work. There are several that live right here in the immediate area of Goshen so the church is well represented and known in the community. The young people have shown good interest in the work. The young men have started leading songs, reading the text, and giving short talks. We have a couple of young sisters that have been very instrumental in passing out flyers and inviting visitors to the services. We have also had a booth at a local festival where we have given out literature, offered correspondence courses, advertised our meeting, and met a lot of people in the area. Newspaper articles are run, we sing at a local retirement home, and the members always keep an invitation open to their friends and acquaintances. It has also been found out that there is a fairly large Hispanic population up here, so we are also offering a study course in Spanish. This offer is run through a Spanish paper that has just started this year. So far two people have requested this course. I have had the privilege of taking part in the annual preacher's study in Saltillo Mexico these last two years. This has been a real treat for me since leaving the

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work in Honduras in 1997. The brethren there are always an encouragement to be with and the energy of Brother Juanito Rodriguez is amazingly contagious. I definitely commend his work and encourage the brotherhood to assist him in the needs of it there. A meeting at the El Cajon congregation in the San Diego, CA area was a real treat for me this past April. It had been many years since I had been in that area, and it was a pleasure to work with them during that meeting. Lord willing the congregation here at Goshen will be hosting the 2000 Eastern Labor Day Meeting. Plans and details are already in the works to make this a great meeting like it has always been in the past. Please make plans to be with us at that time. More information will be available as the time gets closer. Please feel free to contact us if we may be of help with the work in your area. May the Lord bless the work the world over.

Alan Bonifay, 523 Jessie Ave., Manteca, CA 95337, abonifay@aol.com—October has flown by with chock-a-bloc meetings in this part of California. We heard Doug Hawkins at Fair Oaks and Atwater. We visited with Ronny Wade one day and heard him preach that evening at 64th Street in Sacramento. Ronny also held meetings at Lodi and Planz Rd. in Bakersfield. Ryan Connor and I enjoyed a weekend in Bakersfield where we heard George Battey preach at Brundage Lane, and enjoyed the (as always) unexcelled hospitality of the Doyle Elliott home. Then we heard Carl Johnson at Fremont. We are very blessed in this area to have the opportunity to attend so many meetings. I was privileged to preach in Placerville's new building on the third Sunday, and we spent an enjoyable weekend with the Raymond Nelson family. We also enjoyed a visit with Jerry and Beverly Harris, who were out here for a short time this month, and with whom we worked side by side many years ago in Flagstaff, AZ. Our work here continues apace. Our regular Thursday study with Bennie Cryer, Ryan Connor, Matt Hayes and Matt Trent is undergoing some changes since Bennie has moved to Yuba City. We now meet at Greg Gay's house, and we hope he can join us as his job permits. The highlight of the month for me, though, was the last weekend. I was privileged to participate in a study at the Queensborough congregation in Shreveport, Louisiana, where Bobby Cunningham labors. The hospitality of the congregation was absolutely wonderful. I also enjoyed the warm hospitality of the Wayne Fussell home during my visit. The study was a great experience, and I met and came to appreciate the Bible scholarship of several new friends. Bobby Cunningham opened the study Thursday evening with a sermon on Judgment. Friday we discussed nine topics: Wayne Fussell spoke on the Restoration Plea. David Mabry discussed the Christian and suffering. Keith Brown exhorted us to evangelize the inner cities. Art Lynch carefully explained both the right and the wrong ways to use the contribution of the church. After lunch I discussed premillennialism. Russell Hall then explained how Jesus used parables and how they should be understood. Charles McConnell spoke about Calvinism. Joe Gatson explained the types of the Tabernacle. Finally Doug Young discussed how the Holy Spirit operates in the life of a Christian. In the evening we polished off the day with a singing and a fish fry. On Saturday we started early again. John Brewer spoke to us about the life of Paul. Reggie Blount then spoke of "Blacks in the Bible." The last speaker was Glen Osburn who discussed the strengths and weaknesses of several major translations. Then in the afternoon we split into teams of three and went door-to-door in the neighborhood of the church building and a high-density housing project nearby. Several leads for studies were obtained and left in the capable hands of

Bobby and Bro. Bob Burton. In the evening we enjoyed an informal Bible discussion in the hotel room of Brother Blount. On Sunday I was privileged to preach twice at the Midway congregation. In the afternoon we attended the final service of the Queensborough meeting and heard Brother Scott Smith of Jackson, Mississippi. (At the morning service, Derek Daisy, a young man from Chicago, spoke.) On Sunday two people were baptized. A great time was had by all and I look forward to being with these brethren at next years study, Lord willing.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012, pon.wjn.ks@juno.com, Nov. 3—Time is flying and this year will soon be gone. It is hard to realize how soon we will begin a new millennium with the old one gone forever. Sept. 9-12, I was with the congregation at Brumley, MO in an enjoyable meeting. They have built a very neat and attractive place of worship without going deeply into debt. We had good cooperation from other congregations and several outsiders attended the services. Dan Wessinger is doing a good work in the area of Eldon and Brumley. Oct. 24-31, we were at Blue Springs, KY. I don't know how many meetings I have held there, but I always look forward to it. We always have large crowds and good interest. People in that area appreciate the gospel and love to hear it preached. This is Zade McClure's home congregation. Now Doug Hawkins is living in the area and working with that church. Doug and his wife have built a beautiful house and we were privileged to stay with them during the meeting. I was asked to return for another meeting in the fall of 2001. Last month I celebrated my 58th anniversary of preaching the gospel and the Lord willing, this month Wilma and I will celebrate our golden wedding anniversary. The Lord bless all our efforts for His cause.

Virgilio O. Danao, Sr, 94-371 Ikepono St., Waipahu, Hawaii 96797, Telephone and Fax No. (808) 680-0249, October 18, 1999—Bro. Bennie Cryer and Bro. Don L. King came and worked with us during the period covering October 9 to 15, 1999, primarily to help us iron out some problems which seemed to have been disturbing the serenity of the Church. Their wisdom in handling the situation, and their firmness in their adherence to the truth, showing no bias feeling and compromise, have, once again, been demonstrated. Through their assistance, every issues needed clarification have been made, and all personal differences have been ironed-out; and concerned brethren after acknowledging faults and mistakes, burying all animosities and differences, made a vow to God, never to dig them out again, and was sealed by prayers. Thanking Bro. Cryer and Bro. King for their sacrifices in coming here, we salute them because of their dedication as true evangelists of the Church. Also, in behalf of the Lord's work here in Hawaii, I would like to express our gratefulness to the faithful Church of Stockton, CA, through the able leadership of Bro. James Mason and Bro. Gene Youngblood, for their continued concern and love towards the work here. May God continue to bless all of them. For the past Sundays, the Waipahu Church was privileged to have non-member visitors, some of whom are our avid radio program listeners, and brethren from the mainland. We are praying hard that our Sunday worship service continues its present trend (some were seated outside the room, but could be seen because the sliding glass door was open). We continue to air our radio program, which becomes our instrument in contacting prospects. We express our heartfelt thanks to all the brethren everywhere who, in one way or the other, continue to extend their love and support to the Lord's work here in Hawaii. We request you please mention us in your prayers.