

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. 1

COMMUNING WITH DISCERNMENT

By *BENNIE T. CRYER*

I Corinthians 11:29 reads in this manner: “For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself not discerning the Lord’s body.” This is said in reference to the citizens of the kingdom of Christ gathering around the table of the Lord to partake of the body and blood of Jesus Christ their savior and the king of kings. The citizens of the kingdom made up the membership of the church in Corinth. Evidently they had been improperly discharging their duties as they partook of this sacred feast. They were partaking of the bread and the cup of the Lord “unworthily” which meant they were eating and drinking of them in the wrong manner. This word “unworthily” does not describe the quality of their lives, though some were suspect in many areas of their personal conduct, but rather describes the way they were partaking of this memorial feast. When Christ instituted his supper he had suitable purposes and designs in mind that would be beneficial to each individual citizen as well as the collective body. The things some were doing and not doing as they were together eating of that bread and drinking of that cup brought “damnation” (“judgment” in most other translations) of God upon the individual communicant. Paul specifies that the wrong manner of partaking involved failure to discern the Lord’s body. What were the results of partaking while “not discerning the Lord’s body”?

The Consequences of Such Action

Verse 30 reads: “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” This action of “not discerning the Lord’s body” allowed the disease of sin to enter their lives. Some were just spiritually weak. Others were spiritually sick, and some were already spiritually asleep (dead). This should cause each communicant today to make sure that as they partake of the Lord’s Supper they properly discern the Lord’s body. When the Sierra Mountains in California receive too little rain and snow it has a devastating effect on some of their beautiful pine trees. As a result of the drought the roots are not able to send up enough moisture and nutrients to the top of the tree. There is a beetle that is able to detect this condition and it gets beneath the bark of the tree and begins to interrupt the food flow. As a result the giant tree begins to

die. In this way a number of these small insects can bring death to the tree that is much larger than they. As long as the tree has sufficient moisture and nutrients it can fight off the attacks of this beetle. The application is that as long as a citizen of the kingdom communes worthily he is able to fight off temptations and sins and remain strong, healthy, and vigilant. In some local congregations there is as much as 25% of their members who are backsliders. I am firmly convinced that had they observed the communion each Lord’s day correctly most, if not all, would still be faithful. Therefore, it is imperative for each communicant to improve in the manner they partake of the communion.

How Do We Discern the Lord’s Body?

Simply put “discerning” means judging correctly, according to Arndt & Gingrich. It is used in Matthew 16:3 with this definition in mind. “O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?” They could look at the sky in the evening or in the morning and interpret from the signs in the sky what the weather would do that day but they could not interpret the miracles of Jesus, the conditions in Judea, and the prophecies in the Old Testament and discern that he was the Messiah. In Mark 8:12 we are informed that as a result of this observation “he sighed deeply in his spirit.” I wonder if there is not a heavenly sigh when he observes members of his body partaking of his feast without properly discerning his body.

What Is the Lord’s Body?

There are three things referred to as his body in the larger context: His literal physical body that was given on the cross. Verse 24 informs us that the bread is his body, and I Corinthians 10:16-17 tells us that we are “. . . one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.” The body here is the church, Ephesians 1:22-23. If we conclude that “discerning the Lord’s body” means his body that was given on the cross then we need to study the details about his body, interpret these details correctly, and then, as we commune, think on them. However, if “the body” in verse 29 refers to the body of Christ which is the church then there are certain things about this body that we are to study and interpret correctly. It seems to me that this is what Paul had in mind when he wrote this to the church in Corinth. They were not discerning their own position and condition in the body of Christ nor

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Editorial

IMPROVING OUR WORSHIP

By DON L. KING

In this special January issue of Old Paths Advocate, we begin our 73rd year with a special issue on improving our worship. This is a needed theme and we hope you will read carefully the articles in this month's paper.

The apostle Paul wrote: "Let all things be done decently and in order." (1 Corinthians 14:40) He carried the idea of decency even to the point of whether a brother's head was covered or not covered and the same with the sisters (1 Corinthians 11:2-16).

Notice What Alexander Campbell Wrote

In October of 1835, Alexander Campbell published and "EXTRA" in the **Millennial Harbinger**. He wrote, in part: "When the heirs of heaven present themselves in the presence of the Lord, and meet around that sacred board which commemorates the ignominy, reproach, and sufferings of Him who redeemed them to God by offering up Himself a sacrifice for their sins; that gaiety of dress and flippancy of manners, so fascinating amongst the sons and daughters of fashion, festivity, and song, are wholly indecent, in the good sense of all the admirers of the fitness of things, or of the innocence and simplicity which adorned the ancient Christians. . . The Church must view herself, if sincere in her professions, as 'an habitation of God through the spirit,' as 'the pillar and support of the truth,' as 'the temple of God,' and as 'the gate of heaven.' Every one that speaks or acts must feel himself especially in the presence of the Lord, not as on other days or in other places. Not a thought must be entertained, not a word spoken, not an action performed, that would make the disciple blush, if the Lord Jesus was personally present. The Lord, indeed, is in the midst of them if they have met in His name and according to His word." (Page 508, Volume 1835)

Attitudes During Worship

Campbell, we believe, touched upon a very important matter and that is our attitude during worship. In some places, we have probably become too relaxed and "flippant," during the worship. Just think about the distraction caused by people whispering during a service. There was a time when this was rare, as was unnecessary trips to the rest rooms, etc. That was forbidden except in real emergencies. Campbell remarked, "Next to those who permit barking and fighting dogs and screaming children to torment the audience, I know of none more obnoxious to censure than those disturbers of the peace, who are ever and anon on foot, going out and coming in, as if to arrest attention, or disturb the speaker and the audience. These, and they who whisper and mutter to

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GIVING WITH SIMPLICITY

BY GREG GAY

There is an old story about a father who complained to the family about the sermon on the way home from church. His little boy spoke up to say, "I thought it was a pretty good show for a nickel." He saw what his father contributed that day and thought that was the family's payment for being allowed to attend the service. Hopefully no one today believes they are paying for a "show" when it comes time for giving during the worship.

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

We are to be prepared to give when the time of giving arrives in the service. "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). The idea of purposing is to plan the amount we are going to give before worship so we are ready to give when the time comes to contribute.

Notice also that we are not to give "grudgingly, or of necessity." That means we give voluntarily without reluctance, not because anyone has demanded or forced us to give. Since Paul tells us "God loveth a cheerful giver" that must mean he does not appreciate a resentful attitude toward contributing to the financial needs of the church.

Paul gives us a wonderful principle regarding generosity in giving. "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully" (2 Corinthians 9:6). These verses do not guarantee worldly wealth in return for generosity in giving, but they do guarantee a reward for generous giving, perhaps in this life, but certainly in the life to come.

We do not live under the old law of the tithe, or ten percent (Leviticus 27: 30-33) so we are not bound to that. But, we should all want our giving to be described as "bountiful" rather than "sparing." Everyone can give something; some can give more than others.

Paul exhorts those with special abilities and talents, including giving, to exercise them diligently: "Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness" (Romans 12:8).

At first glance at this passage it appears that our giving is to be "simple," which could mean uncomplicated, perhaps a casual "do or not do" type of thing. Closer examination proves otherwise. The New King James Version translates the phrase "he who gives, with liberality."

Cottrell comments and also quotes Sanday and Headlam in the *College Press NIV Commentary*: "To give with

simplicity means to give with the simple, unselfish purpose of wanting to help others, "and not with mixed motives, with the thought of ostentation or reward" (SH, 357), i.e., not with an ulterior motive. The connotation of generosity naturally goes with the gift of giving, though, and this is how most translations render it" (Romans Vol. 2, 357).

When we give with the idea of helping others we become Christ-like in our thoughts and actions. Certainly God's love toward us is seen by His actions. Our love to God can be seen in our acts of giving of our hearts, our time, our money, etc.

Individually, let this article be a reminder of purposing. If it has been sometime since you have examined the amount you give why not reflect on that and see if it is time to increase what you are doing? The needs of the church have never been greater. Even if we can only help a little bit more let us remember, as the old song suggests, "Little is Much When God is in it." It is important for us to know that God looks at our hearts more than he looks at amounts. Jesus praised the giving of the poor widow because of her generosity, even though the amount she gave was very little (Mark 12:41-44).

Congregations' leaders would do well to be sure to remind their congregation of the works the congregation is involved in so everyone can know the wonderful ways they are sharing in the preaching of the gospel. Paul told the brethren at Phillipi, "Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress" (Philippians 4:14 NKJV). Since the congregation in Phillipi supported Paul, they shared in his work wherever he went throughout the world.

Today our contributions enable our congregations to respond to appeals to help poor and needy saints locally and around the world. We are blessed to have funds with which to build and maintain comfortable and respectable places of worship for the commanded assembling of the saints. Our generous giving has enabled gospel preachers to live of the gospel, to travel to conduct gospel meetings, and to work to establish and build up congregations. Each congregation's money, sent directly to a work, has enabled the church to spread within the United States and around the world to many countries including Russia, India, the Philippines, Mexico, Cuba, plus nations in South America, Africa, and more.

Paul explains how generous giving is a blessing to the giver, an acknowledgment of our submission to God, and also brings praise to God. Moffat translates and comments:

He who furnishes the sower with seed and with bread to eat will supply seed for you and multiply it; he will increase the crop of your charities—you will be enriched on all hands, so that you can be generous on all occasions, and your generosity, of which I am the agent, will make men give thanks to God, for the service rendered by this fund does more than supply

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PRAYING WITH UNDERSTANDING

By *BILLY D. DICKINSON*

Since prayer is the umbilical cord of the spiritual life, all Christians should be interested in making their prayers more effective with God. James declared that when the right man prays in the right way it is something that has great power in its effects: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (Jas. 5:16) While it would be profitable to discuss the potency and application of prayer in the individual's life, this article will focus on united prayer (Acts 12:12), especially as it relates to the assemblies of the church. After all, if the prayer of one righteous man can move God to action, think of the good that can potentially result from the unified efforts of faithful brethren praying together.

When a brother leads the church in united prayer, he has accepted an awesome responsibility because he is addressing God on behalf of the whole congregation. The following statement in 1 Corinthians 14:14 points out a principle that we must keep in mind: "For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful." The way some interpret this passage shows a disregard for the context and the main point of the chapter. Paul is correcting the Corinthians in their misuse of the spiritual gifts that they possessed. Paul is emphasizing that they had those gifts, not for personal gratification, but for the good of the total body. He writes that when they come together in the assembly of the church, "all things" are to be done unto edifying (1 Corinthians 14:26). That is why all things are to be done "decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40), so that the church can be edified.

In regard to speaking in tongues (human languages that the speakers had not studied, but were empowered by the Holy Spirit to speak- Acts 2:8), Paul shows the need for an interpreter because the audience could not understand what was being said without a translation (1 Corinthians 14:5). Paul argues that where there is no understanding the congregation is not edified. That is the point of 1 Corinthians 14:14. Paul says that if he prays in a foreign language without a translation, his understanding is "unfruitful" because the whole church has not been edified. Keeping this principle in mind, I would like to offer a few suggestions for those who lead the congregation in united prayer.

Contemplation

When people do something on the spur of the moment, there is always the possibility of not doing the best that one can do. That is certainly true of the preacher or teacher who has to speak extemporaneously, and it is also true of the man who leads the congregation in prayer without any forethought. When we are assigned this responsibility, surely it is a time for contemplation. While it would be unadvisable to become mechanical in our approach, there are some issues that we need to ponder.

What particular needs of the congregation ought to be addressed? Is there a special evangelistic effort (like an upcoming gospel meeting) that we should ask God's blessing upon? What about the sick and afflicted among us? When possible, we should pray with specificity for the needy, mentioning them by name. In doing so, we follow the example of Christ who prayed for Peter (Luke 22:32). Also, Paul prayed for the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 1:2) and

requested that they pray for him (1 Thessalonians 5:25). However, this requires that we have an awareness of the needs of the congregation and a good presence of mind.

Clarity

Getting back to the principle in 1 Corinthians 14:14, we need to pray in a way that is clear and understandable by all. Can everyone in the assembly actually hear what is being said? If not, the brother leading the prayer needs to speak up. I might be praying one of the most meaningful prayers ever uttered, but if I am speaking too low for you to hear it, there is no way that you can join in the "Amen" (1 Corinthians 14:16). Remember, too, that the brother is leading the congregation in prayer. In other words, it is our prayer, not simply his, and we need to listen intently to what is being prayed.

When I was a teenager, I witnessed something that was both sad and amazing. There was a brother in the congregation who did not have the confidence to participate in a public way. He didn't teach in the assembly, he wasn't a song leader, and he didn't lead the church in prayer. But one Sunday night he was called upon, right on the spot, to dismiss the congregation in a word of prayer. That poor man froze in his shoes. He did not utter one word. However, after a brief period of time (what must have seemed like an eternity to him), someone yelled out "Amen." There were others who then joined in with their "Amens." I learned something from that incident. Just because someone says "Amen" does not necessarily mean that the prayer was actually listened to. Brethren, let's pray with clarity and concentration.

Conciseness

Let us remember that we will not be heard because of our "much speaking" (Matthew 6:7). A prayer that is from the heart and to the point means more to God than a "long prayer" (Matthew 23:14) that is full of empty phrases. Prayer is not something to be hurried through, but neither should we think that a prayer has to become a "weariness of the flesh" (Ecclesiastes 12:12) to the congregation in order for it to be effective.

Conclusion

Prayer was central to the practice and fellowship of the early church. Prayer has an intimate and special relationship to God's house (Matthew 21:13). God's house today is the church (1 Timothy 3:15). May it be said of the church today, as recorded in Acts 2:42, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." 2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803 bddickinson@juno.com

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TEACHING WITH CONFIDENCE

By RONNY F. WADE

In the closing verses of the book of Acts (28:30-31) we are told that Paul continued “preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.” Even though the aged apostle was in prison he continued the noble task of telling others about the kingdom of God. The impressive point of the text is that he taught with confidence or boldness. In an unrestrained manner he shared the truth with all his visitors. There is something to be said for a presentation made with confidence. If a salesman is not convincing about his product, he will have little success selling it. If he appears uncertain or unprepared his chances of making a sale are greatly impaired. Why is it then that many who undertake the important task of teaching in the assembly of the saints do so with little or no preparation, enthusiasm, or confidence? To stand before the church ill-prepared is inexcusable. Teaching is the life blood of the church. Through it the people are warned, encouraged, challenged, and edified. The caliber of teaching coming from the pulpit is parallel, in many ways, to the strength and growth of the congregation. Poor weak teaching results in weak disinterested members. Strong vibrant teaching will find its expression in an active growing church. What does it mean to teach with confidence?

Know Your Subject

Teaching with confidence can only happen when the one doing the teaching knows the subject or lesson to be delivered. I never cease to be amazed at how well some people can talk about ball games, giving scores, statistics, and eventually a complete wrap-up of the game without missing a word. Yet the same individual speaks about Bible subjects with little or no confidence at all. Why? The obvious answer is that the person knows the subject matter in one area, but not the other. Men who know their lesson usually have little difficulty delivering it. When someone hum-haws around, stops and starts dozens of times, you can know for sure they have not adequately studied. The Scriptures are replete with passages that teach the necessity learning the will of the Lord. In 2 Timothy 2:15 the writer admonishes us to “be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” Again in 1 Peter 3:15, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” Abraham Lincoln said one time, “I believe I shall never be old enough to speak without embarrassment when I have nothing to say.” Daniel Webster declared, “I had rather stand before an

audience half-clothed than half-prepared.” Perhaps the secret to successful teaching was best captured by Alexander Hamilton when he said, “Men give me some credit for genius. All the genius I have lies in this: When I have a subject in hand, I study it profoundly. Day and night it is before me. I explore it in all its bearings. My mind becomes pervaded with it. Then the efforts that I make are what people are pleased to call the fruits of genius. It is the fruit of labor and thought.” Remember before you take the audience’s time, you should earn the right by study and work that will allow you to give them something in return for their time. The bottom line is prepare, prepare, prepare.

Enthusiastic Delivery

Teaching with confidence also expresses itself in an enthusiastic delivery. The successful speaker must put himself into his sermon. Nothing is more discouraging than listening to someone who acts as if they have little feeling for what they are saying. Often this problem is magnified when the speaker reads his lesson word for word, sometimes halting and hesitating as he drones along. There is nothing wrong with a speaker referring to a commentary, Bible encyclopedia or dictionary. However to read endlessly from such is neither wise nor beneficial. When a speaker is so tied to his notes that he can seldom look at the audience, it won’t be long until he loses them altogether. The more pleasant, animated and excited one is about his lesson, the greater the possibility that those listening will be taught and encouraged by what they hear. Abraham Lincoln also said, “I don’t like to hear a cut and dried sermon. When I hear a man preach, I like to see him act as if he were fighting bees.”

Communicating Ideas

The individual who teaches with confidence possesses the ability to communicate ideas easily and effectively. The purpose of preaching, in part, is to provide the audience with the necessary information so that they can make wise and correct choices about their manner of life. Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:1-2, “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.” If the speaker fails to impart knowledge, or inspire change, he has failed. The late Senator Sam Ervin, from North Carolina, after listening to a speaker talk on and on without saying anything, said, “The official reminds me of a husband I knew back home who notified his lawyer that he wanted a divorce from his wife, even though he admitted that she was a beautiful woman, a good cook, and a good mother. Why then do you want a divorce, the lawyer asked? Because she talks all the time

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the position and condition of the other members. There were divisions and contentions among them, 1 Corinthians 1:10-11; 11:18-19. "What have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not," (11:22). The Holy Spirit recognized that some were slighting other members and looking upon them with disdain. They actually despised them. Some were not cognizant of the needs of some of the members. They failed to examine themselves, verse 28. The same word for "discerning" is used in verse 31. In fact the ASV translates it in this way. "But if we discerned ourselves, we should not be judged." So, if we desire to improve our observance of the Lord's Supper we need to discern, judge, or interpret our own lives and then make sure we are not despising a single member in the body in such way that their needs are not being fulfilled. In this way each communicant can truly declare that he is one with his brothers and sisters in Christ as they all partake of that one bread.

Christ's Example in "Waiting" on The Table

Brother, if you are selected to wait on the table you have an example to follow also. This example is often ignored by making long speeches or using incorrect phrases to describe the elements. Jesus probably used less than six dozen words to tell the disciples what the supper was about. Paul used about fifteen verses that can be read in less than two minutes to teach Corinth how to observe it. The words that Christ and Paul employed are important for each communicant, especially the one serving at the table, to remember and use if we are to improve our worship in this area. Long speeches and incorrect phrases tend to distract from the feast itself. For example, some try to dichotomize the cup (container) and the fruit of the vine. Jesus never did this. The two parts always remained one unit in his descriptions. "For this is my blood of the new testament," Matthew 26:28. Paul handles it in a similar fashion. "This cup is the new testament in my blood," 1 Corinthians 11:25. These are accurate descriptions of the cup of the Lord. Just as a legal will and the signature are two different things yet form just one document so is the cup of the Lord. A signature without a will or a will without a signature would not bequeath anything to the heirs. Let us all learn to use the words found in the institution and observance of the communion. A cup without the contents is not the New Testament. Fruit of the vine without the cup is not the blood Jesus shed. Both together form "the blood of the new testament" or "the new testament in my blood." When we do that we have healthy doctrine and practice. In this way our observance will improve and we will not be condemned with the world.

Are We Guilty of Crucifying Jesus Again?

1 Corinthians 11:27 states, "Wherefore whosoever shall

eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of body and blood of the Lord." If we partake of the Lord's Supper unworthily, that is in the wrong manner, we then involve ourselves in the crucifixion of Christ identifying ourselves with the Jews and Gentiles that committed the actual act against our Lord. Hebrews 6:6 shows the possibility of involvement in that terrible act years after the actual event occurred. Let us therefore partake of this feast remembering our Savior in his life on earth, his death, burial, and resurrection, and what he is doing for us now. Let us also examine our own lives and discern the need for unity with our fellow communicants and see that their needs are met. Then, and only then, can we say we have communed worthily. 4635 Larkin Road, Live Oak, CA 95953
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their companions while one is addressing the audience, except on some paramount occasion, belong to the first class of transgressors of the plainest principles of good education and good order. Such persons have as little respect for the credit of their parents and tutors as they have for their own reputation, and ought to be publicly reprov'd by every good bishop." (Page 510, Volume 1835) His whole point was that we should have an attitude of reverence during worship. Jesus said, "God is a spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24) This obviously requires reverence and preparation for our worship. Brethren, we can improve in this regard.

We Have Improved In Some Ways

There was a time when little preparation was made before worship. Song leaders were randomly chosen during a service, and expected to lead with no prior arrangement. The same was often true with the teaching, the communion, prayers and the collection. Thankfully, brethren have learned better through the years and more consideration is given to planning the service now. Some have believed a way to improve things was to change the order of the worship. However, that has often proved to be more confusing than beneficial. In our opinion, there is little gain to be seen by changing the place in the worship of the various items. It is probably best to utilize the methodical order most of our congregations have used for many years. At least everyone knows what comes next. We have been places where we counted on a good brother to give us a nod so we could know when to get up and preach. It had to be that way because not being familiar with their custom; it was difficult to remember what happened next.

Let us all try to be at worship on time, with our minds on spiritual things so we can serve God according to the due order. David said, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." (Psalms 122:1)

Think on these things. DLK

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the husband responded. What does she talk about asked the lawyer? That's the trouble the husband replied, she never says." If people fail to get the point, it may be because we didn't make one. Closely associated with this idea is the principle that preaching is designed to change the behavior of people. When we fail to reach sinners with our sermons and bring them to repentance, we have not accomplished our goal. If we don't encourage the church member to greater and more dedicated service, we have failed in our preaching. People must see the point, grasp the thought, and get the lesson for any good to be accomplished.

Use Time Wisely

Speaking with confidence is greatly enhanced by making wise use of the time at hand. As someone has said, "One cannot see Paris in a day or the American Museum of Natural History in thirty minutes." By the same token a speaker should never bite off more than he can chew. In teaching the Bible, we should take only the part to which we can do justice. I once heard of a speaker who had three minutes to speak. He announced he would cover eleven points. That would amount to about 16 seconds per point. One can easily see the futility of such a venture. On the other end of the spectrum is the speaker who speaks forever about nothing, and in the process totally wears out the audience. The old adage that says "the mind can absorb only what the seat can endure" is actually very true. Watch your time. Be sure you have enough to cover the subject, but don't use so much that you lose the audience. Many a sermon would have been considered outstanding had the preacher stopped a little sooner than later. *PO Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808*
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the wants of the saints, it overflows with many a cry of thanks to God. This service shows what you are, it makes men praise God for the way you have come under the gospel of Christ which you confess, and for the generosity of your contributions to themselves and to all; they are drawn to you and pray for you, on account of the surpassing grace which God has shown to you. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift! (2 Corinthians 9:10-15)

Certainly we are blessed both spiritually and physically. The next time we prepare to participate in the contribution prior to worship let us remember the overwhelming blessings of God in our lives. May the realization and wonder of those blessings be reflected in the generosity of our giving. *1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747 papagreg@aol.com*

PRACTICALLY SPEAKING

By DOUG HAWKINS

During the holiday seasons, cookies, candies, Turkey and fixings are all readily available in most of our homes. Most of us overindulge in what we eat during this time of year and put on a few extra pounds only to resolve on Dec. 31st to lose it plus ten more at the New Year. Overindulgence reminds us that one of the most important characteristics that any person can acquire is self control or temperance. It has to do with our ability to discipline, manage, and control ourselves, even in things we find unpleasant and undesirable. If you think about it that's really all we can control anyway. The apostle Paul remarked about bringing his body under control in 1 Cor. 9:27. Solomon said, "he that ruleth his spirit is mightier than he that taketh a city." (Pr. 16:32) I can't control what others do to me, but I can control what I do to others. I can't always control the circumstances I find myself in, but I can control my attitude toward those circumstances. The trait of self control is needed in every area of our life - physically, financially, emotionally, spiritually, socially, morally. It ultimately affects every aspect of life. If your life seems out of balance, almost like the shaking of a car at highway speeds, or completely out of control it may not be the fault of anyone, but yourself. As humans, we look to blame others for our failures and shortcomings. We look for excuses why we're overweight, why people disrespect us, why we're broke, why we are unhappy, and why, why, why. The truth may be: we don't control what we eat, we act disrespectfully toward others, we don't manage our finances, we don't adjust our attitude with humility, and gratitude and on and on. The great benefits of self control and godly obedience are far reaching. Godliness is for the life that "now is" and "of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:7-8). The greatest resolution for you to have is not a New Year's resolution, but a life changing resolution. Don't wait for New year's to resolve anything. Start right now. Practically speaking, I am responsible for me. I will be responsible for me. I can only control myself. I will control myself. "Now the fruits of the spirit are. . . temperance. . . (Gal. 5:22). "And besides this giving all diligence (that's something we overlook) add to your faith. . . temperance. . . (2 Pe. 1:5).

HOW TO OVERCOME A HABIT

Habit is hard to overcome. If you take off the first letter, it does not change "a bit." If you take off another, you will have a "bit" left. If you take off still another, the whole of "it" remains. If you take off another, "it" is destroyed; all of which goes to show that if you want to get rid of habit you must throw it off altogether.

SINGING WITH GRACE

BY JOHNNY ELMORE

In a familiar passage of scripture, the apostle Paul reminds us, "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" (Colossians 3:16). Although it is somewhat difficult to make the distinction sometimes, psalms are thought to be compositions having the character of Old Testament psalms. Hymns are described by some as solemn odes or prayers directed to God, and spiritual songs, according to Trench, are sacred poems that are neither psalms nor hymns.

The apostle's directive is to "sing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Our singing does teach, admonish, and speak to "one another," but we must never forget that it is directed "to the Lord." We do not sing for the praise of men, but for the glory and praise of God. Our singing is directed horizontally, but also vertically.

With Grace or Gratitude

Both Williams and Goodspeed translate the phrase "with grace" as "with thankfulness," and Phillips translates it as "with joyful hearts." Robertson says that the Greek verb *aidontes* is from an old word "for lyrical emotion in a devout soul." When we consider that we are surely unworthy of God's favor or grace, but that it has been bestowed upon the human family so abundantly, why shouldn't our hearts being full of joyful, thankful praise? As one man said, "My question is not: Why don't people sing God's praises? My question is: How do they keep from it."

God's people have always been singers. William Barclay says we inherited that from the Jews, who, according to Philo, often spent the whole night in hymns and songs. Barclay relates the description of an early church service by Pliny, who wrote to the Roman Emperor Trajan, "They meet at dawn to sing a hymn to Christ as God."

The Heart Is Involved

The apostle says "in your hearts." What is the Bible heart? It is the seat of man's intellect, emotions, and will. It is that part of man that thinks, reasons, understands, loves, purposes, and wills. Our whole inner being is to be involved in singing with grace. From grateful, thankful hearts we are to sing praise and adoration to God above, and at the same time encourage and admonish each other. Robertson points out that without the heart? "there is no real worship 'to God.'" If that which is rendered is simply lip service, how could that be pleasing to God?

I have been present in worship when brethren loved the sentiment of a song so much that they sang it twice in the service. I have been present, also, when a song leader was so preoccupied with selecting a song or something else that he announced the song that had just been sung. Was the heart involved? I also know a young brother who always routinely led an invitation song every Lord's Day (before the preacher gave the invitation).

Apparently he never learned the difference. Another sang "O Why Not Tonight?" on Sunday morning. Did he want the penitent sinner to wait until Sunday night to obey the gospel, or was the heart even involved?

Is the heart involved when song leaders always sing the same song without regard to the occasion? Is the heart involved when song leaders choose songs based strictly on the fact that they know the tune, rather than the appropriateness of the words?

The Sacrifice of Praise

I have always believed that since the Bible describes "the fruit of our lips" as "the sacrifice of praise," (Hebrews 13:15), we should make our sacrifices the very best that we can possibly offer. God has never been satisfied with anything less than the best sacrifices in any dispensation of his dealings with man. Some evidently have the idea that singing is something less than prayer. They would not get up and stir around during prayer, but they will during singing. They also must have the idea that singing is something less than communion. They would not think of attending worship on Lord's Day and not partaking of the communion, but they will sit by and not sing. If someone can do your singing for you, why can't they commune for you? Making our sacrifices of praise the very best may require learning how to sing. If I couldn't read God's word, I would want someone to teach me to read. I remember that Jesus' disciples asked him to teach them to pray. Wouldn't it be profitable to have someone to teach us to sing?

Two Major Flaws

I have been young but now am old and I have observed two major flaws in our singing that can be easily remedied. Songs are generally pitched too low and sung too slow. That causes the singing to be dragged down and uninspiring. In the same chapter that Paul talks about singing with grace in your hearts, he says: "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Colossians 3:23). Dead, lifeless singing does not inspire anyone not the preacher, not the visitors, and not each other. Let all song leaders choose a pitch that is high enough that the song can be sung with life and enthusiasm, and then move along with it at a good pace.

Conclusion

I am thrilled with the idea that our work and service here is preparing us for service in glory. The idea of being able to sing with the 144,000 redeemed ones in heaven inspires me to do my best here. As the apostle John described it in Revelation 14:2, they sang a new song. (God evidently has no problem with new songs.) The rhythm of that singing was perfect—"as the voice of many waters." The volume was tremendous—"as the voice of a great thunder." The melody was sweet—"as harpers harping with their harps" (ASV). So often here on earth we are limited by ability, imperfect voices, sickness, and the ravages of time, but how glorious to think that in that world we will have voices made anew and that we can finally give God the perfect praise that he is so justly due.

419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, bookman@brightok.net

Announcements

ROANOKE, VA

The church at Roanoke, VA is meeting again for worship each Lord's Day at 10:30 a.m. The congregation there has many that are ill and Brother E. R. Brown passed away on Nov. 17, 2004. Brother Brown's son, Joe Brown, will help keep things going; and my son and I will go once a month to help with the work. Other surrounding congregations and brethren have also agreed to help. Please pray for the work.
- J. W. Kornegay, 1543 Sid Mitchell Rd., Youngsville, NC 27596

EVANGELISTIC POSTCARDS

Dear Brethren:

Due in part to limited resources as well as trying to find ways to do the Lord's Work with good stewardship of His funds, quite a while back I came up with the idea of creating a postcard - something which costs only about 25 cents to create and mail. This card (sample shown below), or one like it, though short, can fulfill various purposes: (1) advertise a congregation's existence in an area, (2) advertise a website, (3) advertise a correspondence course, and so on; but its primary purpose is to diplomatically interest people in setting up Bible studies.

Depending on who (whether an individual or a local congregation) is footing the bill, each person (or family) who gets involved mails as many as possible each month (preferable no less than the average of three a day). From my experience here in Lawrence, KS, I don't believe we'd have our last five converts if it weren't for the postcard mailer.

Because others have heard about this recently, they are trying it as well. So far I've heard of four other areas using the card, and (if I have it right) three more baptisms due to the use of it. One congregation (or at least one of its members) that's using the card in its area, because of the success, had me write up another, more specific, follow-up card.

Just think! For less than \$25 a month, every Christian could be sending out 100 of the following postcards as one of his evangelistic efforts.

Are You Religiously Confused or Dissatisfied?

Well, I Can't Blame You!

Since Jesus only built one church (Matthew 16:18 & Acts 2:47) and. . .

Since Jesus expects His people to be in unity - believing, teaching, and practicing the same things (First Corinthians 1:10 & John 17:20-23). . .

It doesn't take a religious scholar to see that something just isn't right in "Christianity"! The only valid solution I see to this condition is an attempt to motivate people

to share their thoughts on what God has revealed in His Word; after all, biblical unity, which may very well affect our salvation, can't be achieved unless we're unified on what the Lord has said. And I don't believe this is impossible; otherwise, God would be unjust by demanding it of us. The purpose of this card, then, is to encourage you to share your thoughts with me. I'd love to hear from you concerning this most critical of life's issues. Please write me at PO Box 4035, Lawrence, KS 66046, or e-mail me at tendenton64@hotmail.com, or call me at 331-3577. I also invite you to take a Bible correspondence course and visit the website www.ASiteForTheLord.com. Thank you much for your consideration. T. E. Denton.

If you (as a congregation or an individual) are interested in using this card in your area, I'll be happy to help you get it started. Just let me know (via one of the ways on the card above), and I'll get right on it, providing you with a little more information than what you've read here concerning how we go about this work here. Blessings, Tony E. Denton.

Our Departed

W. FRED ORTEN A TRIBUTE

Leviticus 19:32 - "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I Am the Lord." As in life, even so after his death, we rise up respectfully to honour the man, W. Fred Orten. "Uncle Fred," as he was lovingly known by most of us, was born on February 2, 1904 in Winston County Alabama to John Wesley and Julia Ann Smith Orten. He passed away peacefully at his home in Ethridge Tennessee on January 26, 2004, just seven days before his 100th birthday. He was the last of the charter members of the Church which ultimately settled at the Chapel Grove location in Lawrence County Tennessee, and from which sprang many of the congregations in the middle Tennessee area. In August of 1926 he married Zula Ellen Rawdon, and it was through her influence that Uncle Fred obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ about the year 1930. It was in 1933, when they learned that the innovations the church at Ethridge had accepted were unscriptural, that they along with a few others left, being unable to convince those left behind of the truth in worship. Thus began a rich history of the Church in Lawrence County and middle Tennessee. Some of the great debates of our brotherhood were held in this part of the country and grand meetings with overflowing crowds and responses to the Gospel from a few to several dozens at a time. One meeting with James Stewart in the fall of 1939 yielded crowds between 800 and 1,000. Twenty were baptized and 13 restored. Of course Uncle Fred along with many others saw that these great works were carried out. Most all of the "Old Time" preachers who are now gone, preached here and found a home with the Orten's, and many

of the great preachers of the last 50 - 60 years got their start in this area. I am told that following the 4th of July meetings back in the 50's many of the "youngsters" would come to Chapel Grove with Billy, James, and Ervin Waters and preach. Many brethren over the years including this writer have received "gifts" of money and encouragement from the Orten's.

Uncle Fred and Aunt Zula had five children in whom they instilled love and respect for the Lord, His word, and His Church. Their oldest son was killed at the age of thirteen in a tragic accident. Their other two sons and twin daughters gave them fourteen grandchildren, and twenty great-grandchildren. As far as this writer knows, all of their children, sons and daughters-in-law, and grandchildren who are of age are members of the Lord's Church. Aunt Zula once told me, "You must teach your children all the time. We had daily devotions together where we would read and study God's word and pray together, each one taking their turn. And it's important for a mother to be at home. I believe a woman should stay home. When my children would get to the porch from school they would holler, 'momma,' and I was there." Uncle Fred following her words said, "A family should dwell together, and eat together. You learn how to get along with people in a family and learn to share and divide what you have. This is important in learning later how to get along with other people in the Church!"

These grand people led a simple life, never traveling far from home, and yet their influence is felt and seen today around the world. The Gospel has been carried across this land and to many countries and nations of the world through the lives of their children and grandchildren, among whom are Preachers, Evangelists, Elders, Teachers and Leaders of congregations. No doubt many thousands of people have been influenced worldwide either directly or indirectly by their example and work. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith The Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." (Rev 14: 13)

Uncle Fred was ordained an Elder in the Chapel Grove congregation on May 6, 1990. He served faithfully and led us with gentleness and the "wisdom that is from above." (James 3: 17)

He is preceded in death by his wife of nearly 75 years, Zula Orten, his son Vernon "Sonny" Orten, his son William H. "Billy" Orten, and several brothers and sisters. He is survived by his son Dr. James D. Orten and wife June of Tulsa OK, his daughter Jean Orten Stephens and husband Carlton of Ethridge TN, his daughter Joan Orten Long and husband Ronald of Ethridge TN, his daughter-in-law Peggy Johnson Orten of Conway LA, two sisters, fourteen grandchildren, and twenty great-grandchildren.

A fitting memorial service was held at the Chapel Grove Church of Christ on January 28, 2004 with Brethren and sisters from the surrounding congregations providing beautiful and comforting singing. Brother Phillip Patton

opened with the reading of the obituary and prayer. Son-in-law and fellow Elder Ronald Long spoke of their relationship, first as friends, then as in-laws, and finally as fellow laborers in the Kingdom of Christ. Brother Johnny Fisher followed with fitting words of encouragement to the family and memories of his relationship with the family through the years. At the grave side this writer read appropriate scripture and spoke of the resurrection, and grandson-in-law and preacher of the gospel Doug Hawkins concluded with prayer.

In January of 1987 I had an interview with the Orten's for our little paper in which I asked Uncle Fred what advice he would like to give to the church. It is fitting still. He said, "The best advice I believe I could give to anybody is to learn self control ! I believe that we can learn ourselves to be what ever we ought to be and learn to do whatever we want to do. If we have bad habits we can quit them if we want to and try hard. Living the Christian life is not easy! It is something we have to work at day by day and hour by hour. We must learn to control ourselves and to treat one another right, especially man and wife, and everyone else as we would like them to treat us."

- *Edward Daniel, 117 Blackwood Dr., Summertown, TN 38483, e_daniel@bellsouth.com*

BROWN, JAMES (JIM) - Jim was born March 1, 1927 in Parker, OK to William Thomas and Myrtle Brown. He died August 25, 2004 in Broken Arrow, OK at the age of 77. He is survived by his wife Daisy and four children, Connie Holt, James Brown, Barbara Braggs, and Thaina Crenshaw. He is also survived by ten grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, and four sisters. I first met Jim in Tulsa when I was a teenager. I knew him to be hard-working and devoted to his family. He loved people and was a joy to visit. Several years ago he and Daisy retired from the Tulsa area and moved back to Coalgate, Oklahoma, where Jim grew up. They drove to Ada for worship until his failing health forced them to move back to the Tulsa area to be near their children. Jim honored me by telling his family several years ago that he wanted me to conduct his funeral. The large crowd that attended the services in Coalgate testifies to Jim's wide-ranging influence. God bless Daisy and the family. - *Carl M. Johnson*

BROWN, ELBERT R. - was born Sept. 6, 1923 and departed this life Nov. 13, 2004 after a long illness with Parkinson's disease. He is a great loss to the home, the Church and the community. He leaves his loving wife, Vergie and devoted children and grandchildren. Brother Brown was a true soldier for the Lord and fully equipped with the whole armor of God. The family and church in Roanoke, VA has lost a great warrior for the Lord. Their home of hospitality was open to care for preaching brethren. I, for one, have spent many days and weeks in their home. The writer and my son John D. Kornegay endeavored to speak words of comfort and warning to a large gathering. The interment was Cedar Lawn Memorial Park, Venton, VA - *J. W. Kornegay*

Field Reports

Richard DeGough, 1907 Tully Rd., Hughson, CA, 95326, November 1 - This year has been good for us in many ways. God's blessing has followed in every way possible. We have been at home most of the year with the exception of being in the Philippines working with Don King and Virgilio Danao last January. That was my second trip to be among the brethren in that Country. It was a real joy to be with Don and Brother Danao and to work with them. The Church there is growing daily because of the faithfulness and preaching of good men. We remained on the Island of Luzon during the trip but met and studied with preachers from Mindanao who came to be with us in Manila. It was encouraging to see the good results from there. As long as there are faithful preachers like Brother Conrado Libertino and others, who have worked tirelessly for the Cause, the Church will prosper in Mindanao. His faithfulness and hard work for the Lord have been exemplified for many years. He is strong in the Faith and preaches it with conviction. The Filipino brethren are loving and hospitable, willing to share and sacrifice in order to live the Christian life. I love them and am grateful to have been able to encourage and preach to them. The response to the gospel invitation was great. It is encouraging to me to see so many who are willing to live for the Lord. I am thankful Don asked me to accompany him for the 2004 trip. I hope to go again sometime, if the Lord be willing. We continue to enjoy good preaching from faithful preachers who have been in our area. Brother Ron Alexander and Doug Hawkins held our meetings this year at Turlock. We recently heard Michael Conley and also Bennie Cryer who has recently been in Escalon. It was good to hear Brandon Stephens at Atwater and perhaps many more. We preach in Atwater, Fremont and at home in Turlock on a regular basis. The Labor Day meeting in Bakersfield was great. Bennie Cryer conducted it and several preachers shared in it as well. We are saddened to hear of the illness of Brother Barney Owens. Our prayer is for his full recovery and the welfare of all brethren.

Richard L. Frizzell, Sr., 14198 C.R. 3505, Ada, OK 74820-2784, (580) 332-3673 - Since last reporting I have preached one or more times in CA, TX, AR, MO & OK. During my time in TX two precious souls, an man and his wife were baptized into Christ. One was restored and two confessions of wrong doing. And here at Galey, OK my home congregation, the Brethren have baptized two into Christ, one was restored, and six have made confessions of wrong doing. The church is growing, we are having good crowds, and the young men are doing the chapter teaching on Wednesday nights, doing a great job. Our meeting this year with Bro. John Anderson was well attended. John's preaching was powerful and Bible centered. We were very saddened at the death of Bro. Walker Hisle, a strong Christian and a very

dear friend. He will be greatly missed. The year 2004 is nearly over, we need to ask "what have we done" in 2004. Too often we put off doing what we know we should. Let us sincerely determine that during 2005 we will use our time to serve the Lord: To Christ and His church let us dedicate our lives and all we are in the year of 2005 and forever. I need your prayers, please.

Jack A Cutter, 12321 E. 14th, Tulsa, OK 74128, jacknorita@sbcglobal.net, November 30 - Please, check to see if you have our latest e-mail address. The congregation and work at Broken Arrow is doing fine. We still help support and host the T.V. Program, "Let the Bible Speak" with Ronny Wade preaching. This effort has continued now for over 3 years. It covers all of N.E. Oklahoma on a Fox channel. To the best of my ability, I have attempted to contact as many of those that have addresses that can be contacted. Several have enrolled in the free Bible Correspondence Course that is offered each Sunday by Ronny. The churches in this area all seem to be working together in unity. During the year, we have had several good weekend meetings and one week-long meeting at Broken Arrow. God's richest blessing on the Cause everywhere.

What If God. . .

WHAT if God Wouldn't take the time to bless us today because we didn't take the time to thank Him yesterday?

What if God decided to stop leading us tomorrow because we didn't follow Him today?

What if we never saw another flower bloom because we grumbled when God sent the rain?

What if God took away the Bible tomorrow because we would not read it today?

What if God took away His message because we failed to listen to His messenger?

What if God hadn't sent His only begotten Son because He wanted us to pay the price for sin?

What if the door of the church was closed because we didn't open the door to our hearts?

What if God stopped loving and caring for us because we failed to live and care for others?

What if God would not hear us today because we would not listen to Him?

What if God answered our prayers the way we answer His call to service?

What if God met our needs the way we give Him of our lives?

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THE BACK PAGE...

NO ORDINARY JOE

By CARL M. JOHNSON

In 1950 Roy Richards founded a wire-making operation near Carrollton, Georgia, called "Southwire." This company, which Richards began with twelve employees, is now America's largest manufacturer of wire and cable. Southwire's manufacturing, smelting, refining, and distribution facilities across the world employ more than 5,000 people and produce annual revenues in excess of \$1.6 billion.

Richards, obviously a very smart and innovative man, developed the Southwire Continuous Rod system, which revolutionized the production of aluminum alloy rod. One of the smartest things he did, however, was to hire the late Joe Bass as an engineer and later as Plant Superintendent of the Carrollton plant.

Joe Bass was no ordinary Joe. He became an expert in the construction and operation of aluminum rod mills. He and Dr. Lavern Eastwood co-edited a 322-page textbook for Southwire dealing with aluminum rod mill practices, which Southwire published in 1977, and he traveled all over the world to initiate and oversee construction of rod mills for Southwire. Obviously, as Ronny Wade says in Joe's obituary (OPA Nov. 2004), "He was a man possessed of unique talents and unusual intelligence."

That intelligence caused Joe to wrestle with himself on occasion to be patient with others. He was frustrated when others could not see the cause of problems and the solutions to dilemmas as quickly as he could. When he became frustrated he would usually wrinkle his brow, fix his laser-like blue eyes upon the person, and with increased volume explain again in the most concise manner what he thought should have been obvious to the person.

Everyone may not have felt comfortable approaching Joe, but he did command everyone's respect. He once gave me a tour of the mill in Carrollton, with its gigantic furnaces and vats of molten metal. As we passed from station to station the employees who met us greeted us with the words, "Good morning, Mr. Bass, sir. How are you, sir?" Later, I commented to Joe that I had never seen such a display of respect. I felt as though I was walking through a military camp with a four-star General. Joe grinned and in his direct and self-effacing way replied, "I'm not sure their respect is for me. It's for my position. They know I have the power to fire them."

One morning several years ago during a meeting I was conducting at Temple, Phyllis and I were sitting at Joe's breakfast table. He walked in and said, "You are both here. Good. I have something I want to say to you." He continued, "This meeting we are having is one of the best we have had in years." He then looked directly at me and said pointedly, "But it is not because of you." Turning to Phyllis he said, "It's because of you, Phyllis. We have some young women attending every night who do not usually attend our meetings, and it is because you have been friendly to them and have shown an interest in them. I thank you for that." I smiled at his words. It was vintage Joe direct, to the point, and right on target. I have believed a long time that preachers' wives are the true heroes and they do not receive enough credit.

On another occasion Joe and Velda came to a meeting I was conducting in Napoleon, Alabama. As Joe approached the building I greeted him and said, "Joe you are looking good." Joe was in his mid seventies at the time. He stood about 5 feet and 10 inches tall, was of medium build, and had a head full of straight white hair. Working his cattle and farm had kept him physically fit in spite of his age. However, he quickly responded to me in mock disgust, "Yeah, that's what they say to old people 'You're looking good.'" He added, "I just wish someone would say to me sometime, 'Joe, you are good-looking!'"

The next person to arrive and walk toward the building was Kenny Prince. As he approached us, I made the perfunctory greeting and as a conditioned reflex I almost said to him, "You are looking good." I caught Joe out of the corner of my eye watching our exchange, however, and I said instead, "You know Kenny, you are good-looking." Kenny stepped backwards, threw up his hands and protested, "Whoa! You are about to cross over my comfort zone here!" Joe burst out in laughter. He loved such repartee.

Joe loved the church passionately. He was charitable toward and quick to praise deserving people. He was also touched by the infirmities of others. I have heard his voice break with emotion and I have seen his eyes fill with tears as he expressed concern about a dear brother or sister lying at death's door. Such emotional vulnerability seemed almost out of character for Joe.

He was a voracious reader and he loved to read about and discuss church history, especially the American Restoration Movement. Two years ago the publishers of the OPA and I agreed to begin "The Back Page" as a new monthly column. Don King and Ronny Wade gave me the freedom to write about current events affecting the church and historically significant events and people. Early on I wrote about Moses Lard, a strange, second-generation Restoration Era preacher. I had no idea how the article might be received. But the morning after Joe received his paper he called me and told me he enjoyed the article very much. He said it answered questions he had about the eventual outcome of Lard's life. He encouraged me to continue providing information about significant people in our history. He never knew how much his phone call did to calm this writer's insecurities and feelings of unworthiness.

As I reflect back upon the year 2004, I recall that Joe is just one of many of our friends whose death saddened us during the year. I know that death is a natural part of living in this earthly realm (Heb. 9:27), and that our own life is like a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away (Jas. 4:15). As the song suggests, "True today we are here / But tomorrow may see / Just a grave in the vale / And a memory of me." I believe Joe leaves behind more than a grave in the vale and a memory, however. I believe his works do follow him (Rev. 14:13), and all who knew Joe and his works will agree that he was anything but ordinary.

carlmj@cableone.net

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

CALVINISM

(CONTINUED FROM DECEMBER 2004 ISSUE)

By GLEN OSBURN

If the spirits we receive from God come with depravity, then for the Calvinist there is an ethical problem with a God who creates evil (James 1: 13). [Calvinist answer: God is sovereign, ie. He can do anything He wants and still be righteous. True, He can do anything He wants, but He will not contradict His nature (act unrighteously). Example: God will not lie. Therefore, it becomes “impossible” (Hebrews 6:18) for God to lie.]

There is another consideration in this line of thinking; if our spirits emanate from our parents, how does the child of two Christian parents come to be born with a corrupt, depraved spirit? Calvinism says that “this corruption of nature...doth remain in those that are regenerated” [Westminster..., Chapter VI... V (Palmer, p. 126)]. The Scriptures teach, however, that all who have obeyed the truth have “purified” their souls (1 Peter 1:22), “cleansing their hearts” (Acts 15:9). The Bible affirms that there most assuredly are those who are “pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). How, then, can two “pure” souls spawn a totally corrupt soul? Souls can not be “pure” and “not pure” at the same time.

The truth is that the spirit God gives us as children is not depraved (Hebrews 12:9; Zechariah 12:1). God initially gives us a pure spirit for our bodies, but we mess it up. Paul said; And I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died; and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; for sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me (Romans 7:9-11 NAS). Paul maintains that he was “once alive” spiritually to God. Paul is speaking of his own spiritual life, or fellowship with God, as a child, before he sinned. But then “the commandment came.” This is not speaking of the inscription by God of the Ten commandments on Mt. Sinai (Galatians 4:24), it is speaking of the childhood of Paul, before the law “became known” to him [Thayer’s Greek English Lexicon, B,2,b, p. 251, (Strong’s #2064)]. Before the age of accountability, Paul

was “alive” to God. Then, at some point, when Paul knew right from wrong, he was deceived by sin, committed sin and spiritually died. (See also Deuteronomy 1:39.) But remember, Paul was originally “alive” to God. This cannot mesh with the doctrine of Total Depravity or being “born in sin.”

How does man become a sinner? “Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices” (Ecclesiastes 7:29 NAS). Solomon, in his inspired insight, says that God makes men “upright,” then man chooses to become a sinner. James details “...each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death” (James 1: 14-15 NAS).

It is not our spiritual *death* that creates lust and sin, but our *lust* which creates sin and spiritual death (see also Romans 6:23). Calvinism says it is our being born in sin (naturally naughty) that causes all our sins. “From this original corruption...do proceed all actual transgressions (Philadelphia..., p. 24). John MacArthur, a Calvinist, put it this way: “Committing sinful acts does not make us sinners; we commit sinful acts because we *are* sinners” [Ephesians (Commentary), John MacArthur, Moody Press, 1986, p. 54]. This is not what the Bible says. Scriptures teach that it is our own personal sins and iniquities which bring about our “separation” (Isaiah 59:2) from God. “And you were dead in *your* trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1), the Scriptures record.

The Scriptures are explicit, we shall *not* be held accountable for the sins of others. “Yet you say, ‘Why should the son not bear the punishment for the father’s iniquity?’ When the son has practiced justice and righteousness, and has observed all My statutes and done them, he shall surely live. The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father’s iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son’s iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself’ (Ezekiel 18:19-20). We may have to live with the temporal consequences of a sin we commit,

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Editorial

GOD IS LOVE

By GREG GAY

John the Apostle tells us "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (I John 4:8). What an amazing statement about God, that He is love! Here we are not told that God loves, although that is certainly true. The verse proclaims God to be love.

Adam Clarke comments on this verse: "It has been well observed that, although God is holy, just, righteous, etc., he is never called holiness, justice, etc., in the abstract, as he is here called LOVE. This seems to be the essence of the divine nature, and all other attributes to be only modifications of this"

How can we begin to describe the greatness of these simple words, "God is Love" that are said to contain the "essence of the divine nature of God?"

We are told regarding the love of Christ, who is also God, the full realization of the love that God has is beyond our ability to fully comprehend. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph 3:17-19)

One of the most beautiful attempts I'm aware of to describe the love of God is in a verse of the song, "The Love of God" by F. M. Lehman.

Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made;
Were every stalk on earth a quill, And every man
a scribe by trade,
To write the love of God above Would drain the
ocean dry;

Nor could the scroll contain the whole, Tho'
stretched from sky to sky.

With the greatness of the fact that "God is Love" it seem impossible for us to begin to acknowledge such tremendous love in our lives.

Yet, the Bible gives us a way to respond to the love of God in a very special, yet simple way. "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him" (1 John 2:3-5).

This then becomes our task: to keep His word. "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the

Father's which sent me" (John 14:23-24).

One proof of keeping God's word will be seen in how we treat one another as His children. "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us" (1 John 4:12).

In the meantime, in this life there will be many, many distractions along the way. Satan will do his best to try to get us to forget that "God is Love" and that our response to that love is obedience to his word. Paul writes to encourage us:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom 8:35-39

Since God promises nothing is strong enough to separate us from the love of God we can trust if we will do our part in keeping God's word in our lives in every way, God will reward us with Heaven!

"Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21). 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747, papagreg@aol.com

THE QUERIST COLUMN

BY RONNY F. WADE

Question: Does the cup (container) by itself have any significance in the Lord's Supper?

Answer: The cup of the Lord, 1 Corinthians 11:27, is not an empty cup by itself, nor is it the fruit of the vine by itself. The cup of the Lord is a cup containing fruit of the vine for which thanks has been offered. The literal cup by itself signifies nothing, but when containing fruit of the vine, it represents the new covenant according to Luke 22:20 and 1 Cor. 11:25 "In the same manner he took the cup after supper, saying This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do as often as you drink it in remembrance of me." Since the cup Jesus took contained the fruit of the vine, whatever he said about the cup must take that into account.

J.H. Thayer on page 15 says "This cup containing wine, an emblem of blood, is rendered by the shedding of my blood an emblem of the New Covenant." Hence the cup containing wine is an emblem of the New Covenant. In 1931 Brother J. D. Phillips contacted several Greek scholars of the day asking them about

Luke 22:20 and 1 Cor. 11:25, following you will find their replies: "Poteerion (cup) occurs twice in the passages from Luke 22:20 and 1 Cor. 11:25. The first time it is apparently the literal cup; the second time it is apparently the cup with its contents." Walter Miller, College of Arts and Science, University of Missouri. F.R. Gay of Bethany College "This cup (that is the cup and its contents) represents the New Covenant (and testament: both ideas are included) which is ratified by my sacrificial death." Neander says in Lange "The cup, then, with the wine it contains, symbolizes the New Covenant, and this covenant is established in the blood of Christ, which wine poured into the cup. . . sets forth as shed for the expiation of sinful men and to be appropriated by those who drink of the cup."

Three things are mentioned by the Lord, and three things are symbolized:

The bread symbolizes or represents His body.

The fruit of the vine symbolizes or represents His blood.

The cup containing fruit of the vine symbolizes or represents the New Covenant.

In giving thanks, we must be careful not to say or imply what the scriptures do not. It is a mistake to separate the cup and its contents in our prayer of thanksgiving. Christ did not say or teach that the cup by itself represents the New Testament and the contents of it represents His blood. Yet I hear some saying that today. We should say exactly what He said i.e. 'We thank thee for this cup which is the New Testament in thy blood.' Or what Paul said in 1 Cor. 10:16 "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? Brethren you cannot improve on what the bible says. Why try?"

Question: Is it wrong to sing songs in our worship services written by non-Christians?

Answer: In Eph. 5:19 we are told "speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." In Colossians 3:16 "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." Nothing is said about who writes or produces the songs or hymns that we sing. There is no mandate from God that we sing only what some Christian writes. We obviously cannot sing something that is unscriptural, something not true. Christians as well as non-Christians have written songs that accurately represent biblical truths, and so long as that is the case no scripture is violated in using such songs. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade 2254 E. Raynell Springfield, MO 65804 or rfwade@mchsi.com)

BETTER THAN THE JEWS (PART III)

BY BARNEY OWENS

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. (Heb. 8:6).

The superiority of the New Testament to the Old is demonstrated over and over again in the book of Hebrews. Various types, shadows, illustrations and figures are used to prove this beyond a reasonable doubt. In the passage before us, the New Testament is seen to be better because of the "mediator." While Moses fulfilled this function (going between God and the people) for the Old Testament, he commissioned the sealing of the Testament to be carried out by Aaron and those that followed. They offered the blood of animals seeking atonement. The New Testament has a "mediator" Who sealed it with His own blood. "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Mt. 26:28). No sin could be remitted by animals' blood in the Old Testament, therefore, argues the Apostle, this Testament (New) is superior to the old. The Old Testament was given 430 years after the promise to Abraham to contain those under it as they looked for a better Testament. The promises were "land promises" attached to physical life. Fact is the New Testament is a far *better covenant* (testament). Better because it does not fade away to one which follows. Better because it is bound by the blood of God's only begotten Son. Better because it is not limited to a geographical location, but is universal. Better because every human being is included within it. Better because it is addressed to the mind rather than the flesh. Etc. etc. It has *better promises*. Promises such as our sins are remembered no more. Promises such as the availability of the cleansing blood of Christ when we come short of our duty. Promises such as our being able (as priests of God) to address the Father boldly. Promises such as eternal life around the throne of God in Heaven. Etc. etc.

The conclusion is clear: We are made better under the New Testament, and therefore we must do better than the Jews. Anything less is a reflection on the New Testament and low rates the Mediator of it. This was the point of the Apostle and has been the theme of these papers upon this subject. This is no reflection on the Jews, if they will accept the New Testament, the blessings and promises therein are theirs as well.

BETTER THAN THE JEWS RESPECTING OUR GIVING

For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 5:20)

This passage has been the foundation of the articles written this far. As pertains to the present idea, it has been used to prove how much Christians are to "lay by in store" upon the first day of the week. The reasoning

goes something like this: "*the Jews were to tithe (give a tenth) of their earnings, we are to do better than they, therefore, we are to give a tenth plus, to be pleasing to the Lord.*" Let's explore this idea some and see if this is true and if so, do those who advocate this practice what they preach.

HOW MUCH WERE THE JEWS REQUIRED TO GIVE?

It is commonly stated and believed that the Jews tithed, which amounted to them giving a tenth. The reasoning that follows is that we are to do *better*, which means we are to give a tenth plus. First we need to ascertain if the amount is correct concerning the Jews' requirement.

1. The Jews were required to tithe (provide a tenth) for the Levites, Num. 18:20-24.
2. In addition the 1st and 2nd year they were to take another tenth and eat it before the Lord, Deut. 14:22-24. Evidently, this was to be done along with the Levites.
3. On the 3rd year a tithe was to be given to the widows and poor, Deut. 14: 28-29.
4. The 7th year was a Sabbath to the land, giving it rest, Ex. 23:10-11.

Putting this together it is as follows; each yearly total was a double tithe or 20%. Upon the 7th year, there was a 100% minus the 20%. Therefore, the yearly average was over 31%. If we take the reasoning applied to the tithe, that is, that the Jews gave a tenth and we ought to do better by giving more, that would mean that we are to give 31% plus of our earnings. I cannot think of anyone I know who gives that amount to the Lord's work.

The scriptures are clear regarding our giving. We are to give according to our prosperity, as Paul addressed the matter to the Corinthians in chapter 16, verses 1 and 2.

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

There are some clear regulating statements within this verse that are worthy of our consideration.

1. There is a collection or a putting together of funds by members of the church if you please, a common treasury. "*Concerning the collection*" and "*that there be no gatherings when I come.*"
2. This involves every member—none are left out "*let every one of you lay by in store.*"
3. It is to be done at a specific time. "*Upon the first day of the week*"
4. The funds are to be used for Christians. The "*collection (is) for the saints.*"
5. The giving is determined by our prosperity. "*Lay by him in store as God hath prospered him.*"

It will not do for one to contend that the money must be laid aside ONLY on the first day of the week to the

exclusion of all others, or to contend that the funds are to be used for members of the church in need, in total disregard of other people and their needs, and then say or practice giving any way and every way. It has been my observation that Christians are far too lax in the amount we lay by on the first day.

The great problem with the Jews was their attitude. Mostly, at least among their leaders, it was an attitude of self-righteousness, doting on their accomplishments. Jesus taught an infamous parable to this end in Luke the eighteenth chapter, beginning at verse ten.

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

We can do *better than the Jews*. Their general attitude is seen as this man began his prayer "praying within himself." Then he compared himself with other people rather than the standard of God. As pertaining to his giving, he did only that which was required rather than making any kind of sacrifice for the benefit of others. The attitude that governs our giving is seen in Paul's address to the Corinthians.

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. (II Cor. 9:7).

The "cheerful giver" is a man after the very heart of God who gave the best He had to save the world from sin. It is written, "*God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*" How can we close our hearts to those in need by refusing to support the Gospel by our offerings?

Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. (I Jn. 3:16-18).

There are hundreds of thousands of people in the United States alone that have not heard a pure Gospel sermon. The truth could be taken to them by mass medium, but it is not. The question is why? The answer is simple, the finances are lacking. Is it because members of the church do not have the funds? No, that cannot be. Look at the automobiles, the houses, the clothes, the money spent on vacations and various amusements, yet the contribution gathered in the Lord's house remain meager, very meager, in comparison. There shall be a reckoning for the people of God. Condemnation will come upon us, not because of some iniquity we have done, but for the lack of love for the lost, and the love we have for ourselves. We are no better than the Pharisee described by Jesus in Luke 18 (see above). There is time for us to repent and turn things around, if we will but set

our heart on the Lord's will. We can and we must do *better than the Jews* in our giving.

HOW MUCH SHOULD WE LAY BY IN STORE EACH WEEK?

This is a knotty question among many because the amount is not spelled out for us as it was to the Jews. However, there are some things that are sufficiently stated that make it easy for the heart that is set on God and God's business. The first thing that we need to remember is stated in I Cor. 16:2 as mentioned above, each is to "lay by in store, *as God hath prospered him.*" There is no room for doubt that there is some sort of percentage involved here. If a person prospers \$100.00 he certainly is not expected to lay by as much as the person who prospers \$500.00. So, what determines it for each of us?

Seems to me the next thing as already brought out is our *attitude*. Some Christians need an attitude adjustment in regard to money. It is for this reason that Jesus spoke more on the subject of money than any other subject during His personal ministry. Why? Because it is money that reverses the character of a man or woman. It can get some strange hold on our heart. Paul taught "*covetousness which is Idolatry*" (Col. 3:5), and "*For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows*" (I Tim. 6:10). Money itself is not evil, but the LOVE of it is the danger. Some serve the Lord in wonderful ways, except for their greed, stinginess, selfishness and love of money, as they fail to lay by in store as God hath prospered them.

Some guidelines for us:

1. The Law of Moses is gone (Col. 2:14) therefore, the tithe is not binding on Christians. Yet, the Law of Moses is a Shadow of good things which have come to us. We have a better covenant (law) and better promises. Should we not willingly sacrifice more than the tithe?

2. Melchisedec was a type of our High Priest (Jesus). We are the children of Abraham (spiritually Gal. 3:26-29). Abraham gave a tenth of all to Melchisedec (Heb. 7:1-4), should we not do better toward our High Priest Who is superior?

3. Gen. 47 reminds us of the people during the famine in Joseph's day. The people came to Joseph desiring bread. He took their cattle for Pharaoh and gave them bread. There was no relief the next year, so they came again saying we have only our land and our bodies. Joseph told them he would take their land for Pharaoh. They could work the land and, of what was produced, they must give one part to Pharaoh and keep four parts for themselves. Figure that out and it comes down to 20% being given to Pharaoh. The people said, "no Joseph, that is too much." Who can give off the top 20%? No, that is not what they said. They said, Gen.

47:25 "*thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.*" "Our very souls are saved by Jesus, what should our attitude be? **Let us strive for an attitude better than the Jews**, the outcome will surely be better than theirs.

A DEADLY DISEASE

By MARK GRANT

When the words AIDS, SARS, or West Nile Virus are mentioned in the news today, they strike fear in some people because they can cause us to die. While these diseases can cause death, there are usually a very limited number of people who die from these diseases in the United States. There was a time, though, when a deadly disease could wipe out numerous people. In 1520, a Spaniard stepped off a Spanish galleon in Mexico and caused the deaths of thousands of people. The man was a soldier under the leadership of Panfilo de Narvaez, and he had smallpox. Although the soldier was unaware he had it, wherever he went the Mexican people were being exposed to a new disease. As a result, a smallpox epidemic ensued, causing many thousands of Mexican citizens to die.

One man is all it took to wreak havoc among the people. His contact with the unsuspecting Mexican people led to a horrific, agonizing scourge. The destructive effects of that disease spread from one person to another, infecting a large segment of the population.

It was the apostle Paul who compared the spread of a deadly disease to the spread of a spiritual sickness that sometimes strikes a congregation. It is the disease of false doctrine. *"Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some"* (2 Tim. 2:16-18; NIV). Note the way in which the spread of evil teachings is compared to "gangrene." The word "gangrene" comes from the Greek word *gaggraina*, which Thayer defines as "a gangrene, a disease by which any part of the body suffering from inflammation becomes so corrupted that, unless a remedy be seasonably applied, the evil continually spreads, attacks other parts, and at last eats away the bones" (Thayer's Greek English Lexicon; pg.107). When a person is diagnosed with gangrene the immediate remedy is to cut away the affected area, or the patient's very life will be in danger because of the rapid spread of this deadly disease. So, too, with false teaching and heresies that come into the church. The infecting of one often leads to the infecting of many. False teachers not only contaminate and destroy their own souls, they also affect others. Their evil teachings and consequently corrupt practices spread like a gangrene, whose hidden roots spread throughout the body and produce horrible results.

The infection often starts so innocently with those who wish to engage in godless chatter. Godless chatter is characterized by trying to make strong arguments,

frequently using God's name, but without any basis of truth. Opinions and arguments that divert from the word of God are confusing, useless, and will cause strife and division. These empty words will only go from bad to worse and "*become more and more ungodly.*" These discussions of non-biblical views will develop into more powerful and more dangerous errors and worse courses of conduct. False teachers love to cause strife and division by their meaningless quibbling over unimportant details and by spouting lies. Some distort the truth, some dilute it, some add to it, and some simply ignore it by saying that God's truth no longer applies.

Having described the chatter of Hymenaeus and Philetus as gangrene, Paul specifically identifies one of the main points in their profane and false teaching saying, "*that the resurrection is passed already, and overthrow the faith of some.*" Paul had turned Hymenaeus over to Satan (1 Tim. 1:20), because his false teaching concerning the resurrection was destroying some people's faith. No judgment concerning the eternal salvation of Hymenaeus was involved. He was merely excluded from the fellowship of the church (1 Cor. 5:5-11).

It's not unusual for a happy and well-adjusted congregation of Christians to be infected after just one person introduces godless chatter. Soon dissension is running rampant among people who had been eagerly working together, and the church finds itself spending more time on damage control than on ministry. Let us be on our guard brethren! Let us rightly divide (to cut straight) the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15). Good teaching never promotes quarrels or foolish arguments (2 Tim. 2:16,23). Let us commit to teaching sound doctrine that accords with the glorious gospel, instead of indulging in vain argumentations that ruin rather than save the hearers (2 Tim. 2:14). Else, you may see your own congregation deteriorate and mortify before your very eyes from a deadly disease.

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CALVINISM

continued from page one

even though we have been forgiven. And we may even physically suffer because of another's sin. But we will not suffer eternally for another's sin, or receive the guilt of their sin. [We are living with the consequences of Adam's sin (physical death), not the guilt (spiritual death); 1 Corinthians 15:20-22.] If we lose our soul, it will be because of our own sin and failure to receive forgiveness. (See also Deuteronomy 24:16; 2 Kings 14:6; Jeremiah 31:29-30; Ezekiel 18:14; 28: 15.)

"So then every one shall give an account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). If God created us totally depraved and unable to obey, why would He call upon us to "give an account" of ourselves to Him? The concept of God making us accountable to Him for doing something He knows is impossible for us, is incompatible with the true nature of God (2 Peter 3:9; 2 Timothy 2:34). Judgment itself suggests that we are *able to respond* (responsible) in obedience to God. We shall be called upon to "give an account" of ourselves to God. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5: 10).

We have spent much on this first tenet of Calvinism, for if this foundational concept is incorrect, then the rest of Calvin's system of thought is faulty. If we cut down the "trunk" of Calvin's doctrinal system, the "branches" fall with it.

U - Unconditional election: Defined: The Westminster Confession of Faith (1648): Chapter III, I. God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass...III. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. IV. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished (Palmer, p. 124).

And: The doctrine of election declares that God, before the foundation of the world, chose certain individuals from among the fallen members of Adam's race to be the objects of His undeserved favor. These, and these only, He purposed to save. God could have chosen to save all men (for He had the power and authority to do so) or He could have chosen to save none (for He was under no obligation to show mercy to any) - but He did neither. Instead He chose to save some and to exclude others. His eternal choice of particular sinners unto salvation was not based upon any foreseen act or response on the part of those selected, but was based solely on His own good pleasure and sovereign will.

Thus election was not determined by, or conditioned upon, anything that men would do, but resulted entirely from God's self-determined purpose (Steele & Thomas, p. 30).

Scriptural Considerations: Calvinism says: Because of being born in sin (Hereditary Depravity), all of us are spiritually dead, so dead we are unable to even have faith. Therefore, in order for us to be saved, God alone had to save us. We know that everyone doesn't "get saved" so, God had to choose those to whom He would give grace (Unconditional Election).

The first glaring contradiction between Calvinism and Scripture is the Bible's teaching on the impartiality of God. Paul, in discussing the justice of God, emphatically states "...there is no partiality with God" (Romans 2:11). Peter, after preaching Christ for the first time to the Gentiles, says "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him" (Acts 10:34-35). God "desires all men to be saved" (1 Timothy 2:4) but only those who fear and obey Him will be "welcome to Him." The problem keeping all men from being saved is not the sovereign will of God, but the arbitrary will of men.

The Bible does teach "election" and "predestination:" Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as *He chose us* in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love *He predestined us* to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will (Ephesians 1:3-5 NAS).

The phrase "He chose us" is from a word which originally meant "to lay out together." It carried the idea of *making a selection* or *choosing* from among different objects or things. Those, therefore, who were chosen by God were chosen from what consisted of many varied groups or persons. Rather than an arbitrary choice of particular individuals, God *chose* to receive all those who are "in Christ." He chose a class of people: those who in faith would obey Jesus (Hebrews 5:9).

This relationship called "in Him" or "in Christ" and is where "all" or "every spiritual blessing" is found (Ephesians 1:3). Ephesians the first chapter lists seven spiritual blessings that are found only "in Him": 1. We are chosen (1:4), 2. We are predestined to be adopted (1:5), 3. We are given grace (1:6), 4. We are redeemed and forgiven (1:7), 5. We are allowed to know the mystery of His will (1:9), 6. We are to obtain an inheritance (1:11), 7. We are sealed with the Spirit (1:13). [See also Ephesians (Commentary), Glen Osburn, Contending For The Faith Pub.]

God's decision or choice pertaining to whom He would save, was made before the world was built, that

is, before its “foundation” was laid (Ephesians 1:4). Because of God’s impartiality this choice consists of individuals within a particular group. He chose to save those who had the quality of being “holy and blameless” (Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; Colossians 1:22). This *separation* from sin and guilt is attained only “in Christ,” and maintained by us (2 Corinthians 7:1; 2 Peter 1:10).

The word “predestine” means literally “to set out boundaries in advance.” God staked out the boundaries for the group he would adopt. The concept of this word is described in John’s gospel: “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out. When he puts forth all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. And a stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.” This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them. Jesus therefore said to them again, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture” (John 10:1-9 NAS).

The imagery here suggests that the “sheep” represent people. God *set out a boundary in advance* that those in the “fold of the sheep” were to be the “saved.” The “fold of the sheep” represents the church where salvation is (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23). The way to get into that “fold” is through “the door,” which is Christ Jesus. God predestined, or “set out boundaries in advance,” that the “fold of the sheep” or *the church* be where salvation is and that “anyone” who wanted to be saved enter “through” Christ. Anyone? Yes, anyone: “If *anyone* enters through Me, he shall be saved” (John 10:9). Jesus also said “you are *unwilling* to come to Me, that you may have life” (John 5:40). (See also John 10:16 & Ephesians 2:14-16.)

By His sovereign decree, all those “in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3) are in that group called the church (Ephesians 1:22-23) of which Christ is the Savior (Ephesians 5:23). Whether a person *is* or *is not* in God’s church is dependent on whether that person has in faith chosen to obey Jesus (Hebrews 5:9; Romans 8:29-30). God’s call to come and be saved “in Christ” is offered to all through or by the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14). You get “into” Christ when in faith you respond to the gospel and are “baptized into Christ” (Galatians 3:26-27). This is a *general* election, as opposed to the *unconditional, particular* election of the Calvinist.

L - Limited Atonement: Defined: Christ’s redeeming work was intended to save the elect only and actually secured salvation for them. His death was a substitutionary endurance of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners. In addition to putting away the sins of His people, Christ’s redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation, including faith which unites them to Him. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, thereby guaranteeing their salvation (Steele & Thomas, p. 17).

This tenet is known negatively as “Limited Atonement,” but put positively as “Particular Redemption.”

Scriptural Considerations: Let’s recap. Calvinism says: Because of being born in sin, all of us are spiritually dead, so dead we are unable to even have faith (Total Depravity). Therefore, in order for us to be saved, God alone has to save us. We know that everyone doesn’t “get saved,” so, God had to choose those to whom He would give grace (Unconditional Election). Jesus couldn’t have died for everyone or everyone would be saved. So, because some are lost, we know Jesus didn’t die for everyone (Limited Atonement).

Did Jesus die for everyone? Let’s see what the Scriptures say: “And He Himself is the propitiation (atoning sacrifice) for our sins; and *not for ours only*, but also *for those of the whole world*” (1 John 2:2). “For God so loved *the world*, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). “For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who *gave Himself as a ransom for all*, the testimony borne at the proper time” (1 Timothy 2:5-6). “For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that *one died for all*, therefore all died; and *He died for all*, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). “But we do see Him... Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might *taste death for everyone*” (Hebrews 2:9). (See also: 2 Peter 3:9; Matthew 11:28-30; Revelation 3:20.)

Can we tell anyone we will ever meet that God loves them, and Jesus died for them? Absolutely! But, what about the Calvinist? As a Reformed (ie. Calvinist) Christian, the writer believes that counselors must not tell any unsaved counselee that Christ died for him, for they cannot say that. No man knows except Christ himself who are his elect for whom he died (Competent to Counsel, Jay Adams, Presbyterian & Reformed Pub. Co., 1975, p. 70). We do not need to worry (unlike the Calvinist) that we may have inadvertently lied to someone about Jesus dying for them just because we were unaware if they were one of “the elect.”

I - Irresistible Grace: Defined: Although the general outward call of the gospel can be, and often is, rejected, the special inward call of the Spirit never fails to result in the conversion of those to whom it is made. This special call is not made to all sinners but is issued to the elect only! The Spirit is in no way dependent upon their help or cooperation for success in His work of bringing them to Christ. It is for this reason that Calvinists speak of the Spirit's call and of God's grace in saving sinners as being "efficacious," "invincible," or "irresistible." For the grace which the Holy Spirit extends to the elect cannot be thwarted or refused, it never fails to bring them to true faith in Christ (Steele & Thomas, p. 49)!

Scriptural Considerations: Let's recap again. Calvinism says: Because of being born in sin, all of us are spiritually dead, so dead we are unable to even have faith (Total Depravity). Therefore, in order for us to be saved, God alone had to save us. We know that everyone doesn't "get saved," so, God had to choose those to whom He would give grace (Unconditional Election). Jesus couldn't have died for everyone or everyone would be saved. So, because some are lost, we know Jesus didn't die for everyone (Limited Atonement). If you're one of the ones God picked, you can't change it (Irresistible Grace).

Stephen said of the disobedient Jews who had deceitfully brought him to trial: "You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. "Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it" (Acts 7:51-53).

Stephen said this rowdy assembly was "resisting the Holy Spirit." Evidently the work of the Spirit can be resisted. Their fathers had resisted the Spirit by persecuting the prophets and killing the ones who announced Christ. But the sons were "resisting the Holy Spirit" through betraying and murdering Christ, and even though they had the law, they "did not keep it." When people today refuse to obey the word of God, they also are *resisting* the Spirit. [We can also "grieve" (Ephesians 4:30) and *insult* "the Spirit of grace" (Hebrews 10:29)].

The Spirit's call is to all: And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost (Revelation 22:17). Jesus said to some, "you are *unwilling* to come to Me, that you may have life" (John 5:40).

The Spirit's call is not "irresistible" for man has often resisted yielding to the Spirit's invitation and instruction. Therefore, the grace which God offers can be resisted by the insolent will of man. *To Be Continued. . .*

Announcements

PANAMA CITY, FL

Brother Phillip Prince is currently assisting in the work in Panama City, Florida. He is interested in obtaining the names of anyone living in that area that he might contact about the church. If you know of anyone he might visit or of anyone who might be interested in relocating there please contact him at 12025 Turkey Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32221 or call him at 904-783-1589 or 904-537-6105.

MY POSITION ON CARNAL WARFARE

In the December issue of Old Paths Advocate we ran a list of the names of those who were registering their opposition to military service in any form. Inadvertently we omitted the following names:

Daniel T. Kline • Grace E. Kline • Mary H. Kline

Our Departed

SMITH - Thomas S. Smith of Wesson, MS was born April 9, 1920 in Lincoln County, MS and departed this life on December 3, 2004 while a patient at Kings Daughters Medical Center in Brookhaven, MS. Thomas was a leader in the New Salem congregation where he had worshipped and labored for years. He was highly respected and his presence and influence will be greatly missed. It's hard for me to think about his seat being empty. Thomas was a quiet man, but when he spoke people listened. He was kind and charitable, but firm and resolute in his convictions. We had been friends for over fifty years. The memorial service was conducted in the New Salem building with burial in the church cemetery. The day was cloudy with rain, which seemed to accentuate the sadness of the occasion. Thomas will be greatly missed by the church, his family, and the community where he lived. He is survived by his wife, Juanita, one son, Juan, one daughter, Cynthia Post, two brothers, two sisters and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The service was conducted by this writer and Luke Post, a grandson, who delivered a moving tribute to his grandfather, and brother Lynwood Smith, whose remarks at the grave reminded us all of the importance of having the Lord by our side when we make the crossing to the other side. - Ronny F. Wade

REECE - Harry W. (Bill) Reece of Tucson, AZ was born December 20, 1927 in North Adams, Mass. and departed this life on October 10, 2004, in Tucson, AZ. He is survived by his wife Mable, three sons Richard, Terry and Jeffrey Reece and grandchildren. A devoted Christian for 57 years. One of the original members of the Tucson, Arizona Church of Christ. He was a teacher, a song leader and a strong member, as well as serving as treasurer for a number of years. He is greatly missed by all at the Tucson Church of Christ.

BRIGGS - Hazel Virginia Briggs of Yakima, Washington, was born March 18, 1919, in Flippin, AR to Will and Clara S. Osborn. She departed this life on December 12, 2004 at the age of 85. Hazel spent her school years in Arkansas. She married Jewell Briggs, Jr., on September 23, 1939. They relocated to live in the Yakima Valley of Washington in 1941. She is survived by three children, three brothers, three sisters, and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Hazel was known for her love of the Lord and was a member of the Church of Christ in Yakima. The church there will greatly miss her. On the day following her funeral her oldest son returned to the Lord after having been away for some time. Even though dead, her influence was still living. The writer conducted the service at the Valley Hills Funeral Home Chapel, in Yakima, Washington, December 18, 2004. Her body was laid to rest in the Tahoma Cemetery in Yakima. - Gayland Osburn

FANCHER - Clayton Ray Fancher, Galena, MO, passed away December 2, 2004 in the Ozark Mountain Regional Healthcare Center, at the age of 84. He was born March 17, 1920 in Pleasant Valley, Texas, to Dow Oscar and Birdie Fox Fancher. He was united in marriage to Bonnie B. Middick on August 20, 1939, this writer performed the wedding service, and also used his influence in persuading Clayton and Bonnie, to move to this community in Missouri, which they did in 1979, having lived near Frederick, Oklahoma, where he was a pawn broker, having owned his own business, from which he retired several years ago. At the time of his demise he was a member of the Mountain Home, Church of Christ. He had been a faithful member of the Church of Christ, since his teenage years. He was a powerful leader in the church. Survivors include his wife, Bonnie, of the home; one son, Rodney Fancher and wife Carole of Galena; one daughter, Karen McAlester and husband Rex of Aurora, MO; two sisters, Connie Andrus of Oklahoma City, OK, and Donna Wolfington of Austin, TX; many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, relatives and friends. Bob Loudermilk, and this writer conducted the funeral service. Mike Whitworth, his daughter Cammie, and son Daniel, did the singing, and did a terrific job! We were very close both in the natural and spiritual realm. This writer will really miss him. Bob Loudermilk's words were to the point and well articulated. Interment was in the Mars Hill Cemetery. - Clovis T. Cook

COMBS - Sister Lillie Combs of Big Spring, Texas departed this life November 19, 2004, at the age of 88 years, 2 months, and 1 day. Her husband Barney Combs preceded her in death on October 14, 1992. She and brother Combs were charter members of the Church of Christ in Andrews, and they worshipped here from 1956 until 1970, at which time they moved to Big Spring, TX and began to worship with the brethren there until the church there had to cease, because of the lack of any male members. She is survived by two daughters, two sons, fifteen grandchildren; one of which is Bro. Barney

Ray Combs, of Athens, TX, thirty-nine great-grandchildren and seventeen great-great-grandchildren. She was a sweet, talented, and dedicated lady, whom you could depend upon in matters pertaining to the church and its interest. She is the fourth member of this family, who requested that I be the preacher to say a few words of comfort and warning at their funerals. I was glad to do so, as this family was near and dear to my family, as we worked side by side for the Lord for several years. She will be missed! Singers from Midland Texas sang songs that she and her children loved. May God comfort those left behind, may they be reminded that they too are but "one step" from death themselves, and may they dedicate themselves to being ready whenever that day arrives, is my humble prayer in the name of Jesus. - C.A. Smith

Field Reports

C.A. Smith, 810 NW 6th St., Andrews, TX 79714, January 10 - So often, more than we like, word comes to us of the passing of brothers and sisters in Christ, which of course brings to our minds, the fact that we shall not have the opportunity to see and be with them again here in our earthly sojourn, but thanks be to God and His faithfulness, we know, if they were prepared and we are prepared as well, that we shall meet over yonder "in the sweet by and by." Such was the case, when I heard of Brother Thomas Smith's passing. He was a dear one to my heart and a great Christian. I know that Juanita and the children will not weep as others, who have no hope, but will so conduct their lives that they will be reunited with their loved one in heaven. I was privileged to be present the summer that they were united as husband and wife, while traveling with Lynwood.

The church here in Andrews is at peace, and daily striving to be all that we should be and to "keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace." Such should be with every congregation of the Lord's people, but alas, some evidently do not see the need or the importance of doing so. Our son-in-law, Dyke, Connie's husband, is now home after having to stay in a Houston hospital, St. Mary's, three and a half months, which really took its toll on he and his family as well. He has come a long way, but still has a long way to go. His heart is getting stronger, but his kidneys are not functioning as of yet, however, the doctor's are saying that in time they will repair themselves. We do so appreciate all the prayers that were prayed on his behalf, and please continue to pray for him, specifically praying that his kidneys will indeed begin to function. He and his family have seen some troubling times but we know that God has been with them every step of the way, has heard our many prayers, and has answered most of them, and we just need to wait on Him to do more. So, Brother Dyke, we don't believe that the Lord is through working on you yet. Don't lose hope, for we serve a wonderful, loving, and gracious God.

Ecuador Report - I am happy to announce that we have purchased a vehicle for the Lord's work in Ecuador. I had been looking at buying an extended cab pickup truck, but then decided a van would be better. A pickup would probably have held more people, but for safety reasons I decided a van would be better. The van is a 1995 Peugeot with a 2000 motor in it. It was owned by a doctor who basically used it for family trips. The dealer was selling the van for \$10,000 but we were able to talk him down to \$8,400. We had \$12,000 to buy a vehicle. I used the extra money to have some minor work done and to buy a new set of tires. I had a tune up done which involved changing oil, spark plugs, belt, etc. I also put a new alarm system in the van because car theft is a major problem here. Most of the left over money I have put aside for auto insurance. I have not been able to purchase insurance yet because not all the paper work for the van is done yet. I am still waiting for the local police to finish their part. I have learned that any government paper work in Latin America takes time. I am able to drive the van because I have a paper that shows it is mine. But I cannot purchase insurance until the local police give me a permanent title. I am happy that the Lord helped us find an excellent vehicle for His work. Now that we have the van the work in Portoviejo has grown. The past few Sunday's we have had good attendance. I take three families to services in the van. Sister Rosa's husband has a pickup and has been helping me pick up other families. We started a mid-week service on Wednesdays. This has been excellent. For three weeks in a row there have been 43 people on Wednesday night. Most of those 43 people are children and non members. On Friday nights I am showing the film studies in sister Rosa's house. This has been a great study because several of her neighbors attend. The past two weeks there have been 25 people at each of these studies. Some of those people are the same that attend worship services. Other days of the week I have other Bible studies. I am still studying with Jaime, Maria and their family. This is the Mormon family that I wrote about a few months ago. The other members of their organization no longer are studying with us, but we are happy that Jaime and Maria continue to study the truth. I have another Bible study with Victor, Taresa and their two teenage daughters. This family comes from a Pentecostal background. Thankfully they have been attending services for the past few weeks. I hope and pray that they will soon obey the gospel. Sister Carmen has a sister and a niece that also attend worship. We hope to be able to hold a Bible study with them soon. The brethren in Ambato continue to worship faithfully. Brother Villacis has been having health problems but that has not stopped him from preaching everyday on the radio. Please remember him in your prayers. Thank You! God Bless, Jonathan Bunner.

Roger Owens, Cassville, MO, January 10 - The work at Cassville, Missouri continues to move forward in a very positive manner. The past year has blessed us with three tremendous meetings for the Master's cause. Reggie Kinser in March, Billy Dickinson in May and Ronny Wade in August. The church locally and from a distance was truly blessed. The Missouri Study was a tremendous success in every way possible. The brethren here are busy and determined to make it all work in His name. I have been very impressed by the attitude and support from every member of this congregation and others. The preaching is second to none when critiqued for content, contextual truth and determination to keep the faith in love, may I add? We look forward to the new year with a positive outlook knowing that what we do in His name will be blessed by His power and might. I have enjoyed working with congregations in the Arkansas area to resolve issues and helping restore unity in the body. I have one more meeting this year Lord willing before we cross over into a new dawn of service 2005. Perhaps my greatest challenge is working in the shadow of Brother Lynwood Smith who served in this community over the past 50 plus years. Lynwood is respected and admired for his sermons of passion and truth that still when delivered by his unique style give a breath of life into the listeners ears. I was greatly blessed to hear Don King at Neosho this past month I deeply respect and admire him for the work sake at home and abroad as well. I have as of this year enjoyed the opportunity to speak and labor for the Master some 40 years. I have been active as a recognized evangelist for 16 of those years. At the age of 15 I traveled with my father to small congregations of just a handful to speak for the Master. He would drop me off at one congregation and then go to yet another. I will always remember those early years of how receptive and hungry our people were in a less wicked time than now. My greatest joy in life has been to stand up and tell the old old story of my blessed King. We have only begun and we say to world around us, bring it on because we are armed and ready to defend our King and His glorious kingdom, the one true Church. Pray for us as we do for all that are His in Christ.

Ronny F. Wade, 2254 E. Raynell, Springfield, MO 65804, rfwade@mchsi.com, January 14 - Since last report, we have enjoyed meetings at Longwood, FL where we found a church knit together in love working for the Lord. We spent a wonderful week with these brethren working together for the good of the Cause of Christ. Next we were in Dothan, AL for the annual New Year meeting. This meeting is primarily for the people in the South even though we had eighteen States represented this year. A number of preachers came from far and near to encourage us and participate in the meeting. The church at Dothan and Brother Kevin Presley are to be commended for their diligent work in making the meeting a success. Currently we are at home enjoying our work in this area. Our next meeting Lord willing will be in Piedmont, AL February 27 - March 6. May the Lord bless His people everywhere.

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PREACHED TO DEATH AND STARVED TO DEATH

BY CARL M. JOHNSON

I recently ran across a sermon with the unusual title, "Preached to Death and Starved to Death," by the late Alfred Ellmore. In this sermon Ellmore laments a woeful syndrome that developed in the church in the late 1890's. Ellmore observes that congregations were dying because they were not receiving the kind of edification that allows Christians to grow and mature spiritually. He observes further that the lost people in the community never hear the gospel unless they happen to stumble into the assembly of the church and, therefore, they are being "starved to death." The development of the syndrome described by brother Ellmore is one we would do well to guard against today.

Ellmore was born in a log cabin near Frankfort, Kentucky, in 1838. He was the eighth of ten children born to Eleazor and Rachel Ellmore, and is a distant relative of Johnny Elmore. Early in life Alfred changed the spelling of his family name, adding an "I" to make "Ellmore." According to family legend, he changed the spelling in order to distinguish his immediate family from his other relatives.

Alfred attended a neighborhood log-cabin school where he seldom saw a blackboard or a grammar book but he confessed he did see numerous switches.

Few men in the Indiana wilderness knew the Bible like his father Eleazor. Both his parents were born into the Quaker faith, but their quest for divine truth led them to become New Light Baptists, and ultimately New Testament Christians.

Ellmore loved preaching and as a young man decided he wanted to become a preacher. He was baptized when he was 19 years old, and when he was 27 he began his life and work as a preacher.

As a young man Ellmore's favorite preacher was Ben Franklin, editor of the **American Christian Review**. On one occasion Ellmore spent three hours with Franklin in a restaurant in Indianapolis. As they were parting, Franklin took Ellmore's hand and said, "Brother Ellmore, do all the good you can and no harm." Ellmore said later, "That admonition went through me like a dart," and it became his own philosophy for life, as is illustrated in the following statement he made toward the end of his career. "After having preached for more than fifty years, and to almost every grade and class of society, I am now fully convinced that one great element in order to success is kindness. Shall we undertake to reform the drunkard by tearing down his house? Let us be firm, but very kind."

After Ellmore preached his first sermon in March 1865, he was soon preaching all over the Midwest and into Canada. He preached in "meeting houses, schoolhouses, dwelling houses, opera houses, storehouses, halls, depots, courthouses, sawmills, on board ship in the Atlantic Ocean, in groves in the woods, on goods boxes in the streets, and under tents and brush arbors."

Few preachers ever gave to their work more tireless devotion than Ellmore. In 1901, he observed that he had been in the ministry 36 1/2 years and that during these times he had preached three times every Sunday, and often four. Though he was now past 63 years of age, he still averaged speaking fourteen times a week and carried a heavy correspondence for the papers, yet he was seldom "overly tired."

Later he wrote, "The winter was bitter cold-too severe to be successful. It was not a pleasant duty for a man of 66 to travel in sleet, mud, and ice, warm up cold beds, eat irregularly and often such diet as does not suit the digestion of one already injured by such viands (foods). But the worst feature of all is, the churches are almost dead-some entirely lost in the weeds. For twenty years I have been urging the people to establish the worship and press every able man and woman to be present and do their duty every first day and support faithful men and send them into the wilderness to preach the gospel to the lost." These words certainly echo the concern he expressed in his sermon mentioned above.

In 1893 Ellmore joined W. J. Rice in editing the **Gospel Echo**. He continued to edit this paper, a four-page weekly in newspaper format, until 1901 when the paper ceased publication and merged with the **Gospel Advocate**.

His writings in **Gospel Advocate** focused upon a few main themes, including "sect baptism," his opposition to Sunday schools, and his opposition to substituting human societies for the church in carrying out mission work.

In 1912, as Ellmore continued to preach and write almost nonstop, he also became President of Gunter Bible College. Ellmore served Gunter as President for ten years, but at the age of 84 he returned to his home in Covington, Indiana. He died in Covington in 1925 at the age of 87.

According to Ellmore, the syndrome he describes in his sermon developed because elders were either unable or too lazy to teach their respective congregations. They hired evangelists, therefore, to come in on a monthly basis and do all the teaching. He said the evangelists had a habit of preaching nothing to the members of the congregations but the first principles of the Gospel. Consequently, the members did not receive the kind of edification necessary to grow and mature as Christians (Heb. 5:12-14; 6:1-2; Acts 20:28). Hence, they were being "preached to death."

This arrangement also developed into a pattern whereby evangelists confined their preaching almost exclusively to the local church buildings. People from the community, therefore, had no opportunity to hear the Gospel unless they happened to stumble into one of the assemblies of the church (Mt. 28: 18-20; Lk. 14:21-23). Thus, they were being "starved to death."

We would do well to take a hard look at ourselves today. Do we have able men who refuse to edify the congregation and call in evangelists on a monthly basis to do all the teaching? Is our congregation being fed in such a way as to cause the members to grow? Are we making a concerted effort to see that the Gospel is being preached to our community outside the walls of our church building? Be honest. It could very well be that one hundred years after Alfred Ellmore preached his sermon, that many churches are still stuck in the syndrome he describes as "preached to death and starved to death." carlmj@cablone.net

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

OWE NO MAN ANYTHING

BY TAYLOR A. JOYCE

Does a Christian sin by going in debt? Some have thought so, basing that belief on Paul's admonition in Rom. 13:8. "Owe no man anything but to love one another." Some have considered this an absolute prohibition of indebtedness of any kind. Others have understood it to refer to specific kinds of debt. Opposing views were presented in two articles printed in the Millennial Harbinger in 1842. Editor Alexander Campbell weighed in on the subject by writing some introductory comments to one of them.

The first article appeared in the April issue. It was a reprint of a sermon outline taken from another religious journal and attributed to a preacher in Cincinnati. He had contended that the debts forbidden by Rom. 13:8 "are those which in themselves violate the law of love, or directly tend to such violation." He listed four debts of this kind: debts of willful dishonesty, debts of avaricious speculation, debts of vanity and debts of imprudence.

He said that debts of dishonesty were those where the debtor had no intention of repaying them or did not have the means to do so.

Debts of avaricious speculation were those in which there was great risk of losing one's investment as well as placing the creditor's property in jeopardy. He likened this type of debt to "a species of gaming."

Debts of vanity were those "contracted or maintained for the sake of vain show—or to gratify what is called in the Scriptures 'the lust of the eye and the pride of life.'" He listed "splendid mansions, elegant furniture, and costly apparel" and said "the use of them by persons of limited resources is clearly indiscreet. And when it either compromises or seriously endangers the interest of creditors, it is an aggravated trespass upon the principle of the text."

Finally, he mentioned debts of imprudence "arising from the want of proper or due consideration." He explained that "whenever. . . a man seriously endangers the interests of third parties, or even the welfare of his own family, he offends against the rule of the text."

Since Campbell printed the article without comment it seems likely that he approved of its contents. But when Campbell printed a negative response to this article three months later, he introduced it by saying "the preacher has not, in my opinion, exactly used this text as Paul intended.

The writer of the rejoinder is not identified by name.

The initials "D.L." are appended to the end of the article, but Campbell evidently knew the writer's identity since he calls him a preacher. Citing Rom. 13:8, the writer declares, "This apostolic precept, then, strictly prohibits to the followers of the Lord Jesus every kind of indebtedness but to love one another."

The author refers to what he calls "the prevalent practice of explaining away or mystifying the plain precepts, narratives or doctrines of the Book of God, until they mean everything or nothing." He then asserted, "Therefore, according to the plain and obvious meaning of this simple passage, the voluntary contraction of any debt or obligation is strictly forbidden among the people of God."

Citing others who agreed with the writer's interpretation Campbell dissented, saying, "Paul spoke of *paying* of debts, while these good friends are thinking and writing of *contracting* debts. To imagine that the Lord should positively prohibit the contracting of debts, and yet command Christians to lend, is a singular oversight." "Would the Lord make it a sin to borrow, and a virtue to lend?" he asked. He specifically referred to the Lord's word in Matt. 5:42, "Him that would borrow of thee turn not away." He then asked, "But what does Paul say? The context will explain. 'Render to all their dues,' or 'Pay off all your debts.'"


Campbell's understanding is supported by a number of more recent commentators. Kenneth Wuest translates this verse "Stop owing to even one person, even one thing..." He says, "Pay your debts. The language of the A.V., prohibits the contracting of legal debts such as mortgages and business loans. But that is not Paul's thought here." Clearly, he understood Paul to be insisting on the payment of debts, not prohibiting the contracting of debts.

Roy Deaver offers the following comments: "Many have thought that this passage forbids purchases for which one is unable to pay completely at the time of purchase. But, such is not the case at all. To contract for a certain thing, with payments to be made at specified intervals, and then to meet these payments according to contract is all right. Such is certainly not a violation of this passage. One owes nothing until it is due according to agreement. If the time for meeting an obligation draws near, and if one can see that it will be impossible for him to meet the obligation on time, then the Christian thing to do is discuss the matter with the creditor, and make satisfactory arrangements.

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Editorial

TAKING AWAY BARRIERS

By **JERRY DICKINSON**

Recently, I was in San Antonio to hold a meeting at the Glendora Avenue Church of Christ. It was a great meeting! I was impressed with the enthusiasm of the members and the steadfast conviction of the leadership of this congregation. During the meeting one of the brethren let me read an article that Max Lucado had written for the San Antonio newspaper. Max Lucado is the senior minister for the Oak Hills Church in San Antonio, formerly known as the Oak Hills Church of Christ. (I might just add that David Robinson, the former basketball star of the San Antonio Spurs, is an associate minister at this church.) Lucado is also a best selling author of scores of religious books, some of which have even been offered by Billy Graham.

The purpose of the article Lucado wrote in the San Antonio newspaper was to explain the changes that have occurred in the Oak Hills church under his leadership and the leadership of the elders of that church. He refers to these changes as a way of taking away barriers that kept some away from the fellowship of his church. He specifically mentions three such barriers.

1. THE NAME CHURCH OF CHRIST: The elders, he writes, decided to take the name Church of Christ off the sign and out of use because that name was a barrier that kept a lot of people from coming to the church. Before the change he states that the membership at Oak Hills was 3,500, but since the name, Church of Christ, was taken away the membership has swelled to 5,000.

2. INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC: The Oaks Hills Church of Christ formerly worshipped without the aid of instrumental music, but that too was a barrier to many people so the elders decided to have multiple Sunday services. At one of these services singing without instruments would continue, but at another service instruments would be played. Lucado writes that the reason for the change was that many in the church had the talent to play instruments and wanted to use that talent in the worship service. Also, he added, many of those who visited said they like instrumental music and so the elders decided to take away another barrier.

3. BAPTISM FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS: Another great barrier taken away was the teaching that baptism was essential to salvation. Lucado writes in the article that the Bible teaches we are saved by grace through faith. Baptism, he adds, is necessary to obedience, but not necessary to salvation. This, of course, is the old Baptist line and Lucado, all protestations to the contrary, has embraced Baptist doctrine. In fact, he and a Baptist preacher in San Antonio have exchanged pulpits in the past. Lucado went and ministered to the Baptist church and the Baptist preacher came and ministered to the Oak Hills church.

I want to make a few observations after having read the article.

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Please explain about debating. Does Romans 1:29 teach that it is wrong to study the scriptures in this fashion?

Answer: The word debate is defined by the Webster in the New World Dictionary as follows: "1. to discuss reasons for and against (something) 2. to take part in a debate with (a person) or about (a question). As a noun it means: 1. a discussion of opposing reasons 2. a formal contest of skill in reasoned argument." The King James Version translates Proverbs 25:9 "Debate your cause with your neighbor." Strong says of the Hebrew word used in this verse "...hold a controversy (by implication) to defend; adversary, chide, complain, contend, debate..." Wilson in his Old Testament Word Studies says "to contend, strive, quarrel; to plead a cause." From the foregoing it seems clear that the word merely refers to a discussion in which people contend or argue for their belief regarding a certain issue. Is it wrong for Christians to hold a controversy with their neighbor regarding matters of right and wrong? Surely not. In fact Jude 3 instructs us to "earnestly contend for the faith." W.E. Vine says that the word "contend" "signifies to contend about a thing, as a combatant, to contend earnestly, Jude 3. The word "earnestly" is added to convey the intensive force of the preposition" So, not only is it not wrong for Christians to debate, discuss, contend, and defend our belief, it is enjoined upon us to do so. But what about Romans 1:29? This verse in the KJV reads "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers." The word "debate" in this verse translates the Greek word "eris" which according to Vine means "strife, contention, is the expression of enmity." The New King James Version translates the word "strife." Arndt and Gingrich say the word means "strife, discord, contention." The use of the word "debate" by the KJV translators is unfortunate. Clearly the meaning is not to discuss, or contend with someone about a bible principle or truth, but rather to be guilty of strife, discord and such which is clearly wrong. When anyone in a calm, forceful, manner discusses the scripture they are doing exactly what the word "debate" implies. On the other hand when one angrily creates a scene and wrangles, threatens, and reviles they are guilty of what Romans 1:29 calls strife. There is a vast difference between debating and strife. One is acceptable the other is not.

Question: Is it wrong or sinful, to take part in what God has ordained?

Answer: It is not wrong to do what God authorizes us to do. Hence, as applied to question number one, it is not wrong to contend or debate or discuss the scriptures with other people. Most people think of a debate as an organized arrangement where two men sign propositions limiting the discussion to a certain topic. There is certainly nothing

wrong with such an arrangement. That type of arrangement, however, is just one of many that may be used in studying the bible with other people. As I pointed out above, we not only have the right to discuss, defend, debate, etc. the scriptures with others, we are obligated to do so. This does not mean that such discussions have to be formally arranged. In fact there may be times when other arrangements are better and more profitable. Anytime a discussion results in wrangling, hard feelings, and abusive language, it is wrong, whether formal or informal. We must at all times manifest the attitude of a Christian and treat anyone with whom we discuss the Word of God, with respect. To alienate anyone through a discussion is to defeat the very purpose of the discussion. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade 2254 E. Raynell, Springfield, MO 65804 or rfwade@mchsi.com)

TO JUDGE OR NOT TO JUDGE?

By JAMES D. ORTEN

Every group that wants to stay together must learn peacefully to resolve differences. This is true for small groups, such as families, and for very large ones like nations. The matter has special relevance for churches. Christians are charged to pursue peace and eschew division.

A strong challenge to peace comes when disciples disagree over the meaning of Scripture. We believe in God's word, that it means what it says, and that we should obey it. We appropriately are cautious about compromises. Probably the most difficult situation arises when we disagree on a biblical topic that is complex and involves many Scripture passages that must be reconciled.

A complicated situation tempts individuals to follow their own personal inclinations. Some people enjoy conflict. The enormous popularity of such sports as football, boxing, wrestling, et cetera should be sufficient to prove this fact. Many who don't want to be participants, enjoy them as spectator sports. By contrast, there are those who fear conflict so much that they run from any confrontation faster than a speeding bullet (to quote an old Superman line).

These personal inclinations are not wrong in themselves. The danger is that they will lead one to misinterpret Scripture and into sinful behavior, e.g. destroying the peace of the church or compromising a biblical practice.

A Painful Example

We see an example of this process when Christians argue by lining up lists of Scriptures, each believing his list cancels out the other's. Such arguments are nowhere more painful than on the topic of Christians judging one another. One side points to passages that say: "Judge not, that you be not judged" (Matthew 7:1), "Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge" (Romans 2:1), "Who are you to judge another's servant" (Romans 14:4), and "For judgment is without mercy to those who have shown no mercy." (James 2:13). These references are presented to prove that one should not judge others, at least not on the matter in question.

The other side presents an equal list that they think gives Christians the right—obligation, some say—to judge others. “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” (John 7:24), “Do you not judge those who are inside?” (I Corinthians 5:12), “Come out from among them and be separate...” (II Corinthians 6:17), and “Mark those who cause divisions...and avoid them” (Romans 16:17).

Each list would seem to teach what its proponents say, if it stood alone. But Scriptures can not be taken in isolation. What then are honest seekers to do? We have the responsibility to:

1. Remind ourselves that the Bible does not contradict itself. If passages seem to do so on first appearance, that must urge us to dig deeper and avoid making judgments on appearances (John 7:24).

2. Accept that both sides in a controversy are equally obliged to reconcile all Scriptures on the topic—those that seem to justify their position with those that appear to condemn it.

3. Accept the truth we can take from Scripture, even if we do not understand everything it may teach. For example, any unbiased person can look at those lists of Scriptures and conclude that there are some types of judgments that Christians simply should not practice. By the same token, an objective person can see that other types must be done. Neither side should be completely comfortable until it has figured out which is which. No Scripture is meaningless.

The Task is Not Impossible

The task seems daunting because there are several hundred passages that speak of judgment. Quite a few are relevant to the study at hand. There are also different Greek words with related meanings that are translated into a variety of English words, i.e. judge, condemn, decide, discern, teach, form an opinion, and so forth. All this sounds complicated. But it is not that difficult if one approaches it with an open mind and closely studies each passage and its context. Otherwise, going astray is easy, as the following examples show.

Some have taught that Matthew 7:1-5 (“Judge not, that you be not judged. . .”) only applies to persons who have greater and more ongoing sins than those they are trying to correct. If one has cleaned up his life—gotten righteous—he can do “righteous judgment” as spoken of in John 7:24. Both interpretations are wrong.

Jesus’ use of the word “hypocrite” tells us who He was talking about in Matthew 7. The words Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites just seemed to belong together in the Lord’s teaching. He gave an example of the judgment He had in mind in Luke 18 :9-14. The Pharisee there “trusted in himself that he was righteous and looked down on others.” He judged the publican harshly and thanked God he was not like that. The publican acknowledged his sins and asked for mercy. The Pharisee probably did have fewer ordinary sins than the publican. But the big one, the plank in the Pharisee’s eye, was his self-righteousness. With that spiritual blindness he could not grow, and if he taught others, he would make them “children of hell” like himself

(Matthew 23 :15). No wonder Jesus said the publican was justified rather than the Pharisee. Jesus was talking about anyone who judged others self-righteously, looking down on them rather than loving them, in other words, the opposite of what Paul taught in Galatians 6:1.

Nor does John 7:24 teach that “righteous judgment” is that done by righteous persons. Both the grammar and the context of Jesus’ statement show that He was not talking about the moral state of the person who made the judgment, but about the quality of the judgment itself. The word “righteous” is an adjective modifying judgment. As in the Old Testament (i.e. Leviticus 19:15), this type of judgment is fair, takes all facts into account, and does not decide on surface appearance. The situation with Jesus confirms this view. The Jews condemned Him for healing a man on the Sabbath, claiming it was work which broke the Sabbath law. Had they looked beneath the surface, they would have known that the Law allowed such benevolent acts. Their judgment did not take the whole Law into consideration and thus was not righteous.

Could we be guilty of such unrighteous judgments? Absolutely! When we condemn others on the basis of incomplete, distorted, or false information, we are so. If we misquote them or put their statements into more prejudicial contexts our judgments are unrighteous. If we condemn one person for things we overlook in others, we are “judges with evil thoughts” (James 2:4).

Many Passages are Clear

Not all passages require extensive reasoning. Sometimes a brief look at the context will keep us from going astray. For example, to take Romans 14:4 (“Who are you to judge another’s servant?”) as an excuse for turning a blind eye to sin, plainly belies the context of the statement. Paul was talking here about matters of personal discretion. Matters of law were not in view. In the same way, the use of I Corinthians 5:12 (“Do you not judge those who are inside...”) and Romans 16:17 (“...mark those who cause divisions”) to support one individual condemning another are misapplications. These passages refer to the process of disfellowshipping an inveterate sinner or heretic, a procedure that must be conducted by the church.

This article is unable to consider every passage that is relevant to the topic. But we should not leave the subject without observing that several forms of judgment (refer to the discussion of “Greek words” above) are routinely carried out in the exercise of Christian duties. These cause the church little trouble. Teaching the truth is one such form. No one doubts that preachers and teachers must “declare the whole counsel of God.” They must “preach the word, in season and out of season... convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (see II Timothy 4:2, Titus 1:13, & Ephesians 5 :11) Another form of judging is exercised as each Christian continually makes decisions about his own behavior, including disassociating himself from evil individuals (II Corinthians 6:17). Nor does the church have much trouble over exercising the most severe form of judgment—disfellowshipping a confirmed sinner.

We do have problems when an individual takes the

role of judging his brother. I do not mean respectfully talking with a Christian about his sins, nor attempting to restore a wayward brother in love. These efforts are praiseworthy, often effective, and rarely drive the subject away. I speak of censorious, personal condemnation of the type Jesus discussed in Matthew 7:1. A wise scholar of about 200 years ago gave guidelines for correction attempts based on this passage.

1. Judge no one unless it is your duty to do so, and unless you have the knowledge to do it. 2. Judge observable behavior and leave the judgment of motives to Him who can see the heart. "Lord, You alone know the hearts of the sons of men" (II Chronicles 6:30). 3. Avoid censoring the individual's relationship to God. Jehovah has not asked you to decide whom He will accept. 4. Never judge anyone without first reflecting on your own sinfulness, as required by Galatians.

When we correct our brothers in this way, we will be what Solomon called a "wise reprov-er." We will "see clearly" how to do it, and likely find more "obedient ears" (Proverbs 25:12). We need those skills. Our job is to help save our brothers, not to get them told.

TRIP TO THE PHILIPPINES

BY DON L. KING

On New Year's Eve of 2004, Brother Bennie Cryer and I departed San Francisco for Manila, Philippines. It had been several years since Bennie had gone there but he has made a number of trips with me over the 24 years we have been involved in the work there. I have always enjoyed working with Bennie and he was a great help to the work this time, as usual. The brethren have learned to love him for his work's sake and were very happy to see him again.

The trip began with a two-day study in Manila wherein we enjoyed teaching about various issues and answering questions from the many preachers gathered there from the Islands of Luzon, Mindanao, Mindoro and Palawan. The work has spread into all these areas during the last few years. We then visited the Provinces wherein we have faithful congregations, preaching in as many as time allowed. In many cases, the congregations simply combined so we could reach as many as possible. Bennie and I took turn about preaching several times a day. We thank God for the eighty baptisms that took place while we were there. What a thrill to see people so eager to obey the Gospel. Though the work has not been without problems, it has nonetheless prospered and grown in nearly every way. It is a wonderful example of how a work can grow and thrive under the leadership of local brethren and preachers. The preachers take care of their own work. Some receive support from American brethren, in a direct manner, and report to the congregations supporting them. Local congregations handle their own affairs and when problems arise, local brethren or preachers solve them. In other words, the Philippine brotherhood operates just as our American brotherhood. In the time the work has been in existence, no American has ever lived among them, yet it is one of the great works in the world today. We pray God's

richest blessings on them as they continue.

Early on in the work, which began in 1981, the no-exception brethren did what they could to disrupt and divide it. They began making trips there shortly after the work began. At least two church buildings were taken over, after the division took place, and our brethren forced to leave and rebuild in another place. Recently a building was completely dismantled and moved to another location. There have been occasions where preachers were reportedly offered greater support if they would change and begin to preach the no-exception doctrine. Lately there have been several visits made to our preachers and brethren. During this trip to the Philippines, at the last Lord's Day service, a no-exception member attended the worship service. We knew him from past associations. He had once been with us. We greeted him cordially, as brethren should. When the service was dismissed, he quickly walked to the front and loudly insisted that there was a problem in that congregation regarding divorce. We were stunned and asked the leader of the congregation if that was true. He told us there was no problem whatsoever. We were then forced to deal with Brother Tomas Rivera before the whole congregation. We told the brethren, through a translator, that this brother was now a part of a group who has withdrawn fellowship from us and so is not of us at all. Therefore, if he visits again, he should not be allowed to speak or be recognized in any way. My brethren, please keep in mind that all of this trouble, division and heartache came about in a land where the Government does not allow divorce. Of all the places in the world where there should never be trouble over this matter, the Philippines have to be in first place. Now, this seems to be sad but ample proof that at least some of those brethren are willing to divide congregations, and withdraw fellowship from good brethren, purely because of their belief (not the practice) in the exception given by Jesus in Matthew 19:9. If this is not the case, how can the division in the Philippines be otherwise explained? It certainly did not come about by us. We never taught about marriage at all until materials were mailed to the Filipino brethren teaching the no-exception doctrine. When the question came up it was only then that we taught what the Bible teaches in Matthew 19:9, etc. We did not feel the need since divorce is not allowed there anyway. If the American no-exception brethren are not behind all of these troubles and if they do not sanction what we have reported here, let them come out publicly and say so.

In spite of problems, the Lord has blessed the work there. Several new congregations have been established, and new preachers developed. The Lord's church is spreading into new Islands, radio programs are common, and recently a written debate took place dealing with the Lord's Supper. It is to be printed and should be ready soon, Lord willing.

There are faithful preachers who need support. If you are interested in becoming involved, let us hear from you. We will gladly give you the information so you can begin supporting them directly and they will report to you. Other needs of a one-time sort need to also be addressed. If you can help, let us hear soon. Don't forget to pray for the work.
- DLK

TAKING AWAY BARRIERS

continued from page two

1. **NO NEED FOR BIBLICAL AUTHORITY:** I told the brother who showed me the article, "Well, at least he's honest! He does not even make an attempt to justify these changes by what the Bible teaches. He just says they were barriers keeping the crowd from coming, and so they took away the barriers!" The root of the problem is that Lucado and the so called elders of the Oak Hills church see no need to make an appeal to Biblical authority. There is no need nowadays to establish authority by command, example, and necessary inference! The silence of the scriptures - there is no such thing! So what if the New Testament says "Sing and make melody in your heart," and the scriptures never show the early church using instruments of music in worship. Lucado has abandoned the plea of those who came before him to "speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent." The sad part is that he does not think he needs authority for taking away these barriers. The people want the changes and he does not feel incumbent to justify said changes by an appeal to scripture. How sad indeed! But brethren, what worries and concerns me is that I hear some in our own fellowship who echo the attitude of Max Lucado. Listen, when some begin to say, in a dismissive and off handed way, that we do not always need commands, examples, and necessary inferences to establish scriptural authority there is danger and shipwreck not far off. There are too many following the likes of Max Lucado. His is a dangerous, albeit popular, doctrine that in our service to Jesus anything goes, and how dare anyone set up a barrier to keep people from serving the Lord in the way they choose. We still say, "Give us the scripture!" If these things be barriers, then they are the barriers the Lord has set up, not man.

2. **THE god OF NUMBERS:** The sad and pathetic truth is Lucado has sold out to the crowd. Again, he is at least honest about it! After taking away the barrier of the name, Church of Christ, he says that church membership went up from 3,500 to 5000. Oh, that god of numbers! Whatever it takes to bring in a crowd is acceptable to most churches today. And again I say that I am worried about some of our own number who are flirting with the same notion. When you call into question some practices of some churches they respond by telling you how much they have grown numerically. Lucado is correct when he states that things like the name of the church, the opposition to instrumental music, the insistence that baptism is necessary to salvation, etc. are barriers to numerical growth. But, we insist again, it is the scriptures that have erected these standards. Take away the standards, or as he calls them barriers, and you will grow numerically alright. Put individual cups on the table, put a piano up by the pulpit, build on some Sunday school classes, baptize babies, burn incense, hire a woman preacher, and stop preaching baptism for the remission of sins and I guarantee you it won't be long till you have to build a bigger building to

house all the new people who will come. But, where are all those people now? Why don't they come next Sunday? You know why! Barriers! Standards! Commands, examples, and necessary inferences - Bible authority! May the Lord help us not to take away these barriers just to serve the god of numbers!

3. **WHERE DO YOU DRAW THE LINE?** Some do not like the preceding question. We should not worry about what a practice might lead to. "I am not concerned about something being right or wrong just because the denominations or the digressives are doing it," we are told in strident, almost arrogant, tones. But the question begs an answer. First, the elders and Lucado take away the name, then they change the worship, and finally they abandon, almost unbelievably, the plan of salvation. What next? Will the Oak Hills church hire a woman preacher? Will they start accepting infant baptism? Will they start clapping hands and dancing during worship services? Why not? People like those things and they are certainly barriers hindering a broader fellowship. Does anything matter? Is there a line that some will not cross? Personally, I am glad the elders at Oak Hills took the name Church of Christ off their sign. Hopefully, that will dissociate them in people's minds from those of us who are striving to maintain the faith delivered. Brethren, we are not and never will be the biggest group numerically, nor should we desire to be. Oh, we want all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth, and we work tirelessly to preach the gospel around the world, but we cannot and will not take away the standards God has set up! Take down the barriers, just to please men and be bigger numerically? Never!

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CALVINISM

By GLEN OSBURN

(CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE)

P - Perseverance of the Saints: Defined: The Westminster Confession of Faith (1648): Chapter XVII, I. They, whom God has accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved (Palmer, p. 130; Steele & Thomas, p. 56).

This doctrine is also known as; "Once saved, always saved...Perseverance of God...Preservation of the saints...(and)...Eternal security" (Palmer, pp. 68-69).

Here's an excerpt from a Calvinist tract presenting some unavoidable inferences:

We take the position that a Christian's sins do not damn his soul! The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul...All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all

the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer; AND ALL THE SINS HE MAY COMMIT FROM IDOLATRY TO MURDER WILL NOT MAKE HIS SOUL IN ANY MORE DANGER...THE WAY A MAN LIVES HAS NOTHING WHATEVER TO DO WITH THE SALVATION OF HIS SOUL" [A Discussion Which Involves a Subject Pertinent to All Men, Rev. Sam Morris, pp. 1-2: (Calvinism, Samuel G. Dawson, p. 13)].

Scriptural Considerations: Let's recap one more time. Calvinism says: Because of being born in sin, all of us are spiritually dead, so dead we are unable to even have faith (Total Depravity). Therefore, in order for us to be saved, God alone had to save us. We know that everyone doesn't "get saved," so, God had to choose those to whom He would give grace (Unconditional Election). Jesus couldn't have died for everyone or everyone would be saved. So, because some are lost, we know Jesus didn't die for everyone (Limited Atonement). If you're one of the ones God picked, you can't change it (Irresistible Grace). And since God picked you to be saved and you can't do anything about it, there is no sin that you could ever commit that would cause you to lose your salvation (Perseverance of the Saints).

Calvinists, speaking of salvation, say:

If you ain't got it, you can't get it.

If you get it, you can't lose it.

If you lose it, you never had it.

To verify that they approve of this little aphorism: The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints does not maintain that all who *profess* the Christian faith are certain of heaven. It is *saints*—those who are set apart by the Spirit—who persevere to the end. It is *believers*—those who are given true, living faith in Christ—who are secure and safe in Him. Many who profess to believe fall away, but they do not fall from grace for they were never in grace. True believers do fall into temptations, and they do commit grievous sins, but these sins do not cause them to lose their salvation or separate them from Christ (Steele & Thomas, p. 56).

Because of this, when discussing the "possibility of apostasy," a Calvinist will often try to escape the force of a passage by insisting that the person being discussed was *not really* a Christian. They say that he might have *professed* to be, or even *thought* he was, but in reality *had* never been redeemed by the blood of Christ. We want to look at some passages which cannot possibly be speaking of anyone but those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, those who are unquestionably Christians: For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame (Hebrews 6:4-6). Someone has "fallen away" ["if" (v:6 KJ, NIV) is not in the greek text]. This is someone who has "once been enlightened," has "tasted of the heavenly gift," and has "been made partakers of the Holy Spirit," etc. This cannot possibly be speaking of anyone but a once true Christian. This passage is contending that it

is possible for a Christian to *fall away* to such an extent that they find it impossible to repent. (Contextually it is speaking of ex-Jewish Christians who would leave Christianity altogether, and probably return to the Old Law: Hebrews 2:1-3; 3:12; 4:1, 11; 6:11-12; 10:23, 32-39; 12:3, 12-13.)

As a Christian we are instructed to "repent...and pray," if we sin (Acts 8:22, note Simon was a true believer: Acts 8:13). "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1 :9).

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves (2 Peter 2:1). These fallen, now false, teachers were "even denying the Master who bought them," consequently "bringing swift destruction upon themselves." The phrase "who bought them" is speaking of the redemption of Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19). These false teachers were going to deny Christ, the very one who had redeemed them. Would this cause them to lose their salvation? Jesus says, "whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33).

For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace (Hebrews 10:26-29)? This passage is speaking of one who had been "sanctified" by "the blood of the covenant," something he now regards as "unclean." This is someone who "after receiving the knowledge of the truth" has "insulted the Spirit of grace." This was a true "sanctified" Christian who, without repentance, will suffer a "severer punishment" than death.

"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing. "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned (John 15:5-6). This is addressed to those who do "abide in" Christ, a Christian. Jesus warns those who would *not* continue to "abide in" Him that they would be "cast...into the fire." Abiding "in" Christ means to continue being in fellowship with Christ through obeying His word (2 John 1 :8-9).

Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace (Galatians 5:2-4).

to be continued. . .

Announcements

MEET BROTHER MICHAEL CONLEY



Brother Michael Conley is a full time evangelist from Richmond, KY. In 1990, Brother Michael was baptized into Christ. Since September 2003, he has labored with the Lexington, KY congregation and has been doing excellent work in that area. He and his wife Mary have three children, Makayla, Jacob, and Mallory. Brother Michael desires to broaden his usefulness in the Master's vineyard. You can reach him at (859) 623-0976. For further questions, please contact: Bruce Roebuck (580) 345-2594, Doug Hawkins (606) 271-0529, or Philip Scott (606) 344-2344.

A NEW CD BY "THE BELIEVERS"

This new CD contains 30 songs, some of which were written by our brethren. There is over an hour of acappella music for your listening pleasure. The singers on the quartet, "The Believers" are Charles Barnes, Stephen Middick, James Frizell and Brian Osborn. The group has been together for about 8 years. If you would like to purchase this CD, the price is \$15 each plus \$2 shipping and handling. Please allow three to five weeks to receive. You may order from Charles Barnes, 4393 Howie Ln, Seneca, MO 64865, Stephen Middick, (417) 206-3392, e-mail smkk3106@hotmail.com or Brian Osborn, 11 Kirk Ln., Bella Vista, AR 72715, e-mail bgosborn@yahoo.com

CAN YOU HELP?

PREACHERS SUPPORT NEEDED! In September of 2003, a new congregation began meeting in Virginia Beach, VA. Evangelist Marcus Ayers, a faithful preacher, has agreed to relocate to the Virginia Beach area and work with this new congregation of the Lord's church. The Spring Valley Church of Christ in Huntington, WV, is sending Brother Ayers to the work - but we need your help. This is a great opportunity for the cause of Christ and your congregation can be part of it!

Please allow a brief history of the work in VA Beach. Brother George Battey baptized the first two members of this new congregation - David and Jessica Jordan. Brother Jordan was an Army soldier at the time. Soon after his conversion, he filed for conscientious objector status with the Army. He was finally honorably discharged from the Army and given CO status on October 28th, 2004 - over a year after initially filing for discharge. David has found a good job and he and his wife plan to stay in the area to help the church grow. On September 20th, David and Jessica were blessed with a beautiful baby boy. In his steadfastness to separate from carnal warfare, Brother David has demonstrated a rare degree of dedication and commitment to the faith. But more importantly, Brother David has been an answer to the prayer for more laborers to gather the harvest. He has shared the gospel with practically everyone

he knows, or has met, since his conversion. He has baptized a number of people in the short time since he was baptized. Nevertheless, this new congregation needs a full-time evangelist who is capable of following up leads, of preaching and conducting Bible studies to help these new Christians become rooted and grounded in the faith, and "set in order the things that are lacking!" There is a window of opportunity here that we simply must not ignore.

In the beginning, a few teachers from the Huntington, WV area traveled the 465 miles along I-64 to VA Beach to help conduct services. Evangelist Wyn Baker contacted Brother Charles Mosley and his wife, who live in the area. They decided to meet in the home of Brother and Sister Jordan instead of traveling to Raleigh, NC for services. The Mosley's are long-time members of the church and are a tremendous help to the work. Two other sisters living in the area also began to meet with the Jordan's. The congregation grew rapidly from within and without. Visitors are at nearly every service. On three occasions, I preached to a living room of more than twenty people.

The Spring Valley Congregation in Huntington, WV has taken a special interest in this work. They have sent me to VA Beach nearly once a month. Earlier this year, brother Jamie Leonard and I helped the brethren in VA Beach find a regular meeting place. We sent Marcus Ayers to visit the work in August, and he has agreed to relocate to the work in March, 2005, The Spring Valley Church of Christ currently supports a full-time preacher locally. Yet, we recognize the great opportunity in VA Beach. The Lord willing, this work will help the Lord's church gain a stronger foothold in the eastern part of the country. We are asking for your help in this great work with a one to three year commitment of \$100, \$250 or \$500 a month or more. Please contact us A.S.A.P. with your pledge of support. We will inform you concerning how to send funds directly to Brother Ayers. If your congregation would like to help with a one time contribution, or if you have any other questions, please call David Smith (304) 429-6106, Jamie Leonard (304) 429-2332 or Ryan Connor (304) 453-5563. You may also email us: questions@livingletters.org. - Ryan J. Connor, 80 Twin View Lane, Huntington, WV 25704

Bonds of Matrimony

STRIPLING - ANDERS

On the evening of December 31, 2004 in the presence of their family, Morgan Lee Stripling and Leigh-ann Kristin Anders exchanged marriage vows. Leigh-ann's brother, James Anders officiated. The wedding party included, myself, Wally Rowland (stepfather of the groom), Amy Berry, Becky Anders, Halee Anders (daughter of the bride) and Sam Anders. I was honored to be included in this blessed event and so impressed with the beautiful ceremony. Morgan is a fine young preacher and I believe that Leigh-ann will be a great help to him. They have made their home in Paducah, KY where Morgan works with the church. It is my prayer that God will bless them and will prosper their efforts for Him as they live their life together. - Miles King

SMITH - HULLET

On December 24 at the Cherokee Hills Church of Christ in Oklahoma City, Daniel Dwight Smith and Becky Jean Hullet were united in marriage before a large audience. The beautiful music was all accapella. Daniel is one of our gospel preachers and is the son of Dwight and Caron Smith of the Jamesville, MO congregation. Becky is the daughter of Don and Carol Spradley Hullet of the Capitol Hill congregation, and I feel will be a fine helpmeet and wife as they labor in the Lord's vineyard. They are making their home in Huntsville, AR where he is laboring with the Hartwell congregation. We feel blessed to have them in close proximity to Harrison and wish them all the blessings that this world can offer. - Jimmie C. Smith

50 YEARS

On April 11, 2005, my Dad and Mom, Miles and Johnette King of Scotland, Arkansas will celebrate 50 years of marriage.

Daddy was born in Morristown, Tennessee, December 12, 1932; Mom was born in Scotland, Arkansas, September 1, 1935. They both obeyed the gospel in their teens and Daddy began preaching at the age of 15 (and oh how he loves to preach). They were married in the home of Floyd and Lora Bounds among a small gathering of friends and family in Little Rock, Arkansas on April 11, 1955. Leon Fancher officiated. They have lived and worked at Witts Springs, AR, Cincinnati, OH, Harrodsburg, IN, Alton, IL and Norman, OK (Mom says "and a lot of places in between"). They moved to Scotland, Arkansas in the spring of 1982 and have called it home for the last 23 years. They have two daughters, both faithful members of the church - Laura Jean Furr of Scotland, AR and Rebecca Lynn Baze of Farmerville, LA. They have been blessed with 5 grandchildren, 4 step grandchildren and 2 step great-grandchildren.

I am so thankful to God that this Christian couple is my parents. By example, they have taught their children and grandchildren that our first love should be for God and Christ's church and then our family, both spiritual and physical. What a blessing to be raised in a Christian home where you are taught to love and serve God!

I could not begin to name all the preachers and traveling Christian families who have been welcomed into our home as though it were their own. Many have enjoyed the Christian hospitality extended by Daddy and Mom and many have sat down at the table to eat a splendid meal prepared by Mom. Their door has always been open to everyone. They have been such a wonderful Christian example to all.

A card or letter with any special remembrance would be a special treat. Daddy especially loves to receive cards from friends (he reads them over and over). Their address is 8586 Wilderness Trail, Scotland, AR 72141. - Jeannie Furr



Our Departed

GARRISON - Mary Garrison from the Chouteau, OK congregation was born August 14, 1924 in Locust Grove, OK the daughter of Joseph and Ruth Burns. She lived most of her life in Locust Grove, was baptized into Christ in March 1938 and passed away December 26, 2004 at the age of 80. Sister Garrison married Mac Garrison on March 28, 1941 and he preceded her in death in 1998. She also had a son, Floyd, who preceded her in death. Mary is survived by her son, Donald, of Locust Grove, OK. Services for Mary Garrison were held December 29, 2004 in Locust Grove, OK with Ed Williamson officiating, assisted by John Anderson. Beautiful singing was provided by Ron Green, Mark and Arla Scott, Sally Romans, Leon Mullican, and John Anderson. Burial was in the Hogan cemetery. Sister Garrison will be missed by the Chouteau congregation. - Ed Williamson

MOORE - Jared Michael Moore, age 19 of Basehor, KS was killed on Dec. 19th about two miles from home while responding to a call as a volunteer fireman when he was rear ended. Jared was the son of Patrick Richard (Pat) and Marlene Moore of Basehor. I assisted Jared in his obedience to the gospel on May 26, 1996. Prior to his death, his dad had accepted a job in Omaha, NE with the intention of starting a congregation there and Jared had agreed to go and help him get it started (which for now has been put on hold if not canceled). The funeral was held on Dec. 31 at the Coffman funeral chapel in Harrison which was packed to capacity (even though the Moore's haven't lived here for nine and a half years). Jared was a stalwart, handsome young man with a bright smile and winsome personality. He had a sensitive conscience that would not let sin go unconfessed. He confessed wrongs a week and a half before his death at the 85th and Euclid congregation in KC, MO. There was a memorial service held by the Fairmount Township Fire Dept. of Leavenworth, KS on Jan. 3, 2005. Our grief has been great, but our hope is bright. - Jimmie C. Smith

BENNISON - We are saddened by the loss of our dear Brother John J. Bennison, Jr. and his wife Sister Ruby Pauline Bennison of Beaumont, TX. Bro. Bennison was born September 2, 1918 in Beaumont and departed this life January 17, 2005 while in the hospital at Beaumont. Funeral services were Friday, January 21, 2005 at Forest Lawn Funeral Home in Beaumont. Sis. Bennison was born March 8, 1915 in Goldthwaite, TX and passed away on January 22, 2005 in the hospital in Beaumont. Funeral services were January 28, 2005 at Forest Lawn Funeral Home. The Bennisons shared 57 years together and are survived by one son, Johnny Ward of Florida and one daughter, Sarah Lauraan Griffin of Beaumont, TX. They have four grandchildren. This couple was a wonderful example to all and showed Christian hospitality to many. They will be missed by the congregation at Beaumont, their children and grandchildren and by this writer who co-officiated at both services. - Miles King

STAGGS - Franklin Staggs passed away January 8, 2005. His funeral service was conducted by Brother Pat Adkinson in Gadsden, AL. I did the interment service at the Chapel Grove, TN cemetery. Our sympathy goes out to Thelma, his wife; son, Timothy Staggs; daughters Tonya Bonifay, Shana Rahn and Melissa Barnard. Frank was a kind, compassionate and loving man. He was laid to rest beside his first wife, Gladys Staggs. - Paul Walker

STUDER - Bobby Glen Studer was born June 27, 1934 to E.M. (Mick) Studer and Bessie Keel Studer. He passed from this life February 9, 2005 at the age of seventy after a long and painful battle with cancer. Bobby obeyed the gospel in 1948 at the age of fourteen. He was a faithful member of the church until his passing. He attended the congregation in Mineral Wells, Texas. I had known Bobby most of my life. We grew up together in the old Vaughn Blvd. church in Ft. Worth. He had a beautiful voice and was accomplished in teaching vocal music. He is survived by this wife of forty-nine years Genevieve, two daughters Betty and Donna, one son, David as well as a host of friends from far and near. We will miss him. The writer and Joe Norton, his cousin, Melvin Blalock and Charles Goodion conducted the service. - Ronny F. Wade

Field Reports

Miles King, 8586 Wilderness Trail, Scotland, AR 72141, mtking@cei.net - We appreciate the Old Paths Advocate that comes our way each month! Thanks for all the good articles, reports etc. We are encouraged by the progress being made at the church at Scotland. Our singing and teaching is good. We are looking forward to a gospel meeting with Cecil Smith doing the preaching, June 8-12. I'm also looking forward to working with Randy Tidmore and the Sulphur brethren during the 4th of July, June 24th thru July 4th. I have short meetings planned at Levelland, TX and Hammond, LA. We were so saddened by the deaths of Brother & Sister John Bennison at Beaumont, TX (reported elsewhere in this issue of the OPA). Brethren, please pray for us in the Lord's work.

Douglas T. Hawkins, 409 Worthington Pl., Richmond, KY 40475, (606) 271-0529, douglast@alltel.net - It won't be very long until travels for the year get underway. I'm planning to be with the congregation at Tyler, TX March 2-6; Chestnut Ridge, KY April 6-10; and Chapel Grove, TN May 6-8. If you are near any of these places, we would love to have you in attendance. We are diligently working among the churches in central Kentucky and conducting a leadership study with the congregation at 84 Hwy. in Brookhaven, MS. The interest in both places has been good and I look for good results in time to come. We wish you all of God's goodness and ask for your prayers.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, old_paths@juno.com, February 12 - Brother Bennie Cryer and I enjoyed a fruitful trip to the Philippines during the month of January. (See report elsewhere in this issue) Just about 24 years ago, we made our first trip along with Brother Jerry Cutter in March of 1981. The work has grown from a single congregation

of about 35 then to many in various provinces and four Islands. There are a number of faithful preachers, some of whom are supported by American brethren, who are doing a good work there. Each congregation takes care of her own affairs and handles her own problems. The work is an amazing example of the Bible way in action. Since our return, it has been a pleasure to be at home except for one Lord's Day in Stockton, CA. Last weekend we heard Frankie Brancato preach some good sermons at the Stockton congregation. He is now working full time with the congregation at Planz Rd., Bakersfield and you will not be disappointed should you call him for preaching. We are looking forward to a new year filled with opportunities. Preachers, don't forget to send your articles and field reports to us for OPA. We are planning a special issue for the month of July, put together by Carl Johnson, who will contact brethren to write around a special theme. Don't forget us when you pray.

P. Duane Permenter, PO Box 37073, Lusaka, 10101, Zambia, Africa, Jan. 24 - Greetings to all the brotherhood in Christ Jesus! It is good to have my wife back in Zambia with me. She was stateside this last year for many months recovering from surgery and I missed her dearly. This was the first time we were ever separated when one of us was ill or having surgery in 28 years of marriage. I suppose it was the most difficult thing we have faced in Southern Africa since moving here 19 months ago. So many things have happened since coming to Zambia it is impossible to recount them all in this short report. Since arriving here in June of 2003 the work has exploded into 70 new churches and hundreds being baptized. My main focus has been with church leaders but so many good things have taken place never before in all my years of preaching have I felt that I was making such a difference. The work has grown more in the last 19 months than it has in ten years and that is due to all the work being done by the native preachers. Thank you so much for all your support and kindness you have shown me during this time and God bless you every one. If you have questions about the work, please feel free to ask. If you are not on my mailing list and would like to receive my monthly reports send me an email and I will gladly send it to you. duane@dnlpermenter.com

Virgilio O. Danao, Sr., 94-371 Ikepono St., Waipahu, HI 96797, February 3, 2005 - To all the faithful brethren every where, greetings in the precious name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In his annual preaching itinerary every January in the Philippines, this year, Bro. Don L. King was accompanied by Bro. Bennie Cryer. They visited local Churches, holding meetings and studies, in the provinces of Isabela, Quirino, Cagayan, Ilocos Norte, Pangasinan and Tarlac, and in the cities of Manila, Dagupan, Santiago and Laoag. (We did not hold meeting in Baguio City this time because of the recent epidemic there -the Meningococemia virus, which is said to be worse than SARS.) As a result of this effort, 80 souls were baptized. Before going to the provinces, when they were in Manila, to help the preaching brethren who came from the islands of Mindanao, Mindoro and Palawan "be grounded in the faith", Bro. King and Bro. Cryer held successfully a two-day study with them. As we visited local Churches, they were welcomed by the local brethren, and peace and joy overwhelmed us.

However, Tomas Rivera, who used to be with, but joined those who separated from, the Waipahu Church of Christ, and who now is claiming to be with the no-exception in the Philippines, disturbed the peace and joy we had when he tried to create problem immediately after our Sunday worship service in Nepaco, Paniqui, Tarlac on January 16th. Truly, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" Jer. 13:23. Once again, I am privileged to travel with Bro. King and Bro. Cryer, as their interpreter and guide. I continue to highly esteem them because of their dedication to the Lord's work. They are loved and respected by the local brotherhood there. They are both worthy and capable evangelists of the gospel. The leaders of the Church here in Waipahu "supplied the pulpit" when I was in the Philippines. Of course, they are not as efficient if compared to those who are veteran workers of the Lord; but their willingness to do whatever they could is worthy of commendation. On January 30th, in the afternoon, we baptized a couple — Mr. Gavino and Mrs. Filomena Nacino. May God bless their lives that they may continue to be firm and faithful in the faith. We urge you, please, continue to mention us, especially the Lord's work here, and for the fast complete recovery of my wife's health. God bless.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS, pon.wjn.ks@juno.com, Dec. 6 - Since my last meeting in October I have spoken several times at the home congregation at Stony Point, Kansas City. Also, November 24, I had the privilege of speaking at the midweek service at El Cajon, CA. Brother Matt Trent is presently working with this congregation. It was good to be with them once again. I was glad to see other preachers, Larry Lay and Elias Rodriguez, who is doing a good work among the Spanish speaking people in that area. If the world stands, soon we will begin a new year in the Lord's work. We don't know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future in His hands. Our trust is Him. May the Lord be with all the faithful. Note: My apologies for the delay with this report. DLK

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS, pon.wjn.ks@juno.com, Jan. 7 - Thank God that through His mercy and His goodness He has given us more time to reach the lost with the Gospel before He has called a halt to things and declared that time is no more. We have passed another year of life and are permitted to seek and to save more of the lost; and backsliding members are given time to repent. Dec. 26, I had the privilege of preaching at El Cajon, California. While we were away we received the sad news of the tragic death of Jerod Moore. He was a young man nineteen years of age with a ready smile and many friends. He died as the result of a collision. He was a volunteer fireman on a call when the accident happened. Hundreds of people attended his memorial service. Last Lord's day we had several confessions of fault. On the Wednesday before, we had one confession. We are glad that there are hearts that can still be touched with the gospel. May the Lord bless His workers everywhere.

Ecuador Report, Jonathan Bunner, Feb. 8 - The Lord continues to bless the work here in Ecuador. My family and I just came home from visiting the brethren in Ambato. The saints in that city are doing well and are working hard to find the lost. Brother Villacis continues to work very hard at reaching the lost. Although he is blind he never lets his blindness stop him from doing the Lord's work. Brother Villacis continues to preach on the radio seven days a week. Since the beginning of the year he started preaching twice a week on two of Ambato's television stations. Both TV stations have given him 15 minutes of free time. He is on one station on Monday morning from 7:00 to 7:15. Then on Tuesday morning he is on the other TV station from 9:00 to 9:15. The congregation in Ambato has had some response from these programs. There are three ladies attending the Sunday services as a result of these programs. Of course, this is an encouragement to all of us. In Portoviejo we are doing well also. This year began with several baptisms which is an encouragement. Every Sunday we have visitors that attend worship service. There is a family of four who just a couple weeks ago started to attend. They are of the Baptist faith. Another visitor is a man named Manuel who is Catholic. Manuel is sister Rosa's father-in-law. Other visitors were two ladies that attended worship on the last Sunday of January. One of the ladies is a member of the Jehovah Witnesses. The other lady I am not sure about her religious background. These two ladies are neighbors of Victor and Teresa. It is hard to believe that the second Sunday of January made a year since brother Motta and I first came to Portoviejo. Thankfully in a year the congregation has grown in number. These past few weeks people have been more open to listen to the gospel. The reason is because people are afraid. Since January 11, 2005 there have been more than 300 tremors on the coast of Colombia and Ecuador. Here in Portoviejo there are at least three tremors a day that can be felt. There have been two tremors that were earthquakes of 6.1 and 6.0 the scale. This has made people afraid and more willing to hear the gospel. Of course, they should be willing to obey the Lord all the time. These tremors do make us nervous but we trust the Lord that he will protect us. We ask for your prayers also.

OWE NO MAN ANYTHING

continued from page one

Christians will be careful to meet their obligations, to be governed by their contracts" (Romans, God's Plan for Man's Righteousness, 502).

We may safely conclude in the light of the teaching of the Bible as a whole that a Christian may borrow, but if he does, he has an absolute responsibility to repay what he has borrowed according to the terms of his agreement. - More next month.

- 1713 Savannah DR., Fort Smith, AR 72901 .

Editor's note: Some time ago, we asked Brother Taylor Joyce to write about the subject of bankruptcy, debt, etc. He worked with the court system for many years and has first hand knowledge of the topic. He has written a series of three articles of which "Owe No Man Anything" is the first. We hope you enjoy and profit from his study. DLK

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THE BACK PAGE...

ROOSTER BOXING

BY CARL M. JOHNSON

Oklahoma State Senator Frank Shurden has just introduced a bill into the Senate advocating the legalization of rooster boxing. Shurden wants to outfit roosters with boxing gloves and let them go at each other for several rounds. I remember seeing "dancing chickens" on the carnival midway at the State Fair as a child (I did not know then that the floor in the chicken cage was actually a hot plate), but trying to visualize rooster boxing stretches the imagination.

Cockfighting was banned in Oklahoma in 2002, and violation of the ban is a felony. Shurden has been an advocate for the breeders of gaming fowls since the ban took effect, and his Senate Bill 776—sort of a blending of the fowl bloodsport of cockfighting and the "sweet science" of pugilism—is a creative, backdoor attempt to restore some form of cockfighting.

Shurden's bill would not only put gaming-fowl breeders back into business, but it would also provide a "kinder, gentler" form of cockfighting as another venue for gambling. Pari-mutual betting has long been the true driving force behind every cockfighting operation.

Shurden's bill reinforces my belief that compulsive gamblers are among the most creative people in history. Gamblers will bet on anything the mind can conceive—slot machines, roulette wheels, card games, numbers games, horse races, dog races, lotteries, bingo, ball games, etc.—and now they may add rooster boxing to the list.

The bane of gambling has been around almost as long as civilization itself. The Greeks in Homer's time used the knucklebones of sheep and goats as dice. Tertullian acknowledged the practice of gambling with dice in his day (A.D. 145-220) and condemned it. Virtually every civilization has acknowledged the existence of gambling within its culture and condemned it as damaging to the individual and to society at large. George Washington said, "Gambling is the child of avarice, the brother of iniquity, and the father of mischief."

Today, Americans spend approximately 50 billion dollars on legalized gambling each year, with ten million people being classified as "pathological" gamblers—one of the fastest-growing groups with mental health problems in the Western World (*New England Journal of Medicine*, Oct. 5, 2000).

What is the age-old, universal appeal of gambling? Psychologically speaking, the gambling urge involves the perversion of three basic desires: the desire for gain, a lust for excitement, and the innate tendency toward combativeness. There is something in the very nature of gambling that tends toward addiction. The winner becomes eager for larger wins and the loser becomes desperate to recoup his losses.

Some people argue, "Life is a gamble." "A farmer planting a crop each year is taking a gamble." "Each time you pull your car onto the highway you are taking a gamble." On the contrary, each time you get into your car you are taking a risk, but that risk does not constitute gambling unless you place a wager on it with someone. There is a certain amount of risk in all activities, but the presence of risk is not tantamount to gambling. When gambling thrives someone else suffers. The winners win at the expense of the losers, and that is hardly the same thing as planting a crop each year.

Another argument is, "gambling is simply a harmless, recreational release, like fishing or golfing." There is, however, a reason gambling is classified as a "vice." It gets a destructive grip on people, as is evidenced by the thousands who attend "Gamblers Anonymous." Yet, I have never heard of "Golfers Anonymous," or "Fishermen Anonymous." Obviously, there is a difference.

While the Bible does not mention gambling specifically it does furnish us with many principles it violates. The Apostle Paul says, "the love of money is the root of all evil" (I Tim. 6:9-11), and gambling is the love of money in its rawest form. Gambling is also a form of covetousness, an inordinate desire to get something of value without giving anything in return (Col. 3:5-6). Furthermore, gambling violates the "Golden Rule" (Mat. 7:12). It is not an attempt to do something for your neighbor, but it is an attempt to take something from your neighbor. If your neighbor suffers as a result it is just his tough luck.

Some people not only defend gambling in the ways mentioned above, but also extol gambling for the economic and social benefits it provides (eg. education lotteries). Some of these same people, however, have been destroyed by the gambling they defend. While pursuing the get-rich-quick dream they let the utility bills go unpaid and house payments fall into arrears—sometimes to the point of foreclosure. Out of desperation they resort to stealing and lying. As Paul says, they have "pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Tim. 6:10).

On the surface, it is amusing to try to visualize Senator Shurden's proposal of rooster boxing. But because his proposal is inextricably linked to gambling, it becomes an even bigger con than the dancing chickens on the carnival midway. At least, at the dancing-chicken show the only ones who suffered were the chickens themselves. carlmj@cableone.net

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. LXXIX

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NO. 3

"AN HOLY PRIESTHOOD"

By *BILLY D. DICKINSON*

Anyone who has read the Scriptures is familiar with the idea of a priesthood. In the Old Testament alone the word "priest" occurs more than 700 times. However, some might think that the idea of a priesthood is purely an Old Testament arrangement, while such a concept was done away completely in Jesus Christ. That, of course, is simply not the case: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5).

THE PATRIARCHAL AGE

The need of a priesthood connects itself, in all of its forms, with the consciousness of sin. When men are guilty of violating Divine law (I John 3 :4), they feel unworthy and unable to approach God who is holy and pure. That is why there is a craving for the intervention of someone who is considered more acceptable - someone to offer up prayers, thanksgiving, and sacrifices on their behalf. In that sense he becomes their representative in "things pertaining to God." We can see how this was true when the Patriarch (the head of the household) served as family priest and was the main spokesman through whom God dealt with the whole tribe. Notice how "the patriarch Abraham" (Heb. 7:4) officiated in that capacity: "And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent . . . and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord" (Gen. 12:7-8).

THE MOSAIC DISPENSATION

With the giving of the law of Moses, a change was made when God gave the sons of Levi the priesthood- a family system of religion had now developed into a national religion. In the Scriptures this is called the "Levitical priesthood" (Heb. 7:11) because they were of the tribe of Levi, and it is also known as the Aaronic priesthood because they were "priests the sons of Aaron" (2 Chron. 26:18). These priests could go into the Holy Place and do all the things they were appointed to do, and they offered up sacrifices on behalf of the people. Today we are no longer under the Mosaic system: "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (Heb. 7:12). Christ, as our high priest, offered Himself

up as a sacrifice for sin upon the cross and in that one sacrifice He accomplished our salvation: "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needed not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered himself" (Heb. 7:26-27). All of those things that were done under the old law were types, or a shadow, of what was to come, finding fulfillment in Jesus Christ! The New Testament is plain in declaring that we are priests unto God because of the relationship we bear to Christ as our high priest. What a glorious thought it is to know that we are able to approach God through Christ and can offer spiritual sacrifices to the Father for ourselves!

THE GOSPEL AGE

Let's notice how that in this dispensation of time all Christians serve as priests: "Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; and he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father" (Rev. 1:5-6- ASV). We are the kingdom of Christ and, as citizens of that kingdom, we serve as priests unto the most high God. John's statement here is reminiscent of Ex. 19:6 where God said that Israel was to be unto Him "a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." That's what we are as the church! Sometimes we have a low opinion of ourselves as Christians- "We're just servants and lowly disciples of the Lord." Well, it is true that we are servants of God, but our

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Editorial

“RECEIVE NOT THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN”

By **DON L. KING**

2 Corinthians 6:1 reads: “We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.”

J.W. McGarvey has an interesting comment about this warning given by the apostle in his Commentary on page 203. He said, “In the first epistle to the Corinthians the apostle had reasoned with the church, giving it instruction as to marriage ties between pagans and believers, and as to the social and other fellowships which tempted the Corinthians to take part in idol feasts. In all this, his language had been careful and guarded, and he had recognized to the full every principle of Christian liberty involved in these questions. He now lays aside the argumentative reserve, which characterized his first letter and tells them plainly that by thus going to the extreme limits of their liberty they are liable to make the grace of God in vain as to them. That life is a brief day of probation wherein they should not hazard their salvation. Then, by a series of short, terse questions, he shows the utter folly, the inconsistency and incongruity of every form of alliance which entangles the children of God with the children of the devil. The world has not so improved, and Satan has not so repented, as to in any way nullify, or even weaken, the weight and applicability of this apostolic warning.” It appears that Paul gave the warning in verse one and then went on to give some of the ways they might receive the grace of God in vain in succeeding verses of chapter six.

What Does this Mean to Us?

Unless one is prepared to take the position that the “grace of God” applies here only to one’s obedience of the gospel, this is a very important concept for all of us today. We are made aware of God’s grace today through His Holy Word in the form of doctrine, or teaching. Paul wrote, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” (Titus 2:11) Probably, we all realize that the Greek word for “grace” is in other verses sometimes translated as “favor,” etc. In fact, we often say that Grace refers to God’s “unmerited favor.” We mean by this that though we are undeserving of His grace, we are none the less recipients of it through our obedience to His will, which is given to men through the Bible. It is a fact that the Book of Books teaches that the Word of God is “the word of His grace.” In Acts 20:32 as Paul was teaching the elders from Ephesus he said, “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.” If the Bible is “the word of His grace,” it is easily seen why we can receive the grace of God in vain. All we have to do is reject what the Bible says and we have done exactly that.

There could be many examples cited to prove the above point, but we will mention only two just here. Think about

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Introduction: The questions for this month's column are both timely and important. They represent situations that frequently happen in the course of congregational activity. Wisdom and prudent judgment on the part of those involved are necessary for a scriptural resolution to the problems here presented.

Question: Assuming all things are scriptural, is it proper for a congregation to move ahead with a work over the strenuous objection of one individual after all efforts of persuasion have been exhausted?

Answer: It would be very difficult to give an unqualified answer to the above question, because of the many variables that are often present in situations like the one described. Is the person objecting a new convert or an aged and tried leader in the church? Is he someone who always objects to things or one who seldom does so? Is the matter under discussion one that deals with important issues or something that matters little either way? Is the objection based on conscience or just what one likes or dislikes? The answers to these questions would all impact whether or not the objection should be honored or ignored. It seems to this writer that the phrase in the question "assuming all things are scriptural" must be given primary or just weight. We are not talking about anything that would violate the teaching of the scriptures. The next question should be "is it expedient?" Paul said that "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify" ICorinthians 10:23. Again in ICorinthians 6:12 "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful (expedient). All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." The essence of the apostle's teaching is simply that there may be some things that are all right (scriptural), but it is not best to do them. Such situations call for wise and discerning judgment. If "all things are scriptural" and it can be determined that the proposal is expedient, then I would say "yes" it is proper for a congregation to move ahead with a work, even though one individual may object to it. No one should place himself as a roadblock in the path of progress. None of us should allow personal opinions, likes or dislikes, to interfere with a proposal that the rest of the brethren want to pursue, unless there is just

and scriptural cause for not doing it. Many times churches have been stymied in their attempts to move forward because someone offered an objection which led to eventual stalemate and no action at all. Brethren everywhere should seek consensus as they endeavor to work for the good of the cause of our Lord. Division and disagreement limit and confound the work we all love and seek to advance.

Question: If a church hires an evangelist who later creates problems in the church and instead of things improving they tend to get worse, what should be done? What is the Godly way to handle such a situation?

Answer: All problems such as the one cited above need to be discussed and resolved in a manner which benefits both the church and the preacher. If the problems arise from a doctrinal background then the scriptures need to be studied, the situation discussed and corrections, where necessary, made. If the problem comes from a lack of understanding, a failure to communicate, or personality conflict, then those involved need to clarify the issues, seek common ground and move forward. In the event that resolution cannot be obtained, then it might be in the interest of the church for the preacher to move on. It seems useless, to this writer, for a preacher to insist on staying at a place where conflict and disagreement abound. Regardless of his intentions or dedication, any preacher under such conditions, will be limited in the amount of good he can accomplish. To stay is but to extend the problem. Churches, on the other hand, need to realize that in getting the preacher to move to their location, they have extracted from him time, money, and commitment. To suddenly terminate his stay may leave him in the lurch. For this reason consideration of these matters should be given when such actions are contemplated. It has been my experience that in most situations similar to the above there is seldom unanimous agreement as to what should happen. Some want the preacher to stay, some want him to leave. Either way some are dissatisfied. That is why brethren need to take care in the way they handle such matters. If the preacher goes and the church remains divided there is still a problem. If he stays and the church is divided, there is obviously a problem. Hence resolution in either case must be obtained so that the church can move on unhindered. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade 2254 E. Raynell St. Springfield, MO 65804 or e-mail rfwade@mchsi.com)

HE HAD NOT TO PAY

By TAYLOR A. JOYCE

Jesus tells the story of a servant who owed a king ten thousand talents, the equivalent of \$10-million in today's currency. "But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made" (Matt. 18:25). The debtor appealed for mercy, and the compassionate king "forgave him the debt."

"But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence," a paltry sum in comparison with the debt which the king had just forgiven. "And he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest," and instead of showing the kind of mercy he had received from the king, he "went and cast him into prison, til he should pay the debt."

When the king learned of this he was wroth and re-instating the \$10 million debt he "delivered him to the tormentors, til he should pay all that was due unto him."

This story was told to show how essential it is for us to forgive others as God has forgiven us. Having shown the fate of the unforgiving servant, Jesus said, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses."

But while the main purpose of this story is to teach a lesson on forgiveness, it suggests other valuable lessons, as well. First, it shows that only a creditor can forgive debts owed to him. It raises a question of whether or not a third party, even a bankruptcy judge, can cancel a debt. The fact that the king could cancel the \$10-million debt owed him but not the one hundred pence debt owed his servant clearly implies that only the one to whom money is owed has the right to forgive the debt.

Another thing to be learned from this story is the harsh treatment historically administered to those who could not or would not pay their debts. Choking of debtors, as described here, was a common practice in ancient times. Both Cicero and Livy refer to the practice, Cicero saying, "Lead him to the judgment seat with twisted neck." Imprisonment of debtors was also a widespread practice. As late as 1841 there were still debtors prisons in the United States.

In England, there was a period during which certain debtors could have an ear cut off. In 1705, Parliament made it a capital offense for certain debtors to defraud their creditors. Although the law was on the books for some 115 years records indicate that only five people were put to death

under its provisions.

Bankruptcy laws providing a more humane treatment for debtors are a modern innovation. The first such laws were intended to cover business failures rather than personal insolvencies. The word *bankrupt* is the combination of two Latin words meaning *broken table* and denoting the wreck or breakup of a trader's business.

Bankruptcy laws have always been contentious political issues. Although the United States Constitution confers on Congress the power to "establish uniform laws on the subject of bankruptcies throughout the United States," it was not until 1800 that Congress passed such a law. That law was so unpopular that it was repealed three years later. The same fate was in store for similar laws passed in 1841 and 1867. Modern American bankruptcy had its permanent beginning with passage of the Bankruptcy Act of 1898. There have been several amendments and modifications since, but the essential nature of bankruptcy has remained essentially unchanged for all these more than 100 years.

Current law provides two methods of handling a personal bankruptcy and there are similar procedures for handling a business failure. Under certain circumstances one may proceed under Chapter 7 of the Bankruptcy Act, but this is problematic for a Christian because it lets people over their heads in debt sell off some of their assets to pay creditors, keep the rest, and cancel much of the remaining debt. It is those unpaid balances that are troublesome to one who is governed by the precept, "Owe no man anything."

A better option for a Christian is to proceed, if qualified, under Chapter 13 of the Act that helps create a repayment plan that you can afford without losing any property. The big problem here is that the bankrupt may not be required to repay every debt in full.

A person who maxes out a pocket full of credit cards, who lives above his means, or who makes unwise business or investment decisions is asking for financial trouble that may eventually land him in bankruptcy court. It defies logic or scripture to believe one who has engaged in that kind of behavior can just simply use the legal system to walk away from his debts.

On the other hand, statistics show that many who are forced into bankruptcy are there through no fault of their own. People who are clobbered by lay-offs, job losses, divorce or medical disasters may have no other alternative.

So what is a Christian to do? We will explore that question in our next installment, "It Is Legal, But Is It Right?" — 1713 Savannah DR, Fort Smith, AR 72901

PAGES FROM THE PAST

The following by Brother Ervin Waters appeared in the April 1939 Old Paths Advocate. It is as timely today as it was then. It seems that every generation struggles with the problems created by adopting the modern teachings of the day. Such teaching is often preceded by the use of "the language of Ashdod." The use of unscriptural terms set a bad precedent and need to be avoided. We would all do well to clean up our language. Please read with profit the following article by Brother Waters and take heed to what he says.

THE LANGUAGE OF ASHDOD

BY J. ERVIN WATERS

God made a Covenant with Abraham and said, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). He renewed that Covenant with Isaac and Jacob, and counseled them that they keep their blood pure, that Christ, the promised see, might be born of pure ancestry. He forbade marriage with stranger or aliens, (Deut. 7:2-4). But they disobeyed God. "In those days saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod" (Neh. 13:23). Notice the result of this. V. 24, "And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jew's language, but according to the language of each people." The children spoke a mongrel tongue or a mixed language, and this incurred the displeasure of God. Their language became polluted and adulterated with foreign speech.

Christ has given us a language and I plead that we allow it to remain untainted with foreign phrases, words, and expressions. Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life, (Jno. 6:63). Peter writes, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God," (1 Pet. 4:11). Paul exhorts Timothy, "Hold fast that form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me" (2 Tim. 1:13). "Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine," (Tit. 2:1). This vital subject is intruded upon the mind by constant suggestion in the New Testament. If all disciples of Christ would heed these and many other scriptures pertaining to sound speech, division among us would be a thing of the past and unknown to our ranks. But the language of God has become corrupted by the introduction of unscriptural expressions and teachings, and division has been the inevitable result.

This **pure language** was even mentioned by the prophet. "For then will I turn to the people a **pure language**, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent" (Zeph. 3:9). Why was this pure language to be given? Because God foresaw the time when he would break down "the middle wall or partition" between the Jews and the Gentiles, and then with a common spiritual tongue they could "serve him with one consent." I am reminiscent now of that wonderful day when everyone on earth was united and spoke the same language. "And the whole earth was of **one language**, and one speech" (Gen. 11:1). But it was confounded at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:7), which resulted in division and different nations. God realized that with one language man was united and therefore stronger, and that "now nothing will be restrained

from them" (Gen. 11:6). We should thank God that he has restored unto the people a "pure language" and realize that with such we should be stronger and have unity.

Today there exists a divided condition unparalleled in history among professed believers. Christendom is divided into numerous parties, sects, and bodies. Each one has its own peculiar speech, caused by the admixture of varying quantities of **Ashdodish language** with the word of God. All teach some truth, but refuse to speak wholly "as the oracles of God." and therefore are corrupt. Religious philosophers on the Bible have excogitated the following doctrines and unscriptural phrases: —'God out of Christ,' 'Free will,' 'Original sin,' 'Total Depravity,' 'Eucharist,' 'Consubstantiation,' 'Transubstantiation,' 'Impossibility of Apostacy,' etc.—Ad Infinitum. The corruption of Christianity has been consummated by the incursions of barbarian (Ashdodish) language, and by the new appropriations of the sacred style.

The use of Ashdodish language is not limited only to the Denominations but, to our shame, we have permitted its entrance into our speech. "The words of the Lord are pure words" (Psa. 12:6). Paul told Titus to use "Sound speech that cannot be condemned" (Tit. 2 :8) . Why can't we heed the scriptures? Such words and expressions as, 'Instrumental Music,' 'Sunday School,' 'Missionary Society,' 'Joining the Church' (added to the church is scriptural), 'Cups,' 'Breaking the Loaf at or near the middle,' etc., are foreign to the New Testament. Frequently I hear brethren say, in giving thanks at the Lord's Table, "We thank thee for this Cup, which represents the Blood of Christ." Here is some more of your Ashdodish language. Jesus said, referring by metonymy to the contents of the Cup, "This is my Blood of the New Testament" (Mk. 14 :24) . He nowhere states that the Cup is the blood, but he says in Luke 22:20, "This cup is the New Testament in (or 'ratified by') my blood." We should, in studying the Bible, always take a word or statement literally, unless compelled to do otherwise by its usage, or the circumstances surrounding the context. Away with such Ashdodish language!

I, too, am guilty of using unscriptural terms many times, but I am striving to purify my speech and to "speak as the oracles of God." Alexander Campbell in his preface to the Christian System, Page 6 states, "But we found it an arduous task, and one of twenty years labor, to correct our diction and purify our speech according to the Bible alone; and even yet we have not wholly repudiated the Language of Ashdod. We only profess to work and walk by the rules which will inevitably issue in a pure speech, and in right conceptions of that pure, and holy, and celestial thing called Christianity, — in faith, in sentiment, and in practice." Campbell realized that although he might not entirely purify his speech, yet to continue to walk and work by these rules would culminate in a pure speech that could not be censured. He said, "It may yet deserve the construction of a large vessel in a more propitious season" (Christian System).

Campbell further writes, "We choose to speak of Bible things by Bible words, because we are always suspicious that if the word is not found in the Bible, the idea which it represents is not there; And always confident that the things taught in the

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CALVINISM

By GLEN OSBURN

(CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE)

Paul is addressing Christians in the churches of Galatia. Paul is warning those who had benefited from the grace of God found in Christ, that if they went back to seek justification in the Old Law (represented by receiving circumcision), they would be "severed from Christ." They would find that Christ would "be of no benefit" to them for they would have "fallen from grace." "Certainly no one can be severed from something to which he has not been joined, and one cannot 'fall out of' something he has not been in" (Calvinism, Samuel G. Dawson, p. 17).

But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you. Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree (Romans 11 :17-24)? The Jews are represented as *natural* olive branches, and Gentile Christians are represented as *wild* olive branches. The thing that is said to connect the branches to the tree of fellowship with God is belief. The warning is that the Jews were "broken off" because of "their unbelief" in Christ, and the Gentile Christians would "also be cut off" if they failed to continue in "faith." Some, "believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away" (Luke 8:13). "Take care, brethren, lest there should be in anyone of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12 NAS). If, however, the Jews "do not continue in their unbelief," they "will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again."

For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died (Romans 14:15). Also, "For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died" (1 Corinthians 8: 11). Both of these passages are warning us to recognize we may inadvertently contribute to a brother's sin against his own conscience (1 Corinthians 8:7, 10, 12; Romans 14:14, 23). If we are not sensitive to the conscience of young "weak" Christians, we may encourage them to do something against what their conscience says is pleasing to God. When our "weak" brother "doubts" but goes ahead and does what he doubts is right, "he is condemned...because...whatever is not from faith is sin"

(Romans 14:23). The believing "brother for whose sake Christ died" did not act "from faith," he sinned, and is now "hurt," "ruined," and "destroy(ed)." This is a sanctified Christian, one "for whom Christ died," who has been spiritually *destroyed* through sin. The word "destroy" in Romans 14:23 means "...to lose eternal salvation" [Thayer's, p. 64 (Strong's #622)] The Bible goes on to say to those who are not sensitive of another brother's conscience, "And thus, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ" (1 Corinthians 8:12).

The passages cited above clearly speak of sanctified Christians losing their salvation. It is, therefore, possible for us to sin as Christians and revert to a state that is worse than before: For *if after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.* For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them. It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A dog returns to its own vomit," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire" (2 Peter 2:20-22). Because we can sin, we must regard the warning: "therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10: 12).

Conclusion: Calvinism says: Because of being born in sin, all of us are spiritually dead, so dead we are unable to even have faith (Total Depravity). Therefore, in order for us to be saved, God alone had to save us. We know that everyone doesn't "get saved," so, God had to choose those to whom He would give grace (Unconditional Election). Jesus couldn't have died for everyone or everyone would be saved. So, because some are lost, we know Jesus didn't die for everyone (Limited Atonement). If you're one of the ones God picked, you can't change it (Irresistible Grace). And since God picked you to be saved and you can't do anything about it, there is no sin that you could ever commit that would cause you to lose your salvation (Perseverance of the Saints).

However, as we have shown, the Bible says: We all are born spiritually alive to God and innocent to sin. But there comes a point of accountability, a time when we are responsible for understanding and doing the will of God. There comes a time when we lust, commit sin (Romans 3:23), and, therefore, lose our fellowship with a Holy God (spiritual death). As sinners we then need to hear (Acts 15:7), believe (Mark 1:15; 16:16), and obey the gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:8). [This includes repentance (Acts 17:30), and confessing Christ (Matthew 10:32).] When we obey the gospel, we are "redeemed" (1 Peter 1:18-19) and placed "into Christ" (Galatians 3:26-27). Once "in Christ," we are responsible to grow in "knowledge" (2 Peter 3:18), all the while keeping our body and mind obedient to what we have learned (1 Corinthians 9:27). We are aware that we can lose our salvation through careless sin (2 John 1:8; Matthew 12:36-37; Hebrews 10:26-29). If we sin, as a child of God we have the privilege of penitently calling upon our Father for forgiveness (1 John 2:1-2; 1:9; Hebrews 4:15-16). If we abandon our Father, we must find repentance, come back to our Father in prayer and confess our unfaithfulness; like the

penitent prodigal son (Luke 15:11-24). If our sin has caused a breach in our fellowship with our brethren, we must let them know of our change of heart (James 5:16).

We are not born "Totally Depraved" but have a free will, an ability to choose right from wrong, that we will give an account for in the Judgment; the election is not an "Unconditional Election" but conditioned upon our abiding in the body of Christ; the atonement of Christ is not a "Limited Atonement" but is offered to all; we can insult the Spirit of grace, therefore, it cannot be an "Irresistible Grace"; and we can lose our salvation through sin, therefore, the concept of "once saved, always saved" or "Perseverance of the Saints" is not Biblical. The reasoning of Calvinism is not of God.

The Scriptures teach that salvation is of grace: "For the grace of God has appeared, *bringing salvation to all men*" (Titus 2:11). The Scriptures also say, speaking of Jesus, "And having been made perfect, He became to *all those who obey Him* the source of eternal salvation" (Hebrews 5:9). We can correctly conclude that: Jesus, through grace, offers salvation to all, but only those who choose to obey Him will receive God's grace and eternal salvation.

Will you obey Him?

"RECEIVE NOT THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN"

continued from page two

First Corinthians 11:23-29 where the Lord's Supper is described. We insist that the use of one loaf and one cup are mandatory there as well as in Matthew 26, Mark 14 and Luke 22. We are correct in doing so and have successfully debated the issue for many years. We prove by the Greek that our practice is Scriptural.

In addition, it is impressive that in the first Corinthian letter we see Paul, under inspiration of the Spirit of God, (see first Corinthians 14: 37) as he gives inspired instructions to **one congregation** for the use of **one loaf and one cup**. Not only does the Greek text support the use of one loaf and one cup but the practice of the early church, as instructed by an inspired apostle, does also. That is what Paul told Corinth to do! If they had disobeyed, would they have received the grace of God in vain? Absolutely, they would have and many are still doing so today.

However, look at the instructions given by the same apostle and in the same chapter (1 Corinthians 11:2-16). Here Paul gives inspired instructions about the covering for men and women. We learn from those verses that men are not to let their hair grow, or have long hair (verse 14); but conversely, the women are to let theirs grow so that they will have "long hair." (Verse 15) A Greek noun is used in that verse which denotes a woman's long hair as "ornamental hair." This "ornamental hair" is given her "**for**" (from a word in the Greek meaning "instead of or in place of") a "covering." The word translated "covering" there means a veil or covering, which is an artificial veil or covering. Does the woman have an artificial veil then? Not at all because her long hair, which is "ornamental" to her has been given her by God **INSTEAD** of that. Does this mean she can trim it and still be covered with "ornamental hair?" Not at all! She is given "ornamental" hair (Kome, Greek noun for

"hair." in verse 15) in the place of a veil and the only way she can have the "ornamental" hair is by letting her hair grow (Komaio, Greek verb for hair in verse 15). She cannot obey the command to let it grow (Komaio) and trim it at the same time. If she can, what about the men? We must not have long hair, so we get ours trimmed. If the woman can trim her hair and still have the ornamental hair, the men would also have ornamental hair even while regularly trimming theirs and Paul says that is a shame unto him. (See verse 14)

Here is the point: Why are the verses about the communion more important than the verses about the hair? They are all in the same chapter, of the same letter, written by the same man, under the same inspiration, at the same time, and to the same brethren. The answer, my friends, is that both topics are equally important. They just have to be. Think about this question, please: when brethren disobey either of these inspired teachings, have they received the grace of God in vain?

It is not pleasant to contemplate standing before the Lord on Judgment Day and trying to explain to Him why He wasted His grace on us. Folks, these are only two examples. There is no telling how many more might be considered. However, it is obvious that when we reject the teaching of God's Word, we have received the grace of God in vain. If not, why not? Think on these things. *DLK*

THE LANGUAGE OF ASHDOD

continued from page five

words and under the names which the Holy Spirit has chosen and appropriated, than in the words which man's wisdom teaches. There is nothing more essential to the unity of the disciples of Christ that purity of speech" (Christian System, Page 125).

Brethren, we will wield greater influence if we practice what we preach. We say, "We speak where the bible speaks," but many of us do not. "Be thou an example of the believers in word" (1 Tim. 4:12); "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to **wholesome words**, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to Godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but dotting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, railings, strifes, evil surmisings" (1 Tim. 6:3-4), To speak the **language of Ashdod** is to be "proud, knowing nothing," and to encourage "envy, strife." "But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness" (2 Tim. 2:16). Moffat's Translation reads, "Avoid all that profane jargon, for it leads people still further into irreligion." By our inconsistent, inharmonious, incongruous teachings, we encourage infidelity and division.

Truth is prevailing. Idols are crumbling. The Bible is cutting its way. Light is breaking. The morning is approaching, and faith is chasing away the dark clouds that have so long hung their black drapery over the straight and narrow way. I join you in a fervent prayer to Almighty God to hasten the day when the "knowledge and glory of God shall cover the earth as waters that cover the sea." Let the language of Ashdod and Babylon be abandoned and buried, but eternal truth shall never perish.

“AN HOLY PREISTHOOD”

continued from page one

position as such is a high and holy one. The reason that is true is not because of any merit derived from who we are, but because of who God is and the relationship we have with Him! The fact that we are a kingdom of priests and a holy nation to the Lord should motivate us to righteous living.

1 PETER 2:5

Peter employs some wonderful figures in this passage to illustrate our relationship with God through Christ: (1) “A spiritual house”- This is what we are as the church (1 Tim. 3:15). Notice that it is not a physical house made of brick and mortar, but a spiritual building in which Christ is the foundation stone and we as “living stones” are built upon it. (2) “Holy priesthood”- Not just priests, but “holy” priests! MacKnight says this literally means “a collage or company of priests.” We are holy because we have been sanctified or set apart for this sacred purpose of worship and service before the altar of God. (3) “To offer up spiritual sacrifices”- Here is what it means to be a priest of God in this spiritual house, the church. It is not just a title we wear, but it indicates the area in which we have a right to function as children of God. What are the spiritual sacrifices we offer up? “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb. 13 :15-16). The sacrifices we offer up are the praise, prayer, worship, and service that spring from a dedicated life. Let us never forget that Peter says these things are “acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

CONCLUSION

The New Testament knows nothing about a special class in the church designated as “priests,” as if they possess special authority that the rest of believers do not have. All Christians are priests- a part of the “royal priesthood” that Peter went on to write about in 1 Pet. 2:9. We are a priesthood because we are empowered to approach God, and we are “royal” because of our relationship to the King. [Vine says that it has to do with the royal dignity of showing forth the Lord’s excellencies.] Since I am a priest, I am qualified to offer spiritual sacrifices unto God for myself. However, I must remember that this is only possible through Christ! - 2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803

Announcements

MY POSITION ON CARNAL WARFARE

I cannot participate in military service 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 thy 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 in any way, 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 any way, 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 any way 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.

1. Jeremy Johannesen, Broken Arrow Church of Christ, Tulsa, OK
2. Etienne Nichols, Broken Arrow Church of Christ, Tulsa, OK
3. Uriah Nichols, Broken Arrow Church of Christ, Tulsa, OK
4. Clint DeFrance, Broken Arrow Church of Christ, Tulsa, OK
5. Phillip Olden, Broken Arrow Church of Christ, Tulsa, OK
6. Bryan Olden, Broken Arrow Church of Christ, Tulsa, OK
7. Chris Kemp, Broken Arrow Church of Christ, Tulsa, OK
8. Michael Smith, Broken Arrow Church of Christ, Tulsa, OK
9. Leland D. Brown, Broken Arrow Church of Christ, Tulsa, OK
10. Joe Chatterton, 49 Twin View Ln, Huntington, W. VA 25704
11. Joseph R. Kline, 1925 Shelton Rd., Willow Springs, MO 65793
12. Daniel T. Kline, 1925 Shelton Rd., Willow Springs, MO 65793
13. Grace E. Kline, 1925 Shelton Rd., Willow Springs, MO 65793
14. Mary H. Kline, 1925 Shelton Rd., Willow Springs, MO 65793
15. Matthew Charles Walling, 4162 Hudson Mill Rd., Ruffin, SC 29475

16. Kirby Lewis Walling, 4162 Hudson Mill Rd., Ruffin, SC 29475
17. James Melton, 7556 West Chester Rd., West Chester, OH 45069
18. Jace DeGough, 1701 Nutshell Ct., Hughson, CA 95326
19. Clay Roper Gilley, 1477 CR 3250, Paradise, TX 76073
20. Billy Jason Tidwell, 1651 Liberty Church Rd., Bremen, GA 30110
21. Diane Tidwell, 39 Harlan Ln. Rd., Villa Rica, GA 30180
22. Marcus Moran, 1355 Vista Sierra Dr., Rancho San Diego, CA 92019

FROM LYNWOOD SMITH

I want to thank everyone for their cards, letters, and phone calls during my recent illness. I am now home from the hospital and improving day by day. I appreciate your concern and prayers in my behalf. - M. Lynwood Smith

Bonds of Matrimony

SHOCKLEY - DUDLEY

On the afternoon of February 12, 2005 Brad Alan Shockley and Alexandria Brie Dudley were united in marriage before a large number of family, friends and fellow Christians in the Church building at Buffalo, MO. Brad is one of our good young preachers who is well known in our area for his hard work and very good Bible knowledge and judgement. Alex is a fine young Christian who has attended church at Niangua all of her life. We ask God's blessings on them as they begin their Christian journey together and that their Christian home may be a blessing to the church and to the cause of Christ. The writer was honored to officiate. - Ron Alexander

Our Departed

LEE - Mary Douglas Lee was born Sept. 24, 1960, and passed from this life Jan. 30, 2005. She was a member of the Church of Christ in Columbia, MO. Mary and her husband, Don, came out of the "cups church" nearly nine years ago. Since that time she put in a lifetime of labor for the Lord. Her approach to the Christian life was simple; she did everything she could to please the Lord, so that she could make Heaven her home. Although there are no words that can communicate the level of her commitment and devotion, it must be stated that Mary was a woman whose great conviction rested on the Word of God. Even at her funeral it was her desire that the Gospel be preached to those who attended. She was truly a crowning jewel of our congregation. She will be sorely missed by those of us who knew her well. I was honored to speak to those who gathered in her memory.

- Reggie Kinser



HEFFREN - Eva Lue Heffren was born March 27, 1927 at Seneca, MO and departed this life on January 7, 2005 at St. John's Hospital in Joplin, MO after a sudden illness. Eva was united in marriage to Berlyn Heffren on June 9, 1946. Eva is survived by three sons; Dan and his wife Becky of Joplin, Larry and Jim both of Seneca; and one daughter, Linda Holcomb, of Seneca. She was preceded in death by her husband, Berlyn in January 1999; and one daughter, Debra Burris. Eva was a long time member of the church and attended the Highway 60 Church of Christ at Neosho at the time of her death. She will be missed by her family and at Church. May God bless her family. The writer offered words of comfort. - Ron Alexander

GRANT - Brother Gene Grant of the Knoxville, GA congregation passed away February 16, 2005 after complications arising from heart bypass surgery. Brother Gene was 72 years old at his passing. He is survived by three children, eleven grandchildren, and three great grandchildren. One grandson preceded him in death. To pay his bills, Brother Gene drove a truck, but his main occupation was teaching the word of God to those who would listen. He was baptized by Brother David Tant in 1965. In the early 1970's he was taught the truth about worship by Brother Alton Bailey and he took a firm stand for truth - though it separated him from friends and even family. During his life Brother Gene traveled to Russia four times to preach the gospel. He traveled once to Haiti to preach there. He had three formal debates: (a) in 2002 he debated Mr. T. A. Body of the "Church of God in Christ" concerning denominationalism and the plan of salvation; (b) in 2003 he debated Brother Reggie Young in Philadelphia concerning divorce and remarriage; (c) in 2004 he debated Mr. Richard Rickman from the Pentecostal Church concerning the cessation of miracles. Brother Gene was a close friend and faithful brother. I miss him greatly. I was honored to assist Brother Barney Owens in speaking words of warning and encouragement at the memorial service. - George Battey

PRESSLEY - Brother J. C. Pressley, Sr. of the Jonesboro, GA congregation passed away February 14, 2005. He was diagnosed with bone cancer on December 22, 2004 and lived only eight weeks after the diagnosis—in much pain. Brother J. C. married Sister Margaret Smoot on December 27, 1954 and they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary before Brother Pressley passed. Brother J. C. was 74 years old when he passed and is survived by his wife, six children, two brothers, two sisters, nineteen grandchildren, and four great grandchildren. Brother J. C. was baptized by Brother E. H. Miller in about 1956. Brother J. C. will be remembered most of all for his faithfulness in the church. I can remember him missing the assembly only during the last eight weeks of his life when he was in great pain. Otherwise, he was always at the worship assembly. He walked with a cane and would pass out Bible literature while taking his daily walk in the neighborhood. Brother J. C. would always speak words of encouragement to me. I was honored to be asked by Brother J. C. himself (the night he was diagnosed with cancer) to speak words of warning and encouragement at his memorial service. - George Battey

Field Reports

Ronny F. Wade, 2254 E. Raynell St., Springfield, MO 65804, rfwade@mchsi.com, March 11 - The meeting at Piedmont closed March 6. We enjoyed our stay among these brethren. The church is strong and operates under capable leadership. A number of visitors from surrounding congregations came to help us out during the meeting. Lord willing our next will be in Nashville. TN March 16-20 and from there Fossil Creek in Ft. Worth, TX April 3-10, Harrisonville, MO April 24-May 1 and Bandy, KY May 8-15. We look forward to rewarding work in all these places. May the Lord bless us all as we labor for Him.

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, bookman@brightok.net, March 8 - Sally and I were in a meeting February 9-13 at LaGrange, GA. It was wonderful to see all our friends and loved ones in that area again, and we hope some good was done. We were sorry that Alton and Florence Bailey were not there due to Alton's surgery. Enroute home, I spoke at Napoleon, Alabama, and we enjoyed being with them again, as always. On the way down, we visited with Lynwood Smith and on the way back we visited Sam and Irma Smith. I expect to be at Davis, Oklahoma April 13-17, Lawrenceburg, Tennessee April 22-24, and Bakersfield, California (Planz Road) May 1-8.

Douglas T. Hawkins, 409 Worthington PI, Richmond, KY 40475, (606) 271-0529, douglast@alltel.net, March 8 - I recently returned home from a meeting in Tyler, TX. Despite scheduling conflicts we managed to have an encouraging meeting. The brethren there are continuing in the Lord's service. I remember when Terry Baze and Glenn Ballard first went to Tyler in the late 80's to start the work there. It reminds me that if we want the Kingdom of God to increase, we've got to have a vision and be mission minded. Our mission has not changed - "perfecting the saints"; "work of the ministry"; and "the edifying of the body of Christ." We've been doing a leadership study at the Bandy congregation that's planned for the entire year. It's been well received and we are encouraged by the interest. I look forward to meetings in Chestnut Ridge, KY (Apr. 6-10); Athens, AL (Sanderford Rd.) (Apr. 29-May 1); Chapel Grove, TN (May 6-8) in the months ahead. As always, we wish the faithful the very best that our Lord has.

Billy D. Dickinson, 2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803, bddickison@juno.com, March 5 - My work with the congregation at Jamesville is going well. We pretty much have a full house every Sunday. We had a good weekend meeting with Jimmie Smith in January. Joe Hisle will hold our spring meeting (May 4-8) and Don McCord will be with us in the fall. When I began laboring with these brethren, we agreed on a two year stay. It's hard to believe that those two years will be up in May. However, I'm glad to report that the decision has been

made to continue our evangelistic efforts together for another two years. I have a full meeting schedule planned for 2005 and, Lord willing, will be at the following places: April 3-10 at Cable Ridge, MO; May 15-22 at Fremont, CA; Aug. 6-14 at Bedford, IN; Sept. 14-18 at Ratliff City, OK; Nov. 6-13 at Lexington, KY. Brethren, we are swiftly turning life's pages. Let's all work hard this year to save lost souls and restore the erring. Remember me when you pray!

Ron Alexander, 117 E Hillsboro, Marshfield, MO 65706, rcakex@team-national.com, Mar. 1 - Please note my latest e-mail address. Several have tried to use the old one and I apologize for not updating it sooner. I appreciate the cards, letters and phone calls we received when my mother passed away last August. Your thoughts and prayers are always appreciated and needed. Mom's passing was another in a long list of deaths in our little church at Niangua. We've lost fifteen to death in the last few years which takes its toll not only in numbers, but talents and influence are lost also. We miss each one and that which each supplied to the church. But, at the same time we rejoice in the hope and promise of eternal life. We do have some new people attending of late and others have promised. We look forward to studying and helping them learn the truth. We are about ready to begin our meetings this year and look forward to seeing many of you when we are in your part of the country. Pray for us and Lord's work.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, March 9, e-mail old_paths@juno.com. We have just returned from an enjoyable meeting at Wichita Falls, Texas (Crestview congregation.) It was encouraging to see the excellent cooperation from the Garden's Edge congregation nearby as well as several churches more distant. A fine spirit prevailed throughout by everyone who came. The brethren had worked hard for the meeting resulting in visitors from the community on several nights. It was good to be with preaching brethren Cullen Smith, Jimmie Cating, Ted Warwick and Johnny Elmore among others I may have overlooked. The hospitality of Charles and Jan Goodgion was outstanding, as always, and we enjoyed our stay with them. Our next meeting will be at Modesto, CA, Lord willing. Recently, we mentioned some needs for the Philippine work. Please, let us hear from you if you can be of help. In addition, we need to mention once again that the paper could use your help for foreign subscriptions. We try not to remove any foreign subscription because we know it is helpful to them in many ways. However, it costs the paper much more for a foreign sub because of the postage. If you can help, it will be appreciated. We are trying very hard to keep the paper growing as well as keep the price at an affordable level. Pray for the work everywhere.

Greg Gay, 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747, papagreg@aol.com, February 22 - Since last report, I have had meetings at Harrisonville, MO and D'Arbonne, LA. These congregations work with Joe Norton to help two of the great works in Africa: Harrisonville with Togo, and D'Arbonne with Ghana. The Harrisonville meeting was well attended with good support from sister congregations and outsiders who attended one or more services. I saw many friends from years gone by. I enjoyed visiting with preachers Tony Denton, Mike Criswell, and Ron Alexander. I had a great time staying with the Jim Bradford family who has moved back to the Kansas City area from California where they are sorely missed. The D'Arbonne congregation went all out to get visitors from the community. One night there were twenty-five community visitors and many of those came back several times. By the end of the meeting there had been at least eighty visits from outsiders. It was good to see Bobby Cunningham at one service. I stayed with the Terry Baze family and enjoyed their great hospitality. Our work continues at 64th St., Sacramento. We have had success in the last few months advertising a correspondence course in the local paper with an ad I borrowed from Bill Ferguson when I was at Hamilton, Ohio last year. We ran the ad once a month for four months and have had around thirty responses. Some have only requested one lesson but many are working their way through lesson after lesson. I am thrilled to have new directions for leads in the area.

Don McCord, Box 1773, Covina, CA, Feb. 21 - The Oklahoma City study was to me a blessing; the spirit of both the presenters and the respondents was commendable. My little meeting at Turlock, CA was a blessing to me. For the first time in a long time, I was at El Cajon, CA lately, where I enjoy a 60-year perspective, which is so encouraging to me. God bless all of these good folks. Due to Wanda's increasing poor health, it is necessary for me to ask leave of my 2005 meetings at Yuba City, CA; Edmond, OK; Peidmont, AL; Napoleon, AL; New Hope, OK; Lawrenceburg, TN; Oklahoma City, OK; Jamesville, MO; Healdton, OK; Lexington, OK; Walnut Grove, KY. I humbly ask these wonderful folks to understand this necessity; these are among the folks all over the land who have honored me, permitting me to do what I love to do most, that is to preach the gospel of the everlasting kingdom; I will ever be in their debt. I hope and pray for Wanda's health to improve so I can resume my meetings. Whatever eventuality, I will preach as long as the Lord lets me. We kindly request the prayers of those we love and those who love us in this regard. Our meetings here at home this year are with Bro. Wayne McKamie (April 3-10); Bro. Johnny Elmore (July 10-17); Bro. James Orten (Sept. 7-11), and Bro. Carl Johnson (Nov. 6-13). Our 2006 meetings, Lord willing, will be with Brethren Wayne Fussell, Joe Norton, Bennie Cryer and Ronny Wade. We enjoy peace here at home for which we are grateful. Brethren, peace does not come easily; it takes scriptural hard work on the part of every member.

When will we ever learn that dividing with ill-will never solves our problems; we thus divide as though we think it is a command. When will power-struggles, personality differences, opinions, traditions, inconsistencies, uncontrolled tempers cease dividing us? What an unscriptural scenario! At least some of us are wrong! May the Lord help us! Finally, I am often asked when will the commentary on *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* be complete. My target date is May 20, 2006. Please pray for me.

Ecuador Report, Jonathan Bunner - February 2005 just may be the best month so far for the work in Ecuador. I really believe that month could be the turning point for the Lord's work in Portoviejo and maybe all of Ecuador. We had our first ever gospel meeting here with Brothers Wayne McKamie and Juan Rodriguez. From the very start the meeting went well. On Friday evening brother Juan preached on the "Scriptural Baptism". Three people expressed their desire to be baptized and several Christians made confessions. Since it was late and the river is a 45 minute drive from Portoviejo all three souls decided to wait until morning to be baptized. On Saturday morning we decided to go to a swimming pool instead of the river to baptize. Juan baptized not three but four people. After the baptisms brother Juan studied with Victor and Teresa who had been baptized in a Pentecostal group. Brother McKamie preached an excellent sermon which brother Rodriguez translated for everyone. On Sunday brother Juan preached once again. Later Sunday evening we went back to visit with the brethren in Portoviejo. By this time Teresa expressed her desire to obey the gospel. Right away we went to the pool to baptize her. After her baptism her husband Victor decided he wanted to obey the gospel also. (I baptized their three daughters in December and January). A total of six souls obeyed the gospel during the gospel meeting. On Monday morning we left for the city of Guayaquil where brothers Rodrigues and McKamie left that afternoon for Lima, Peru. The congregation in Portoviejo is blessed to have several new members. Brother Victor has been working with me everyday since his baptism. He and I have visited several of his relatives and friends. In Quito Victor asked me if we could visit some friends of his family who are Pentecostal. Victor wanted to present the truth to them. Victor called his friends and they were happy to receive us. To make a long story short, we spent six hours studying with this family. Christian is a lawyer and has a lot of Bible knowledge. Nevertheless his knowledge is useless because he does not practice what he knows. For example, we spent a few minutes studying First Corinthians 14:34-35. Christian agrees that women must remain silent, but that is not what he practices. His wife and oldest daughter preach once in a while. I was glad that Victor and his entire family were able to see how inconsistent Christian and his family are. My prayer is that we can encourage brother Kelvin and maybe he can hold Bible studies. I am excited about all the good things that are happening in Ecuador. Please continue to pray for us. God Bless.

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THE BACK PAGE...

WAS GEORGE WASHINGTON FIRST?

By CARL M. JOHNSON

When George Washington died, Henry Lee, one of Washington's officers eulogized America's first President as being, "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." There is also a possibility that Washington was the first President to demand baptism in strict accordance with the teachings of the Bible.

Washington was a member of the Episcopal Church and had been sprinkled as an infant. After the Revolutionary War was over, however, Washington concluded that sprinkling was unacceptable as a mode of baptism. He based his conclusion upon the teachings of his personal chaplain John Gano and his own intensive study of the Bible. According to James E. Chessor, Washington came to Gano and said, "I have been investigating the Scriptures, and I believe immersion to be the baptism taught in the Word of God and I demand it of your hands. I do not wish any parade or the army called out, but simply a quiet demonstration of the ordinance" (Marvin Hastings, *Saga of a Movement* 322). Gano immersed Washington in the Potomac River in the presence of 42 witnesses.

While there is no record in Washington's papers of his baptism, the witnesses—including Gano's oldest son Daniel—lend credibility to the above tradition. In a story celebrating the bicentenary of Washington's birthday (September 5, 1932), *Time* magazine reports the account of Washington's baptism as a matter of fact. In 1908 E. T. Sanford of Manhattan's North Church commissioned a painting of Washington and Gano waist-deep in the Potomac River. The Gano family eventually presented the painting to William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri, where it now hangs in the school's Gano Chapel.

While few historians doubt that Gano baptized Washington, there are many people who dispute the claim that he baptized Washington for the remission of sins. Gano was a famous Baptist preacher from New York and generally the Baptists did not baptize for the remission of sins. It should be remembered, however, that most of the American Restoration Movement preachers were Baptists and Presbyterians when they learned the true conditions of salvation. When Alexander Campbell arrived at the conclusion that the New Testament pattern for baptism was immersion upon the simple confession that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God," he made a trip of thirty miles to the home of Baptist preacher Matthias Luce and asked Luce to baptize him. Campbell insisted the baptism had to be in strict accordance with the New Testament pattern, so no "voting" was involved and Campbell refused to recite any religious experience. His request was contrary to Baptist custom, but on June 12, 1812, Luce agreed to perform the rite even at the risk of censure from his brethren. Afterwards Campbell, who had been a Seceder Presbyterian, identified himself with the Baptist Church.

Campbell was opposed to infant baptism and he insisted the mode of baptism had to be immersion, but he did not understand baptism is for the remission of sins until 1823. While preparing to debate infant baptism with renowned Presbyterian preacher W. L. McCalla, it dawned on Campbell that baptism is significantly related to the remission of sins. During a break in the course of the debate Campbell stepped into a room full of his Baptist brethren and announced he was just as much opposed to their position on baptism as he was the position of the Presbyterians.

Obviously Campbell's arrival at the truth was sequential. It is entirely possible that Washington's case is similar to Campbell's—that he understood only a part of the truth about baptism at first. Some people believe, however, that Washington understood the whole truth about baptism at the time of his immersion—a belief argued by Chaplain Gano's own grandson John Allen Gano.

John Allen Gano was born in Georgetown, Kentucky, in 1805. He was educated at Barton W. Stone's Academy, became a scholar in Latin and Greek, studied law, and was eventually admitted to the bar. He was baptized for the remission of sins by Stone, took the Bible as his only guide, and refused to wear any name religiously except the name of Christ. The Gano family was still identified with the Baptist Church at the time, and they were disturbed by John Allen's extreme position. They called Baptist leader Jacob Creath to come and "straighten out" John Allen. The two men studied earnestly for some time over an open Bible and finally Creath admitted to young Gano, "You are right and I will take my stand with you." Both men subsequently became giants in the American Restoration Movement, baptizing thousands of people.

After his grandfather died, John Allen made the case that his grandfather had indeed baptized George Washington for the remission of sins. His claim will probably always be disputed, however, because Washington kept no record of his baptism among his personal papers. Nevertheless, it is entirely possible Washington was the first American President to be baptized in strict accordance with the New Testament pattern. After all, the "Father of Our Country" has a well-deserved reputation for being first. carlmj@cablone.net

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. 5

LARGE CONGREGATIONS AND ONE CUP

By *BILLY D. DICKINSON*

I was recently assigned the task of dealing with the issue of large congregations and the use of one cup in the communion. Believing that others might profit from the exchange, I will first reproduce the specific request that the brother made: "I have a question which I would like your views. A little of my background. At one time, I attended a 'one cup' congregation. Now, I attend a 'main stream' congregation. I am aware that most of your congregations are very small, but if all must use the same cup, how would you handle the situation involving larger congregations like 500 members? Can two different groups use the same building and have separate services at different times? or have their services at the same time? Thanks in advance for your comments." Now, having read the brother's e-mail, please consider my response: Having been asked to respond to the above inquiry, I am happy to give this reply. First, all of the "What if?" questions that one might pose cannot set aside the teaching of God's word. Individual cups violate the following instructions given to the church at Corinth concerning the scriptural observance of the Lord's supper: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." (1 Cor. 11:28) Note: Not eat of those loaves and drink of those cups! According to Paul, this is how the communion is to be observed by a congregation. The members of a local church are to come together in one assembly (1 Cor. 11:20), and each communicant is to eat of the loaf and drink of the cup.

How would we "handle the situation involving larger congregations like 500 members?" To begin with, why stop at 500 (as if that is a magical number)? Why not 5000? What about 50,000? Surely the Lord expects us to look to His word, to ascertain what is commanded and authorized, and then to use wisdom and judgment in carrying out His will. Perhaps it has become "mainstream" for brethren in churches of Christ to no longer feel the need to follow the Bible pattern. What a sad day

for the church! However, if we are committed to doing what God has specified in His word, we will make our situation fit the Bible, rather than making the Bible fit our situation. In other words, the size of the congregation should be adjusted to fit God's pattern for the communion. We have authority for a plurality of congregations (Rom. 16:16), but we don't have authority for a plurality of loaves and cups in a congregation.

Let's meet the issue head on. Can a congregation get too big to do all that the Lord has required of it to do? Strangely enough, Guy N. Woods admitted as much when he wrote about congregations among them who must have "multiple services resulting from overcrowded auditoriums." Although Bro. Woods used contorted logic to justify this practice, he sets forth the scriptural pattern in the following analysis: "Where is the New Testament authority for conducting separate worship assemblies? It is crystal clear from 1 Cor. 11:20, that the church was required to assemble (a) together, (b) at the same time and place for the observance of the Lord's Supper. Moreover, in coming together to partake of the Supper, they were to 'tarry one for another' (1 Cor. 11:33). These necessitates the conclusion that all present are to assemble together." [Questions And Answers, Open Forum, Freed-Hardeman College Lectures, Pages 291-292] When a congregation, due to an overcrowded auditorium, gets too big for all the members to eat the Lord's supper together, you have a dilemma that cannot be reconciled with 1 Cor. 11:33.

I will conclude by quoting from the pen of Clovis Cook: "There is no limit to the size of a cup (drinking vessel) as long as it can be called such; neither is there any law to govern the amount of time we spend in dividing it among ourselves . . . It is certainly permissible and scriptural to organize separate local congregations. This provides the means of crossing any bridge the cups advocates can show us." Clovis wrote this in 1945, showing that the question concerning large congregations is an old one that has been answered time and again. - 2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803

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Editorial

LESSONS FROM ROME

By DON L. KING

The recent illness and death of Pope John Paul II in Rome, and the subsequent massive media coverage of it, has brought some things to light you may not have realized before. We suspect most of our readers grew tired of the constant media coverage early on. It is well, if you did, because the media preached Catholicism to us for many days. Perhaps not even the Catholics could have paid for the worldwide advertisement they received by every form of the media. Not wishing to belabor the event, we would nonetheless like to point out a few things.

If one views the deceased pontiff from the Catholic perspective, he is seen as a somewhat conservative individual. He refused to bow to pressure from many quarters and allow homosexual practices or marriages. His opposition to divorce was unbending. He refused to allow Priests to marry. He was opposed to abortion, birth control, etc., as well as allowing women to become priests. We suppose there were perhaps other areas in which he also refused to compromise, but it is not our purpose to laud his strong points or even to discuss him at all. Our opinion of such a fellow is forevermore formed by what Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4 and 1 Timothy 4:1-5, etc.

Change Agents Among The Catholics

When the media asked various Catholic dignitaries what sort of pope they would like to see next time, most answered that they hoped one would be elected who followed in the footsteps of this one. Then, the inevitable caveats would come. Yes, they wanted one who would also be conservative, etc. but perhaps the next one should consider the modern times in which we live and realize that women should no longer be restricted from leadership roles in the Church. After all, they would say, women are no longer willing to accept the submissive roles they have usually held. Perhaps, also, the next one should consider the times in which we live and be more accepting of gay rights and same sex marriage. In other words, they wanted another pope exactly like the one who has died except, different. Could it be that in spite of their touting a membership of 1.1 billion Catholics world wide, they seek to improve the statistical fact that only 3% of Catholics in Italy attend church services? Perhaps this has something to do with their desiring change. Does that sound familiar to you? Have we not all read of those who would like to drop the name "Church of Christ" from their signs to encourage a greater attendance? They realize that if they can modernize the Church structure and doctrine, they can appeal to a greater number. The massive, almost total, ignorance of the Bible and the structure intended for the Lord's church, has allowed this mind-set to exist. This seems to be true within the Catholic Church, apparently at the highest levels, the news media and the public at large. One major news anchor announced from the Vatican, in Rome, that Peter

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

BY RONNY F. WADE

Question: Is it scriptural to spend the Lord's money on cosmetic amenities when building or renovating a church building?

Answer: According to Hebrews 10:25 Christians are commanded to assemble for worship and praise. The church must have a place to assemble. It might be bought, borrowed or rented, but a place of some type is necessary. If brethren choose to build or renovate a building for their use in fulfilling the command to assemble I believe they are within their right. How much may they spend? Obviously the bible does not say. Thus the answer to the question must be found in sound judgment and the purpose for which the building is needed. A building is not an end, but a means to an end. It is used by the church in fulfilling an obligation. In today's world it seems as though some people think that the larger and more elaborate the building, the greater the dedication and spirituality of the church. Such is obviously not the case. The church exists to preach the gospel, edify itself in love and minister to the needs of its number who are deprived. (See 1 Timothy 3:14-15, Ephesians 4:11-16, Romans 15:25-26, and I Corinthians 16: 1 -3) Having and maintaining an overly extravagant meeting place is not a part of the work of the church. When a building becomes more important than the work God has given us, we have missed the mark. I have observed that some brethren seem to have no problem whatsoever deciding to carpet the building, pad the pews, or pave the parking lot, but argue for hours about whether to support a preacher or send a missionary to a foreign country. I am not saying that carpet on the floor is wrong, I am merely pointing out that sometimes our judgment is faulty. We seem more concerned about the status of the building than we do the status of the church. We all would agree that benevolence is a part of the work of the church. We are obligated to look after our needy members. However, God has placed restrictions on us with reference to "who" is a needy saint. Several years ago some brethren asked if I thought it would be wrong to help a brother who had lost his job by making the payment on his diamond ring that he was about to lose. Of course it would be wrong. The church does not exist to put diamond rings on people's fingers. Even in the case of a widow, the scriptures specify that she must be a "widow indeed." In order for this woman to become a charge of the church she must be desolate, or destitute, have no one in her family upon which to depend, be faithful in worship, she must have been godly in life and character, must be sixty years of age or above, have been benevolent and faithful in good works herself and have been the wife of one man. I Timothy 5:1-16 In view of this, it seems to me that to say we are without guidance in the way we spend the Lord's money is obviously wrong. Brethren who buy flowers, contribute

to human organizations, people who are not saints (unbelievers) or who recklessly and lavishly spend the Lord's money need to take notice. Judgment and reason must be exercised in the use of the treasury. The money is simply not ours to spend as we like or see fit. It belongs to the Lord and care must be taken when we spend it. I am aware that in some parts of our country it costs more to build, buy or maintain a building than it does in other areas. Nor am I blind to the fact that our buildings should be clean, neat and presentable. However we need to be cautious not to cross the line between what is needed to fulfill our duty and what becomes lavish, purely cosmetic, or something for show. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade 2254 E. Raynell Springfield, MO 65804 or rfwade@mchsi.com)

GOD WILL BRING THOSE WHO SLEEP IN JESUS 1ST THES. 4:13-18

BY IRVIN BARNES

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Some of the Christians in Thessalonica were troubled regarding the second coming of Jesus. Some of their loved ones had died. The Thessalonians understood that the faithful who were living on the earth when Jesus returned would surely be swept away with the Lord in the air at the Lord's coming. But what then was to become of the loved ones who had died, whose bodies had been committed to the ground? Paul refers to this number as the "dead in Christ" or those "which sleep in Jesus."

Paul sets aside their worries by telling them that God will bring these loved ones with Christ. Please notice that the writer does not say that Jesus will bring those who are asleep, with him. God the Father and not Jesus is going to do the bringing. Please notice also that nothing is said about where those who are asleep in Jesus are coming from. The text does not say they are coming from heaven.

1st Corinthians 6:14, affirms "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will raise up us by his own power." Paul is explaining to the folks Thessalonica, that those who are in the graves will not be left there, but at Christ's appearing, God will simultaneously with a demonstration of great power, bring those who are asleep in Jesus from the dead. In the above text of 1st Thes. 4, Paul goes on to say that the "dead in Christ shall rise first." "First" here

means before those who are alive at his coming depart, the dead will have first been raised, or that God will have already brought them by his power from the dead. He goes on to affirm that those who are alive and remain will be caught up "together" with loved ones who have been raised by the resurrection power of God, to meet the Lord in the air. The lesson is this: at the very moment that Christ descends, God in heaven at that same moment will raise the dead from their graves, thus "bringing them" with the Lord. Therefore, those who are alive at Christ's coming will not prevent, (precede), those who are in the graves, for God will bring them from the dead at the same moment that Jesus descends. 3218 E. Farm Road 88, Springfield, MO 65803, irvinbarns@aol.com

IT IS LEGAL, BUT IS IT RIGHT?

By TAYLOR A. JOYCE

A Christian is a citizen of two realms - the one in which Caesar is lord and the one in which Jesus is Lord. Jesus made this point when, in response to a question about the payment of taxes, he said, "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21).

The Christian's obligation to civil government extends beyond the payment of taxes, however. There is the further obligation to pray "for kings and for all that are in authority" (1 Tim. 2:1-2) and to "be subject unto the higher powers" (Rom. 13:1). Obedience to the law of the land is absolute except in cases where obedience to that law would result in disobedience to God (Acts 4:19, 5:29).

By the same token, a Christian may avail himself of the rights and protections afforded by the law of the land just as Paul did, appealing to Caesar (Acts 25:11) when it appeared that his citizenship rights were not being honored and protected by a lower court.

But one should never assume that just because Caesar says something is legal God says it is right. At the time the New Testament was being written *patriapotestas* was the law of the land. Under this law a father had the legal right to sell, enslave, or even execute his own children. Surely no first century Christian would have believed that because he had the legal right to kill his child he had the moral right to do so. There was a vast difference between what was legal and what was Christian - between what the law allowed and what God approved.

Even today we see that same dichotomy between the laws passed by the Congress of the United States and the perfect law of liberty as recorded in Scripture. The law of the land, as interpreted by our Supreme Court, says that a woman may terminate an unwanted pregnancy and abort her unborn child. Who among us would argue that because the court says abortion is legal it surely must be okay with God, as well?

It is obvious that a Christian must not only be

concerned with what the Statutes of the United States say but also with what the Bible says. And they are not always in agreement. One of many areas of concern for the Christian has to do with utilization of the bankruptcy laws. Although the Bible does not address this issue by name it is filled with general principles by which a Christian's decision to seek bankruptcy protection can be informed. These include the apostle Paul's reminder that "It is required of stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2). There is also the declaration of the psalmist: "The wicked borrows, and does not repay" (Psa. 37:21, NKJV). Paul's admonition, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another" (Rom. 13:8) cannot be ignored.

A Christian who is caught in a financial crisis not of his own making can scarcely be faulted for using the bankruptcy court to give him time to get his financial house back in order. The real concern arises when at the end of the procedure there is still unpaid debt that the court simply discharges. The creditor is now barred from making any effort to collect it, and the debtor is left to choose whether or not he will make any further effort to pay it.

A Christian's moral obligation to pay all his debts in full when he is able to do so still remains. Legal experts agree that the discharge entered by the bankruptcy judge does not destroy the debt but merely releases the debtor from liability. The legal obligation to pay the debt is removed, but the moral obligation is unaffected.

A person caught in this situation might learn from President Abraham Lincoln. While he was not a baptized believer (See Carl Johnson's The Back Page, OPA, May, 2004) he often demonstrated Christian principles more faithfully than some who are. Prior to becoming president, Lincoln and a partner named Berry opened a village store in Salem, Illinois. Within a few months the store "winked out," as Lincoln described it, leaving a sizeable debt. Berry showed no interest in repaying the debt, but when he died, Lincoln assumed both his and Berry's obligation. It was such a large sum that Lincoln often referred to it as the national debt. Lincoln made payments when he could and although it eventually took him 15 years to do it, he paid every cent of that indebtedness. It was this kind of integrity that earned him the nickname "Honest Abe."

A bankruptcy judge may discharge a debt as provided by the law of the land, but it would be as ludicrous to think he could absolve a financial obligation as to think that a Catholic priest can absolve sin. Any procedure which leaves debt unsatisfied, either by forgiveness of the creditor or through payment of the last cent owed, cannot be viewed as in compliance with the teaching of Scripture. Even in the midst of a financial catastrophe a Christian will surely want to do what he can to pay the debts he has incurred regardless of any action by a bankruptcy court or anyone else.

In his comments on Romans 13:8, William Barclay

observed, "Paul had to remind his people that Christianity is not an excuse for refusing our obligations to our fellow men; it is a reason for fulfilling them to the utmost." Alexander Campbell had this verse in mind when he said: "The payment of debts is, with every Christian, a point of highest honor, as well as eternal obligation. All the statutes, laws, and ordinances of all human tribunals under heaven, never can free a Christian man from any debt whatever which he owes to God or man."

Wayne Jackson, a preacher from our own generation, said, "Honesty is not merely the best policy for the Christian—it is the only policy." What more can anyone say but "Amen."

PAGES FROM THE PAST

The following article by J. Ervin Waters appeared in the May 1938 issue of Old Paths Advocate. It is the very first article by Brother Waters to appear in the paper. At the time it was published he was a young preacher twenty-two years of age. He was to become a prolific writer for the paper. His articles appeared every month for years. In addition to his writing and preaching, he became the leading debater among one cup, non class brethren. He currently resides in Temple, Texas.

THE YOUNG PEOPLE

By J. ERVIN WATERS

I notice that most of the articles now are written upon doctrinal differences, and that very little is written to help, encourage and strengthen the youth of today. And yet, the future of the church depends upon the young people, for the boys and girls of today will be the men and women of tomorrow.

There are many congregations dying for the lack of proper teaching. The church of Christ, is not composed of negatively-taught individuals. Christianity is not just merely standing out against that which is wrong. There are many positive, constructive things, to be taught and practiced. Many a congregation has been fed on negative doctrines for years without any constructive teaching, and yet they wonder why the young folks are not interested.

Paul said that Timothy had known the holy scriptures from a child (2 Tim. 3). He further says that Timothy's faith first dwelt in his grandmother and then in his mother (2 Tim. 1:5). No wonder, then, that he could say that he had no man like Timothy (Phil. 2:19). You will also remember that Samuel's mother gave him to the Lord and how faithful he was to the sacred trust. In Eccl. 12:1 the wise man says: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." It is a mistaken idea that every child must "sow his wild oats." Many a young person growing up under the influence of the Devil has become so hardened and beset in sin that the gospel which is the power of God to salvation does not appeal to him. I have had people in sin to say to me, "Just keep up the good work young fellow, that is fine;

if I had tried to be somebody when I was young I might have amounted to something, but such as that does not appeal to me now." Young friends, this is a sad picture, and my plea to you is that you obey the gospel and live a Christian life now, or you, too, may sometime say "I have no pleasure in them."

Paul instructed Timothy to "give attendance to reading." It may be that you do read papers, magazines, books and so on; but be sure that you give earnest attention to reading the Bible. You may say, "I have read the entire Bible through." Well, that is fine, but from a child Timothy had **known** the holy scriptures and yet Paul commanded him to read and study. Our memories are faulty, and we forget; and remember that you can not know **too much** about the Bible. The Bible is unlike any other book. We do not **finish** it by going through it a time or two.

Sometimes young people say that they do not intend to be a preacher or a teacher, and so, do not need to study the Bible. But God did not give the Bible to preachers only, but to all; and he expects us all to read it and learn for ourselves. Others seem to be ashamed to carry the Bible along the street where they will be seen with it, but remember that Jesus said, "Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me and my word in this sinful and adulterous generation; of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with His angels." Mk. 8:38. You do not have to put on a show of your religion, but where ever you are just let it be known that you are a Christian - at school, at play, at work or anywhere. Just always stand up for truth, honesty, virtue and the church. It is true that they will not ask you to drink with them, nor attend their wild parties, nor engage in their vulgarity, but that is because they have too much respect for you if you have proven to them that you are a Christian.

You cannot deceive your associates and there is no use to try. If you do and say things that are not becoming to a Christian, then when a parent or anyone tries to talk to a sinful boy or girl about becoming a Christian, they will point to **you** and say: "I am better than that would-be saint." May God help us to live better lives. And remember, "there is an all seeing Eye watching you."

HOW BEAUTIFUL HEAVEN MUST BE

By GREG GAY

There are a lot of beautiful things to see in this life. Who of us hasn't marveled at the sight of a sunrise, a sunset, a rainbow, a mountain, a forest, a desert, a valley, or an ocean? When we start making a list of things we enjoy seeing in this life indeed the list is endless. Everywhere we go in the world we can find beauty that is wonderful and amazing. Yet, as beautiful as things are in this life we are assured that heaven will be far more wonderful than anything here.

Jesus referred to heaven as his "Father's house" in this comforting passage: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's

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IS IT A SIN NOT TO VOTE?

BY BRETT HICKEY

While I am not politically involved, I confess that I am very interested in politics. The recent election was more gripping for me than any previous. There were aspects of both political platforms that I was less than enthusiastic about, but in the end I was confident that the Lord would do as He saw best (Romans 13:1).

A post-election article in the *Tennessean*, presented some eye-opening facts. "Exit polls also indicated that Bush won 69% of the vote of those who go to church more than once a week - 17% better than in 2000. Overall, Bush won 76% of the votes of those describing themselves as 'white evangelical/born again.'"

Professing Christians turned out in droves to support the candidate who expressed the strongest opposition to same-sex marriage and also offered hope that the 1973 *Rowe vs. Wade* abortion decision could be reversed with the replacement of potentially-retiring Supreme Court Justices.

As I pondered the ramifications of this election, I stumbled on to an intense radio sermon. I was taken aback to hear the preacher drive his point home: "It is a sin *not* to vote." This was news to me. I wondered how many others have expressed this and how many people actually believed it. Searching through my own mind, I was unable to locate any files from my own Bible study that would substantiate this idea. But I did access another file - David Lipscomb's *Civil Government*. This was one of several books Lynwood Smith gave me upon graduation from High School some twenty years ago.

David Lipscomb

David Lipscomb (1831-1917), editor of the *Gospel Advocate* for nearly fifty years, is one of the more high profile names in Nashville history, but his is also one of the more prominent 19th century names among preachers in the churches of Christ.

After enduring the ravages and unrest of the Civil War and reflecting on these events in light of the scripture, Lipscomb's views on the relationship between the Christian and government came into focus. Lipscomb concluded that the Christian should avoid government involvement and even suggested that Christians should abstain from voting.

As editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, Lipscomb wrote an article in 1868, saying that though the Christian must pay taxes, "in all the teachings of Christ and the Holy Spirit, not one word is given telling Christians how they should act as active participators or ruler of human government." In the same article, Lipscomb said, "no one ever saw a single individual improved morally by engaging in politics," because the system is based on principles contrary to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Late in life Lipscomb did not waver. In a 1912 *Gospel Advocate* article, he wrote, "Over fifty years ago

I studied the relation the Christian sustains to civil government. . . My conclusion was, and is, made stronger by every investigation, that Christians should take no active part in upholding civil government."

Civil Government by David Lipscomb

Lipscomb assembled his extensive writings in the *Gospel Advocate* in 1866-1867 on the scriptural basis for his position and published *Civil Government*. The enthusiasm over the recent election has moved me to begin reading this book once again.

The following excerpt, taken from the Preface of Lipscomb's *Civil Government*, details how the Civil War impacted his view on the Christian's relation to government.

"While I failed to see then as I now see, that religion embraced every duty and every relation of man and moulds every thought, purpose and action of his being, the feeling would creep into my mind that even in political affairs man should do only what God commanded him. Finally the years of sectional strife, war, bloodshed, destruction and desolation swept over our land, and the spectacle was presented, of disciples of the Prince of Peace, with murderous weapons seeking the lives of their fellowmen. Brethren for who Christ died, children of him who came to heal the broken-hearted, to be a father to the fatherless and a husband to the widow, were found imbruing (drenching-BH) their hands in the blood of their own brethren in Christ, making their sisters widows and their sisters' children orphans. It took but little thought to see that this course is abhorrent to the principles of the religion of the Savior, who died that even his enemies might live. He had plainly declared that his children could not fight with carnal weapons even for the establishment of his own Kingdom. Much less could they slay and destroy one another in the contentions and strivings of the kingdoms of this world. It took but little thought to see that Christians cannot fight, cannot slay one another or their fellowmen, at the behest of any earthly ruler, or to establish or maintain any human government. But if he cannot fight himself, can he vote to make another fight? What I lead or influence another to do, I do through that other. The man who votes to put another in a place or a position, is in honor, bound to maintain him in that position, and is responsible for all the actions, courses or results that logically and necessarily flow from the occupancy and maintenance of that position. A man who votes to bring about a war, or that votes for that which logically and necessarily brings about war is responsible for that war and for all the necessary and usual attendants and results of that war."

Lynwood Smith still owns the rights to Lipscomb's Civil Government. If you have never explored this subject, I recommend that you obtain a copy and consider the Biblical reasons that gave Lipscomb such strong convictions. - Brett Hickey, 208 Crosshaven Ct., Antioch, TN 37013, unityseeker@hotmail.com

LESSONS FROM ROME

continued from page two

was the first pope. The poor man did not have a clue that the first pope came hundreds of years after Peter, as did the Catholic Church as well. We recently heard of another misguided fellow who supposed the Catholic Church put the Bible together. There seems no end to the Biblical ignorance in the world today. This false doctrine can be foisted upon the people, who gullibly swallow it, because so few ever really study the Scriptures.

Change Agents Among Us?

Now, however, one has to look within our own brotherhood and realize that change agents are among us as well. Virtually every generation in the Lord's church has had to fight against change and those who are bent on achieving it even at the expense of unity. Many years ago, the church was divided over the instrumental music issue. Change agents borrowed the idea from the Catholics who had also suffered division when it was introduced by one of their popes. Later, when the denominations came into existence because of the Reformation, most of them first opposed it and then gradually accepted it. Today, they all allow it and scoff at those who oppose it. One would think it could be read on every page of the Bible. We have recently heard of some among us who frankly admit they see nothing wrong with using an instrument. As the old saying goes, "what goes around comes around." We had better be preaching the truth about this, brethren. Danger lies just ahead for those who remain at ease in Zion.

Still later, division came about over so many more issues. The Missionary Society, wherein an unscriptural organization was formed to preach the gospel. What was wrong with it? It is always wrong to form any organization to do the work the Lord intended the church to do. It is the mission of the church to preach the gospel, not some society organized by men. We must not supplant God's plan.

Unfortunately, the church has also suffered division over divorce and remarriage. That was tragic, indeed. However, others are now unwilling to be satisfied with what Jesus clearly allowed in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. They would go farther and allow dissolution of a marriage between believers for an unscriptural reason. Worse yet, there are brethren who are loath to speak up when questionable marriages are known to exist among them, preferring to simply ignore the matter. Brethren, it is time we learn from John the Baptist and declare, as he did to Herod, "It is not lawful for thee to have her." (Matthew 14:4) What is the cause of this? It has to be laid at the feet of those change agents who will do anything to avoid an unpleasant situation even if it means harm to the church the Lord died to purchase.

The church has also been divided over the individual cups. In spite of what the Bible says in Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, and I Corinthians 11, where one cup is plainly taught, men decided they could improve upon it by the use of individual cups. What happened? Change agents were at work, and though it took some time, eventually those

who cared too little for a Bible pattern accepted it.

We could go on and on, but more recently we heard uncertain sounds from a few who saw no harm in arranging an occasion wherein women might be allowed to teach Bible topics even to large crowds as long as it was not a church service.

Brethren, may God help us be very afraid of being involved in anything for which there is no Scriptural pattern. We need to be satisfied with what God has arranged. It is impossible to improve on His plan. Let us be reminded of what the prophet said in Isaiah 55:8,9: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." These words have rarely been more needed than right now. Think on these things. **DLK**

HOW BEAUTIFUL HEAVEN MUST BE

continued from page five

house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know" (John 14:1-4).

Imagine getting a letter from the President of our country saying I have a room for you in my house and I want you to come and live here. What an honor that would be! Yet, God's invitation is a far greater honor. It is for us to live with Him in heaven!

As we live in this life there are many times of happiness and great joy. When we have good health and happiness in all our relationships this life is great! We sometimes think, "It doesn't get any better than this!" And, we often want our lives to stay just the way they are. But, things change. Accidents, illnesses, and tragedies occur to us or those we love. We grow old. All of these things remind us the pleasures of this life do not last forever.

God promises eternal happiness in heaven. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev 21:4).

When we look in the Bible for a description of what heaven is like we see a description of beauty beyond compare. God tries to help us understand heaven's beauty by describing the street of gold, gates of pearl, and walls of different precious materials. But, I think God describing heaven to us is like us trying to describe the most beautiful things we have ever seen. We take pictures to capture the scenes but often we end up saying the picture just isn't the same as being there. The Bible's description of heaven must be the same way. No wonder the composer of the old song wrote: "How Beautiful Heaven Must Be!" 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747, papagreg@aol.com

Announcements

PREACHER'S STUDY/GOSPEL MEETING

WITH THE PADUCAH CHURCH OF CHRIST PADUCAH, KY

SPEAKERS: FLOYD HARRISS JR. OF BLOOMINGTON, IN

WALTER HUNTER OF HELTONVILLE, IN

GOSPEL MEETING: JUNE 3RD, 4TH AND 5HT.

TIMES: FRIDAY AND SATURDAY 7:30 P.M.,

SUNDAY 10:30 A.M. AND 4:00 P.M.

PREACHER'S STUDY: JUNE 4TH

TIMES: 11:00 A.M.-12:00 P.M., 1:30 P.M.-2:30 P.M.

GOSPEL MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE MEETING HOUSE IN PADUCAH.

PREACHERS STUDY WILL BE HELD IN MOUNDS, IL

CONTACT: MORGAN L. STRIPLING 270-441-7983

GENE ANDERSON 270-928-2175

IN TIMES LIKE THESE

"But know this, that in the last days
perilous times will come" (2 Tim. 3:1)

**MEMORIAL DAY MEETING 2005, OZARK MISSOURI
MAY 27 - 29 MEETING CONDUCTED BY KEVIN PRESLEY
DOTHAN ALABAMA**

The Ozark congregation invites you to attend our seventh Annual Memorial Day Weekend Meeting. We have asked Brother Kevin Presley to conduct the 2005 meeting. He has chosen a theme suggested by Timothy 3:1. As in past years, the Saturday evening service will feature five minute talks by any faithful brother who would like to speak. If you are a young man who would like to do so, please contact Isaac Bunner (see below). The topics for the meeting are as follows:

- In Times Like These We Need to Be Reminded. . .
- In Times Like These We Need Bold Preaching
- In Times Like These We Need Strong Leaders
- In Times Like These We Need Christian Homes
- In Times Like These We Need Revival
- In Times Like These We Need Assurance
- **Lord's Day Morning Keynote Sermon:** In Times Like These We Need to Be Separate • Kevin Presley

SERVICE TIMES: Friday Evening 7:30 p.m., Saturday Evening 6:00 p.m., Lord's Day a.m. 10:00 a.m., Lord's Day p.m. 6:00 p.m.

INFORMATION OR ACCOMMODATIONS

Smith Bibens - smithbibens@cebridge.net - 417.830.7077

Isaac Bunner - ibunner@cebridge.net - 417.619.8974

Wayne Towe - towe@classicnet.net - 417.724.0550

GOSPEL MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lord willing, in the near future we will begin a column wherein meeting announcements from the brotherhood will be published each month. Brother Rick Martin, of the Marietta, GA congregation will be editing it for us. It would be helpful if you would contact him with your meeting information so he can begin compiling the list. You may e-mail him at: mmartin@bellsouth.net. You

may also reach him at 770-516-5227 or by regular mail at 300 Clubview Terrace, Woodstock, GA 30189. If you will begin sending the information to him right away, we can begin this service for you soon. - DLK

FOURTH OF JULY MEETING 2005 IN LEBANON, MO

JUNE 27 THROUGH JULY 3RD

Conducted by: Mike Criswell and Wayne Fussel

This meeting is hosted by: Hayes Street Church of Christ

Service Times and Locations

Monday, June 27th @ 7:30 p.m. Church of Christ

Building • West Hayes St. and Springfield Rd.

June 28th ~ July 2nd 10:00 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Kenneth E. Cowan Civic Center

500 East Elm Street Lebanon, MO

Sunday, July 3rd

Area Congregations

Please check time for each location

July 3rd @ 7:30 p.m.

Kenneth E. Cowan Civic Center

500 East Elm Street Lebanon, MO

For More Information Please Contact:

Floyd Massey 417.532.6686

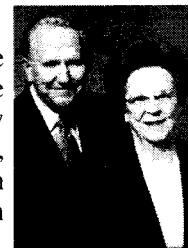
Bob Shotts 417.532.4490

Mark Holton 417.588.4339

Chuck Jordan 417.532.4435

50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Ronny and Alfreda Wade will celebrate their golden wedding anniversary on June 7, 2005 in Springfield, Missouri. They were united in marriage in Huntington, West Virginia by brother Lynwood Smith in 1955. They have worked with congregations in Arlington, Texas,



Lebanon and Springfield, Missouri. Ronny has been a preacher of the gospel for over fifty years, and currently holds gospel meetings all over the brotherhood. They have three children, a daughter, Kathy, who died in 1979; a son, Jeff Wade, of Coral Gables, FL; and a daughter, Karen Smith of Hallsville, MO who is married to Bill Smith, both of whom are members of the Columbia, MO congregation. They also have three grandchildren who are their pride and joy, Taylor, Haley and Hunter. I am so thankful to be able to call them my father and mother, and am blessed to have been raised in their Christian home. I can never thank them enough for instilling in me a love for God and His word, and for teaching me that a life lived in service to Him is what is truly important.

There will be a reception held in their honor in June 4, 2005 in Springfield at Drury College from 1:00 to 3:00 in the afternoon. All are welcome. They would enjoy receiving a card or letter from those who have known them or have special memories of them. Please send any correspondence to 2254 E. Raynell, Springfield, MO 65804

Our Departed

LITTLEJOHN 1907-2005 - George Washington "Wash" Adair Littlejohn was a long time member of the Lord's Church in Stilwell, OK. He had served as a dedicated, respected and valuable leader there for many years. Bro. Littlejohn will be sorely missed by church and all that knew him. His service was conducted by Brethren Joe Dan Morgan and Jim Walker.

Bro. Wash was born December 30, 1907 in Brushy near Sallisaw, Oklahoma to Charles Posey Littlejohn and Maggie Ann (Bateman) Littlejohn. He departed this life January 27, 2005 at his home in Stilwell, Oklahoma surrounded by his family at the age of 97 years and 28 days.

On May 31, 1933 he married Elizabeth M. Brown in a cornfield in Stilwell, Oklahoma and to this union five children were born. Their marriage vows formed a lasting bond that spanned 72 years. Wash and Elizabeth were inseparable and loved each other deeply. Wash worked as night supervisor for Stilwell Foods and retired after many years of service. He enjoyed gardening and was a member of Noel Chapel Church of Christ in Stilwell.

Preceding him in death were his parents, Charles and Maggie Littlejohn; two sons, Carl Stanley Littlejohn and Earl Ray Littlejohn; five brothers, Joe, Jeff, Felix, Tom and Jim Littlejohn; four sisters, Maudie (Littlejohn) Brown, Gertrude (Littlejohn) Reddin, Myrtle Littlejohn, Grace Littlejohn and two grandsons, Clifton "Snooks" Cain and Clayton Cain.

He leave to moun his wife Elizabeth of the home; one son J. Dewayne Littlejohn; two daughters, Lottie "Dot" Cain and Dovie Mae Littlejohn all of Stilwell; 13 grandchildren, 28 great grandchildren and 12 great-great grandchildren.

- Joe Dan Morgan

Field Reports

Douglas T. Hawkins, 409 Worthington Pl. Richmond, KY 40475, (606) 271-0529 douglast@alltel.net, April 4, 2005 — As the spring time comes on our travel schedule becomes more regular. We just closed a meeting in Tyler, TX and enjoyed the stay with them very much. I'm quite fond of Tyler as it is where I spent several weeks soon after graduating from college working and learning from Terry Baze and Glenn Ballard. That congregation and the one in Athens too would not be there if those men and the good brethren in TX didn't have the foresight to plant the seed in that city. My sincere appreciation is extended to all who have labored together to make it possible. I enjoyed being with Earl and Jean Roe. They were very loving and hospitable. It was good to be with and hear Bro. Joe Hisle at Hiltop, KY at the first of April. We look forward to a number of area meetings coming up soon. I'm planning to be in Chapel Grove, TN May 6-8 and Orange, CA June 5-12. if you are in the area and have opportunity to be with us please come. As always, we solicit your prayers and bid the faithful God's richest blessings.

Michael S. Conley, 836 Aster Ct., Richmond, KY 40475, (859) 623-0976, msconley0517@aol.com - The

work here in Lexington Ky. in going well. We have 26 in attendance each Sunday. Here recently we have had visitors to come in and be with us. As an effort to spread the gospel in this area I was allowed a space on a shelf in Ryan's Steak House to put information about the church. It was supposed to be for two weeks, but the lady in charge told me I could stay up until someone else asked for the spot. We have had this for 6 1/2 weeks. So far 1045 booklets and 265 cd's have been taken off the shelf. The lady in charge said that she and her husband have been reading the material and plan on coming to services. I have had several studies and phone calls through this work. It looks encouraging. I have just recently returned home from Brookhaven, Mississippi. I held the Hillcrest congregation a meeting. Those brethren know all about hospitality. We had a great meeting. Though Brother Lynwood Smith had been feeling ill, he came out several nights to support the meeting. I also had the privilege of going over and preaching at New Salem before we left town Sunday evening. I ask that you all keep praying for this work here and for my family and me. May the Lord bless you in His work.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, e-mail old_paths@juno.com, April 13- We were recently able to hear Frank Brancato preach a good sermon at Atwater, CA. Unfortunately, some others were in CA that we were unable to hear but it is always encouraging to hear good preaching. Presently, we are about midway through an enjoyable meeting with the church in Modesto, CA. My father helped establish that congregation when I was just a teenager and it is nice to go back from time to time. Crowds have been good and we have appreciated preaching brethren Alan Bonifay, Ron Jordan, Karl Modgling, and George Vergara being with us. George now lives in Modesto but was once a part of the Fremont congregation. Allow me to remind the preachers to send your reports and articles, please. Brethren enjoy hearing about you. Please, take a moment from time to time and write a brief report for the paper. Lord willing, our next meeting will be the Memorial Day meeting at Jacksonville, FL. We hope you see you there.

Michael D. Kidd, P. O. Box 32, Fayetteville, Ohio 45118, (513) 875-2845, kiddm@fp.k12.oh.us, March 17, 2005 - I'd like to take this opportunity to once again say thank you to those congregations who helped us with the purchase of our building last fall. God has blessed us with a nice place to meet, and we are very thankful. We have had several visitors and one baptism. Our new sister is very honest and sincere. Charlene's strong desire to please God shows, as she very humbly submits to the truths she learns in God's holy word. Please remember our new sister when you go to God in prayer. We began a new radio program the first Sunday of February. For those in our surrounding area, the program is on WKDI AM on the 1090 dial from 8:45-9:00 each Sunday morning. The program is called, "What Does The Bible Say?" Each Sunday we take a Bible subject and go to the Bible to see what it has to say about that subject. Michael Kidd is the speaker. We are currently in the process of installing a baptistery. We have a nice space in the front of the building. It is large enough to have steps at both ends of the baptistery. The work is coming along nicely, and

we hope to have the carpentry work completed before very long. Jearl Cromer is doing an excellent job with the carpentry work. If you are in our area, we would be very glad for you to stop by and worship with us. Please pray for the work here.

Allen Bailey, 112 Tuscany Court Irving, Texas 75062, (972) 281-8181, allenbailey@thechurch.com, April 1, 2005 - It has been a great joy to conduct meetings with several congregations over the past few weeks. We have been in Kansas City, KS where the congregation is blooming with zeal and interest. They have recently moved to a new and better location and purchased a building that will serve them well. Two baptisms quickly followed the meeting and to God we give the glory. The Elders are doing a great job leading this congregation. We were at Moore, Oklahoma where one of the members introduced the gospel to one of his close friends and he was baptized. What a privilege to preach the gospel that Jesus instructed us to take to the whole world, every nation and to every creature (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16). We look forward to upcoming meetings in Baton Rouge Louisiana; Placerville, California; Pleasant Hill, Missouri; the D'Arbonne congregation in Farmerville, Louisiana. In addition to the meetings, we have been working with the Twenty First Street congregation in Oklahoma City. This congregation has great leadership and truly has a love for the cause of Christ. I admire their eagerness to get the word out to anyone and everyone they possibly can. Several congregations are jointly supporting a television program with Ronny Wade that is generating a number of requests for copies of sermons and bible correspondence courses. While in Oklahoma, it has been a special treat to hear Raymond Fox, Bennie Cryer, and Jerry Dickinson in gospel meetings. The new congregation in Irving Texas known as the Church of Christ in Las Colinas is doing well. I am thankful for the hard work being done by the brethren and sisters locally. Many efforts are being put forth to advance the cause of Christ throughout the community. The support and encouragement from preachers and congregations in the Dallas Fort Worth area is appreciated. The Las Colinas brethren and sisters have enjoyed attending various congregations in the area for mid-week services. Thanks to those members and preachers who have visited the new congregation while in Dallas. We wish all of you safety on your travels. Our continued thoughts and prayers are for those who have had tragedies in their families, loss of loved ones, and serious illnesses that disrupt their lives. May the Lord bless and keep you and brighter days will be ahead. One day there will be a place where God will wipe away all tears from our eyes and there will be no more pain, sorrow, sickness nor death for the former things will have passed away (Revelation 21:4). (Note: This was received too late for April issue DLK)

Dear brethren, Greetings in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I am happy to give this INDIA work report - 2005. This report explains you how the church work in is growing by the Grace of God. This year - 2005 on February 16th American brethren Brian Burns (5th trip), Doug Krull (1st trip) and Tony Melton visited our country to preach and teach the word of God. We had 10 days busy meeting schedules from 17th to 27th of Feb. in different parts of our country. We had Gospel meetings,

Preacher's Bible studies and Individual Bible studies. In this trip by the Power of the Gospel 47 souls were added to the Lord's church in INDIA. This result is the co-laboring of American and Indian brethren in Lord's vineyard in INDIA. Our American brethren had given wonderful lessons about Salvation, Importance of the church and its mission, Giving, Sunday schools, Bible classes, Importance of the women in family and in the church, Kingdom of God etc., Some Important outlines of the work in INDIA in this trip: 1. Visiting preaching brethren from USA: Brian Burns, Doug Krull & Tony Melton. 2. Total days of Visiting: 10 days 3. Total different places visited: 15 4. Total Preacher's meetings: 3 5. Total Gospel meetings: 11 6. Total congregations visited: 13 7. Total Sunday worship services: 28. Visiting Districts: 6 9. Total area travelling (by Jeep & Train): Around 2500Km 10. Total Baptisms: 47 11. Others Reports: Some members were restored, Visited two new districts, Inaugurated two new church buildings and in some areas there is a need for preachers and in some areas preachers expressed their needs like monthly support, prayers sheds, bicycles, Bibles and song books ect., Please pray for the 47 new fruits and churches that were established in this trip and other churches that are growing and for the preacher's needs and congregation needs in your prayers. The following is the complete report about preachers and congregations in different parts of INDIA: 1. Total Preachers working: 15 - S.Lazarus, P.Rajasekhar, G. Balasunderarao, Solomon, B. Lukebabu, G. Aseervadam, Rajaratnam, Immanuel, Vandanam, T. Sureshpaul, I. Yessaiah, Pullarao, Prabhakar, D. Ravikur 2. Other Interested Preachers: 9 - Moses. K. Anand, Anandraj, U. Daniel, Sunil, Durgarao, Matthew, Nageswararao & Isaacmagi. 3. Total congregations working (in Villages, Towns & Cities): Around 27 - Suryanagar colony, Begumpet, Lalbazar, Cherlapalli, Nadigadda (Lakeside), Krothaluru, Uppalapadu VNK, Uppalapadu NRT, Pathamaguluru, Kadium, Nagulapet, Madiki, Vip. 4. Total Districts working: 8 - Secbad/Hyderabad, RR Dist, Guntur Dist. Prakasam Dist. Kurnool Dist, E.G. Dist, W.G. Dist & Gajapati Dist. 5. Total states working: 2 - ANDHRA PRADESH & ORISSA. Once again we are thankful to God for His blessing in INDIA for multiplying His family by the hardwork of our preaching brethren in USA & INDIA. I am thankful to our brethren Brian Burns, Doug Drull and Tony Melton for their fellowship and live for the Truth. I am also thankful to the church at Goshen for sending Brother Brian Burns 5th time to INDIA. We are also thankful to the other churches of Christ in USA for their help, prayers and encouragement for the work in INDIA. Please pray and encourage! Your brother, Saganty Lazarus

Miles King, 8586 Wilderness TR., Scotland, AR 72141, mtking@cei.net - Johnette and I wish to say "Thank You" to the Old Paths Advocate and our daughter, Jeannie for reporting our 50th Wedding Anniversary. We "cherish" and appreciate all the cards, letters and email that has come our way. Our home congregation at Scotland has enjoyed the preaching of Bro. Aubrey Ballard - a week-end meeting April 1-3. Aubrey is young and he sure knew his lessons and we believe did much good. We were so glad to have visitors from the surrounding area and also those who attended from Texas, Oklahoma and

Louisiana. We were so happy to have Bro. Daniel Smith and wife from Huntsville, AR attend this meeting. Our next meeting at Scotland is with Bro. Cecil Smith of Mitchell, IN - the dates are June 8-12.

Bennie T. Cryer, 4635 Larkin Rd., Live Oak, CA 95953 - In January I had the pleasure of traveling again with Bro. Don King to the Philippines. I think this was one of the most enjoyable trips to that work area that I have shared with him. Bro. Virgilio Danao was there to guide us and translate for us most of the time. His brother, Eduardo Danao and Bro. Libertino traveled with us as we visited congregation after congregation. The Filipino preachers have really been working. Several came from the northern part of the island of Mindinao and studied and worshipped with us while we were in Manila. It was a pleasure to meet some of the new preachers from that area. We traveled from Manila all around Luzon. What a joy it was to see brethren standing fast in the faith. God is surely working through the preachers and congregations. We also saw evidence of the Devil being present and rearing his ugly, divisive head by one of the no-exception workers. I want to thank the congregations that helped send me on this trip such as Olivehurst, Stockton, Lodi and Fremont. Before we left for the Philippines I had the pleasure of attending and participating in the Oklahoma City study hosted by the NW 21 St. congregation. It was my pleasure to stay with Cliff and Pat Arney in their home once more. I was able to attend and participate in the New Year's meeting in Lodi, CA one night before leaving for the Philippines the next day. I also enjoyed the winter study in Placerville taught by Bro. Alan Bonifay each Saturday evening from January through February. He presented excellent studies on a part of the book of Romans. March 6-13 I had the pleasure of conducting a meeting with the Edmond, OK congregation. We had good crowds with several preachers in attendance. What a pleasure it was to work with Bro. Edwin Morris again and to stay in the home of Dale and Susan Ayers. The work is going well here in Olivehurst. It is my honor to be able to continue to work with them. May God bless all of you.

Don Pruitt, 1111 Garst, Cabool, MO 65689, donpruit@mehsi.com, April 8, 2005 - Looking back over last year reminds me of a very pleasant and profitable time of labor. In Feb. we studied with and baptized a young woman in the congregation at Houston, MO. In March, I went back to Mozambique to conduct studies with preachers and leaders in some of those churches. I always enjoy working with Bill Davis and Jim Franklin, as well as our very capable translators. The work resulted in a number of baptisms and confessions. I became ill while there, spent a little time in the hospital, and was an additional burden for those good brethren to bear. Upon returning home, it took a number of months for me to get back "on my feet", but I am fine now. I am looking forward to returning to Mozambique this fall. My meetings last year were in Neosho, MO, Earlytown, AL, Council Hill, OK, San Angelo, TX, Healdton, OK, New Salisbury, IN, Covina, CA, and Davis, OK. These meetings resulted in another baptism, 2 confessions, and 1 restoration. We certainly enjoyed being with these congregations in addition to seeing and working with a number of preachers who attended and encouraged these meetings. While at the meeting in Healdton, a wonderful event happened

that I would like to report. Over 20 years ago I met a man in Duncan, OK during a meeting that was to become a very dear friend. Skeet Chapman attended the meeting with his faithful wife Myrna. He welcomed me to his place of business to visit with him, and I talked to him about his soul. He was not willing to obey the Gospel at that time, but he told me that when he was ready, he would look me up. We have all heard that line! But when I came to Healdton to begin that meeting on Sunday morning, Skeet and Myrna were there and he told me he was ready to talk about obeying the Gospel. And he did on Tuesday night. Maybe sometimes "Felix" does get a "more convenient season". The work in southern Missouri with the Fieldstone congregation continues to go well. Last year we lost some very special people to death, but others began to "live again". Five were baptized into Christ and two were restored after being away from the fold for several years. Evangelists Taylor Joyce, Ron Alexander and Dennis Smith helped this church with their Gospel meetings. Dianne and I are most happy to be associated with the church at Fieldstone. They, and the church in Montreal, MO, make our work in the area and in Africa possible. We just returned from a wonderful meeting in Birmingham, AL. It was their annual "Spring Meeting" and a number of brethren from other congregations assisted in making the crowds large and spiritual. We enjoyed being with Richard Nichols and his family, as well as a number of other preachers who attended. There were 9 confessions of fault and 2 were restored after worshipping with the digressives for several years. Our remaining meetings this year are Huntington, W. VA, April 10-17; Montreal, MO, May 13-15; Davis, OK, June 1-5; Red Oak, TX, July 10-17; Marion, Iowa, Oct. 9-16; Capital Hill, Okla. City, Oct. 28-30 (Homecoming Meeting); and Lodi, CA, Nov. 6-13. We hope to be able to see many of you during these times. May God richly bless the brotherhood!

Jonathan Bunner, Ecuador, April 6, 2005 - The Lord continues to bless the work in Portoviejo. There were no baptisms in March, nevertheless, the church is growing spiritually. The men are learning to lead songs and to lead prayers. Once a week we get together to practice singing and practice praying. In the worship services Jaime Quiroz Junior and I lead all the singing. Jaime Quiroz Sr. has the desire to lead singing also, but say he does not know a song well enough to lead it. I gave him a CD with some of the songs that he may become more familiar with them. Brother Victor led the prayer once in a worship service. Victor does a good job, but gets nervous. I told him that the more he prays the more confidence he will have in himself. We have been getting together more with the young people of the congregation. Three of their friends have attended Sunday worship twice. A couple of weeks ago Victor and his family accompanied me to Quito and Ambato. We arrived in Quito on Tuesday afternoon. On Wednesday we visited Victor Manuel and Kelvin in prison. They were happy to see us. I was able to study once again with some of Victor's and Kelvin's friends. On Thursday we left for Ambato. This was the first time that Victor's family had gone to Ambato. Later, I took Victor's family around the city of Ambato to sight see. Brother Villacis and I used to have a Bible study with Rocio and her family. She was happy to see us and glad that I brought some of the brethren from Portoviejo to Ambato.

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THE BACK PAGE...

ANTHONY FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST?

By CARL M. JOHNSON

I was not too surprised a couple of months ago when the news broke that Anthony Flew, one of the world's leading atheists for more than a half-century, changed his mind about God and has become a believer of sorts.

Flew is an 81 year-old British philosophy professor. Though his father was a famous Methodist preacher, Flew became an atheist at age 15. As a student at Oxford, Flew won the prestigious John Locke Prize in Mental Philosophy. He has written 26 books and many of them are classics. A 1949 lecture given at C. S. Lewis' Oxford Socratic Club became one of the most widely published essays in philosophy. **The Times Literary Supplement** said Flew instigated a change in both the theological and philosophical worlds.

Flew taught at Oxford, Aberdeen, Keele, Reading, and has lectured in North America, Australia, Africa, South America, and Asia. **The Times** of London referred to him as "one of the most renowned atheists of the past half-century, whose papers and lectures have formed the bedrock of unbelief for many adherents."

In spite of his impressive credentials, Flew does not seem to fit the prototype of a crusading atheist. He exhibits none of the arrogance or combativeness of a Madalyn Murray O'Hair, and in a debate about the existence of God in Denton, Texas, in September of 1976, he seemed unsure of his own atheistic beliefs. The debate was with Dr. Thomas Warren, Ph.D. in philosophy from Vanderbilt University and professor of Harding Graduate School of Religion. People flocked in from all over the continent to hear these two heavyweights go at each other. The debate, however, turned out to be a mismatch. Flew failed to uphold the atheistic view and at times he even refused to espouse it, even though he had signed a proposition saying, "I, A.G.N. Flew, know that God does not exist."

When he was in the affirmative, Flew seemed oblivious to his responsibility to make arguments supporting his position, even though it had been explained to him. When he was in the negative, Flew did not respond to Dr. Warren's arguments. His whole defense consisted of a litany of "interesting questions" and "curiosities." Flew's constituency became so frustrated with his performance each evening that they tried to arrange for another debate to take place during the daytime with one of Flew's associates defending the atheistic position.

In a review of the debate Robert Camp writes, "Throughout the whole debate Dr. Flew maintained a very good nature and disposition which seemed compatible only with the acceptance of full surrender of his position. Flew's acquiescence was rather like that of a chess master who concedes the match after only a few moves. He does not concede because he is incompetent or a coward, but because being a chess master and envisioning the whole game he realizes he has hopelessly lost and does not choose to give agonizing testimony to the fact by continuing."

The debate was published and you can read it and draw your own conclusions, but the general consensus is that Flew did not live up to expectations. One man observed that Flew reminded him of the old saying, "I'm not the man I used to be, and I never was." He concluded that Flew was not the man he used to be, with the only question being if he ever was.

Flew's atheist friends were displeased with his performance during that debate, but they are even more displeased with his latest announcement that scientific discoveries in DNA necessarily imply a Creator. In an effort to minimize the importance of his admission they are quick to point out that while he believes in some kind of Creator, he does not believe in the God of the Bible, Jesus—as God's Son, or an afterlife. Flew explains he is best labeled a "deist" like Thomas Jefferson, who did not believe God was actively involved in people's lives.

To his credit Flew does not seem to be bothered that his friends are upset with him. His response is, "Well that's too bad. My whole life has been guided by the principle of Plato's Socrates: 'Follow the evidence, wherever it leads.'"

Flew's name and his philosophical odyssey remind me of the Mother Goose nursery rhyme: "Three geese in a flock / One flew east / And one flew west / And one flew over the cuckoo's nest." In 1962, author Ken Kesey appropriated that last line as the title for a book about a man trying to escape from a hospital for the criminally insane (cuckoo's nest). The last three lines can be appropriated to explain Flew's own flight from the insanity of atheism. His efforts to "follow the evidence" have led him to many points "east" and "west." But until he arrives at a belief in the God of the Bible and is constrained by faith to obey the gospel of Christ, Flew has yet to escape completely the cuckoo's nest (Ps. 53:1). carlmj@cableone.net

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. 6

"RECOGNIZING FALSE DOCTRINE"

By RICK MARTIN

Some people do not like to use the term doctrine for fear of being called legalistic. Sound doctrine or teaching is extremely important and is necessary for healthy Christians. What one believes determines behavior. People who believe in right biblical principles will enjoy the blessings that obedience to truth brings.

Doctrine is nothing more than sound teaching. It is a body of beliefs to which we ascribe. When beliefs are based on false teaching, people are lead astray and behavior will not conform to God's way or character.

Much of the New Testament was written to counteract false doctrine. Colossians, 1 John, and other epistles were written to warn about the dangers of false doctrine. Paul's two letters to Timothy contained instructions regarding the spread of false doctrine. **1 Timothy 4:1** "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;" **2 Timothy 4:3** "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:"

Unfortunately over the years the church has undergone a change regarding the necessity of sound doctrine. members of the church used to know their Bible. People used to demand the truth be preached no matter who wanted to hear it. Today many are afraid that someone may be run off or offended if the truth is preached in the way it needs to be. There are many who have so little knowledge that they cannot recognize false doctrine. We must demand that sound doctrine be preached. In the absence of sound doctrine, false doctrine will creep in.

In **Titus 2:1** we are told "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:" We are commanded to speak sound doctrine, and this would lead us to believe that there is a danger of speaking that which is not sound. That which is not sound is to be avoided. **Romans 16:17 through Romans 16:18** "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." Those who spread

false doctrine usually have a spiritual problem. They resent and resist all authority including God's. Pride is a major problem, and they seek the recognition of man, seeking to please their listeners instead of pleasing God. It is imperative that we separate ourselves from the false teacher. We cannot live under their deceptive teaching and remain true to God's word. We cannot fellowship those who do not uphold sound doctrine.

False doctrine is deceptive; it holds a grain of truth but it cannot deliver what it promises. There is an appearance of truth on the surface, but when examined closely the error will be revealed. False doctrine often emphasizes personal experience. Feelings run high and it is emotional. The Bible says nothing about relying on feelings. We all have feelings, but it is the unchanging truth and fact of God's Word that is to be our anchor and guide.

We must have sound doctrine in order to please God. It is important to study the Bible. The more familiar we are with the whole counsel of God, the easier it will be for us to recognize false doctrine. When we study and are taught sound doctrine, we can refute error when it is presented. Beware of those preaching and teaching things that sound like they are from denominations. Examine these things before you accept them, because it is quite possible they are false doctrine. **Matthew 7:15** "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." We must rely on the truth of the scriptures and examine all doctrine by the standard of the truth, which is God's Word. When we do this we will be able to recognize false doctrine.

- Rick Martin, 300 Clubview Terrace, Woodstock, GA 30189, mmartin@bellsouth.net


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Editorial

WORDS FROM OUT OF THE PAST

By DON L. KING

For a long time, I have enjoyed reading from the pens of Restoration preachers. Of course, one must keep in mind while reading, that they were in the process of learning and searching for truth on many things, as we should be doing also. Often, they wrote things with which we might disagree today. However, their brilliant minds are thrilling to follow. Barton W. Stone was born on December 24, 1772 and died November 9, 1844. He edited a paper called "The Christian Messenger," from 1826 until 1844, which I have in bound volumes and enjoy reading from time to time. About 1830 he wrote a piece addressed "To the Church Scattered throughout America." It was published in "Pioneer Sermons and Addresses," by F. L. Rowe. We will quote only a portion of the address just here.

"My dear brethren, we have advanced and become a great people. Now is the time of danger, now there is need of humility, watchfulness and prayer. We begin to be respected as a people, and begin already to vie with others in numbers. A Joab is sent by the higher powers through the length and breadth of the land to number Israel. O that the fate of Israel of old may not be ours! If it proceeds from pride, and if God has regard for us, we may expect a diminution in our ranks. Instead of thanksgiving and praise to God, because He has so wonderfully prospered our labors in uniting so many thousands, it is to be feared that pride may yet succeed, and spoil all our works. Israel were often seduced from the true worship of God to the idolatry and communion of the nations among which they dwelt, and this always took place in the days of their prosperity. So we may be so captivated by the doctrines, forms, popularity and respectability of the sects around us that we may try to accommodate the truth of God to their prejudices, in order to gain their favor, and eventually to enlist them on our side, and join in our mighty union. Such union is no better, if as good, as that of the Romanists, who are exceedingly zealous for union. A union of ten pious, uncompromising persons in the truth, is better than ten thousand of the contrary character. Truth must never be sacrificed for the union on numbers. Truth preached and lived in the spirit will cut its way through all opposition.

But what is truth? The Bible, and the Bible alone- not opinions which men have formed of the Bible, whether comprised in a confession of faith, or in a Christian System, or in thirty-nine articles, or in a discipline. Our union first commenced on this ground, and sectarianism first received its deadly wound from this weapon, and by no other will it die the death, if its death is to be effected by moral means. If we begin to magnify our opinions, and make them tests of fellowship, we depart from the foundation laid in Zion, and shall be under the necessity of becoming a sect by forming a book of opinions as our creed, and demanding a subscription to it as the basis of union. This must be a

continued on page seven

THE QUERIST COLUMN

BY RONNY F. WADE

Question: Would you please explain Hebrews 13:2 and 1 Timothy 5:10. Who are the strangers in these verses?

Answer: The passages in question read "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels." Hospitality is a duty of all Christians. It is doubtless an extension of the brotherly love commanded by the Lord and His apostles. Thompson in the Living Word Commentary says that the "strangers the author has in mind are traveling Christians previously unknown to local Christians," and I believe he is correct. The inns (hotels) of that day were likely to be centers of immoral practices, making hospitality more than just an economic help. In the Timothy passage the reference is to a widow, worthy of the support of the church. She may be supported if she has been "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 believed the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work." Here, as in the Hebrews passage, hospitality to Christians in need of a place to stay, even though she had not previously met them, is enjoined as an act of love. The phrase "some have entertained angels unawares" is a probable reference to Abraham's experience when he entertained "three men" by the oaks of Mamre (Gen. 18:1). The author may also have had in mind later examples of hospitality such as Gideon Judges 6:11 and Manoah Judges 13:3. As one writer remarked "many families, acting as host to godly persons, have received, through their influence, a blessing worth far more than the cost of entertainment." Hospitality is a virtue fast fading in some places. Christians seldom entertain other Christians. As a result the bonds of love that are to bind us together as God's people grow weaker. The scriptures teach that we are to love one another, and what better way to demonstrate that love than showing hospitality to one another.

Question: Please explain the significance of the statement in Mt. 25:36 "I was in prison and you came unto me?"

Answer: All the things mentioned by our Lord can and have happened to many Christians. There are today those who need clothing, food, encouragement, and yes even some in prison who need our help. Down through the centuries the people of God have been imprisoned for their faith. Some have been falsely charged. No doubt the writer of Hebrews referenced that in 10:33-34 "partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven," and also in Hebrews 13:3 "Remember the prisoners as if chained with them, those

who are mistreated since you yourselves are in the body also." Today should those of the faith be imprisoned, as has been the case in ages past, our duty is to visit, help, succor, and minister to them. We are abundantly blessed today. Our government allows us the freedom to preach and live the religion of Christ without fear of imprisonment. We should thank God daily for such blessings. There are those in prisons today who might be receptive to the gospel. We should seize every opportunity to teach them the truth, or minister to them in anyway that might open a door of opportunity to lead them to salvation and a changed life. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade at 2254 E. Raynell, Springfield, MO 65804 or rfwade@mchsi.com)

CAN OUR CONGREGATION BE MORE FRIENDLY?

BY BRETT HICKEY

Those who have been able to visit congregations across the country or even across the waters can often sense the difference only moments after entering the building. Some congregations can exude a warmth and friendliness that makes a visitor feel welcome while others, though no doubt unintended, convey the feeling that they care little whether a visitor is present or not.

Repeated exhortations to exhibit "brotherly love" and "brotherly kindness" (Rom. 12:10; 1 Pet. 1:22; 2 Pet. 1:7) demand that we treat each other with special affection. Although Jesus did not offer the intimacy of friendship unless men obeyed Him (Jn. 15:13), He reached out with kindness and compassion to those living in sin (Lk. 7:36-50; Jn. 8:1-11). This so defined His ministry that Jesus was derogatively called the "friend of publicans and sinners."

We should "do good unto all men" because of who we are and who we represent, but when we consistently reflect the character of Christ we also promote church growth. Many first generation converts attest to the great impact a friendly congregation had on them.

Flavil Yeakley, Jr., a church of Christ preacher and Sociology Professor at the University of Tulsa documents the correlation between friendliness, friendship and keeping converts in his book *Why Churches Grow*.

Since we realize what a positive influence a friendly congregation can have, how can we be even more receptive to our visitors? Several members at Nashville responded to my request for examples of friendliness and unfriendliness they have experienced in congregations they have visited. The following represent their suggestions.

Ways To Contribute To A More Friendly Church

1. Arrive before visitors do to make them feel welcome.
2. Talk to visitors and each other before AND after the service.
3. Greet warmly; generate more of a conversation than just, "it's nice to meet you," with the sincere intent of learning more about them.
4. Take a genuine interest in their children.
5. Walk a visitor in and help them find a seat or invite them to sit with you.
6. Publicly welcome (after asking their permission) visitors by name.
7. Choose enthusiastic songs that visitors can participate in.
8. Ask,

"Is there anything we can do for you (right now)?" 9. Invite visitors to lunch or out for a snack after services. 10. After getting acquainted with them, introduce them to another member.

Ways Not To Contribute To A More Friendly Church

1. Don't be helpful when a visitor calls and asks for directions or transportation to services. 2. Do not keep the building orderly and the yard manicured. Make the sign difficult to see. 3. Have as few people as possible arrive early to meet and greet. 4. Shake hands, say "hello," and nothing more. 5. Don't make a serious attempt to get to know visitors. 6. Try to correct or convert them before establishing rapport (shoot first, ask questions later). 7. Tell visitors "You can't sit there! That's MY seat!" 8. Stare at visitors and DON'T smile! 9. Don't ask visitors where they are from or why they are visiting. 10. Rush off immediately after services without greeting each other or any visitors. Act like you don't care about either.

- Brett Hickey, 208 Crosshaven Ct., Antioch, TN 37013, unityseeker@hotmail.com

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

By STANLEY R. OWENS

A weapon of mass destruction is an instrument used in an attack that will totally and completely destroy someone or something. We have heard this term quite often over the last few years, especially when officials in our country have described the technology of other countries. But we need to understand that even in the Church, there are also weapons of this type and the masses are being led to destruction. When Paul met with the elders from Ephesus at Miletus he said to them in (Acts 20:29) "*For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.*" When we understand some of the killing techniques of wolves, this verse should take on a new meaning to us. A wolf will kill more that it will eat. This is especially true in parts of the country that raise sheep. Wolves kill and eat many types of animals, but sheep are the only animals that they slaughter in apparent compulsion. This is contrary to the nature of predator and prey. Out of all the animals in the animal kingdom, the Church is inspired to be like sheep. Having the gift of knowledge, Paul was able to look down the stream of time and realize that there would come in those that would tear and rend the flock. For this reason, he was making them aware of one of the most dangerous weapons that they were going to have to stand strong against. He continues in the next verse "*Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*" How sobering it is to know that there are those among us that are leading us into the very depths of hell and we are allowing it to happen right under our noses.

Ever since my youth, I can recall members of the Church saying that we must speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent. And now there are "grievous wolves" among us that are "howling" about a so-called objection to the law of silence and we want to peacefully and unshamedly hand over to them what they

have not been able to wrestle from us in former times with the Scriptures. These weapons of destruction must be brought to ruin. Like the Athenians and the strangers among them (Acts 17:21), those of this mind want to tell or hear "some new thing". No longer are they satisfied with following only what the Scriptures teach, they are to the point that human reasoning is being substituted for the Divine. How many more members of the flock can we allow to be led to the slaughter before we take a stand against it? Do we think this weapon is not destructive enough for our attention? Apparently, this is exactly what the Church at Ephesus also thought. The Scripture reveals that years later, false teaching had become a major problem. Paul urged Timothy in (1 Tim. 1:3-4) to slow the flow of erroneous doctrines that were being taught there. Jesus told this Church in (Rev. 2:4-5) "*Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works: or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*" These people no longer had a deep love for the doctrines of the faith, and Christ was going to judge them harshly if they would not repent.

How can we think that we are above the same judgement? Those who claim that we can do ANYTHING that we want to as long as the Bible doesn't specifically forbid it, is a false claim and it must come to an end immediately. When there are those among us that write articles and preach sermons and learned members of the Church cannot differentiate between what they say and the claims of certain denominations, we have left our first love and the flock is not being spared. Entire congregations are being overwhelmed and butchered with this type of doctrine. Why are so many afraid to publicly denounce these workers of deception? We can not and must not sit idly by while our brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ are being devoured in mass by wolves that are among us. May God give us the courage to stand against those bringing havoc upon the congregations of the Lord. May this weapon of mass destruction be disarmed so that the flock of God might grow and prosper in the Truth of Jesus Christ and not in the doctrines of men. - 8432 Cox Rd., West Chester, OH 45069

THE DEAREST FRIEND I EVER HAD

By DUANE PERMENTER

Friends are a real need in each of our lives as we journey through this world. Many do not use wisdom in choosing friends. The heir of David's throne once said in Proverbs 12:26, "The righteous should choose his friends carefully. . ." Most of us have advised our children to wisely choose their friends. What a delight it is when they choose them well!

Some have the blessing of finding a friend indeed. However, not everyone who passes through finds this kind of friend. Let me introduce you to this dearest Friend of mine. His name is Jesus Christ of Nazareth. We read in

continued on page six

WHO'S TENDING THE FLOCK?

By C. A. SMITH

Back in my younger days, there were but a few congregations that even considered it to be important to have elders and deacons, neither were they overly concerned about not having them, and there were others who saw no need whatsoever for them. Therefore, they made no plans, nor worked toward teaching and implementing any form of church government despite the fact that God, in His infinite wisdom, provided instructions that such should be, and gave minute instructions as to what kind of men should be considered for these offices and the manner in they were to lead when chosen and appointed by each congregation. One of the dangers back then and now was that often times one man was considered the leader, regardless of whether he was qualified to do so or not, resulting in all power in regard to decisions and practices vested in one man, which is ever so dangerous and many times fatal insomuch as the Lord's will for the church is concerned. Now, I understand that sometimes this was practiced due to the fact that only one man was willing to lead, due to there being none others who would "take the reins", and do what they could, until things were set in order. Well, this worked well in some places, where godly men were doing all they could to get the church started in the right direction, and teaching that such was not the will of God, but in due time they needed to abide by the teaching of the Word of God, insomuch as church government was concerned. But in most places, it proved to create problems that thwarted their efforts to be what the church should be in any given locale.

Of course, when we read our Bibles, we readily see that God's people have ever needed leaders. Back in the Old Testament, for example, we find that Moses the great leader of Israel, realized that his leadership was coming to a close, asked God to provide another shepherd for the Israelites (Numbers 27:15-23). Why was he so interested in choosing one to take his place? Simply because of the fact that he was afraid that the children of Israel would become as "sheep without a shepherd." The Lord told him to choose Joshua. Joshua made a great leader also, save for the fact, that when it came time for him to pass the mantle, he did not ask God to name his replacement, and the result was, each Israelite "did that which was right in his own eyes."

You remember too when God provided Judges to save the people from rebellion, how they followed for awhile, and things worked well, but also, they soon returned to their old sinful ways. Later, due to their insistence, a king was provided for the people, which seemed to be the answer to all of their problems, and things went well. Trouble was, that all succeeding kings did not follow God, and this eventually led to the captivity of God's people.

Now the Bible tells us, "the things written aforetime were written for our admonition and learning." What do we learn from these examples? We learn, that God's people

need leaders who follow and obey God, and are zealous toward leading others to God's ways. When we come to the New Testament we find that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is to be the final authority in matters pertaining to the church, but we find Him also delegating authority to others, according to their several abilities. This He did not do for any and everybody, but only those in whom He saw a willingness, able, and wanted to serve rather than be served. So, we see that the church today, needs leaders who follow God and are zealous toward leading others to God. The church then, as I referred to it back years ago, was not all the Lord wanted her to be, simply because under the leadership of some, was not doing what the Lord commanded them to do!

A few years later, some of our brethren began to cry out and declare, "Brethren, we need elders, deacons, evangelist's etc. When they did this, they stressed that men must themselves "desire" to be such, they must also meet the "qualifications" set forth in the Scriptures, able to "oversee" the flock, "guard" the flock, "teach" the flock, etc., and to lead in such a way that would challenge every Christian under their oversight in the way that God has appointed. These pleas did not go unheeded altogether, for we began to see things "set in order", here and there, which was certainly a step in the right direction, considering the fact that Paul instructed Timothy and Titus to "ordain elders in every city", (every church) (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Men who desired to be elders were selected, if they met the qualifications, and after following the due order, these men began to set an example of godly living, stood for truth and against error, and provided spiritual food for the congregations. They also watched for the souls of the congregation and while doing these things, they understood that their role was one of servitude, which caused the congregation to stand behind them and beside them as they worked together with God, proving that following the divine order makes for a mature, happy, and productive congregation.

But, as was the case with the Judges and with the Kings, some brethren decided that we were dragging our feet, that following the due order, to the letter was not necessary, so, they begin to implement changes that would enable more churches to have an eldership, and this would be accomplished by "lowering the standards" and almost any man who wanted to be an elder, could be one. There are those, much to our shame, preachers who will ordain anyone who wants to be an elder. Thus, unqualified men were selected to lead congregations, but the sad fact of the matter is, that they led them away from God's will, instead of leading them "in God's will". Generally these were men who were proud, conceited, lived preeminence and coveted power, loved to "lord over" the flock as if they were kings and the members were peasants, despite the fact that Peter warned of this, by saying, "Neither as being Lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:3). Such men are a hindrance to the mission and growth of the church. When they "get in", the result is trouble, trouble, trouble. They create problems, cause squabbles,

and in many cases splits follow. Their desire is to actually "take over the church" and if allowed, will lead her into spiritual adultery. Those who understand the need to follow the Scriptures in matters pertaining to church government, know that such will happen when you introduce unbiblical ideas, such as, toning down the qualifications here and there and making it possible for men who are absolutely unqualified to be qualified (in their sight), and allow the wolves to enter in among the flock.

Almost weekly, there comes across my desk, via letter, newsletter, sometimes by word of mouth, telephone calls and etc. of some church having been deceived and led astray by leaders who seek their own purpose and do what they want to do, rather than walk in the ways of God. Such ought not to be! We need to fervently pray that God will lead us to choose men who meet the qualifications and men whose interests lie in wanting to do everything to the up-building of the cause of Jesus Christ, under their guidance. There are goals to attain, heights that we have not reached, and purposes to be fulfilled within the framework of the church, but it cannot be done, unless we are guided by a thus saith the Lord.

Some would allow that I am a fanatic and against church government, and specifically against the eldership, but I am not. That is not where I am coming from. I am one hundred percent against the church becoming like the churches??? round about them, and I am for, as much as in me is, to "speak where the Bible speaks," to be "silent where the Bible is silent," to call "Bible things by Bible names," and do "Bible things the Bible way." To some this old cry of the restoration movement may seem overused, out-dated, trite, and even absurd, but that is exactly what and how God wants us to be. To be otherwise is to count the church as a plaything, and to ignore the Spirits teaching concerning organization, and to count the Savior's precious blood which he shed to purchase the church, as unneeded! I am ever so thankful for congregations that have scriptural elders and deacons, and consider them as a bright beacon light, and an example that all need to emulate, and pray that God will increase their number.

No doubt all of us have read the qualifications of elders, deacons, and evangelists often and heard any number of godly men teach concerning the need for them. But, you know, I believe we need to re-read, re-hear, and re-think them over and over again, and for that reason I would like to follow up this article by studying with you about this office, the qualifications that must be met, and the way that men should lead after attaining the responsibility of this great Spiritual function. I would like to show what each qualification consist of and wherein some have erred in disregarding them. The Lord is coming back some time, we know not when, but we do know that we are going to have to give an account of our stewardship, so we need to hurry and set things in order, where possible, and get things right, ere He finds us guilty, in the first degree, of ignoring His precious Word.

- C. A. Smith, 810 N.W. 6th St., Andrews, TX 79714

THE DEAREST FRIEND I EVER HAD. . .

continued from page four

Proverbs 18:24, ". . . But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." This Jesus is truly a friend beyond compare. What a joy it is to introduce you to the dearest friend I have ever had. . . I have never shaken His hand nor looked into His eyes but I know He is my best friend.

Jesus Is A Friend To Sinners

Luke 7:34, "The Son of Man. . . a friend of tax collectors and sinners!" Jesus is not my friend because he disregards my sin. He is my friend; because, he calls me to repentance. He once told His critics, ". . . I did not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

Jesus is a friend because He reveals our sin and gives us hope of returning to God. He came for the purpose of giving His life that we might live. According to the gospel of John, Jesus said that He of His own free will, laid down His life for us. No man could take His life from Him except He offered it freely.

When Jesus died on the cross He shed His blood to effect the New Covenant and He promises whoever will come and obey can have eternal life. John states, "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world" (1 John 2:2). Another Bible scribe says that Jesus is the author of salvation to all who obey Him.

Jesus Is A Friend To Siblings

Jesus once posed the question in regard to His own siblings, "48. . . Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" 49 And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, 'Here are My mother and My brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother' (Matthew 12:48-50).

Jesus forever settled the question as to who His true family are. He without a doubt states that all who do the will of God are His family. It is surely a blessing for all of us to know that we make up the family of God. "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God," (Ephesians 2:19). Unmistakably, from the context of Ephesians Paul says that those in the church of Jesus Christ are members of His family. Every person who is baptized into Christ is added to the church (Galatians 3:26, 27; Acts 2:47).

Jesus Is A Friend To Save

What a comfort to know that Jesus my friend will save me in the end. Obviously, if He died for me while I was His enemy then He will save me. John tells in Revelation that our Lord's promise is an eternal crown of glory to all the faithful. Nothing I do will earn my right to salvation, however, if I obey Him, He has promised to save me.

"Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him" (James 1:12).

Touring That City

Truly, without doubt Jesus is the greatest friend you

will ever have in this life, and the words of Harold Lane in the song, "Touring That City," are appropriate. "Here on earth we have troubles that to us seem so heavy. But in Heaven no one will be sad; Mom and Dad will be singing, Heaven's praise will be ringing for the dearest Friend I ever had." - P.O. Box 37073, Lusaka, 10101, Zambia, Africa, duane@dnlpermenter.com

WORDS FROM OUT OF THE PAST

continued from page two

progressive work; it cannot be effected at once. There is too much light in the world at present for its growth. 'Here a little and there a little,' must precede its introduction. My dear brethren, watch and pray, lest you fall into temptation and mar the work of God. Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

Barton W. Stone made some good points in the above statement. He realized that his life was drawing near the close. He also realized that the work in which he and others had been involved, had progressed in a wonderful way. The number of people who were members of the church of Christ had rapidly increased. He pointed out that our numbers were quite large at that time. Yet he could see that a problem could be drawing near as well. Success could be the weapon Satan might use against the church. He could hardly bear to think of the losses the church might sustain if brethren allowed themselves to be swayed by their own vanity and pride. What if, moved by their own opinions, and lulled into a sense of "we know it all," because of past success, they gradually became no better than the sects around them? This seems to have been his main purpose of writing this "address."

History shows that he was wise in being concerned doesn't it? The subsequent divisions over the Missionary Society, instrumental music in worship, individual cups, Bible classes, fermented wine in the communion, etc. undoubtedly came about, in part at least, because the opinions of men were deemed as important as the Scriptures to those who desired the innovations.

When will it really be believed that the Devil never quits? We are constantly being bombarded by the opinions of men who are convinced their "learned" ideas are worthy of everyone accepting them. When we read of those who would remove the name "church of Christ" from their signs in order to perhaps attract a larger crowd, what are we seeing? We are seeing the vanities of men in action. Can you imagine Paul failing to tell his hearers that the name of the church is the church of Christ? (Romans 16:16). Brethren, think about what we hear today from the pens and pulpits of those who consider themselves "learned." Among the many false ideas advanced are those that the "doctrine of Christ," (2 John 9) is only the teaching about the divinity of Christ. Therefore, everyone who believes that Jesus is the Son of God is a child of God and our brother in prospect, etc. You see, this advances the idea of fellowship among all people who accept that Jesus is the Christ. This might be the only point of agreement but,

according to those who believe it, that is enough. This is taught regularly on the Internet, television and the printed page. Is it correct? Of course, it isn't, but it is put out there by those who are insulted when we do not swallow it completely. Doctrine means that which is taught. Therefore, the "doctrine of Christ," (2 John 9) is simply that which Jesus and the apostles taught. As long as we are willing to abide within that doctrine, or teaching, we may operate with the blessing of both the Father and the Son. It is obvious that one cup containing fruit of the vine in the communion, one loaf of unleavened bread in the communion, one undivided assembly taught by men, speaking one at a time, to an audience of people who sing without the aid of an instrument of music, can be used without ever going out of the "doctrine of Christ." Folks, you can read it in the book! Why, oh why, would anyone consider doing differently? As long as we stay with the Book, we have both the Father and the Son. To use the other things, we have to go outside the Bible where we have neither the Father nor the Son.

We say with Barton W. Stone, the Bible is truth and nothing but the Bible. Think on these things. **DLK**

"Life hasn't any laurels
For cowards in disgrace;
Life hasn't any applause
For slackers in the race.

"Life hasn't any riches
For proud and selfish aim,
But life has countless blessings
For those who wear the name.

"Life may not be so cheery
For one who will retreat;
Life may be disappointing
For he who cries defeat.

"But those who face the battles,
Defending what is right;
Will surely win the victory
Will win at last the fight."

~ Ray Roe, Dougherty, OK 1939

Announcements

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE WEB SITE

We have begun a new web site for the paper. It is now up and running, though much of it is still under construction. You are welcome to go there and put it to use. The address is <http://www.oldpathsadvocate.org>. We appreciate brethren Rick Martin, Terry Studdard and Brandon Steward doing the work. Soon, we hope to have many good things there for your use and benefit. We would appreciate any comments and helpful hints you might share with us. We

hope to have a national list of meetings up and going very soon both in the paper and on the web site. If you would like your meetings listed, send the information to Rick Martin, 300 Clubview Terrace, Woodstock, GA 30189 or e-mail mmartin@bellsouth.net. We hope to hear from you soon.

EVANGELIST NEEDED

The Church of Christ at Columbia, MO is looking for a qualified evangelist to assist in a new work at Jefferson City, MO. Must be experienced and sound in doctrine. Please submit all inquiries to Reggie Kinser (573) 874-3535, rkinser@msn.com or Bill Smith (573) 696-1691, bill.smith@us.schneider-electric.com.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

Dear Brethren, We at the Saint Albans, WV congregation have found it difficult to secure preachers for meetings. Do other congregations have similar difficulties? Preachers are in demand so greatly that there is often a waiting list to have a meeting scheduled. Our congregation has an up-and-coming preacher working among us. He has been conducting thorough chapter studies in both Old and New Testaments as well as other timely Bible subjects throughout his five years with us. Perhaps he has learned as much by his own teaching as the congregation has learned. The membership has begun to carry notebooks to every service and communicate Biblical principles with a renewed zeal. We would like to recommend Sean McCallister to you. He is available to your congregation for meetings. We would highly recommend Brother Sean. His style of preaching is explanatory, revealing and educational. To schedule him for a meeting contact: 304.722.6169 (Brother Sean McCallister)

Bonds of Matrimony

In beautiful surroundings in the presence of family members, friends and fellow Christians Jared Carl Nichols and Andrea Lane said their wedding vows on January 8, 2005 at the meeting place of the Leawood Village congregation at Joplin, MO. Jared is the son of Nick and Sally Nichols of Neosho, MO. Andrea is the daughter of Mark and Yolando Lane of Flippin, AR. The best man was Jared's brother, Matthew Nichols. The maid of honor was Danielle Land, the sister of the bride. It was my distinct honor to have been asked to officiate for this fine young Christian couple, and we wish for them a long happy life together as they serve the Lord. - *Paul O. Nichols (great uncle of the groom)*

Our Departed

SARTORS - R.G. Sartors was born March 25, 1916 in Arkansas and passed away April 26, 2005 in Ada, OK. On October 13, 1940, R.G. married Susie Coatney. She preceded his death August 7, 1997. R.G. and Susie had three children: Judyth Hammer, Patty Fariss and Janet Tinkler. On June 24, 2004, R.G. married Velma Driver and she survives him. The

funeral was at Hudson Phillips Funeral Home Chapel in Holdenville. R.G. was a member of the church in Holdenville. The writer officiated at the services. - *Vaden Morgan*

BLEVINS - Gladys Louise Blevins was born July 20, 1921 near Fox, OK and departed this life April 16, 2005 in Norman, OK. Gladys obeyed the gospel at the old Bit Shop congregation near Fox where my family also worshipped for many years. She later worshipped at Graham, OK and at Norman, OK until failing health made it impossible. In 1940, she married W.L. (Sleepy) Blevins, and to that union four girls, Janice, Linda, Dorice, and Karen, and one son, Jim, were born. She was preceded in death by W.L. a year ago. She is survived by her children, many grandchildren and great-grandchildren and two sisters. I was honored to speak at graveside services in Hillcrest Memorial Park, Ardmore April 19, assisted by Bob Elmore, Larry Iiams, and Doug Edwards.

HENSLEY - Earl Franklin Hensley was born at Elk Creek, MO. August 3, 1930 and passed away April 19, 2005. Earl was a longtime member of the Stony Point congregation of the Church of Christ in Kansas City, KS. He was preceded in death by Wanda, his wife of forty one years, who was also a member of the church. To this union were born three sons and a daughter: Earl Franklin, Jr. of Bonner Springs, KS; William Keith of Kansas City, KS; Stanley Karl, who passed away in 2003, and Dixie Huffman of Basehor, KS. Earl had four sisters and a brother and eleven grandchildren and nine great grandchildren. He is missed at the worship service on Lord's day. He sat in a certain seat, sometimes almost unable to breathe because of his affliction. At times he would be on oxygen because he was determined to assemble for the worship service. It was my privilege to speak at the memorial service. - *Paul O. Nichols*

PORTERFIELD - Ineta Grace Mason Porterfield was born July 29, 1917, to L.P. and Sally Mason in Warika, Oklahoma. She departed this life March 30, 2005, in Ardmore at the age of 87. Nita was preceded in death by son Richard in 1992, husband Judge in 1994, and son Bobby in February 2005. She is survived by sons Roy of Nederland, TX; Jimmy of Healdton, OK; Roger of Wilson, OK; and Walter of Healdton. She is also survived by one sister Loretha Vickrey of Ardmore, 17 grandchildren, 36 great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren. Nita was devoted to the Lord and His church. She was so faithful in her attendance. She attended all-day services on the Lord's Day shortly before she died, and cooked for the big dinner we had that day. She was also devoted to her large family. She was a pleasure to visit and we shall miss her greatly. I did my best to speak a few words of consolation and hope to the standing-room-only crowd of family and friends who attended the funeral services. - *Carl M. Johnson*

SHELTON - Brother William Royce Shelton of Red Oak, Texas passed from this life on Dec. 8, 2004 as the result of a tragic automobile accident. Royce died at the scene. He was a long time member of the Lord's church. Both he and his wife, Ella, were baptized as a young couple not long after they married. They began their Christian life at the old Boulder Drive congregation in Dallas. Royce was a member of the church for around forty years. He was a faithful and active member of the

Stratford Lane Church of Christ in Duncanville, TX, at the time of his passing. All of us in this area have been greatly impressed by the strong faith of his wife, Ella through this ordeal. She suffers from cancer and was in the automobile accident that took Royce's life. In spite of all of the adversity, she seldom complains and is regular in her church attendance. Royce leaves a rich legacy behind. All three of his sons and their wives are faithful members of the church. All of the sons are active leaders in the worship assemblies and are men of deep conviction. He is survived by his wife Ella; his sons, Bill Shelton, Bobby Shelton, and Steve Shelton and their wives. He is survived by three grandchildren, four brothers and two sisters. Royce was 60 years old at the time of his passing. A large crowd gathered on Saturday, Dec. 18th at the Red Oak Funeral Chapel to honor the memory of this beloved brother in Christ. The family requested that I preach the gospel on this occasion, because they said, "That is the way dad would have wanted it." I was happy to comply and honored to be asked to speak at this service. We endeavored to warn and comfort all who were present. - *Melvin Blalock*

A TRIBUTE TO BROTHER WAYMOND COLEMAN

JERRY DICKINSON

Brother Juan Rodriguez informed me today that Brother Coleman passed away on April 12 and his passing brought back many precious memories of time spent with he and his wife Nell on several trips to Mexico. I was only seventeen when I read in the OPA that Brother Coleman and the church in San Antonio was asking for some young people to go on a trip to Mexico to help build a meeting house in a place called Agua Nueva. I had been taking Spanish in school so decided to go. Along with a few other teenagers we accompanied Brother Coleman and some other brethren from San Antonio down to Mexico where we put up a meeting house and visited some of the churches in the area. After that trip I accompanied the Coleman's on several other trips to Mexico. This is when I first met Juan Rodriguez Sr. and his son Juan Jr., whom we all called Juanito. Brother Coleman looked on Juanito as his own son and encouraged him to preach and become a link between supporting churches in the States and the work in Mexico. Juan told me that Brother Coleman helped him to be the preacher he is today and taught him many invaluable lessons about doing the Lord's work. Brother Coleman had a great heart for the poor of Mexico and he always took clothes and food to poor brethren on his visits. This is a work, Juan says, that continues to this day. Brother Coleman visited, at one time or the other, all the states in Mexico and told Juan that his desire was to move back and die in Mexico. He did live there with his wife Nell for several years before having to move back to the USA. Brother Coleman was constantly on the move and did not believe in wasting time. When we ate in a restaurant as soon as he was finished he got up and started for the door. I would just have to swallow down my food and run out the door to catch him. He was ready to go! I'll never forget on one trip he and I went with Brother Juan Sr. to visit some churches way out in the back country. The road was just a dusty trail and Brother Juan's truck had a hole in the floor board. He had a piece of plywood over the hole but the dust still seeped in. We rolled up

the windows to keep the dust out that way but the dust poured in from the hole and every few minutes we had to stop and get out so the truck cab could air out. We tried our best to wipe off the dust and spit out what we had swallowed but it was a losing battle. Aw, what memories! The great work in Mexico today is due in great part to the vision, prodigious effort, and unfaltering love of Waymond Coleman. The brethren in Mexico, and here in the USA as well, have lost one of the great missionaries of our time. I told Juan I was going to write this tribute and he asked that I tell everyone how much Brother Coleman meant to him and to the work in Mexico. He was not a preacher (I never heard him preach a sermon on our many trips) but he was motivator and mover in a great missionary work. May our Lord raise up more like him in days to come! Hasta la vista, Brother Coleman. We will see you after awhile!

BRANCH - Thestain Eugene Branch was born on Jan. 13, 1933, in Comanche, OK the son of Gilbert Thestain and Nina Opal (Blackburn) Branch. He passed from this life on May 6, 2005 at Tahlequah, OK, at the age of 72 years. Graveside services were held May 9th at the Moody's Cemetery. Joe Dan Morgan of the Miami, OK congregation, conducted the services. When Thestain was 11 years old his family moved to Oklahoma City. He married Imogene Neel there on Aug. 7, 1957, at the 7th Street Church of Christ in Oklahoma City. This year would have marked their 48th Anniversary. In 1965 they moved to the Lowery area of Cherokee County where they raised their family. He attended services at the Muskogee, OK congregation. Thestain worked as an auto mechanic until his retirement. Thestain was raised in a strong and faithful Church of Christ family and has been a productive member of the Lord's church since he was a boy. Cherishing his memory are his wife of the home: two daughters, Joy Lea Martin and husband Dean of Tahlequah, and Vicki Johnson and husband Richard of Peggs; two grandsons, David Johnson and Wes Martin; two sisters, Wanda June Orten and husband James of Owasso, and Jeanetta Weeks and husband Cecil of Oklahoma City; a brother Sam Branch and wife Khleber also of Oklahoma City; several nieces, nephews, and a host of other relatives, friends and loved ones. - *Joe Dan Morgan*

PADGETT - Jim was born in Jenkins, Missouri July 21, 1926. His spirit returned to God March 4, 2005 in Bakersfield, CA. He lived in the Bakersfield area for the past 59 years. He was a member of the Planz Road Church of Christ. Jim loved the Lord and was dedicated to the work of the church. Jim was one of the men who helped establish the Churches on Brundage Lane and Planz Road in Bakersfield, CA. He also helped in the establishing the Church of Christ in Arvin, CA. Many wonderful things can be said about him. Jim was one of God's "gentle people". Jim was a godly man, who blessed the lives of many people. Jim's family, friends and members of the Church of Christ gathered at a simple graveside service March 9th to honor him and to give thanks for his life. The beautiful songs spoke of his faith and his love for the Lord. Jim was truly one of God's special people. He will be missed. Jim is survived by his devoted wife of 60 years, Claretta, his daughter Kay Mills, his sons Jim and Leon Padgett, and many grandchildren. - *Jim Winchester, Frank Brancato*

Field Reports

Bennie T. Cryer, 4635 Larkin Rd., Live Oak, CA 95953 - The work in Olivehurst is still going well although we have had one family move to another congregation. In April I preached at the North Area congregation in Sacramento. I am looking forward to a meeting with the congregation in Rogers, AR July 6-10. We plan to attend the Lebanon, MO 4th of July meeting and looking forward to seeing everyone there. God bless all of you.

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401. bookman@brightok.net, April 27 - We heard Kevin Presley in his meeting at Ratliff City two times and we were at Davis, OK in a 5 day meeting April 13-17. It was so good to be with them and to be close to home. The congregation at Davis is doing well. I was asked to speak at Nashville, TN April 20, where I found a nice crowd of enthusiastic people. We were glad to see Bret and Louise Hickey and to stay with Paul and June Pope—now members of the Nashville congregation. We enjoyed good crowds in a meeting at Springer Road congregation in Lawrenceburg, TN April 22-24. I appreciated the congregation very much for their quiet demeanor and close attention during the services. We were here at home tonight (Wednesday evening), and plan to head for Bakersfield, California tomorrow to be there for a meeting May 1-8.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012, pon.wjn.ks@juno.com, May 10 - Recently we lost one of the long time members of the Stony Point congregation of Kansas City -- Earl Hensley. He would come to worship on Lord's day when he could hardly breathe because of serious health problems. Our younger teachers in the congregation are making progress and give good scriptural lessons. One thing we appreciate about them is that they are not afraid to speak the truth, and they do it without fear or favor. They speak with conviction and courage, which is what it takes to build us up in the most holy faith. We look forward to our meeting in June with Kevin Pressely. Let us work while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work (John 9:4).

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, old_paths@juno.com, May 16 - We are presently having a good meeting with Billy Dickinson at Fremont. We look forward to much good being accomplished while he is here. Our meeting at the Modesto congregation produced no visible results. However, we pray good was done. Crowds were very good with some visitors from the community and the surrounding congregations were good to attend as well. We enjoyed being with the brethren there and spending some time with Rod and Muriel Wilson who are long-time friends. Lord willing, we will begin the annual Memorial Day meeting at Jacksonville, FL on May 25 going through the 29. We have been there several times through the years and

always look forward to returning. The 4th of July meetings will be starting very soon and we look forward to seeing many of you there. We appreciate those of you who responded to our offer of subscribing for a friend free. That offer of subscribing for yourself at the regular price of \$10 and a friend at \$5. Some of you have also sent in ten subscriptions and received a free year of OPA for yourself. Let's keep up the good work!

Gregory S. Robbins, 7440 Hwy. 6, Apt. 1012, Hitchcock, TX 77567, (409) 986-9907 - I have just come from Pottsville, AR. There I held a meeting, where much good was accomplished. Sunday morning, Bro. Travis King, son of the late Neil King, made a confession and is now restored back to the gospel and body of Christ. It is our prayer that he will continue, being encouraged by the brethren. I would like to thank the Speincer family for putting me up. I enjoyed their hospitality and general love for the brethren of like precious faith. I look forward to going back there. While conducting this series of meetings, Bro. Wayne McKamime was holding a meeting nearby. As he closed that meeting, we went over to hear him present the gospel; it was very uplifting. As I left for home, I stopped and stayed with Bro. and Sister Holloway. While in the area, Bro. Miles T. King introduced me to some of the brethren in the Conway, LA area. The work in La Marque is going well. Since last report, we have baptized one and restored one. We recently held the local Houston area unity meeting. The theme was over the book of Proverbs. Through this series of lessons, much knowledge and wisdom was learned and applied to our lives.

Carl M. Johnson 1400 Northcrest Dr. Ada, OK 74820 May 5—I am currently near the end of a ten-day meeting with the Green Oaks congregation in Arlington, TX. We have had visitors from the community and from other congregations. Preachers Melvin Blalock, Allen Bailey, Bob Johnson and Gerald Hill have visited and helped us in the meeting. It is good to be associated with Green Oaks' preachers Jim Crouch and Joe Lee Norton. We knocked on a lot of doors the first Saturday of the meeting introducing ourselves to newcomers to the city of Arlington and inviting them to the meeting. Since my last report I have conducted meetings at Healdton, Sulphur, and Lexington, OK. More recently I conducted a meeting in Harrison, AR where I made my home with long-time acquaintances Jimmie and Cindy Smith. I could not have been treated better. Preachers Ronny Wade and Daniel Smith came and helped us during this effort. Phyllis and I next went to Joplin, MO where I conducted a weekend meeting and ordained Wallace Lea as an elder and Mark Miller as a deacon of the Leawood Village congregation. Wallace joins elders Jim Stockam and Oscar Morris and Mark joins deacons Ronald Lankford and Richard Ramsey. I got to be home for several nights of our meeting with Greg Gay and he did a superb job preaching. My meetings for next month include Nashville, June 8-12, and Auburn, CA June 19-26.

Rick Martin, 300 Clubview Terrace. Woodstock, GA 30189, mmartin@bellsouth.net, May 10 - Greetings to all. We recently had a very enjoyable meeting here at Marietta with Jimmie Smith. Jimmie did an excellent job and preached on timely subjects. It was good to be with him. Ronny Wade has also preached for us on two occasions this year and did his usual outstanding job. Terry Studdard comes once a month and does a great job. I have preached in several places over the last few months. I have just closed a very enjoyable meeting in Napoleon, AL. The people at Napoleon are well-respected in the community and do a commendable job of getting outsiders to attend. I had the privilege of staying with Ronnie and Brenda Prince. Their wonderful hospitality was much appreciated. This is, of course, like home to me. My grandparents made it their home for all of their lives. Lord willing, I will be holding a meeting in Duncanville, TX, June 12-19. Many of you may be aware that we have started a new project concerning the OPA. We now have a website, oldpathsadvocate.org. The assistance of Terry Studdard and Brandon Steward has been invaluable in getting this started. Their work and effort is very much appreciated. I believe the site has much potential for good and will be a valuable addition to the paper. If you would like to have your meetings advertised on the site, you may send the information to my email address. Please put the word meeting in the subject area. I would like to have this information several months in advance. Remember me and the work when you pray.

Greg Gay, 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747, papagreg@aol.com, May 5, 2005 - Since last report, I have had the pleasure of helping the congregation at Manteca, CA in ordaining Steve Cozby and Rick Lee as elders. Like David of old, other older leaders there have done a great work preparing for this generation of men to be ordained. The congregation started this great goal in earnest several years ago while Alan Bonifay was working there and I was honored to be asked to assist along the way. In April I was in a meeting at Ada, OK. I stayed with my niece and her family. Danny and Betsy Little, and was treated like a very special guest. I was "Uncle Leg" to the babies. I enjoyed being with preaching brethren Joe Hisle and Carl Johnson and getting to meet and spend time with many wonderful people in the congregation and the many visitors from surrounding congregations near and far. I am currently in Springfield, MO where my mother has had surgery and preached at Northside to a good Wednesday night crowd. The 2005-2006 directory will be ready soon. All information has been sent to the printer and I am waiting for them to send me proofs before printing. As usual, there are many changes.

Bruce Roebuck, 1660 E. 2060, Hugo, OK 74743, May 9 - Our spring schedule has been busy and exciting. January took me to Temple, GA for a short meeting. The church there seems to be doing well. They have a number of young men who should provide a good future. In March we were in Bedford, IN for a week long meeting. I appreciate the brethren there and the work they do. Brother Walter Hunter continues to do a commendable job there. Walter and Cindy were our hosts there and we greatly

enjoyed our stay with them. Next, I went to Hoyte, TX for a meeting. The brethren there are doing well. A more devoted and sincere people you will not find. We were thankful to have a number of digressive brethren in audience during the meeting. April brought a trip to Linville, OH. The brethren labored for the meeting and we had a good one. Most recently I was in Council Hill, OK for a 5 day meeting, it closed with one confession and one restoration. Our remaining schedule is Fossil Creek, TX June 17-19, Conway, LA Aug. 24-28, Hilltop, KY September 11-18, Cullman, AL Sept. 30-Oct. 2, Jasper, TN Oct. 3-9, and New Salem, MS November 23-27.

Joe Hisle, 18975 CR 1580, Ada, OK 74820 - Greetings to the brethren everywhere. We have another meeting schedule will under way. Just like "they" always told me the years are getting closer together. I just closed a meeting in Buffalo, MO. It went really well. I enjoyed making my home with Brad Shockley and his new bride Alex. They went all out to make me feel at home. It always makes me happy to see young people taking responsibility in the Lord's church. Brad is doing a good job with the Buffalo and Lee's Summit congregations. I extend a special thanks to the numerous preaching brethren in the area who supported the meeting. Presently I am in a meeting at Hilltop near Liberty, KY. I always enjoy preaching in KY and this is no exception. We are expecting good results from the meeting. Following is my schedule: May 4-8, Jamesville, MO; June 4-12, Burkhart, MO; July 10-17, Bandy, KY; July 24-31, Temple, GA; Aug. 3-7, Clebourned, TX; Aug. 26-Sept. 7 (Labor Day Meeting), Oakdale, CA; Sept. 14-18, Harrison, AR; Oct. 26-30, Nashville, TN. I would appreciate your prayers and support. May God bless the faithful everywhere. *Note: our apologies for the delay in printing this. - DLK*

Jonathan Bunner, Apartado Postal#13-01-301, Portoviejo, Manabi, Ecuador, South America, May 5 - The month of April was a very special month for us in Ecuador. We were happy to have my parents visit us for a week. I had not seen my dad for two years and this was my mom's first visit to Ecuador. Their visit was good for us to catch up on some things and gave our kids a chance to know their grandparents better. A week after my parents left Ecuador we had two more visitors. Brothers Scott Stockam and Jeff Wissinger from the 85th and Euclid congregation in Kansas City, Missouri came down for a weekend. We also enjoyed having them with us. When brethren from other parts of the world come to visit this really encourages us. These visits are good for the brethren here. They are able to meet brothers and sisters of like precious faith and at the same time they realize that they are not the only ones worshipping as we do. Already the brethren are asking when someone else is coming to visit us. The answer I give them is "pray that it is soon." This past month I was unable to go to Ambato, but the brethren are doing fine. I talked to brother Villacis on the phone and he says things are ok. I plan to go on the second week of May. If I have time I want to go to Quito to visit Victor Manuel and Kelvin in prison. These past few weeks' Quito has not been a safe place to travel so I will have to wait and see when I can go there. Thanks for your prayers!

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THE BACK PAGE...

A FORGOTTEN ODDITY

By CARL M. JOHNSON

Jacob Creath Jr. was 18 years old when he preached his first sermon. The preacher who was scheduled to speak on that occasion did not show up because of high water, and some of the people present asked Creath to speak. Creath declined their invitation several times, but finally got up and spoke on Galatians 3:10. Afterwards an elderly lady commented to Creath, "You word a good prayer, but you will never make a preacher." The lady was only halfway correct. Creath did indeed word a good prayer. In fact, his prayers are almost legendary. However, he also developed into a very successful preacher, baptizing multitudes of people during his career.

Creath was born in Virginia in 1799 to William and Lucretia Creath, the second of sixteen children. William allowed his brother Jacob to name the infant and Jacob named him after himself. The peculiarity of an uncle and nephew having the same name and having to distinguish between themselves by adding "Senior" and "Junior" was just the beginning of the oddities that characterized the life of Jacob Jr.

The circumstances around his death were also odd. Two years before he died he wrote out his own obituary. He insisted that there be no sermon preached at his funeral because Christ and the apostles died without a funeral sermon being preached for them. He requested that he be placed in a plain, cheap coffin, with his pocket Bible placed under his head and a copy of Alexander Campbell's **Living Oracles** placed under the Bible. He lived and fought with the Bible in one hand and the **Living Oracles** in the other, so it was only appropriate that they all be buried together.

As the son of a staunch Baptist preacher, Jacob had always been very serious-minded and he often obsessed about his soul's condition. After the family moved to Kentucky he was converted by the preaching of Alexander Campbell, and was subsequently persecuted by his former religious friends, defrauded by family members, and rendered grief-stricken by the premature deaths of his wife and one of his sons. In spite of such devastating hardships Creath devoted himself uncompromisingly to the preaching of the gospel for the rest of his life.

Creath opposed denominational error with every fiber of his being—sometimes with vengeance. Many regarded him as dogmatic in spirit, but he was never concerned about popularity and he offered no apology for preaching any truth he found in the Bible. If he and his fellow preachers had not opposed religious error with such boldness at that time, the cause of Christ would never have been planted in many parts of the country.

Creath had a difficult time controlling his explosive temper. He would scold an audience severely at the slightest provocation, but then he would present the gospel to them with such simplicity and tenderness they would leave with tears in their eyes.

Creath's prayers, however, made an even greater impression upon others than his preaching. One morning after breakfast in 1854, Creath asked friend L. B. Wilkes to take a walk with him in the woods near La Grange, Missouri. They walked half a mile without speaking a word and stopped beside a fallen tree. At that point Creath said, "Let us pray." As Creath began his prayer his voice trembled and he wept in earnestness. He begged the Lord most piteously to forgive him his many sins and not to forsake him in the day of temptation. Wilkes said that Creath spoke with God in such a way that "I felt for the moment that if I should open my eyes I should certainly see Him upon whom no one can look and live. I never heard anything like it before or since—and that has been 30 years."

Creath vigorously condemned the fighting that took place during the Civil War as anti-Christian. He also fought bitterly against instrumental music in worship and the use of missionary societies to do the work of the church. He became alarmed that the aging Campbell seemed to be drifting from the original plea of the Restoration Movement by endorsing missionary societies. Convinced that younger men such as Dr. Robert Richardson and W.K. Pendleton were leading Campbell astray, he took them to task for their apparent digression. He even threatened to cancel his subscription to Campbell's **Millennial Harbinger**. Richardson dismissed Creath as an egotistical, cranky old man, and when he wrote Campbell's Memoirs he refused to mention Creath's name except when it was unavoidable, and then portrayed Creath in an unfavorable light. Richardson's associates also discouraged other biographers from chronicling the life of Creath after Creath's death. It is tragic, but as a consequence of such efforts as these there are few people today who have ever heard of Creath. Creath himself said, "I have never received much credit from men for what I have done and suffered. They have written my faults in marble, and my virtues in the dust. I hope God will do me justice in the great day." carlmj@cableone.net

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. 7

OUR JOURNAL'S ROOTS

BY CARL M. JOHNSON

The **Old Paths Advocate** began officially in January of 1932, with Homer L. King as publisher, H. E. Robertson as assistant publisher, and an editorial staff consisting of brethren King, Homer A. Gay, J. D. Phillips, and H. C. Harper. Brother Harper actually began publishing the journal four years earlier under the name of "**The Truth**." He eventually brought Brother Phillips onboard as an editor in 1930, and added Brother King to the staff a little later. Near the end of 1931, however, Harper decided to turn the publisher's job over to a younger man because of his own failing health. After a great deal of contemplation, Harper and Phillips decided that the thirty-nine year old King was the best choice to assume the task. It was a wise choice. As Clovis Cook says, Brother King was the right person in the right place at the right time, much like Esther of the Old Testament (Esther 4:14).

The men decided to choose a different name for the journal to accompany the reorganization of its staff. While there is nothing wrong with the name "**The Truth**," they wanted a name that expressed more accurately the mission of the journal—which is to call all people back to the Bible's ancient order. They found the perfect name in the words of Jeremiah, "Stand ye in the ways and ask for the **Old Paths**, where is the good way and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (6:16). As Brother King was preparing to send the first copy of **Old Paths** to the printer, Brother Phillips advised him that he had just received word there was already a journal in existence by that name. The men, therefore, added the name "**Advocate**" to the title as a matter of distinction.

The staff offered the following eight statements in the first issue declaring the journal's policy:

1. To judge no man's loyalty to his God by his loyalty to the paper.
2. To "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). And thus complete the restoration started by the Campbells and others a century ago.
3. To oppose **every** departure from the word of God in faith and practice; avoiding at the same time undue stress on any one sin, to the exclusion of others. We expect to wage a war of uncompromising hostility against every sin both in and out of the church.
4. To make the paper an open forum, insofar as the issues being discussed are considered vital to the welfare of the church and the salvation of the soul.
5. To give the readers a balanced periodical, thus making it beneficial to both saint and sinner.
6. To manifest the spirit of Christ in dealing with all

issues and controversies, thus avoiding personal thrusts and abusive language. We ask all our writers to say nothing in the columns of the paper that they would be ashamed of or afraid to say in the Day of Judgment

7. To make field reports a special feature. Therefore, we insist that all preachers and leaders of the loyal congregations send in reports and announcements regularly; thereby encouraging others in the work.
8. Finally, to be true to the charge that God has given us; to glorify Him in all that we do or say; to urge upon all a closer walk with God; realizing that we have never-dying souls to save, and to fit them for mansions in the sky.

Brother King successfully published the paper for 30 years. In 1962, however, he suffered a severe stroke and found it necessary to relinquish his publishing duties. Don McCord, who had been serving as the only other editor of the paper with Brother King at that time, stepped into the breach and devoted 14 years of his life to publishing the journal. In 1976, Brother King resumed his role as publisher and added his son Don to the staff as assistant publisher. Don subsequently succeeded his father as owner and publisher and remains with the journal in that capacity unto this present day.

This issue of **OPA** gives you a look at the journal's roots. We have included brief biographical sketches of the four original editors, articles about debates and great issues affecting our brotherhood that were covered in the paper, and an editorial explaining why we believe **OPA** is still relevant today.

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Editorial

IS THE OPA STILL RELEVANT?

By DON L. KING

It is perfectly normal for people to say, "Is the **OPA** still relevant?" After all, we are now in our 73rd year of publication under the name "**Old Paths Advocate**." When one considers that Brother H.C. Harper began publishing **The Truth**, which was nearly identical to the **OPA** in format in 1928, the paper is approximately 77 years old. That is a long time for a paper to exist. In 1932, due to his failing health, Brother Harper turned the publishing responsibilities over to Homer L. King and the name was changed to **Old Paths Advocate**. Through the years, the paper has continued to fight sin. We have not changed the purpose, nor are there plans to do so. We advocate the "old paths."

The Beginning

As a boy, I can recall my father telling why the paper had a beginning. Apparently, several of the preachers of the day had resisted the invasion of the various innovations among the Lord's people. The music issue and Missionary Society had been raging for years; and when some of the brethren began looking favorably upon the individual cups and Bible classes, etc., those preachers began opposing them. They opposed all innovations wherever they went to preach. They also wrote articles and submitted them to the papers of the day. At first, some were published because a few of the papers, some of which are still in existence, also opposed the innovations. Gradually, however, the brethren in charge of publishing those papers began to back away from their opposition and embrace the very things they had once opposed. When this occurred, they were no longer willing to print the articles condemning the innovations. It soon became apparent that if the cups and classes, etc. were to be opposed in the printed page, they would have to establish their own paper to do it. Believing with all their hearts that it simply had to be done, **The Truth**, (later **Old Paths Advocate**) was born. There were also other papers, which were in existence for a short time such as the **Loyal Guide**, published by Brother O.B. Perkins in Gilpin, Kentucky. That paper was briefly advertised in **OPA**; but in the April 1932 issue, a notice was placed on the front page telling that it would simply be merged with the paper. Those who had paid for subscriptions would receive the **OPA** for the remainder of their subscription term.

Hence, **Old Paths Advocate** came into existence as a medium with which to oppose all innovations. The relevance of the paper was not a question in those days. Nearly all faithful brethren realized that a war of uncompromising hostility had to be waged against all departures from the Bible way. They knew that unless it was done, all would be lost to digression before very many years passed. They had in common with each other the opposition to any, and all, departures. This was their theme in both sermons, and writings. Though times were very difficult, economically, brethren everywhere sacrificed to pay a dollar a year for a subscription to the paper. The number of subscribers rapidly increased. Those poor people did not take the paper just for entertainment. They took it because it helped bind the struggling brotherhood together and help them all realize that the battle was on going against sin. Those early brethren were literally carving a brotherhood out of sin and digression. The paper helped them realize that the battle was, in fact, being

won. Debates were common. Large crowds attended them, and the digressive brethren soon realized that they had a formidable foe among the "one cuppers." Preachers and brethren were united against digression. They despised it and wanted nothing to do with it in any form. They wanted to be different rather than cuddle up to it as some enjoy doing today. They loved to point out that they opposed ALL departures and that the Bible way was the only way.

What Has Changed?

Has anything changed in our modern times? Nothing has changed. Oh, the names of men have changed and perhaps Satan's devices have a new face, but the fight against digression goes on. There will always be those who would encourage shelving the Bible pattern to allow innovations. A Bible pattern is not a high priority in the religious world today. It is ever the same. From within and without, the church is encouraged to give up the ground we have long held for truth. We are then scolded when we refuse.

The paper has always been issue oriented. Through the years, as brethren learned of new issues, they warned of them in pulpits as well as the pages of the **OPA**. This is still the case and must always be so. **Old Paths Advocate** was relevant in 1932 because there were great dangers facing the church. The paper was a valuable tool for the preachers because it provided a medium to get the message out over great distances. It always stood firm against departures from the Truth. For 73 years this stand has continued. That alone should endear the paper to every faithful Christian, and it has earned a place in every home. What would have happened in those early years if the preachers had simply shrugged their shoulders and hoped the innovations would just go away? We all know the answer. Nothing of Satan ever goes away until he is resisted. Surely, we realize that has always been true. There is a ray of hope, however, because James said, "...Resist the devil and he will flee from you." (James 4:7) Brethren, we must continue to resist him. We must not quit now. An old preacher once suggested that when the let-up came against the sects, the letdown in the church came along. Shall we let up in our opposition then? Remember, Jude said we "...should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints." (Jude 3)

What we need today is brethren who will work together to keep the church pure without fear or favor of anyone. Truth must be our ultimate goal. Brethren cry for unity, but if we can have truth, we will then have unity. Lasting unity can be achieved only by uniting on the truth. It is said that the best predictor of the future is an analysis of the past. Our past is proof positive that great things may be accomplished when everyone works together to achieve a common goal. Brethren fought many battles through the years. We were victorious because we fought for the Bible way, worked together and enjoyed the blessings of Almighty God. Brethren, this must continue if we are to continue to grow and flourish as a Brotherhood.

The Paper Is Still Relevant

The paper is still relevant for the very same reasons it was relevant in 1932. We wish every family in the brotherhood could have the paper in their home. We desire that all preachers among us would work together to encourage others to take the paper much as it was in the early years. Are you willing to consider it? For the church, the path ahead may never be entirely smooth because the devil never quits. However, we can be positive about our responsibility, can we not? There is no place to stop, brethren. We must continue to persevere.

The first President of the United States, George Washington, once said, "Perseverance and spirit have done wonders in all ages." This is a reassuring thought from a remote but relevant time. Think on these things. **DLK**

HARRY CHARLES HARPER

By M. LYNWOOD SMITH

As a child Harry Charles Harper got up and walked out of a church that had just introduced instrumental music into the worship. He followed his mother and his Bible in walking out of the church that day, and demonstrated at an early age his stand against digression from the ancient order of God. That act was a foreshadowing of the concept, life, and work of Brother Harper. He was a pioneer in about every movement for the restoration for scriptural worship. He was among the first to condemn the Bible-class teaching arrangement with its divisions and women teachers, and he also led the fight against individual communion cups that had been opposed earlier by J.W. McGarvey and others. As that fight began to subside Brother Harper renewed it in dead earnest and we owe him a great debt. I consider him about the last of the great restorers.

Brother Harper was born October 24, 1874, at Schannoahon, Illinois, the youngest of David and Eliza Harper's three children. His father was a school teacher, his mother an accomplished musician, and H. C. himself eventually became a schoolteacher for twenty-five years, completing his education at the University of Florida.

The early life of Brother Harper is somewhat unknown. We know enough, however, to know his life was pious and deeply religious. Alexander Campbell baptized his father David, so we know he had a close link with the great Restoration Movement, a fact that always seemed evident in his life.

At age nineteen, he was baptized into Christ and began preaching at the evening services. He was studious and possessed an analytical mind. He was especially gifted as a writer, writing articles and poems that were published in the local newspapers. He always wanted to know the truth. His life's motto was, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." It is little wonder that in later years he would publish a journal called, "**The Truth**."

In 1917 Brother Harper moved from New Mexico with his wife and two daughters to Sneads, Florida, where he settled permanently. At this point in his life he practically gave up teaching and began evangelizing all over the nation. He knew the brotherhood desperately needed help during the World War crisis. As he traveled all over the nation preaching the gospel, however, he continued his prolific writing.

His earlier writings were published in some of the great brotherhood papers—**Firm Foundation**, **Pacific Christian**, and the **Gospel Advocate**. These papers were not too liberal in those days and preachers were not too numerous, so they would allow preachers with differing positions to write for them. This practice gave Brother Harper an opportunity to get what he believed to be the truth into the hands of the masses as far back as 1900.

In 1913 W. J. Rice and Dr. G.A. Trott teamed up to bring to life what would be one of the greatest religious journals in history—the **Apostolic Way**. Brother Harper became an editor of this new journal in 1914, and now he had a venue to send his articles on a regular basis throughout the brotherhood.

Brother Harper remained as an editor until 1926, when a

dispute arose among the editors and printer over whether the communion-cups question should be exposed and condemned in the paper. The dispute became unbearable to Brother Harper and in 1928 he started his own journal called "**The Truth**," and published it in Sneads.

At this point in his life Brother Harper was ailing and very discouraged. He said little about why he left the **Apostolic Way**, but one-by-one brethren began to rally to his side and prospects for the future began to look some brighter. In 1930, J. D. Phillips joined the editorial staff and a few months later Homer L. King of Lebanon, Missouri also joined. This arrangement continued for a number of years.

In 1932 with health gone, Brother Harper asked the other editors to take over the paper in December of that year. Brother King was selected as publisher, H. E. Robertson as assistant publisher, and Homer Gay was added as an editor. The men changed the name of the journal to **Old Paths Advocate**. Brother Harper remained as an editor until his death in 1936, leaving his large collection of writings to be published in the paper.

As was said of the apostle Paul, Brother Harper's "words were weighty and powerful." He was the briefest man I ever read—saying the most in the shortest space. He may have been more effective with the pen than he was in the pulpit. For example, he was eminently qualified to engage J. N. Cowan in oral debate, but observers say he just did not fare too well in this forum. Afterwards, Brother Harper was not satisfied until he settled the score with Cowan in a written discussion. There Brother Harper had the mastery! Oh how his pen bristled with fire in the written exchange! These debates along with the "Harper Trail Discussion" (OPA 1933) remain classics unto this day.

Brother Harper seemed somewhat aloof and alone—to say he was distant or cold—for he was very warm, easily approached and easy to visit with. He was thoughtful and appreciative, thankful for whatever one could afford for him. When he spoke with people, even over the most trivial matters, he was tender and kind. Small matters touched him easily. A compliment of his sermon could bring a tear to his eye. The sisters in the homes found him to be respectful, dignified, and in every sense a Christian gentleman. No question was too simple or shallow for him to explain. Children loved him. My job was to shine his black shoes, for which he always gave me some small payment, which meant much to a penniless country kid of that bygone day. He was an unassuming, gentle soul, easily noticed as a man of dignity and of letters, yet living on the level of the people wherever he chanced to be. He was easy to keep during a meeting and for years afterwards the sisters would report with almost a trace of reverence, "Brother Harper used to make his home with us."

His demeanor won for him a wide admiration and devout following all over the country among those who loved the truth. He also had many foes among those who considered his views to be hobbies. Brethren adored him because of his goodness, purity of life, and his devotion to the Cause they themselves had been standing for so nobly all those years, thinking they were all alone in their community. In him they found a champion, and they loved him because he would challenge the big time preachers and digressive pastors and call them to account.

Time and again he went into a community for work and didn't get enough to pay his way. This, of course, was the case of many devoted men of that day. There were times at

my own home when the support was lacking and my grandpa (T. E. Nong Smith) would wire Brother Harper that we would not be able to have a meeting that year at New Salem. Brother Harper's answer was always, "Have everything ready and I'll be there." So he often continued to preach and write at his own expense. The places he preached are too numerous to mention, but his work ranged to the West Coast and many of the eastern states.

I was but a child, but I well remember the last trip made by Brother Harper. He was going west on a preaching tour and, of course, stopped by for the summer meeting at New Salem. There was a baptism on Monday following the close of the meeting. After the baptism Brother Harper returned to the house but did not go into the front gallery with the other men, as was his custom. Rather, he sat down on our long back porch by himself, with head bowed as if absorbed in deep reflection. He seemed sad, and that made me sad for him. Then, as if he realized this would be goodbye for awhile, he brought a picture of himself and his family and gave it to my grandmother. Thinking he was just showing it to her, she observed, "That's a good picture." But with a quiet and sad voice he said, "This one is for you."

We told him goodbye that August day, and he resumed his ill-fated trip to the West Coast. He returned home a very sick man and on March 19, 1936, he had a stroke. On September 30, he had a second stroke, and December 1, he died.

Years have passed since Brother Harper's death. Most of those who knew him have passed on too. Few of today's preachers ever met him. But we are thankful, in the large, that things remain much as they were when he was among men, including the fact that the **Old Paths Advocate**, once known as **The Truth**, still comes to our boxes once a month. (Condensed from an article in OPA Jan. 1982).

A KING'S LEGACY

By CARL M. JOHNSON

Homer L. King, a short, corpulent, former schoolteacher with a charismatic personality and a propensity for humorous word play, rose from the depths of poverty in the Missouri Ozarks to become the most influential leader in our brotherhood for nearly forty years. Consequently, Brother King leaves us a legacy today that few men can match.

He was born April 4, 1892, in a log cabin at Orla, near Lebanon, Missouri, where he lived most of his life until he moved to Stockton, California, in 1961. He was educated in Dallas and Laclede Counties in Missouri, and one year in Oklahoma, and taught school seven years in Missouri.

In 1914, Brother King was married to Maybelle Massie, and they had three children—Velma, Nola, and Howard. Sister King died September 16, 1933, and on April 27, 1938, Brother King married Helen Buck, who proved indispensable to him as he preached and published, and who loyally stood beside him in sickness and health for the rest of his life. They have one son, Don.

Brother King obeyed the gospel under the preaching of A. C. Crenshaw in a meeting at Union (now the Lee's Summit congregation), his home congregation for many years. He preached his first sermon in 1915, and conducted his first protracted meeting two years later near Norwood, Missouri, baptizing three and restoring a large number. For the next forty-seven years he would catch the train and preach the gospel from coast-to-coast, establishing numerous

congregations and baptizing multitudes of people.

In addition to preaching, Brother King engaged in written and oral debates, taught vocal music, wrote songs, and published songbooks, sermons, and of course, the **Old Paths Advocate**.

Brother King really considered himself, first and foremost, a preacher—a pulpit preacher. He was an exceptional orator whose sincerity and use of pathos when preaching about our Savior would often move audiences to tears. Yet he taught with such clarity that a child could understand him. Tommy Shaw once observed, "Brother King does not have all that many sermons, but he can do more with his than most of the rest of us." His best-known sermons include, "Honest Gentile," "Red String in the Window," and the "Parable of the Vineyard." Brethren would drive for many miles to listen to Brother King preach and would speculate en route about which of his familiar sermons they might hear. If perchance they heard a "rerun," they relished every minute of hearing it again.

In the late 1930's he established the congregation here in Ada, Oklahoma. A couple of years later he returned for a meeting and baptized my paternal grandmother. She was a very religious woman who had attended various denominations through the years, but was continuously frustrated because she had a difficult time harmonizing their teachings with the Bible. After the third night of attending Brother King's meeting, however, she returned home and told my father, "He is the first preacher I have ever heard who preaches the Bible just as it is written." The next night Brother King baptized her into Christ. Grandmother urged my father to begin attending this new congregation, and a couple of years later he obeyed the gospel at age thirty-six. Then on a return visit a couple of years later Brother King baptized my mother. I am the youngest of seven children and all of my brothers and sisters have been baptized into Christ as well. I have often wondered what our spiritual condition would be today if Brother King had not visited Ada, and my grandmother had never heard him preach the simple gospel of Christ.

Brother King was a master of diplomacy. He was engaging, complimentary, and he had a way of making you feel special when he spoke to you. He also tried to cultivate that same diplomacy in younger preachers. Clarence Kessinger says that when Brother King sent him and other young preachers to conduct mission meetings he told them, "Don't go in there and make everyone mad the first night. Use some judgment. If you run everybody off the first night you will not convert anyone."

A significant part of Brother King's charisma was his sense of humor. Ronny Wade says, "He was a jolly, happy man, with a sprightly step. He brought sunshine wherever he traveled." Brother King especially loved humorous word play. Ronny tells about Brother King greeting a man named "Oscar" and his wife "Grace." After greeting the couple, he turned to those gathered around and observed, "You know old Oscar was saved by Grace!" Then he would let loose with an infectious laugh that seemed to come from the bottom of his soul. Don McCord says that when he and Wanda were first married, Brother King wished them well by saying, "May all your troubles be 'little ones.'" He said to a fellow-preacher who had the good fortune of being showered more than once by the brethren's generosity, "Gabe, how do you manage all these showers? When I mention 'shower' to the brethren they show me the bathroom."

Brother King usually referred to his preacher friends as his "pals." When he was addressing them directly, however, he usually called them "Gabe." Clovis Cook says Brother King derived the expression from a Lebanon stock buyer named "Gabe Smith." Brother King had business dealings with him, thought his name was comical, and soon began calling his preaching pals "Gabe." The name stuck and soon all the older preachers were addressing one another by that name.

Brother King loved to eat and when he sat down to a meal he would often exclaim, "This meal looks fit for a King!" He loved strong coffee and believed that one of life's natural, healthful elixirs was a glass of buttermilk before bed each night.

The true character of Brother King can be seen, however, as he sat in the crucible of the publisher's chair of the **Old Paths Advocate**. Don McCord, who succeeded Brother King as publisher for fourteen years said, "I learned somewhat of the demands placed upon Brother King the preceding thirty years. Until one has passed this way, one cannot know the demands placed on a man, his wife, and his children." Brother King began publishing the paper during the very hard days of the Great Depression. The church was in the throes of controversy over Sunday Schools and the use of individual cups in the communion. Brother King and the other editors stood foursquare against these innovations in worship, and debated vigorously those on the other side both orally and in the pages of the **OPA**. Their position was not the popular position of the day and they suffered much ridicule from the larger groups.

The publisher of any paper that enters into polemics becomes an easy target for invective from the other side. Brother King absorbed the "slings and arrows" of his religious opponents, but sometimes the greater abuse came from his own brethren over controversial issues. He was wounded deeply by some of the things that were said to him and about him. But even when things became pretty unseemly on occasion, he kept his own mouth shut and refused to say unkind things about his attackers. Ostensibly, nothing seemed to faze him, but in reality he was a master at hiding his deep hurt. He made his share of mistakes and he was the first to admit them. He was also quick to say "I'm sorry." He was not a grudge-holder and he found sweet relief in resolving personal differences with brethren and being reconciled to them.

In the beginning Brother King was reluctant to accept the task of publishing of the **OPA**, but he developed quickly a great love for the paper, devoted an entire week of each month to putting it together, and was obsessive about its being mailed out on time. Almost seventy-five years later, the paper is still inextricably linked to our brotherhood. I recently obtained a volume of the newly published **Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement**. This is a massive book of nearly 900 pages containing from "A to Z" everything you would want to know about the American Restoration Movement. I was disappointed to find that our brotherhood has only one entry in the entire encyclopedia, but that entry is in connection with the **OPA**. The entry on page 575 says, "Another periodical using the slogan to further its conservative views is the **Old Paths Advocate**, which has since 1929 articulated the views of churches opposing Sunday Schools and individual cups for the Lord's Supper."

After Brother King died on July 31, 1983, Wayne McKamie wrote in tribute, "As men like Homer King leave

us, we, like a nobler soul, ask that his mantle may remain and that a double portion of his spirit be upon us." The encyclopedia entry mentioned above is just one indication that Wayne's request has been realized and that we continue to profit from the legacy of Homer L. King even today. carlmj@cableone.net

J.D. PHILLIPS

EDITOR AND PREACHER

By JOHNNY ELMORE

Brother J. D. Phillips, gospel preacher, debater, and one of the original editors of **Old Paths Advocate**, was born in the Ozarks near Gilbert, Arkansas in 1904 and departed this life in 1981 and was buried at Eola Cemetery, Eola, Texas. He had previously been an editor of **The Truth**, as published by Brother H. C. Harper 1928-31. In 1931, Brother Harper asked Homer L. King and J. D. Phillips to take over the publication of the paper and the name was changed to **Old Paths Advocate**.

Early in life, Brother Phillips became interested in the Restoration Movement. John A. Battenfield, who moved to Gilbert, AR in 1920, influenced him. As a boy, he had previously read the book, **The Great Demonstration**, written by J. A. Battenfield and P.Y. Pendleton. These early influences made an impression on Brother Phillips and he was a student of prophecy all of his life. Many of us heard him speak on Daniel and Revelation in 1959 at the study in Wichita Falls, Texas. He was able to speak with ease about the great prophecies in Daniel and tell the history that confirmed the truth of them. We are indebted to Brother Phillips for the wealth of information he developed on the communion, the contribution, and other subjects affecting the worship of the church. He debated Bob Musgrave near Healdton, Oklahoma in the 1930s on the proper way of breaking bread in the communion. He also had public discussions with others that I do not know about. He published his book, **The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness**, a scholarly work setting forth the biblical teaching concerning one loaf in the communion and the proper way of breaking bread. Another book, **The Cup of the Lord**, is also a scholarly classic, the fruit of many hours of study and research.

Brother Phillips traversed the nation most of his life, preaching at small congregations. In his travels, he searched for books of merit and succeeded in developing a wonderful library. In doing research at the library of Texas Christian University years ago, I was amazed at the number of books on their shelves that had once belonged to him. He had a comprehensive knowledge of the Restoration Movement and the men behind it. In his travels, he learned that he was a distant relative of Thomas W. Phillips, who wrote the book, **The Church of Christ** that often showed up in bookstores and many homes of Christians.

Although I was too young to remember, J. D. Phillips held a meeting at the old Bit Shop congregation where my family worshipped, and at several other congregations in our area. As a preacher he was esteemed by all but he never lost the common touch, and that endeared him to all. He was a close observer of humanity and could entertain for hours with his observations of people and their times.

Brother Phillips believed that the passage in Acts 2:42 is an outline of the worship of the church in Jerusalem, and

advised the churches to observe the items of worship in the same order. His advocacy of that order as an exclusive order of worship was resented by others and disagreement over this issue and some others resulted in his resignation from editorial duties of the **Old Paths Advocate** in June 1939. It also brought about alienation and separation. Ronny Wade has described it as a division that should not have happened. In 1959, Ervin Waters wrote in **Old Paths Advocate** about this division: "Eighteen years ago brethren on both sides of the order controversy were inflamed by passion and motivated by negative emotions when we plunged rashly and headlong into a needless division. Rationality did not dictate our course and love did not rule our attitude, speech, and conduct."

Brother Phillips began to write as an editor in **The Truth**, a small journal published by A.H. Pinegar of Memphis, Tennessee. He advised brethren to continue their subscriptions to **Old Paths Advocate** and to subscribe to **The Truth** also. He assumed the role of publisher of **The Truth** in 1944 and developed it into a sixteen-page journal that went into many Christian homes.

As I was preparing these words for publication, I was informed that Edith, Brother Phillips' faithful wife, who pronounced him a brilliant and good man, departed this life a few weeks ago, and was laid to rest beside him. The memory of J. D. Phillips is cherished by many in the brotherhood today and although we acknowledge that he had faults, as we all do, his contributions to the cause were many and will continue to bless for generations to come. 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401 bookman@brightok.net

HOMER A. GAY

By RONNY F. WADE

Homer Ambrose Gay was born November 19, 1894 near Yellville, Arkansas, to John and Margaret Gay, the youngest of ten children. At an early age his parents made the move from Arkansas to Texas, finally settling in west Texas around Ft. McKavitt. His mother died while he was yet young, thus leaving him to share and shoulder many responsibilities unknown to many children of his age. His religious background consisted mainly of teachings from the Baptist denomination. In 1910 he heard his first gospel sermon from Brother D.L. Pettie who was engaged in a meeting in Ft. McKavitt. It was then that he learned about his duty to God and before the meeting closed made the good confession and was baptized. The church there was small and the leadership inadequate. Soon he was called upon to help out, which he willingly did. Over time he began to teach which ultimately led to preaching. Preachers were few and far between in that area and soon he was going from place to place answering invitations to preach the gospel.

On April 4, 1922, he married Susie Hanley of Brady, Texas, who became his life-long companion. They had two children Luvilla and Homer Jr. For the next four years they resided in Brady, moving in 1926 to Eden, Texas. It was while in Eden that he and Brother Homer L. King first met. They formed a friendship that lasted a lifetime. In December of 1919 an article appeared in the **Apostolic Way** by Wm. Guy Ashley commending Brother Gay to the brotherhood. Brother Ashley referred to him as "one of our best and soundest young preachers. He stands strictly for what is written, and has no patience with innovations."

A few reports and articles by him can be found in the early issues of **The Way**. Later his articles appeared in **The Truth** published by H. C. Harper. In January of 1932 he became Editor of the **Old Paths Advocate** and served in that capacity until his death. He was the author of several tracts including **The Spirit of Christ, Building A Christian Home, The Communion, The Class Question, The Inside of the Cup**, and possibly others. Although he wasn't considered primarily a debater, he participated in several. Among them the Gay-Wolf debate on "The Kingdom" in 1912, Gay-Jones on the "Wine Question" in 1939, and the Gay-Hines on the "Class Question" in 1948.

As a young lad of twelve I was privileged to attend every night of the debate with Dr. Hines. It was in a situation like this that Homer Gay could really shine. Dr. Hines was highly educated, well known, refined, and had written the "Question and Answer" column of the **Gospel Broadcast** for a number of years. In Dallas circles Homer Gay was relatively unknown. With his homespun humor, and quick wit Brother Gay literally confounded the refined Dr. Hines. Time and again he would take one of the columns from the **Broadcast** and say "Now let's read from Brother Hines" "Invariably Hines would contradict in the article what he had said in the debate, at which point brother Gay would say, "we have Hines debating Hines." The discussion became so lop-sided that by the end of the debate the people backing Dr. Hines challenged for another debate. Which resulted in J. Ervin Waters meeting Logan Buchannon the next year.

My first recollections of Homer Gay center around my childhood in Ft. Worth. He would come by the old Vaughn Blvd. Church and preach from time to time. Back then the preacher usually stayed in a different home each night. I could hardly wait for "our night" to keep the preacher. I can still recall such a night when Homer stayed with us. We sat up listening to his "stories and tales" from places far and wide. It was because of men like him that I determined early in life that I wanted to be a preacher.

In 1952 I made a little talk at the Sulphur meeting after which Brother Gay invited me to travel with him. During the next two years it was my privilege to do so. I sat at his feet day after day listening to him preach, discuss scripture, and in personal conversation. It would be difficult to measure the impact he had on my life both personally and professionally. We traveled many miles together; all of which I still cherish today. Homer Gay was a very funny man. He could tell a story that wasn't necessarily funny but the way he told it, made it funny. His wit often spilled over into his preaching. He usually accentuated his preaching with illustrations. These stories drove home the point he was trying to make. Through the years he preached a sermon titled "Traveling." In it he recounted the story of his family's move from Arkansas to Texas. He then made comparisons to things that happened on that move to our journey from earth to heaven. The sermon was unique and everywhere he preached it, it was well received. In those days there were no tape recorders and I well remember a brother saying, "I wish there was some way we could preserve that sermon." I have often wished the same thing.

For a number of years prior to his death he wrote a monthly article for the **Old Paths Advocate** titled "Timely Suggestions." His usual wit came out in these writings. Some of them were very pointed and often addressed topics

few were willing to address. He never shrank from saying what he felt needed to be said. In fact when he talked to you and pointed his finger at you and you could see the twinkle in his eye, you knew you were about to hear something that you might not exactly like. He said it anyway. I could never thank him enough for what he did for me. Many have been the times since he went away that I have wished I could once again sit down with him, as we used to, in the swing on old sister Palmer's porch at Lowery, AL and have another of those good talks.

The influence he had in the brotherhood in his later years was very significant. Winds of unrest were blowing over the divorce and remarriage issue. He had always believed that the death of a companion was the only situation that allowed for re-marriage, however, he did not draw lines of fellowship with those who accepted the "exception" of Matthew 19:9. He once told me, "I personally don't believe there is an exception today, but I hope there is." He did not refuse to worship with those who were so divorced and remarried. Some brethren tried to push him toward a more radical stance. He refused. It would have been very difficult, if not impossible, for the division that eventually came over this issue to have come about while he was alive, simply because of the influence he had at that time.

In later years he moved from Lebanon, Missouri, to Dallas, Texas, where he served as an elder with Brother Hugh Hinton. During this period his health failed. A heart condition greatly curtailed his activities. On the twenty-fourth day of May 1958 sister Gay called home from her job to find him ill of a heart attack. She called a taxi and rushed home finding him hardly able to breathe. He was taken to the hospital, but around 11:30 A.M. he slipped into eternity. Funeral services were conducted May 27, 1958, at 2:20 in the afternoon. Brother Homer L. King long time friend and associate officiated, assisted by Fred Kirbo and this writer. The June issue of the **Old Paths Advocate** carried a brief announcement of his death on the front page. The July issue was dedicated to remembrances of him by a number of preachers and brethren. Brother King wrote "As I try in vain to find words and thoughts adequate to express in my weak way a suitable tribute to my dear old Pal, companion in the gospel, co laborer in preaching, singing, debating, associate editor of the **Old Paths Advocate**, since its beginning, January 1, 1932, over 26 years, and neighbor in the same community, near Lebanon, Missouri, for many years; I shrink at the thought of my task, and I ask all to pardon my humble, struggling effort." Fred Kirbo wrote "My old pal has left me and there is an emptiness in my heart that only he can fill. God surely had a special blessing for me when He directed his footsteps my way. He was the preacher when I walked down the aisle to confess my Saviour. He was the preacher who taught me to love Jesus and influenced me to righteous living, more than any man living on earth."

The accolades of those who wrote all testify to the esteem in which he was held. He was loved and respected by many. From small humble beginnings he had risen to be a leader of people. He was resolute in his convictions, sincere in his beliefs, and a real joy to know. At the relatively young age of sixty-three he was gone, and at a time when he seemed so desperately needed.
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RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY

BY RONNY F. WADE

Historically speaking, religious controversy has been unpopular with most people. Many believe that spirituality and morality are not debatable subjects. Because of this there has been a tendency on the part of some to brand all religious debating and discussion as counter productive. This attitude essentially represented the thinking of both Thomas and Alexander Campbell when they began their work in Western Pennsylvania almost two hundred years ago. In 1820, however, Alexander Campbell, against his inclinations, engaged in "a dispute" with the Rev. John Walker, a member of the Seceder denomination of Presbyterians. That "dispute" not only changed Campbell's view of religious discussions, but also set the course for future debates that would change the entire movement to restore New Testament Christianity. Out of those debates grew the realization that religious differences could be discussed in an atmosphere that not only contributed to the free expression of differing views, but also fostered mutual respect among those involved.

From those days to the present those who seek truth often discuss their differences both publicly and privately in an effort to resolve them. The pages of the **Old Paths Advocate** have often carried such debates. As differences arose, attempts were made to investigate both sides of the issues in the hope that free expression of beliefs would lead to a resolution of the conflict. In August of 1930 H. C. Harper and J.N. Cowan engaged in a debate on the number of cups to be used in the Lord's Supper at Graham, Texas. That exchange resulted in a written discussion between the same two men that was published in the March issue of **The Truth** (which later became the **Old Paths Advocate**) 1931. These two debates were both historically significant. Both Harper and Cowan were representative men. Cowan was anti-Sunday School and had debated that question a number of times, gaining a reputation as an accomplished polemicist. Harper, both a preacher and educator was an excellent writer who was both clear and forceful in argument. Their debates helped focus and define the issues between them at a crucial time in this developing controversy.

In 1939 Brother N. L. Clark challenged Brother Homer L. King to debate the question of a plurality of cups in the communion. It was agreed that the discussion would be published in both the **Old Paths Advocate** and **Church Messenger**. It was in many ways a landmark discussion. Both men were well qualified to represent their respective positions. Brother Clark was held in high esteem as a writer, preacher and debater. He was a Christian gentleman of the highest order. Brother King was equally respected and capable. The debate came at a time when the battle over the number of cups to be used in the communion was raging and served to settle the matter in the minds of many.

Later in 1949 Brother Homer A. Gay met Dr. J.L. Hines in debate in Dallas, TX. To the casual observer these two men were greatly mismatched. Dr. Hines was well respected by those among whom he worked. He served as the writer of the "Question and Answer Column" in the **Gospel Broadcast** published by Eugene Smith. Homer Gay at the time was an editor of the **Old Paths Advocate** and wanted nothing more than to preach the gospel in a simple and forceful manner. Dr. Hines no doubt thought that his task would be an easy one. He soon found out differently. Brother Gay was more than equal to the task in fact by the time the debate was

completed it was clearly evident that Brother Hines had more than met his match. Truth never shined any brighter. The last night of the debate those brethren backing Dr. Hines and Sunday schools, individual cups etc. challenged for another debate.

The next year J. Ervin Waters debated Logan Buchanan in Dallas. Brother Buchanan was an excellent speaker and well prepared to defend his position. Brother Waters brought to the debate years of experience. He had debated the cups and class issues extensively in California and other places gaining a reputation as an outstanding polemicist. It would be Ervin Waters who, more than any other, would represent the cause of those opposing individual cups and bible classes, during the decades of the forties and fifties. In this debate as well as many others he upheld the truth in a clear, factual, and forceful manner. Ervin was always well prepared. He possessed an analytical mind, resourceful knowledge, and forceful delivery. As a result when there was reason to do so brethren from far and near called upon him for his services. He was respected by friend and foe alike and during those years rendered an invaluable service to the cause of truth. During the week following the Buchanan debate a gospel meeting was held in Dallas and a new congregation was established. The fruits of both these debates and the meeting are still evident some fifty-plus years later.

Another preacher who distinguished himself in debate was E.H. Miller of LaGrange, GA. During the fifties and sixties he traveled widely both preaching and debating. There have been others who from time to time have taken up the torch in both public and private discussions.

This brief article is not intended to be an exhaustive study of those who have debated or of the subjects discussed. We should be aware however that controversy is ever with us. As long as differing views exist brethren should be able to get together and discuss those differences with love and mutual respect. When such is the case, only good can follow. Any discussion that deteriorates into a slugfest is wrong and unfortunate. Religious controversy followed Christ and it will surely follow us. We all must be prepared to deal with it in a manner befitting children of God. This paper has lent itself to discussions regarding such issues as "The Christian and Carnal Warfare," "Fermented Wine or Grape Juice," "Bible Classes," "Plurality of Cups," and many others all to the profit of those who read them. May we always be open to a frank, truthful discussion of our differences in the spirit of our Master who Himself defended what was right and opposed what was wrong. rfwade@mchsi.com

THE PAPER'S POSITION ON WARFARE

BY GREG GAY

The position the **Old Paths Advocate (OPA)** has taken through the years is that Christians should be conscientiously opposed to participation in military service. While this position is correct according to the scriptures, it is not at all popular with others in and out of the religious world. In the early days of the church, the confession of belief in Christ was cause for persecution. In the United States' culture, the conscientious objector (CO) position, more than any doctrinal position that we take in our fellowship, exposes us to public scrutiny that has resulted in many occasions of uncomfortable disagreement, confrontation, and even suffering for the cause

of Christ. It is every Christian's desire to lead a "quiet and peaceable life. . ." (1 Timothy 2:2) but sometimes being both a citizen of Heaven's kingdom and a citizen of an earthly kingdom creates circumstances where a Christian must respectfully refuse to obey the rules of an earthly kingdom. When such conflicts occur we are to echo the words of Peter and the other Apostles, "We ought to obey God rather than man" (Acts 5:29).

Being CO's to military participation does not mean we have any desire to be disloyal to our nation. Paul considered his citizenship to be a great blessing (Acts 22:28) and so do we. Being opposed to military participation does not mean we object to a nation's right to engage in war as it chooses, or that we would withhold our taxes from a nation that engages in war. Jesus himself urged the payment of taxes to the nation of Rome that was continually engaged in wars (Matthew 22:21). Paul commanded the same of the church as Rome (Romans 13:7). Being opposed to military participation does mean, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (2 Corinthians 10:4) so we are to have the desire to "do violence to no man" (Luke 3:14) and to "live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18).

The United States was between wars when the **OPA** began in 1932. World War I had ended just fourteen years earlier in 1918. There were only nine years to go before December 7, 1941 when the Japanese attacked the United States at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, to begin the United States' involvement in the battles of World War II. J. D. Phillips, writing in the April 1934 issue of the **OPA** said, "The last quarter of a century has been a time of transition, marked by momentous events. Outstanding among these have been the great world war (WWI), resulting in the breaking up of old political systems in Europe, leaving the nations struggling under colossal debts; the forming of the League of Nations, and the World Court; the holding of disarmament conferences; the adoption of Peace Pacts for outlawing war; the great upheaval in China; and recently the signing of an agreement between Italy and the Vatican, by which the latter is recognized as a temporal State."

Dan J Ottinger, of Chicago is quoted in the August 1935 issue of the **OPA** as predicting more participation in war for America in the future. "Most men capable of giving a fair opinion tell us that a new European conflagration will burst forth in from three to ten years, however, most of them say it can't be over three years. The shortest elapsed time between any two of our nation's wars has been 13 years, and the longest time has been 33 years. What means this? It means that on the law of averages America will again be hurled into a human maelstrom in from one to seventeen years. Will America stay out of the next foreign war? Impossible, so long as we assert our "right" as a world power to trade with belligerent nations. That doctrine brought us into the last war, and it will bring us into the next one."

Ottinger proved to be correct with WWII looming in just a few years. The reason he was correct was not because of any revelation, but because of the predictable way nations interact—as well as the history of the United States regarding war. America, like most nations, has a history of war. The wars of America include the Revolutionary War (1775 to 1782), the war of 1812 (1812-1815), Indian Wars (1817-1898), Mexican War (1846-48), Civil War (1861-1865), Spanish-American War (1898-1902), World War I (1917-1918), World War II (1940-1945), Korean War (1950-1953), Vietnam (1964-1975), Gulf War (1990-1991), plus the

conflicts in the "War on Terror" since the events of September 11, 2001.

From its beginning in 1932, the **OPA** has taken a position against a Christian's participation in military service. The November 1932 issue of the **OPA** has an article on war by Frank Judy of Fresno, CA; "Shall Christ or Caesar Have the Preeminence?" In the article, Judy explains, "The Christian is to be in subjection to the laws of the land in which he lives as long as such laws do not keep him from following Christ. It is right that we should render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, but can you imagine the apostle Paul forgetting the need of the churches and the need of preaching the gospel of Peace in order to fight in the wars of Rome?" The tenor of the article is against a Christian's participation in the military.

The position of nonparticipation is not unique to our fellowship in the religious world. It was a very old position when it was first presented on American soil in the late 1600's. William Penn, who helped found the colonies of Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey was a Quaker and pacifist. "The National Registry for Conscientious Objection" website in an article, "Brief History of American Pacifism," reports that "the framers of the U.S. Constitution even considered including an exemption from military service for conscientious objectors in the Second Amendment" (<http://www.peaceabbey.org/confcenter/coregistry.htm#registry>). The site also reports that "at the onset of the Revolutionary War, George Washington issued a draft order, which was a call to 'all young men of suitable age to be drafted, except those with conscientious scruples against war.'"

Various conscription methods were used to place men in military service during the various United States' wars prior to World War I. The Selective Service system was formed in 1917 and used immediately to draft nearly three million men into military service. There were some exemptions from service for certain job and family situations but there was little offered the CO beyond noncombatant service.

From its beginning up to the time of World War II the **OPA** ran various articles dealing with suggestions of how to help our CO's gain acceptance by the government. There was discussion through the years about whether noncombatant service would be acceptable. In the February 1939 issue an article, "What About Noncombatant Service?" was submitted by Burley F. Black of Ottumwa, Iowa. In his piece he correctly says, "In making representations to the War Department, as to our convictions against carnal warfare, brethren, let us be careful about making hasty promises. Some are offering to do "noncombatant service," but I believe this is a serious mistake." Black points out the problems of forsaking the assembling and worship and asks the question: "If it were right for one to do so (forsake the assembly), it would be right for all and what would become of the church?"

The draft of soldiers for World War II actually started before the Pearl Harbor attack. Homer King wrote the following in the October 1940 issue: "The Conscription Bill is now law, and it seems that many of our Christian boys will have to register before another issue of the **OPA** is off the press. We do not have a copy of the questionnaire, but we presume it will be on the order of the other world war questionnaire. If so, you will find a place to register your conscientious objections to combative carnal warfare, hence do so, as the bill promises to respect it."

According to "The National Registry for Conscientious Objection" website, "in World War II, a total of nearly 43,000 Americans refused to fight for reasons of conscience: 12,000

served in Civilian Public Service, 6,000 went to prison and 25,000 served in the military as noncombatants." My father, Homer (Sonny) Gay, Jr. was one of the conscientious objectors who served in Civilian Public Service (CPS) during World War II.

Congregations and individuals contributed to help the CO's have a little money each month while they were in camps. Homer King helped distribute and keep track of these funds and published news of the boys who were in the camps. The following appeared in the March 1946 issue: "Some changes have been made in our lineup the last few days. Brethren Batsell Moore, Fred Kessinger, Jr., and Travis Cogburn have been discharged from CPS, and their freedom is better for them than the contributions, hence we have dropped them, at their request. But, since Homer Gay, Jr., was transferred from the government-operated camp to a religious operated camp. Three Rivers, Calif., he should be placed on our list for contributions again. This leaves ten brethren at least, entitled to contributions, but prospects are that some will be discharged in the next month or two, and we pray for the discharge of all in the near future. The camp at Mancos, Colorado, being closed Leonard Hendrickson, Homer Gay, Jr., transferred to Three Rivers, Calif., where Bill Harman, Jesse French, and Luke Robertson, are in service. Transferring to Gatlinburg, Tenn., are J. B. Spradley, H. C. Welch, Jr., Bracy Smith, Guy Mallory, Jr., Clayton Fancher, and Ben Frentrup...Lewis Cogburn is still at Marion, Va.. Howard King and Kenneth Triplett are also at Marion, Va., but being yet single and in detached service, do not receive contributions from this source."

In the May 1951 issue, during the Korean War, the **OPA** announced a policy that continues to this day, "Bro. Ben Frentrup, of San Antonio, Texas, makes a good suggestion, i.e.: that we formulate a brief statement, covering the position, generally, of the ones who want to go on record as being opposed to all forms of carnal warfare, run the same in the **OPA** each issue, giving all the young brethren who have registered as such, or who may be called upon to register within a year or so to go on record as to their stand, I am adopting this plan in order to conserve space and to avoid unnecessary reiteration. Therefore, in the next issue of this paper, we shall give in substance the principles, scriptures, and arguments contained in the statements in this issue by Brethren James Orten, Wayne DeGough, and Ted Warwick."

From the articles by James, Wayne, and Ted the position statement was formulated that first appeared in the June 1951 **OPA** and is still published to this day under the title of "My Position on Carnal Warfare."

Through the years many in the church have worked tirelessly to help CO's during times of the draft and of war and have been willing to make appearances to testify at trials and even before congressional hearings. The **OPA** has long encouraged brethren to apply for CO status and to be willing and glad if it becomes necessary to work in alternate service, such as conservation efforts, hospitals, or service industries. Many brethren among us have worked in alternate service, some served in camps, as in World War II, and a few went to prison because they were not allowed their CO classification.

Today the Selective Service System stands ready to institute the draft at a moment's notice in the event of the authorization to do so. According to its website, the mission of the agency is "to provide manpower to the armed forces in an emergency; and to run an Alternative Service Program for

men classified as conscientious objectors during a draft." The site also says of those who would be CO's: "Beliefs, which qualify a registrant for CO status may be religious in nature, but don't have to be. Beliefs may be moral or ethical; however, a man's reasons for not wanting to participate in a war must not be based on politics, expediency, or self-interest. In general, the man's lifestyle prior to making his claim must reflect his current claims."

In the final analysis, Jesus tells God's people to be loyal to their nation's government wherever they live, yet to draw the line in matters that are contrary to our greater allegiance to the Kingdom of God. That is the position the **OPA** has stood for since the earliest days of its existence, and it is the position it still stands for today. 1820 Casterbridge Drive, Roseville, CA 95747, papagreg@aol.com

CONGREGATIONAL COOPERATION

By *BENNIE CRYER*

New Testament doctrine is easy to violate and it is not the most popular subject around in the eyes of a few people. A recent survey by LifeSiteNews.com (March 7, 2005), however, indicates that a vast majority of members from "Christian" religious organizations (91%) disagree with this assessment. In a survey designed to determine why many denominations are losing members, they listed the "lack of apologetics"—the reasoned defense and explanation of Christian doctrine—as one of the main reasons for the collapse. I personally believe the Bible teaches that strong doctrinal preaching and teaching are necessary in order to have strong, growing congregations and a healthy brotherhood. The Apostle Paul teaches, "This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth" (I Titus 1:13-14). "Sound" literally means being "healthy" or "well" in body. If we are going to be "sound in the faith" we must have sound doctrine. This journal makes no apology for publishing strongly written articles about doctrinal issues such as congregational cooperation, because there is always the danger of repeating mistakes in our history.

The growth of the brotherhood has exceeded the expectation of many of its friends and most of its enemies. This growth can be well described with impressive numbers. For the purpose of this article, however, that growth is best described by our willingness to lay aside practices when they have proved to be wrong. It takes maturity to do that whether you are an individual, a congregation or a brotherhood. As a brotherhood we admit to mistakes in the past and thank God for those who stood "sound in the faith" and taught us the way of the Lord more perfectly. Such is the case regarding congregational cooperation in doing evangelistic and benevolent work.

The following is a brief history of some of our experiences with overcoming departures from the truth, and warnings about the seed of error still within. We must continue to watch lest the liberal plant of unscriptural cooperation (God does regulate congregational cooperation) spring up and spreads its destructive, poisonous tentacles among us. The dates you read after a statement refer to the issue of the **Old Paths Advocate** that contains the information.

California Beginning

The congregation where I served as an elder for more than ten years credits its beginning to the work of two of our preachers who were being paid from what proved to be an unscriptural fund. This fund was created on the West Coast for the purpose of doing mission work. It was a highly effective plan, but

effectiveness does not make a plan scriptural.

In this plan several congregations would pool a suggested one half of their contributions into a special fund (11/1/42). This fund was extra-congregational and controlled by selected brethren. Preachers were "engaged" at the annual California Labor Day meeting by the leaders of fifteen or more congregations and, instead of being paid by a congregation, they would be paid out of the special fund (10/1/43). If the preacher happened to receive some extra money from a congregation, he was to report this to the brethren in charge of the fund and that amount of money was deducted from his monthly salary. As new congregations were established they were encouraged to participate in the "Systematic Mission Work Program" as it was called (1/1/42; 3/1/42).

A number of preachers were being supported from the fund at the same time. From one end of California to the other, local congregations were started under this system. The growth was so phenomenal that one brother wrote, "They are doing a great work, and I pray brethren everywhere will follow their example..." (6/1/42). By 1943 preachers reported, "we are en route to that great work in California" (1/1/43). Most of the preachers who worked under that fund would not do it today. But, I have to observe that while they could blister the "American and Foreign Missionary Societies," and the divisions its centralized funding caused, they could not or would not see that they were operating under the same type fund. It just had not gotten as large.

The Centralized Fund Idea Spreads

Circumstances that developed during World War II helped spread the idea of centralized funds for missionary work. A prominent brother from California feared a Japanese invasion of Los Angeles and went to Missouri to investigate the possibility of moving there for the duration of the war. While there he gave a glowing report of the work in California. One of the brethren in Missouri, after hearing and reading about the mission fund's success, wrote, "We have recently agreed upon putting into practice about such a plan for the next two years at least. Funds are building up...as the churches are cooperating nicely in a financial way" (3/1/42). When this fund eventually came to an end, evidently in 1946 or 1947, it was reported that a small balance remained in it (1/1/46). Some of the strongest objections to the plan came from brethren from Missouri, and, as has been shown in recent years, they now stand opposed to anything that even looks like a centralized fund or decision-making body outside of a local congregation.

Oklahoma Next

One of the preachers from Oklahoma, after conducting meetings in California, observed that California was to be commended for keeping preachers in the field. In contrast to that work, he reported, "A lot of brethren in Oklahoma believe in keeping the preachers in the field, but the wrong field—the cornfield. Brethren let us do some mission work" (1/1/42). Keeping the preachers out of "the cornfield" almost became a battle cry for Oklahoma mission work, if not for the whole brotherhood. The "Systematic Mission Work Program" became a reality in Oklahoma one year later. It was reported in the January 1943 issue of **OPA** that a number of brethren met at Sulphur, November 1, 1942 and adopted a "six-point" plan that included the forwarding of money from local congregations into a centralized, extra-congregational fund. Several congregations selected one man to receive and distribute the funds. From this fund the preachers were to receive "adequate support" according to the plan.

Further Growth of the Idea

The centralized-fund idea continued to grow in similar fashion until it had found its way into congregations in at least six different states, even though it was "foreign to the spirit, tenor, and teaching of the scripture" (11/1/57).

Centralized Fund Enters Area of Benevolent Work

When our conscientious objectors were placed into work camps during World War II they found themselves needing financial support. The money required for this work was sent from individuals and congregations to a centralized fund and the money distributed as needed by the brother responsible for it (4/1/43). It seemed the easiest and most effective way of doing that work. The scripturalness of such plans was seriously questioned by only a few until the latter part of that decade. During this time there were a few congregations that sent money directly to the conscientious objectors.

Foreign Fields

This area has not escaped "the centralized fund" application. From the gathering of support to send preachers and their families overseas, to the support of indigenous preachers, poor members, and orphans of foreign countries, the centralized fund idea has had its advocates and practitioners (12/1/57).

By the 1950's the sentiment against the centralization of funds and power had developed to such an extent that one preacher actually withdrew his name from the list of missionaries volunteering to go to Africa. He withdrew because "the fund" had reared its head again in the collection of money to send the missionaries. About this time another centralized fund came to an end out of which African preachers were being supported (8/1/58). Those responsible for the administration of this and other funds "surrendered" their preference of what they called a "more systematic and workable" plan (8/1/58).

Foreign work took on new momentum and forged speedily ahead when a suggestion, which everyone could agree on was adopted. One preacher summarized the suggestion with these words, "...it is my sincere feeling that the present system of centralizing the funds for this work and all other foreign work, as well as here at home, will continue to be questioned if a change, and a small one really, is not effected...Let us support the African work and all mission work, but in a way that cannot be questioned— [sending the support] to the preacher direct" (4/1/58). Since that time the "direct method" has been mostly employed in our work at home and abroad and has proven to be very effective.

An Old Problem in a New Setting

The centralized fund idea lay almost dormant during the next two decades. However, its seed still existed for, as you probably have already noted, some brethren merely surrendered their "preference" when they agreed to work under and with the direct-support plan. They still suggested that their plan was "just as scriptural as any that had been suggested. . ." (12/1/57). So, because of this, we have carefully, prayerfully, and scripturally guarded our mission programs. However, some have forgotten to be just as careful in our approach to the benevolent work and now problems have arisen in the area of caring for orphans and the poor. If it is wrong to centralize funds for evangelistic work it is equally wrong to centralize funds for benevolent work.

Wise brethren found a scriptural, peaceful, and workable solution to this problem in the late 1950's. God bless us with the wise brethren like that now so some future writer can look into our history in this matter and credit us with standing for a "thus saith the Lord" and working together on that basis.

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THEY SAID IT

BY CARL M. JOHNSON

The quotations below are not found in Bartlett's book of **Familiar Quotations**, but they give you a glimpse into the contrasting personalities of the four original editors of the **Old Paths Advocate**.

"Just as Martin Luther had no 'Joshua' to continue his Reformation Movement, Alexander Campbell had no 'Joshua' to continue the American Restoration Movement under the banner of the "Bible alone." With such statements as this in 1934 **J. D. Phillips** contended that the church was adrift after the death of Campbell until men such as H. C. Harper and Homer King eventually emerged.

"I stand where I have always stood—for strict adherence to the precepts and examples of the New Testament and shall advocate that principle until I die." **H. C. Harper** lived up to this declaration he made in 1928.

"Is it safe?" **Homer King** said this question was the first one he asked himself when any issue arose among brethren resulting in strife and division. If we would consider "safety first" when we are called upon to take a stand, we shall not be found occupying doubtful ground.

"From that the news got out around that I was a preacher—I have never lived it down." **Homer Gay** made this observation about his being forced to lead worship services at his home congregation in Ft. McKavitt, Texas, in 1910. The congregation's leader Thad Warren could not make it to the building because of high water, but rather than just go back home the small group pleaded with fifteen-year old Homer to lead services. He led a few songs, read a chapter, prayed, and though he struggled somewhat while officiating at the Lord's table, he made it through.

"Yeah, he's in there." While en route from Iowa in 1944 to meetings in Louisiana and Mississippi, **Ervin Waters and Gayland Osburn** stopped by Homer King's house in the midst of the Ozarks near Lebanon, Missouri. As they arrived in front of Brother King's home in the wee hours of the night, it suddenly occurred to them that he might not be home. They turned off the car's motor, rolled down the windows, and listened for a moment in the stillness of the night. When they heard the unmistakable snoring of Brother King rattling from within the house, they came to the above conclusion.

"Let Christians get a realization of what heaven with all its joys means, and what hell with its attendant associations with the devil and his angels means, and it will end bickering, backbiting, caviling, and crookedness." **H. C. Harper** offered these words in 1932 in answer to a question about "the outstanding need in the church today."

"The reason there is bitterness and hatred among brethren despite so much from the pulpits on love and unity is because brethren preach love in the spirit of hate and unity in the spirit of faction. The way to unity is to take the Bible for our guide. But it is time for all to give the Bible a more honest study. We can learn the truth when we desire it strongly enough, and we can have unity when we decide to learn and follow truth rather than custom and tradition." **J. D. Phillips** made these editorial comments.

"No, I can't. But her father here probably can." This was **Homer King's** reply to a question from good friend Roy Bill Modgling after services during a meeting in northern Arkansas. Roy Bill was a good looking, unmarried young man at the time and he spotted a very pretty young lady in the audience whom he desperately wanted to meet. After services were dismissed Roy Bill hurriedly approached Brother King who was conversing with another man at the back of the building and asked him if he could introduce him "to that good-looking girl standing outside." Brother King smiled, gestured toward the man standing next to him, and gave the above answer.

"I knew then I was a preacher—and a big one." About two months after **Homer Gay** was baptized, he was invited to conduct a gospel meeting in a community about twenty miles away. Protesting all the while that he was not a preacher, he went to the community and conducted his first meeting. Each evening he led three songs, read a chapter, prayed, and led another song. Then he went back over the chapter, saying what he could, and finished up with "faith, repentance, confession, and baptism." He observed that his preaching was poor indeed, but he baptized forty-seven souls that week. Based upon those results he came to the above conclusion, but he quickly realized he had a lot to learn. He adds, "Yes, I too, was once a young preacher—bigger when born than ever afterward—like the wasp."

"Because when I'm on the road conducting meetings I get to eat with the brethren. But my wife and son Don have to eat on what the brethren pay me." **Homer King** gave this retort when he was asked why he was so portly while his wife was so thin. carmj@cableone.net

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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COMMITMENT AND DEDICATION

By PAUL O. NICHOLS

In Luke 14:25-27 and verse 33 Jesus was teaching a throng of people what it takes to receive the reward of eternal life. The account says, “And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. . . . So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” Again He says, “And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life” (Matt. 19:29). This is commitment.

It appears that some people don’t understand what commitment is. Marriages fail, businesses go under, churches die because of this. Jesus teaches His followers, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God” (Matt. 6:33). It is sad that many Christians have never learned commitment and dedication. It seems that some think the Lord ought to be happy with whatever they choose to give Him, as if He is a pauper looking for a handout. But God demands that He be at the top of the list, not just be allowed a small niche somewhere in our thinking. David said, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Psa. 1:1-3). This is a statement of dedication to what is right. It is not “icing on the cake” but the main course of life.

When a person obeys the gospel and becomes a Christian he belongs to the Lord. The apostle Paul says, “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).

Christ is our great example of commitment and dedication. He says, “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me” (John 6:38). “Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God”

(Heb. 10:9). Again, He says, “And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him” (John 8:29). “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4).

The apostle Paul was another great example of dedication. He says, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). He knew his mission as a follower of the Lord. He declares, “For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: (1 Cor. 1:14). He writes, “For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of” (1 Cor. 9:16). “For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward . . .” (1 Cor. 9:17). Near the end of his life he wrote to Timothy, “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. 4:7, 8). He knew he would be rewarded for his faithfulness and dedication.

Every Christian should be committed to serving the Lord to the best of his ability. We are called “servants of righteousness” (Rom. 6:18), and everyone should want to be useful to the Lord.

Many a congregation has suffered from lack of commitment on the part of members. And some churches have gone out of existence because the members were not dedicated to making it what it ought to be. Slack attendance, failure to take the work of the Lord seriously, and refusal to use their talents and abilities for the cause of Christ have been the downfall of many congregations. While the home congregation should be the most important in the brotherhood to each Christian, many have no more concern for the home church than any other. And yet that is where their obligations are. Each person is supposed to be a part of a “flock”, not a member at random (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2).

Each Christian should find a congregation where he fits and where he can exercise his talents, and there “seek first the kingdom of God” and as he has “opportunity do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10). Paul admonishes, “. . . And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not” (Gal. 6:9).

The reward of eternal life is promised to the faithful (Rev. 2:10). “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:59). - *Bonner Springs, Kansas*

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Editorial

WHAT ABOUT THE LORD'S DAY?

By DON L. KING

It seems there are questions about the Lord's Day now and then. As we have noted before, the devil never quits. There have always been those who sought an excuse to miss the worship on the Lord's Day as well those who encouraged them in so doing.

An Assembly

First, let us put a few things into the equation. It is obvious from the Scriptures that a local assembly is according to the will of God. In 1 Corinthians 14:6 Paul said, "Now brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?" Paul likely did not have in mind going to their private homes in order to teach them in this particular place. It is more than probable that he intended to do so in their assembly. In verse 23, he said, "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place..." In verse 24, he deals with the unbeliever happening into their worship. Again, an assembly is plainly in his mind. In verse 26 he said "...when ye come together," There is no doubt that God intended for the church to assemble for public worship. The Spirit also teaches us that the church is to be governed by elders, (1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1). If we could simply wander around, worshipping wherever the Lord's Day happened to catch us there would be little need of elders. Indeed, what would they oversee if we were all just at large?

Since we can see the need for assemblies of the church, it is also easy to see that our attendance is obligatory. There are some things Christians must do to please God and regular attendance of the assembly is one of them. In Acts 20:7 the Scripture says, "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." Here, is apostolic example of the early church coming together on the first day of the week. Could it be that members were not obligated to attend those meetings? Notice Hebrews 10:25 where it says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

Hebrews 10:25

The Greek text reads, "Not forsaking the coming together of (our) selves, as custom with some (is), but exhorting, and by so much more as ye see drawing near the day." (The Interlinear by Alfred Marshall!. Some believe that this passage refers to the apostasy of believers from the church and that could indeed be under consideration. After all, the church was undergoing severe persecution and it is likely that some left, or apostatized, because of their fear. The government officials cared little about those who still worshiped according to the Law of Moses. Those

continued on page five

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: In the May 18 issue of the Christian Courier Wayne Jackson answered the following question: "Does Matthew 26:26-29 teach that the church must use only one cup (container) when the communion supper is served in the worship service of each local congregation on the Lord's day? I have been asked to review the answer given by brother Jackson. First of all let me say that Wayne Jackson is a man to be respected and highly regarded for his knowledge and scholarship. He is a worthy representative of those who believe in the use of a plurality of drinking vessels in the Lord's supper.

Brother Jackson proceeds in his answer by stating **"Some Christians allege that only one container may be used in the distribution of the fruit of the vine during the observance of the Lord's supper. Advocates of this position contend that there is great significance in the fact that Jesus took "a cup," when he instituted the fruit of the vine...At the root of this doctrine is a lack of recognition that the container actually had no spiritual significance whatever; rather, the use of the word "cup" in this connection is a form of a figure of speech known as metonymy, i.e., "when one thing is put for another."**

Our brother is right when he charges that we believe there is significance in the fact that Jesus took a cup. The record could have said "he took the cups" but it did not. It could also have said "he took the fruit of the vine" but again it did not. What it did say was "he took the cup." Now according to Thayer (who is later quoted by brother Jackson) the cup that Jesus took translates the Greek word "poteirion" which according to Thayer means "a drinking vessel." Jesus took a drinking vessel, and Thayer says that the word "cup" or "drinking vessel" in Mt.26:27; Mk. 14:23; Luke 22: 17,20 and 1 Cor. 11 :25 is literal, and not figurative. So according to his own witness the use of the word "cup" in this connection is not a form of the figure of speech known as metonymy."

Brother Jackson continues by saying **"One form of metonymy is when a container is made to stand for its contents."** He gives as an example: **"the kettle is boiling."** In this example the kettle is named to suggest its contents, which is the water in it. The kettle is not the water, nor does it become the water. Yet that is exactly what brother Jackson believes with reference to Mt.26:27. He teaches that "the cup" is the fruit of the vine. that no literal drinking vessel is named or meant. His own definition that says "a container is made to stand for its contents" negates his contention. If the container is made to stand for its contents, it cannot be the contents. In 1 Cor.11 :25 Thayer says the statement "drink this cup of the Lord. . ." is a use of metonymy. In such usage he further explains "by meton. of the container for the contained, the contents of the cup, which is offered to be drunk," (page 533). Notice carefully that in metonymy we drink the cup by drinking its contents. The literal cup is still present. So when Paul said "drink this cup" he meant "drink what the cup contains."

Brother Jackson continues by saying **"That Christ was not placing emphasis upon the material container ought to be obvious from the following facts:**

1. The same language is used with reference to the "bread" and "cup." One was to be eaten, the other drunk. Since the bread (not a platter) was the emphasis relative to the first element, similarly, the "fruit of the vine" (not a container) was the focus of the second element." The problem he has here is that a platter was not named, but the cup (drinking vessel, Thayer p. 533) was named. So the same language was not used with reference to both. Jesus told them to eat the bread and drink of (out of, or from) the cup He took and gave them. The emphasis was on what Christ commanded. The command was "all of you drink from it."

2. The disciples were instructed initially to "drink of the cup," which expression means "of the supply out of (from) which a thing is taken, given, received, eaten, drunk, etc. Mt.26:29" Thayer p. 191 Rather than proving his point, the above statement actually disproves it. Notice carefully that Jesus took a cup (drinking vessel Thayer p. 533) and gave it to his disciples. He told them to drink out of (Ek) or from it. Hence the disciples took what was given to them (a cup containing fruit of the vine) and all drank from it. What was the supply from which they drank? Obviously it was the contents of the cup Christ had given them. To further prove this notice what Thayer says on p. 510 under "pino ek" (drink out of) "with a genitive of the vessel out of which one drinks, ek tou poteirou." Drink out of the cup. That is what Jesus commanded, and that is what the disciples did. To fit brother Jackson's practice Jesus should have said "drink out of the cups."

3. The "cup" was "poured out" (Luke 22:20), "divided" (Luke 22:17), and "drunk" (Mt. 26:27. All these terms refer to a liquid, not a solid container." The obvious conclusion our brother wants us to draw is that the cup is the fruit of the vine. However, not a single one of the references given above imply, say or prove that. The blood of Christ was poured out for us when He died. The fruit of the vine in the cup represents His blood. The cup was divided by the disciples when they "all drank of or from it Mark 14:23; and they all drank the cup by drinking the fruit of the vine it contained. Everyone knows you cannot literally drink a solid. But you can drink from a solid by drinking its contents. This is what Jesus commanded the disciples to do, and this they did according to Mk. 14:23.

4. The logical consequence of the "one cup" doctrine reveals the fallacy of the theory. If the use of the term "cup" demands that a church be restricted to one "container" in its practice of the communion, yet that "cup" represents the New Testament, then each would be restricted to one copy of the New Testament in its teaching program. Our brother is much to knowledgeable to make such an argument. According to Paul in 1 Cor. 11 :25 and Jesus in Luke 22:20 the cup is the new testament in or ratified by Christ's blood. Hence his argument is with Paul and Christ, not us. We merely accept what they both said by inspiration. The cup containing fruit of the vine

represents the new covenant, not copies of the new covenant scriptures. Hence the idea that we could use no more than one copy of the New Testament scriptures misses the point altogether.

Like many advocates of individual cups in the communion brother Jackson contradicts himself. On the one hand he contends that the cup is a metonymy, then says the cup is the blood or fruit of the vine. In metonymy the thing named does not become the thing suggested. The kettle does not become the water and the cup does not become the fruit of the vine. Our brother cannot have it both ways. The truth is "the cup" in Mt.26:26 and Mark 14:23 is a literal drinking vessel as all Greek Lexicons, to my knowledge, attest. Jesus took that vessel, containing fruit of the vine, gave it to His disciples and commanded them to drink of or out of it. We should follow that example today. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade 2254 E. Raynell Springfield, MO 65804 or rf Wade@mchsi.com)

THE POPE. . .? AND SAINTHOOD.

By RICHARD DeGough

The passing of the Pope of Rome has initiated various calls from all over the world to honor him and to declare him a saint. The denominational societies have joined in with the Catholics in this endeavor; however some questions need to be addressed as to who he really is. The man himself had traveled the world as an ultimate man of peace and promoting love and good will for all men. Who was he in reality ? If the God of heaven doesn't know then no one does.

MAN OF SIN

The apostle Paul writes of him and his predecessors as the :man of sin;...whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. He was the emblem of deception and unrighteousness, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. He is the Wicked one whom the Lord will consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming. (II Thess. 2:3-12) Millions are deceived by him and the organization he represents, and will be damned because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. These also believed not the truth and had pleasure in unrighteousness.

MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

He is the head of the organization that John wrote of calling it;...the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. She is arrayed in purple, scarlet, decked with gold precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abomination and filthiness. She also is drunken with the blood of the saints,

and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: . . .(Rev. 17:1-6)

VICAR OF CHRIST, SHEPHERD OF ALL IN THE WORLD AND HEAD OF THE CHURCH.

How can a man who has lived with such vain and abominable titles ever compare with our Lord ? There is only one Christ who is the one Lord. (Eph.4:5) How can he be the shepherd of the world, assuming the title that belongs only to our Lord? The Lord only is the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd of the sheep and the Chief Shepherd who lived and died, giving his life for the sheep. (Jno. 10: 1 1, Heb. 13:20, I Pet.5:4) Who has this pope of modern times sacrificed for, or given his life for?

How can such a man speak for God, or save mankind with so much sin and iniquity concealed in his so called church, the lives of his servants the priests, bishops, cardinals and all others of names and titles no where mentioned in Gods word ? This is not written to indict all the Catholics of the world who are so deceived and kept in ignorance. I feel sorry for them and can sympathize with them. They have had fear put into their hearts to such an extent that, if they speak one word against, or depart from one ordinance of this monstrous organization they will be Anathema, cut off forever from the love of God. May God help us to reach them with the pure gospel and the Lord save as many as possible. More can be said and perhaps you do not agree with me. Brethren, this Catholic organization has bled the world of its resources and claims the right to control every part of your life both civil and religious. Check it out by reading history gone by and see if one single thing has been deleted from these claims I have mentioned.

.....
• The new minister's family was presented with a pie •
• baked by a congregational member who was a rather •
• poor cook. The pie was inedible, so the minister's wife •
• reluctantly threw it into the garbage. The preacher was •
• faced with the problem of thanking the baker and at the •
• same time being truthful. After much thought, he sent •
• the following note: "Thank you for being so kind and •
• thoughtful. I can assure you that a pie like yours never •
• lasts long at our house."
.....

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THE POPE, BILLY GRAHAM, AND ECUMENISM

By BILLY D. DICKINSON

When Pope John Paul II died on April 2, 2005, a media blitz ensued that subjected the world to hurtful misinformation. This fallen leader of one billion Catholics around the globe was declared, over and over again, to have been the successor of Simon Peter. Even President Bush released the following statement: "Pope John Paul II left the throne of St. Peter in the same way he ascended to it- as a witness to the dignity of human life." Peter, of course, was never a pope and the papacy came about only as the result of a great apostasy (2 Thess. 2:1-10)! It is certain that Peter's life and conduct belie such a claim, for Peter was a married man (Mark 1:30) and he refused to allow Cornelius to bow down before him (Acts 10:25-26). Christ is the head of His church and He is to have the preeminence in "all things" pertaining to it (Col. 1:18).

While I was not surprised by the media's coverage of this event, I was amazed to hear Billy Graham declare unequivocally that he believes Pope John Paul II is now in heaven with the Lord. That's right. Your eyes are not deceiving you! On his CNN program, Larry King asked Billy Graham what he thought about the matter, and he received the response that the pope is surely in heaven because, after all, he was a believer in Jesus and (according to Graham) he upheld the banner of the cross. Brethren, this is ecumenism gone to seed. Furthermore, it is the Baptist doctrine of salvation by "faith only" carried to such an extreme that it is absurd and palpably false.

Graham's theology is that one will be saved merely by believing in Jesus, regardless of all the false doctrines that one might teach and practice. Indeed, a person can actually be the head of the Apostate Church and still go to heaven! Such reasoning cannot be reconciled with the warning found in 1 Tim. 4:1-3 (where Paul gives the "marks of the apostasy" that has characterized the Roman Catholic Church): "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." It is obvious that matters of doctrine are not as important to Billy Graham as they were to the Apostle Paul. The "doctrines of devils" will not lead us to heaven, for they embrace ideas and practices that are not acceptable to those who "believe and know the truth."

The main point that I want to emphasize in this article, however, is that we have brethren in the Lord's church who manifests a similar attitude. Graham's ecumenism sounds a lot like the reasoning used by those involved in the so-called "unity in diversity" movement. Here is a question that advocates for this movement need to answer: "Is there

ANY point of doctrine that a child of God can sincerely violate that will put his soul in jeopardy? If so, what is it?" When I have asked this question of different ones in the past, the response I received was always the same silence! Do you wonder why? Well, if they admit that there is a point of doctrine- yes, just one point- that affects our fellowship with God and faithful brethren, down goes their entire movement. Like Graham, they must argue that doctrinal matters are of little or no consequence. With this we must disagree. More importantly, with this the Apostle Paul disagreed: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine: continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4:16). 2850 N. Oakland Springfield, MO 65803

WHAT ABOUT THE LORD'S DAY?

continued from page two

who were afraid could have gone back to that with no problems. Such people represented no threat to the government. Their worship would have been on Saturday and they could have done that without harm coming to them. Paul could have also had them under consideration. We know that an early sign of their defection would have been their absence from the church on Lord's Day.

However, did that possibility mean one could lawfully miss worship? Let us suppose that was indeed the case and those fearful members were leaving the church to return to the Law of Moses and Saturday worship with sacrifices, etc. Did Paul permit that? Not at all, he said, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together," (Hebrews 10:25). No matter what their reason may have been, they were commanded not to forsake the assembly. The word "forsake" in the Greek simply means to abandon or forsake, to leave behind, etc. according to the various lexicographers. When one absents himself on a Lord's Day, can it be true that he does not "forsake" the assembly? No, he forsakes it at least for that time, doesn't he? Does the man or woman who commits the sin of adultery forsake the marriage vows? Yes, indeed, and that is so even if it only happens one time! A man does not have to forever leave his wife to forsake the marriage vow by such a sin. Even if he thus sins only once, he has forsaken the vow for that one time. We can all see that.

If one can forsake the assembly when one chooses why do the rest of us have the obligation to attend? Could we not all have the same freedom to be elsewhere? Of course, we could. If the argument that one doesn't forsake the assembly when he occasionally misses for some elective reason is true, we could all miss for the same reason every Lord's Day could we not? If not, why not? If member "A" can miss for a reason other than sickness, etc., can member "B" not do the same? The answer has to be yes. If that is the case, we can all miss and if we can miss any Lord's Day, we can miss every Lord's Day and for the same frivolous reason. What is the result of that? There would be no need of assemblies and no need of elders would there? God is no respecter of persons. If one can do it, we can all do it!

The truth is the "apostasy" argument gives no permission for the forsaking of worship. It is obvious from the passage that it was the custom of some to absent themselves from the worship. Paul said, "...as the manner of some is;" Yes, some were missing and they were perhaps missing because they were afraid for their lives. Yet, Paul said, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is;" Can you imagine Paul granting approval of a brother missing to work or go fishing when he would not grant approval for one to miss even in fear of his life?

Robert Milligan on Hebrews 10:25

Milligan says, "The apostle refers here, not to apostasy from the church as some allege, but simply to the neglect of public and social worship. The time when this letter was written, was manifestly a time of persecution in Jerusalem and, perhaps, throughout Palestine (Ch 12:4). Many of the Hebrew brethren were no doubt greatly discouraged; and some of them had fallen into the habit of neglecting the regular meetings of the Church. This was clearly wrong...." Robert Milligan is said to be one of the best commentators on Hebrews and held in high esteem by many. He says it is wrong to miss the worship of the church. Even more important, however, is that the apostle Paul forbids us to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. Why do we need more than a simple "no?"

In Acts 20:7, we have apostolic example for coming together on the first day of the week to break bread. In Hebrews 10:25 we have an apostolic command not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. Does this really have to be a matter of great scholarship? Can we not easily see what is required of us? Think on these things. DLK

Announcements

CAN YOU HELP?

It is necessary to ask our readers for help again with the foreign subscriptions. A foreign subscription costs the paper several times as much as an ordinary subscription. This is due to the increased amount for postage, etc. The vast majority of those who receive the paper overseas receive it free from us because they cannot afford to pay for it themselves. However, the paper has accomplished so much good in foreign lands that we simply refuse to remove anyone from the subscription lists. Several of the works overseas exist today because the OPA somehow made its way into a particular country. We cannot, in good conscience, deny anyone the paper who love it as they do. Preachers tell us how they use the articles for seed in making sermons, etc. If you are willing to send to this need, be sure you let us know that the money is for that when you send it. When the need has been met, we will issue a statement to that effect.

THE SPECIAL JULY OPA

The *Old Paths Advocate* for July was a special issue

dedicated to the history of the paper. It was intended to be a keepsake issue that most would desire to keep for many years. We thank Brother Carl Johnson, who put it together for us as well as all those who wrote the articles for doing an outstanding job. If you would like extra copies, let us know. We had a few extra printed. The cost is .75 each plus postage or approximately \$1.12 each. If you would like 25 or more the price is .50 each plus postage. As long as they last we will sell them for \$50 per hundred plus postage. There is a great deal of history included in the July issue and the day could come that you would like to have it at hand. Now is your chance to secure it.

NEW DIRECTORY ORDERS AND CHANGES

The 2005 - 2006 national directory, Where The Saints Assemble, is ready and many have been shipped to congregations who placed advanced orders. The cost is \$3.00 each plus postage as follows: 1-5 \$1.50, 6-10 \$2.00, 11-15 \$3.00, 16-20 \$4.00, 21-30 \$5.00, 31-50 \$6.00, 51-100 \$8.00. Send all orders to Greg Gay, 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747 or email to papagreg@aol.com.

Please make the following corrections:

Richmond, IN - correct Leon Jobe's email to kd8bo@voyager.net; Whichita, KS - remove Wednesday night service; Springer Road, Lawrenceburg, TN - remove Harold Richmond, add Paul Walker, 833 Mahr Avenue, Lawrenceburg, TN 38464, 931-766-0907.

The post office returned seven directories to me from a package that was damaged in shipment. I have no idea where they came from. If you are missing directories from your order or if your order never arrived please let me now so I can try again. Thanks, Greg Gay

PLEA FOR ASSISTANCE (SPANISH WORK)

The Spanish work in Waco, Texas is requesting your financial support. We have the need to construct a new building. The current building we are using is a home that has been used as a place of worship; this location only has room for approximately 10 vehicles and our attendance is approx. 70 every Lord's Day. We are having to park on neighboring property due to the urgent need inside the building and also for more space outside. Our new location will hold a capacity of 120 and will cost \$265,000. The land was paid for a year ago. We have \$37,000 in our treasury and approximately \$14,000 from sister congregations that will go toward this purchase. We are in need of additional assistance; especially toward the down payment, since the bank wants at least 30% of the total amount of the loan. The congregation here in Waco will be able to handle the monthly payment that should be around \$1163 to \$1250 a month. If you are able to support the work in Waco, please send to: Iglesia de Cristo, c/o Johnny Herrera, 1207 Cloverleaf, Waco, Texas 76705. Feel free to call with any questions or for additional details call: 254-379-3384, 254-799-2601, 254-799-4173. Thank you so very much and may God bless you richly.

FIFTY YEARS TOGETHER

Ervie and Hattie Seale will soon celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary. They were united in marriage in Beattyville, Kentucky on August 20, 1955. They moved to Walled Lake Michigan and began their faithful Christian lives with the Milford, congregation in May of 1960. They retired and moved to Bloomington, IN in 1994. They have two daughters. One daughter, Janet Cannon currently resides in Hugo, Oklahoma with husband Gary Cannon where they are members of the Paris, Texas congregation. Another daughter, Joyce Hanson and her husband Ron Hanson are members of the Bloomington, IN congregation. They are the proud grandparents of six grandchildren: Linda Byrd and husband Leighton Byrd, Greg Hanson, Monica Cannon, Grant Hanson, Catherine Hanson, and Blake Cannon, all faithful members of the Church. A reception will be held in their honor on July 23, 2005 in Bloomington, IN. They would take pleasure in cards or letters from those who have known them or have special memories of them. Please send correspondence to: 3206 Allendale Dr., Bloomington, IN 47401



SIXTY-FIVE YEARS TOGETHER

On August 31, 2005, Raymond and Juanita Bray of the Healdton, Oklahoma, congregation, will celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary.

Raymond and Juanita were both born in Healdton, attended the same school, and grew up together in church. They were both baptized in 1934 during a gospel meeting held by Brother Homer Gay in Healdton, a meeting in which 15 were baptized.

They were married in 1940 in Healdton by Brother Tom E. Smith. After marriage, they lived in Healdton briefly, where Raymond worked for the Post Office. In 1941, they moved to Oklahoma City and lived there for 24 years. During that period, Raymond worked for Texaco, at Tinker Field, and at Fred Jones Ford, while Juanita kept a day nursery. In 1965 they moved to Mena, Arkansas, where Raymond became office manager and bookkeeper for Johnson Feed Mill. Wherever they have lived, their home has always been open to visiting preachers.

In 1983 they returned to Healdton, where Raymond operated Bray's Accounting and Tax Service. In the early 1990's, Raymond developed macular degeneration, a progressive disease which causes loss of central vision. This condition forced him to retire from his business in 1995.

Though seeing impaired, Raymond reads and studies with the aid of a seeing technology machine: a television camera which focuses on words and transfers them to a monitor. All who know him can certainly attest to his knowledge and retention of the scriptures.

In 1997, Raymond was ordained as an elder in the Healdton congregation by Brother Bill Davis. Under his

leadership, Healdton has increased our support to Africa and to Mexico and has become increasingly involved in the Spanish work in Oklahoma City and in Chile.

The Brays are parents of Bill, who lives in Goldsby with his wife Jean, Tom of Ardmore, Rebecca McLemore of Healdton, and Kathy Henderson, now deceased. They are the proud grandparents of seven and great-grandparents of twelve children.

Raymond and Juanita believe that one of the biggest changes in the Church over the years is the present-day lack of visiting and close association between families, and one of their goals for the Church is to restore that. They also see changes for the better: from first principles only to a greater depth in the teaching from the pulpit.

When asked for advice to young people recently married or contemplating marriage, they replied, "Put God first, marry your best friend, give 110%, and it will all work out! Divorce is not an option."

The congregation at Healdton invites you to send a card congratulating Raymond and Juanita on their anniversary. The address is 11 Jon St., Healdton, OK 73438



Our Departed

HENSLEY - Earl Franklin Hensley was born at Elk Creek, MO, August 3, 1930 and passed away August 19, 2005. Earl was a longtime member of the Stony Point congregation of the Church of Christ in Kansas City, KS. He was preceded in death by Wanda, his wife of forty one years, who was also a member of the church. To this union were born three sons and a daughter: Earl Franklin, Jr. of Bonner Springs, KS; William Keith of Kansas City, KS; Stanley Karl, who passed away in 2003, and Dixie Huffman of Basehor, KS. Earl had four sisters and a brother and eleven grandchildren and nine great grandchildren. He is missed at the worship service on Lord's day. He sat in a certain seat, sometimes almost unable to breathe because of his affliction. At times he would be on oxygen because he was determined to assemble for the worship service. It was my privilege to speak at the memorial service.—*Paul O. Nichols*

BAILEY - Ellie Mae Bailey passed away at her home, May 20, 2005 at the age of 87. She was born in Randolph County, AL on September 17, 1917. She was the youngest daughter of the late Luther and Nora Bowen Langley. She was preceded in death by her husband Uklet Bailey, five sisters, and 3 brothers. She is survived by her sister Mamie Keel, nieces and nephews, and brothers and sisters-in-laws. She was a member of the congregation at Napoleon, AL, where her funeral was held on May 22, 2005. Members of the Napoleon congregation sang at the funeral and did a wonderful job. It was my honor to conduct the services, along with Bro. Terry Langley. Bro. Jeff Thompson conducted the services at the grave. Ellie Mae was a

wonderful example of a Christian lady and she will be missed by many. - *Rick Martin*

McNALLEN - Candace (Candy) Lynn McNallen was born April 9, 1963 in Lawrenceburg, TN, to Paul and Peggy Walker. She worked as a bookkeeper at the City Drug Store in Jacksboro, TX, and was a member of the North Side Church of Christ in Jacksboro. Candy passed away on April 10, 2005 as the result of a plane crash in East Texas. She was 42 years of age having celebrated her birthday just the day before her death. Survivors include sons, Cody and Wyatt McNallen, and their father, Ricky McNallen; parents, Paul and Peggy Walker, sisters, Paula Roberson and Becky Spradlin; and grandmother, Carrie Hughes. Candy was very highly regarded in the Jacksboro community. An overflowing crowd from the community gathered to honor her memory and to support the family. Her body was laid to rest in the beautiful Oakwood Cemetery in Jacksboro. The writer, assisted by Brother George Turner, and Candy's brother-in-law, Brother Shane Spradlin attempted to speak words of comfort and warning. Our deepest sympathy is extended to Paul and Peggy and their family. - *Melvin Blalock*

KRAMER - Donald Lloyd Kramer was born January 6, 1945. He passed from this life April 30, 2005. He was a life long member of the Church of Christ and one of the main teachers at the congregation that meets at Rote, PA. His mother, the late Thelma Kramer, preceded him in death. Don is survived by his father, Lloyd Kramer, and his stepmother, Louise Dramer of Mill Hall, PA, and his wife, Judith Ann Bechtol, whom he married August 30, 1963. He is also survived by two daughters and one son. Also two brothers and two sisters. He was a good christian man and he will be greatly missed by the congregation and all who knew him. Funeral services were Wednesday, May 4, 2005 at 11:00 a.m. from the Rote Church with a large audience of relatives, friends and neighbors. Eugene Lockard officiated the service.

LIVINGSTON - Christine Harrison Livingston entered this world on March 16, 1925. She made her entrance into the world beyond on May 22, 2005. She was 80 years old. Christine was born in the Ashford, AL community and lived out her life in Houston County. She married Hubert Barfield Livingston and in 1950 they moved to the city of Dothan where they remained until their passing. They had two children; Charlotte and Marjorie. Sister Livingston was a long time member of the Lord's church, worshipping until 1998 with the Pansey congregation and then here in Dothan with the Hartford Highway Church of Christ. She attended faithfully until her and Hubert became ill. Hubert proceeded her in death less than one year ago. She is survived by her two daughters and sons-in-law, Charlotte and Adger McFaden and Marjorie and Eugene Holmes along with a host of grandchildren and other relatives. Christine and Hubert were an example of constant faith and service. They were devoted to the Lord and to one another throughout their life. The church here will miss their presence and their

influence. It was my honor to speak words of comfort and warning to those gathered for the service. Yes, one by one, "God's children are gathering home." - *Kevin W. Presley*

MIDDICK - Funeral services for Brother Winston Middick age 74 were held on June 10, 2005 in Canon City, CO under the direction of the Holt Funeral Home. Winston had struggled for so long with some 28 different health issues until his raked body couldn't take any more. Death came knocking in the early morning hours as he slept. His life was one of much giving and service to his family and to so many others. Five songs were sung during the service, for this man was a lover of our kind of music. Winston was indeed a very blessed and happy man, for his children numbered in double digits. The night before his demise, being the Lord's Day, somehow he rallied around managing to arrive for Sunday worship. During the service he led 2 songs and offered prayer. How impressed I have always been regarding this man and his desire to just serve the Lord. His children and wife Betty, along with a host of friends and co-workers gathered to pay their last respects. The event was filled with tear dimmed eyes and tremendous heartache. Winston will be missed by all for in his quiet way he spoke in words that touched all that knew him. Please pray for this family as they deal with deaths dark cloud. It was a great honor to preach the funeral service. I pray that the words spoken brought peace and comfort to this family. - *Roger L. Owens, 622 N. College St., Neosho, MO 64850*

CRISWELL - Gertye Mae Criswell was born May 6, 1908 and won her eternal home on May 20, 2005 at 97 years of age. Grandma grew up knowing the value of hard work and dedication first at a young age in the cotton fields and corn fields of the family farm, and then later as a faithful wife to Virgil Criswell where she was homemaker and the devoted mother of their three sons. She loved working in her garden and orchard and continued canning until she was 85. She also loved writing letters, sewing, cooking and crocheting. Most important, Gertye was a lifetime member of the Church of Christ in Washington, Oklahoma where she faithfully served the Lord. Gertye is survived by three sons with their families: Roy Lee Criswell and wife Zella of Cassville, Missouri; Harold Criswell and wife Patricia of Moore, Oklahoma, and Jimmy Criswell and wife Larrie of Purcell. Her kind acts and presence at church will be missed. In tribute to nearly a century of service her son, Roy Lee, asked me to submit the following entitled, **What Mothers Do**, "*She carried me under her heart, loved me before I was born. She took God's hand and walked through the "valley of the shadows" that I might live. She bathed me when I was helpless, clothed me when I was naked, fed me when I was hungry, rocked me to sleep when I was weary, and sang to me as the voice of an angel. She held my hand till I learned to walk, suffered with my sorrow, laughed with my joy, glowed with my triumph, and while I knelt at her side, she taught my lips to pray. She was a loyal friend when all others failed. Through all the days of*

my youth, she gave me strength for my weaknesses, courage for my despair, and hope for my hopeless heart. She prayed for me whether life was flooded with sunshine or saddened by shadows. I can never repay the debt I owe to my mother." It was my honor to be able to share with Steve Martin in speaking words of encouragement at my grandmother's funeral. - *Mike Criswell*

KELLEY - The passing of brother Phil David Kelley was a loss for many of us in the Church, and especially the church in Bakersfield and Tehachapi. He was a great and good man with knowledge and wisdom, the spiritual ingredients for a leader in the church. Barbara, his wife, two sons, David and Mike, his daughter Kathy. Also, his sisters, Katherine Ford and Virginia Young, grandchildren, nephews and nieces, friends and brethren in the Lord to numerous to mention by name that were left behind at his passing. From the beginning of the congregation meeting first in the Panama Grange hall on south "II" St. to the present location of the same at 2215 Planz Rd. Phil was a faithful leader and steadfast brother. You could always depend on him being on the "right" side with the word of God being his guide. He was ready unto every good work for the cause of Christ he loved. Phil never thought of himself as a preacher. He could and did preach in private, publicly, and on the air (radio). He was a teacher for many congregations in the state, building up the faith of brethren, strengthening them in times of anxiety and weakness. Barbara was by his side all the way, giving him encouragement as a faithful wife. His last days were spent with the church in Tehachapi because of his failing health. He carried oxygen with him in order to attend services. His presence was strengthening in itself because he was always there for brethren. I miss him and his leadership, his love for others and his great smile. He requested that I speak at his memorial service years ago and it was an honor. His works will follow him and being dead yet he speaks in more ways than I can recall. May God bless his memory in our hearts for the rest of our days. We will meet again in that promised abode prepared for God's children. His brother-in-law Tom, Darrel Brewer, his only son-in-law Mike Fox, a gospel preacher in our ranks, and this writer conducted the service. May God be with the family of Phil and especially Barbara in days to come. - *Richard DeGough*

Field Reports

Douglas T. Hawkins 409 Worthington Pl., Richmond, KY 40475, (606) 271-0529 douglast@alltel.net, June 8, 2005 — I'm currently in a meeting with the congregation in Orange, CA. I've been here a number of times since I began preaching more than 10 years ago. These folks have become very dear to me. We certainly miss seeing Bill and Alyine Modgling here at Orange. I'm staying with Alvin and Virginia Smith and am enjoying their company very much. It was so good to see brother Don McCord and our prayers are with his dear wife Wanda. I've recently been with the churches in Athens, AL and Chapel Grove, TN. Brother

Don Keeter, an elder at Chapel Grove, continues to battle his health issues. Our prayers are for him and his family too. Bro. Brandon Stephens recently closed our spring meeting at Blue Springs and did an exceptional job preaching the gospel. We highly recommend his preaching. Our next meetings will be in Aurora, MO (July 17-24) and Hoyt, TX (Aug. 6-14). May God bless the faithful.

Rick Martin, 300 Clubview Terrace, Woodstock, GA 30189, mmartin@bellsouth.net - I have just recently closed a very enjoyable meeting in Duncanville, TX. It was nice to make new acquaintances and renew old ones. We had many visitors from the surrounding congregations. It was good to have several preachers in attendance: Melvin Blalock, Joe Norton, Gerald Hill, Julio Rodriquez and Bob Johnson. Steve Bowen also attended several nights of the meeting, and it was good to see him and talk about old times. Our meeting in Marietta will be with Carl Johnson., July 10-17. We are looking forward to it. I want to remind preachers and leaders of the congregations to send me their meeting announcements. I would like to get then listed on the website. We have a fairly substantial list now and would like to have more. We also have several of the past special issues of the OPA on the site. Should you have the opportunity, be sure and check it out. <http://www.oldpathsadvocate.org/public/php-scripts/index.php>

Ecuador Report, Jonathan Bunner, July 6 - The Lord's work in this part of the world is going well. Here in Portoviejo the brethren are growing. Brother Victor Quiroz is making every effort to preach the gospel to the lost. Victor is a taxi driver and uses every opportunity to preach to his customers. Recently he told me about a lady that was really interested in learning more about the Lord's church. Victor asked her if he could take me to her house and hold a Bible study. She immediately accepted his invitation. Victor and I went together to hold the Bible study. The first thing this lady wanted to know was how to determine which religious group has the truth. I gave her a study on the history and characteristics of the New Testament church. After I was done the lady told us that she was in agreement with us. Then she started explaining how she has been reading the Bible for several years. She said nobody until now had answered her questions correctly. She also told us that her father is a Pentecostal preacher and that she does not believe in any of their practices. She has been looking for the truth and thinks she may have finally found it. This lady's name is Raquel. After this first study Raquel told us that she would like for us to come every week to study with her. So far we have shown the first two parts of the film study. During the second week of the study Raquel's mother-in-law was visiting her. She said that she also enjoyed the study. As of date Raquel has come twice to worship services and says that she likes what she has heard and seen. We are praying that with time she will obey the gospel and may have an influence on her husband who has no religious background. At this

time we are enjoying the presence of Jon Anderson from Missouri. He plans to be here with us until July 12th. He has preached twice and I have done the translating for him. Please continue to pray for us.

Jerry Dickinson, 13803 Crosshaven, Houston, TX 77015, misterjld@msn.com - I am right in the middle of my Summer meetings and home for a little while before heading out again. I have enjoyed being in Paris, Texas (11 restored to duty), West Monroe, Louisiana, and 85th in Kansas City (2 restored to duty) so far. I am impressed with the leadership in these churches. I immensely enjoyed spending time with William St. John, Bruce Roebuck, and Mike Criswell, preachers held in high esteem in their respective congregations - and by me! I appreciate and love Royce and Mary Jane Garman and Mike and Beth Criswell for their gracious hospitality. My next two meetings are in Neosho, MO and Little Rock, AR. As many of you know by now, I have made a decision to begin working with the church in Texarkana, Texas beginning in January. The church in Little Rock has agreed to guarantee the support for this work and several churches will be helping. Little Rock is still soliciting support and if you can help contact them. The brethren in Texarkana are excited and have many leads ready to be pursued, and I am also excited and look forward to giving myself full time to preaching the gospel. Texarkana is intersected by Interstate 30, US 59 & 71, and various other highways. We expect, therefore, a good number of you to not only pass through, but stop and visit as well. Also, of course, if you know of anyone we can contact in the Texarkana area let us know. With the Lord's providential help, and working as diligently as possible, we expect good things, in due time, from this work. Pray for us in this move and in our continuing efforts to fight the good fight and advance the cause we all hold dearer than our very lives!

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA, 94550, old_paths@juno.com, July 12 - We just returned home from an enjoyable meeting at the Ft Smith, AR congregation. There was one confession of faults. We appreciated the good hospitality shown us by the congregation. We made our home with Jack and Jean Jackson, who are our kinfolk but enjoyed visiting with several of the members as well. It was good to visit with Dennis Smith who has been working there for the past six years. The church seems to have grown in a number of areas. In addition, we enjoyed visiting with Taylor Joyce who has lived there for many years. We also enjoyed being at the Lebanon, MO 4th of July meeting for the last several days of it before going to Ft Smith. We look forward to being at home for a few weeks except for a possible trip into Canada with Bro Virgilio Danao during August. There are some leads we wish to follow up as an outgrowth of the Philippine work... We will report on that later, Lord willing. The July issue of the paper was a special issue put together by Bro. Carl Johnson. He did a fine job and we thank him, and those who wrote articles, for the work. However, we have a bit of a back up now on reports, etc. and we ask the patience of all who have sent things to us.

Miles King, 8586 Wilderness Trail, Scotland, AR 72141, mtking@cei.net, July 8, 2005 - We enjoyed such a wonderful 4th of July meeting at Sulphur, Oklahoma. In my opinion it was "one of the best". It was great to work with Bro. Randy Tidmore and the Sulphur brethren. Also, other brethren who came from "all over" the brotherhood were so loving and cooperative!

I must "tip my hat" to Randy for carrying a lot of the load when I got a little nervous and tired—he really carried more than 50% of the responsibility much of the time. The Sulphur brethren were so good to us. We had visits and lunch with some of them and appreciated their hospitality along with Hans Roodschild & David Risener who graciously invited several for meals at the houses they rented in Sulphur.

Randy and I preached several times the first few days of the meeting before different preachers from across the country began to show up. We were greatly benefited by wonderful lessons from all those who stood in the pulpit. I cannot begin to name each one by name. Many other brethren participated in song leading and prayers. There were several who stood before us reporting good work in foreign countries. The association and friendliness was so good with brethren from some 20 different states and Mexico. We were also thrilled by the good attendance from the congregations surrounding Sulphur. These brothers and sisters were a great encouragement to us at the first part of the meeting when our audience was rather small.

It was indeed nice this year to hear people from the Sulphur community compliment our brethren and our young people. As far as Randy and I could tell—everything was on an UP BEAT!

We had such nice weather this year with cooler temperatures and rain at times. It was so pleasant! We are very thankful to our gracious God!

Kevin W. Presley, 106 Whiffletree Way, Dothan, AL 36303, (334) 678-8999, July 7 - It's hard to believe the year is half over. The last several months have been incredibly busy and productive. The work at home continues at a steady pace. Last week, we were happy to baptize a woman who responded to our television broadcast. Two more are interested in studying and we are initiating that. My meeting schedule has taken me to several places in the past few months. In March we enjoyed a good meeting in Springfield, MO (Northside) where Irvin Barnes worships and works with the congregation. The meeting was well attended and the singing was most impressive. In April, we were with the church in Ratliff City, OK. The congregation is few in number but true to the book and zealous in the Lord's work. It was a pleasure to be with them. Next, we were with the Spring Valley, WV congregation which is always a treat. The church is doing well and we enjoyed the cooperation of area congregations which gave the meeting quite a boost. May and June were extremely busy. It was my privilege to be with the churches in

Ozark, MO, Kansas City, KS (79th and KS) and Joplin, MO. All three meetings were uplifting to me personally. We had the opportunity to preach to several outside visitors along the way and the churches are doing well. It was especially good to be with Paul and Wilma Nichols in KS City. Wilma's health has been failing in recent months, but she and Paul were able to attend every service. Lord willing, I go next to Wichita Falls, TX (Crestview), August 7-14; Mtn. Grove, MO, August 15-21 and Bandy, KY, September 9-11. Our next meeting in Dothan will be September 14-18 with Doug Hawkins and then the Alabama New Year's Meeting. We will be sending out information about that in the next few months. Keep us in mind as you make your plans!

Brett Hickey, 208 Crosshaven Court, Antioch, TN 37013, (615) 501-9246, brett-louisehickey@juno.com, June 23 - Our recent meetings brought us to Ceres, CA; Conway, LA and Corsicana, TX. Each congregation extended exemplary hospitality and received great support from area congregations. With new members and outsiders at each congregation, the timing for these meetings was optimal. It was a pleasure to develop a friendship with the Modgling's during our stay in their home. Ceres' determination to do more and do better would refresh any gospel preacher. While among the dear brethren at Conway, we were able to make our home with the Risinger's - special family friends. A 20 year old lady, who attended almost every night of the meeting, obeyed the gospel on the final Sunday. The Vannoy's were gracious hosts. Their hospitality was so overflowing that they were giving us delicious victuals. All of these congregations have opportunities to be excited about. We look forward to our next meeting at Neosho - August 21-28. Cullen Smith, Ronny Wade and Carl Johnson held our most recent meetings at Nashville. All three offered relevant admonition for us and the visitors present. Johnny Elmore stopped by on his way to a meeting in Lawrenceburg and presented a great sermon on the eldership. Kevin Presley dropped in this Wednesday and fed the flock as effectively as ever. We are generating contacts, studies, conversions and visits from a combination of efforts. Bryan Harris is managing a website and a Bible hotline so I can be freed up for more studies. Tracy Stephens has spearheaded a work to get hundreds of CD's on the Lord's Supper in the hands of cups brethren. Many brothers and sisters help address hundreds of postcards to send out into our neighbors. Three sisters are helping me monitor three hospitals in the area. Several individuals provide snacks for the ICU units. We leave our newsletter and the CD series *Where Will You Spend Eternity?* In the short time we have done this people take forty CD's every two weeks. Some of these have thanked us personally and asked for our prayers. We expect this to be productive over time. Marilyn Moss has generated several studies for us through a retirement center. Once a month a number of us meet at the building and radiate out into

our community passing out our newsletter and inviting them to services. For the time invested, this has been our most productive work. This idea was suggested by Randy Burns, but eleven others participated in our last time out. At a minimum, we are establishing rapport with scores of people in the community, but we are having positive studies as well. Our most recent convert from this effort is studying with me and two other sisters every week. In addition, she has been reading books of the Bible at a time and coming back with thoughtful questions. Several other strong prospects have been developed this way. Matt and Joy Usery have moved to the area from Athens, Texas. Matt's willingness to do anything, anytime is a shot in the arm. We also welcome the Pope's and the Vaughn's to the body of Christ at Nashville. "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012, pon.wjn.ks@juno.com, June 8 - The Stony Point congregation at the present time is in a gospel meeting with Kevin Presley of Dothan, AL. The meeting is going well with good crowds and preaching. We have had both members and non-members to attend thus far. Recently we baptized a young man in his twenties. He became acquainted with Chris Freeman while they were both in college. They studied the scriptures together. Later he began to attend the Wednesday night services regularly which led to his conversion. Since the report that I had cancelled all my meetings to stay home to be with Wilma who has Parkinson's we have received an outpouring of love and concern from our Christian friends and loved ones all over the brotherhood in the form of cards, e-mail and phone calls telling us they were thinking of us and praying for us. We have been very touched, and want to thank each and every one of you for your love and encouragement.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012, pon.wjn.ks@juno.com, July 8 - The young man in his twenties whom we recently baptized at Stony Point, Kansas City is very faithful to attend all the services of the church and is already taking part in the worship services. We are very thankful for him. Wilma and I were able to attend two services of the annual Lebanon meeting. We heard some good preaching and the singing was outstanding. It was good to see so many of our brethren and sisters in Christ whom we have known and loved through the years. Jim Franklin and his wife, Marlene, have moved back to the States after being in the mission field in Malawi for over fourteen years. We enjoyed the hospitality of their home at the meeting at Lebanon. I still preach several times a month, although I am no longer booking meetings. The Lord be with us and bless all our righteous efforts throughout the world.

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THE BACK PAGE...

PUTTING OUT THE FLEECE

By CARL M. JOHNSON

Judges chapter 6 tells of terrible suffering the Hebrews experience in Canaan as a result of their turning away from God and turning to idolatry. In order to produce repentance in the Hebrews, God allows the Midianite armies and their allies to invade Israel at harvest-time, steal the Israelites' produce, ravage "the land of milk and honey," and leave the people in deepest poverty. These scorched-earth invasions continue for seven straight years and there is apparently nothing Israel can do about it. Just prior to the eighth Midianite invasion, however, God calls a farmer in Manasseh named Gideon to deliver His people from the Midianite oppression.

Gideon is reluctant—lacking confidence that he can be successful. He wonders if God really wants him to lead the Israelite army? What does he know about warfare? After all he is just a farmer, and there are others in the tribe who can do a much better job. Although God has already promised Gideon a victory over the Midianites (6:14), Gideon asks God for signs that He will keep His promise. He tells God that he is going to put a fleece on the threshing floor and if God is truly going to save Israel by Gideon's hand, He must give Gideon a sign by making the fleece wet and the floor under the fleece dry. When Gideon checks the fleece and the floor the next morning, he finds the fleece wet and the floor dry, just as he has requested. Still, Gideon is not satisfied with this sign. Knowing he is risking God's anger, he asks God for one more sign, and he makes the test much harder. He puts the fleece back upon the threshing floor and he wants the threshing floor to be wet but the fleece dry the next morning. The ground of a threshing floor is ordinarily very hard and normally would not be greatly affected by the dew. The next morning, however, Gideon finds a dry fleece but a wet floor beneath it (6:37-40). These two signs convince Gideon that God will indeed keep His promise of an Israelite victory.

This episode in Gideon's life has caught the imagination of many people. Consequently, we hear the phrase "putting out the fleece" in many religious circles today, as people ask God for signs that they are making the proper decisions in their daily lives. Some folks believe the Scriptures have nothing to say about everyday decision-making, or they believe the word of God is insufficient or inconvenient. Therefore, they seek further revelation by "putting out the fleece." Jerry Falwell says he "put out the fleece" when he was a young preacher and demanded and received a sign from God to know what direction he should take in his life. A woman testifies that she is getting ready to take a plane trip, but is conflicted about whether she should go. She asks God for a sign. She books her flight and carefully reads her itinerary, including the fact that the airplane is a Boeing 747. The next morning when she awakens, she looks at the clock and it reads, "7:47." She is convinced God is giving her a sign that she should take the trip.

It is a major mistake, however, to use Gideon's example to justify our demand of signs from God to enable us to determine His will. In fact, Scripture elsewhere clearly warns against asking for such signs. Deuteronomy 6:16 prohibits putting God to the test by such demands, and this principle is confirmed by Jesus when He is tempted by Satan in the wilderness (Lk. 4:12). The Jews incessantly demand signs from Jesus during His earthly ministry, but Jesus steadfastly refuses to give them any, knowing they will not be content with any sign short of a sign from heaven (Mt. 12:38; Jn. 2:18). Paul implies the Jews will suffer severe consequences as a result of their sign-demanding doubts (I Cor. 1:22).

One absolute and fundamental fact is that there is no way to know God's will and to receive His guidance apart from the Scriptures (2 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 10:17). The Scriptures are not a catalog of do's and don'ts on all matters of life, topically arranged in alphabetical order. Instead, they consist largely of general and specific principles that are applicable to all life. These principles are available to those who make the effort to understand the Bible adequately. Wise Christians study the Scriptures regularly to learn these principles, so when the time comes to make decisions they have an understanding of what the Bible says about their situation.

"Putting out the fleece" is an approach used by people like Gideon who lack the faith to trust God to do what He says He will do. Twice Gideon reminds God of what He has said (6:36-37), and twice Gideon asks God to reaffirm His promises with a miracle. Who are we to tell God what conditions He must meet, especially when He has already spoken to us in His work? "Putting out the fleece" is not only evidence of our unbelief, but it usually results in our fleecing ourselves and suffering severe consequences. carlmj@cableone.net

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

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

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

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

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NO. 9

A FAMINE IN THE LAND

BY RONNY F. WADE

The word “famine” can strike fear into the hearts of people. The prospect of no food or water opens up the possibility of hunger, thirst, and even death. This was especially true in bible times, when communities were sparse and widely separated from one another. Such catastrophic events cause the most unusual and repulsive of actions. People are driven to eat unclean animals, and drink the blood of animals in the absence of water. The prophet in Amos 8:11-12 speaks of a famine of a different character. A famine of the word of God. This is the most grievous of all famines. It was a time in which no prophet would appear, no spiritual counselor, no faithful reporter, no one to point out the way of salvation or assure of the mercy of God. This is the severest of God’s judgments. Israel had rejected and trampled underfoot the word of Jehovah. Hence, God refused to respond to their cry for a message from Him. They would seek, but would be unable to find it. They would wander from sea to sea, from one extremity of the earth to the other, and be left to stumble in their own self-created darkness. Just as then, today, there is a famine of the Word of God. This one is self imposed. The word is available, but people refuse to heed or respond to it. The people have no delight in the word of God. Like those of Jeremiah’s day “it is to them a reproach. . .” Jeremiah 6:10. People are interested in what the president says. They listen to the nightly news and often quote it. With the greatest of accuracy they can quote the weather forecast, but seldom if ever refer to what God says in His word. This famine, unfortunately, also reaches into the church. Our people do not know the bible as they once did. The man of Psalms 1:2 delighted in the law of the Lord and meditated upon it day and night. David declared “thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee” Psalms 1 19:1 1. Many times what comes out of our pulpits is not what it once was. Some so called “preaching” sounds more like a psychological counseling lecture than a gospel sermon. In fact if you want to kill what some call an “exciting spiritual feast” just inject an old fashioned gospel sermon into it. When any preacher stands before an audience and talks for thirty to forty minutes and never once quotes, reads or refers to the scriptures, he is not preaching the gospel. And any church that calls him back is derelict of their duty. Because of this famine, many fail to recognize

error. Truly where there is no knowledge the people perish. The rebellious people of Jeremiah 6 were repeatedly warned, but they refused to recognize error and cried “peace, peace, where there is no peace.” Today people tend to see the good in things, rather than ask “is it scriptural?” or “is it right?” “do the scriptures authorize it?” or “what’s wrong with it?” Some even declare “well the bible doesn’t say you can’t do this” in a feeble attempt to justify their actions and practices. Jesus said “In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” Matthew 15:6-9. “Buy the truth and sell it not,” is more than a political slogan, it is a bed-rock principle of life. A. Lincoln once received a cherished gift (a bible) from a delegation of black Americans, on September 7, 1864, he said “In regard to this great book, I have but to say, it is the best gift God has given to men. All the good the Saviour gave to the world was communicated through this book. But for it we could not know right from wrong.” How right he was. Without a knowledge of the bible we could not distinguish between right and wrong and because many don’t know the difference between the two, error often goes unchallenged. A tendency to want to get along, and not create waves, causes some to refrain from challenging erroneous teaching. Fear of being accused of “causing trouble” or “making a scene” causes others to remain silent. The idea that “it makes no difference what we believe” or “that’s just your interpretation” causes many to remain silent allowing false ideas to infiltrate the church. We must stand up for the right, if we are to combat the “famine of God’s word” that exists today. The alternative is a situation parallel to that existing in the days of the Judges when “every man did that which was right in his own eyes” Judges 17:6

There is also a famine of shame in our world today. “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No, They were not at all ashamed; Nor did they know how to blush” Jeremiah 6:16. It is a sad day when people forget how to blush. But, what causes people to lose their shame? How and why do we become so comfortable with sin that we are no longer troubled when it happens before our very eyes? Could it be that we have become so familiar with it that we are no longer bothered by it? We are so comfortable around it that it no longer shocks or disgusts us? Our society is driven by advertisements, commercials, movies, television programs, etc all of which present sex, free love, and inordinate desires

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“ATTENDANCE BOOMS AT
NONDENOMINATIONAL CHURCHES”

By DON L. KING

This is the heading of an article saved from a recent newspaper (Reno Gazette-Journal) in Reno, Nevada. The writer says, “On any given Sunday, the parking lot at Grace Community Church in Northwest Reno is full and vehicles line nearby side streets. With its aromatic coffee bar and musical band, which sounds as professional as those performing in downtown casinos, the church is drawing about 2,000 people to its five weekend services.”

The article is long but the main thrust of the piece is to show that the way for denominations to increase their attendance is to throw away any name or title that even hints at a known denomination. People have rebelled at that and are looking for a denomination that will teach no doctrine, rebuke no person for missing services, gambling, drinking, dancing, immorality and on and on the list could go. The article claims that this particular organization is growing “...anywhere from 15 to 25 percent a year.” This in comparison with the known fact that “...traditional Christian Churches... are maintaining or losing attendance.” This organization began in 1990 when two small denominations merged and “it just kind of exploded,” the article says.

What would you expect to find in such an organization? Would a person go there to learn more about the Bible? Would one expect warnings against any of the things mentioned above which are condemned in God’s Holy Word? If so, one would likely be disappointed. The “...associate director at the Institute for the Study for American Evangelicals at Wheaton College in Wheaton, ILL., said Grace Community Church fits the mega-church archetype. He said those churches are defined as having more than 1,000 congregants, have more of a ‘contemporary feel’ and tend to downplay any denominational attachment.” He further said that such churches provide “... a method on how to make their institution non-threatening.”

Folks, there you have it! That is what the world really wants. Oh, many want to “go to church.” However, they want a place to worship that provides a non-threatening atmosphere. They do not want to be reminded of sin. They do not want to be told they are guilty of sin when they do anything condemned in the Bible. They want the preacher to pat them on the back and tell them they are heaven bound regardless of how they are living or what their habits may be. They want to be accepted in fellowship regardless of their beliefs, practices in worship or religious affiliations. They want to believe that the grace of God will allow them to behave in any way they choose while securing their place in heaven. This is how women preachers are endorsed, homosexual preachers encouraged, and members who live ungodly lives, fellowshipped. This is what might be

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LEADING THE CHURCH TO BETTER SINGING

By KEVIN W. PRESLEY

Music is a universal language of the heart and is truly a gift from God. It is surely no accident the Lord gave us the ability to not only appreciate music but to produce it as well. Obviously, music is important to God for it has been a part of the lives of His people through the ages. It was a daily part of the lives of the Hebrew people and was incorporated into any important public function. When the Egyptians were swallowed up in the waters of the Red Sea, Moses led the people in a song of triumph (Ex 15). When war was declared, kings were crowned, banquets were served, people were buried, and victories were celebrated, music was a part of the occasion. We're led to believe that Israel was particularly a musical people. When they were in captivity, the Babylonians ordered them to sing "the songs of Zion" according to Psalm 137. In fact, the Psalms themselves are an indication of the place of song in Hebrew life. The collected Psalms are the earliest known hymnbook to exist. Looking forward, we believe the halls of heaven will ring with the song of Moses and of the Lamb who was slain (Rev 5:9; Rev 14:3). It is not strange, therefore, that the Lord would make singing an important function within the church while she dwells here on the earth (Col 3:16; 1 Co 14:15).

Singing serves many purposes in the assembly and amongst God's people in general. It is first and foremost an expression of worship to God which should reinforce its relevance and importance to us. It is also a vehicle of education and encouragement to the saints and others who may hear (Eph 5:19). Some of the things that most impressed me as a young person when introduced to the brotherhood were the quality of singing in the brotherhood and the emphasis upon good singing. The rich harmony, new songs that were fresh and challenging, and a multiplicity of men who could capably lead were all factors that made the singing in the one cup; non-class churches some of the best to be heard. However, I believe the past fifteen years has brought a swift decline in the quality of our singing. I attend many congregations these days where I wonder if God is really worshipped and anyone edified due to the weary, half-hearted song service that we plod through together. It seems people get more excited these days about a volleyball match than a singing when we get together outside of the assembly. In fairness, that may be because some of the singings we attempt to have aren't too exciting anymore. It is, in fact, a vicious circle since it's hard to generate interest in singing that is slow, discordant and stale. However, because we are losing that interest, our singing only grows more slow, discordant and stale. The long and short of the matter is - we must have a real revival in our singing! There are many factors that could make our singing better. Obviously, better singing relies upon each person's effort to improve their own abilities and put more of themselves into the song-service. Brethren

should seriously consider the value of conducting singing schools in their communities or sending their young people to such events in other places. However, there are many immediate improvements that could result from better song-leading. If leaders would simply use a little common sense and apply some extra effort to their task, our singing would quickly and dramatically improve!

SONGLEADERS NOT SONGPICKERS

There is a vast difference between one who chooses a song for the church to sing and one who actually "leads" the congregation in that song. Brethren need to be circumspect in the choosing of song leaders for the assembly. Not everyone is a song leader just as some are not cut out to be preachers, teachers, etc. Those who have desire and ability should be encouraged but those who don't should not! I feel we have made a grave mistake over the years in considering the privilege of leading a song as a token of fellowship. I have personally witnessed brethren who hardly allow a new convert to "dry off" before encouraging them to get up and take part by leading a song. This is exercising poor judgment for several reasons. In particular, such lax standards in choosing song leaders have contributed to the decline in good singing. If a man cannot even pitch the song and correctly sing the melody, he has as much business leading that song as I have trying to fly a 747. We are all commanded to sing; we are not all commanded to lead singing. A song leader does not need to be a "virtuoso" but he does need to be able to carry a tune, pitch and begin a song correctly, sing out and retain control of the congregation while singing that song. A capable and enthusiastic song leader can make a tremendous difference in how that song will be sung. Rest assured, the singing will be NO better than the ability of those who are chosen to lead the singing.

CHOOSE SONGS WISELY

Not all songs are appropriate for all occasions. Those who compile songbooks don't intend for any song in the book to be sung at any time. They place a variety of songs in the book to fill the assorted needs of the congregation and groups of singers. When leaders open the book to choose a song to lead, they should ask the following questions: what service they are a part of, in which part of the service will the song be sung, and what level of ability does that congregation have? The Lord's Day assembly is a more solemn and worshipful occasion as our focal point is upon the remembrance of Christ's death and resurrection. This does not mean that the song service is to be a funeral dirge. It should be joyous and hopeful, but also worshipful. It is not the time to spring a brand-new, two page, syncopated, convention song on a congregation. Visitors are perhaps more impressed by the enthusiasm and quality of our singing, not by how hard of a song a select few in the group can "attempt" to sing. I dearly love convention style gospel songs, but they have their time and place. That time and place is discerned by wisdom on the part of the song leader.

In this writer's opinion, three songs are of utmost

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BABY BAPTISM

By BRETT HICKEY

The apostle Paul writes in I Cor. 11:2, "Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions ('ordinances' - KJV) just as I delivered them to you." (NKJV) It is significant that with all the needed corrections at Corinth, the apostle readily commends what they were doing right. Note, however, that the praise given was for keeping the traditions "just as" they were handed down.

Today, the divisions existing within Christendom can be traced to two fundamentally different approaches to New Testament ordinances: 1) leave them just as you find them in the Scriptures; or, 2) change them to accommodate the preferences and conveniences of the current culture.

After one New Testament ordinance is abandoned, changes in religion stay only one step behind man's imagination. Today, it is hard to keep up with them all. Innovation has so thoroughly permeated the religious world that major denominations have ordained leaders engaged in lifestyles so perverted that we blush even to name the sin. Who can tell what is on the horizon?

For now, let us go back in time to consider a change that seems less sinister. Honest and sincere people in various denominations promote, or at least continue, the human tradition of infant baptism. After all, what could be wrong with baptizing a baby?

No Biblical Authority

The book of Acts - which is a history of the first thirty-five or so years of the church - tells us of men being baptized (8:38); women being baptized (16:15); men and women being baptized (8:12); but not once is there word of babies being baptized. This fact, combined with the Holy Spirit's promise that the Scriptures "thoroughly equip us for every good work," levels a mighty blow to the "infant baptism" position. The absence of Bible authority is enough (2 John 9-11), but there is more!

Indicted By Their Own Scholars

One of the sure signs that infant baptism is unbiblical is the way their own scholars try to defend the practice. By simply reading their defense, it becomes obvious how little support they have from the New Testament.

Joachim Jeremias' book, **Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries** is an excellent example. Written nearly fifty years ago, Jeremias' defense is endorsed by a team of ten elite scholars as part of the Library of History and Doctrine. Interestingly, the book evolved from a pamphlet by the same author entitled, "Did the Primitive Church Practice Infant Baptism?" What caught my attention was the title change. The obvious lack of evidence for infant baptism in the "primitive church" demanded the more liberal title, which allowed sources beyond the New Testament age. Those who question baby baptism have to wonder, "If he can prove his positions by the Scriptures, why does Jeremias need to meander three centuries down the stream of time to prove his point?"

The renowned paedobaptist scholar begins his book with an overview of forty sources from A.D. 54 - A.D. 430. He qualifies these sources with the following words: "Texts which expressly mention infant baptism are marked with an asterisk." Then, get this, there is no asterisk until source number thirteen,

Tertullian (A.D. 200).

Tertullian On Infant Baptism

If babies were baptized by the Apostles and other first century Christians, why is there no "express mention" of it before 200 A.D.? It doesn't take a history professor to figure out that the baby baptism big-shots conceded that there is no "express mention" of infant baptism in the New Testament. There is only one explanation for Jeremias' inability to locate a scripture expressly mentioning infant baptism - it simply does not exist.

Let us look at that first "express mention." It comes over a hundred years after the last book of the New Testament was written. Tertullian, when writing on the subject, responds to those in his day beginning to advocate baby baptism: "[L]et them come when they are bigger (dum adolescentum), they may come when they can learn, when they are (able to be) instructed whether they should come, they may become Christians when they can know Christ"

Tertullian was addressing the pedobaptist argument from Mt. 19:13-15; Mk. 10:13-16; and Lk. 18:15-17. These folks, since 200 A.D. have tried to squeeze Jesus' approval of infant baptism out of passages where parents bring infants and small children to Jesus to touch them and pray for them. None of these passages mention baby baptism.

Why No Scripture?

Why is there no scripture on baby baptism? Because babies are unable to comprehend the gospel, much less believe and confess the Christ as required of every subject for baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:35-37; Galatians 3:26-27). How can an infant repent of the sins that baptism is to wash away (Acts 2:38; 22:16)?

Age of Accountability

We read of Jesus being "*about His father's business*" at 12 (Lk. 2:49). Interestingly, the Jewish Bar-mitzvah (literally, son of the commandment) ceremony celebrates the Jewish boy's transition from childhood to adulthood while the Bat-mitzvah (daughter of the commandment) is a similar ceremony for the Jewish girl. Traditionally, at age 13 for boys and age 12-14 for girls, this ceremony initiates young men and women as morally responsible. This, of course, closely parallels the time at which boys and girls change physically into adolescents or young adults.

While the age varies from person to person, babies and little children are certainly not accountable. This truth is seen when God pronounces judgment on the children of Israel. Of the adults, only Joshua and Caleb were permitted to enter the Promised Land. Yet, God says in Dt. 1:39, "*Moreover, your little ones. . . and your children, which. . . had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither. . . and they shall possess it.*" Whatever else one takes from this passage, it is obvious that babies and small children need not be "born again", need not "wash away their sins", nor do they need to "walk in newness of life." No! They are, in fact, what we must be to inherit eternal life. As the gospel of Matthew records (18:2-3), "*Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of Heaven.'*"

“DECISIONS AND CHOICES”

By FRANK BRANCATO

In the day in which we live, the Christian is faced with perhaps more distractions than ever before. Business, social activities, and recreation compete for our time and energy. The day in which assembling with the saints every time the doors are opened seems to be a thing of the past. It appears to be a common occurrence throughout the brotherhood, that we have a Sunday morning crowd, a smaller Sunday evening crowd, and an even smaller crowd for Wednesday evening services. It has become quite a challenge to get the majority of our members to support our scheduled Gospel meetings. So we ask ourselves what has changed? The answer is quite simple, even though many give complex explanations. And that answer is that we have simply made the conscious choice to do “other things”. Jesus said in Matthew six and verse twenty-one, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” And, so, the decisions that we make are directly connected to our priorities and our values.

OUR DAILY DECISIONS

A great part of our life is making decisions. Some of these decisions are those that one would consider to be “big and life changing”. For example, the day that we decided to obey the Gospel was the most important day of our lives. This was the day that we obtained the hope of salvation. Another “life changing” decision that we make is deciding who we will spend the rest of our lives with. Are we going to choose a person that has worldly values? Or, are we going to choose someone who will help us get to Heaven? But what we often fail to realize is that the majority of the decisions that we will make in our lives are not considered to be “big and life changing”. I’m talking about the “little daily decisions” that we may not consider very important. But I believe that these are the decisions that shape us, and determine who we really are. We must always remember that once we obey the Gospel, our lives have just begun. Our lives become a journey that is filled with decisions that will determine our eternal destination.

THE LORD MUST BE FIRST

Before the church was established in Acts chapter two, Jesus often used the parabolic method of teaching. In these, Jesus would “lay alongside” something the people knew about with something that they would not have understood had he not done so. In these parables, Jesus tells us that he must be first in our lives. That if anything is more important than the Kingdom (church), we cannot go to heaven. In Luke chapter fourteen, we find that Jesus had been preaching to the multitudes about the Kingdom. Then he turns to them and said beginning in verse twenty six, “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” Now obviously, Jesus did not mean that we must have hatred for those who are the closest to us, but that we must “love them less” than we love Jesus. What would have been your response if you had been standing in the

presence of the King when he said those words? Would you have said, “The price is too much?” Or, would you have been one who was willing to follow Jesus regardless of the cost? Would you have been like the one who found the “Pearl of Great Price” who was willing to sell all that he had in order to obtain it? Would you have been like the one who found a treasure in a field and went and sold all that he had to purchase the field in order to have that treasure? Or would you have been like those excuse makers that were just too busy to attend the “Great Supper”? I believe that this question is much needed and very timely today because, if we by our actions are too busy for the Lord now, we would have been too busy then. We all must remember that Jesus taught that only the “best” decisions will do. For example, playing in a sporting event or participating in other forms of wholesome entertainment are certainly not wrong in itself. But deciding to play or participate in such activities at the expense of attending the services of the church, is not putting the Lord first. To say that we love Jesus, and then take our Christianity in “capsule form”, to be administered in “Sunday morning doses”, is not loving Him.

COUNTING THE COST

In Luke chapter fourteen and verse twenty-eight Jesus said, “For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, this man began to build, and was not able to finish.” When Jesus said “whosoever”, he meant anyone. Jesus here uses the example of building a tower where he teaches them and us that we must first sit down and count the cost to determine if we are going to have enough to finish it. Jesus clearly was teaching us that we must have some contemplation of completion. How sad it is though when we see so many Christians who began to build but didn’t finish. Jesus was not looking for people who were willing to “head in his direction at their own pace”, he was looking for those who would forsake all if necessary to follow him. Jesus clearly taught that to be a disciple meant more than simply walking behind him. And today, just because we assemble together does not mean that we are the Christians that we ought to be. Jesus is looking for those who have sat down, counted the cost, and are able to say, “I am able to finish.”

CONCLUSION

It is true that it may cost Christians everything to follow Jesus. It may cost our friends and even our family. But it will cost us so much more not to follow him. It will cost us our soul. We must always remember that the decisions and choices that we make are shaping who we really are. And, so, we ask the question, “Is the Lord really number one in our lives?” Our daily decisions determine the answer. The words of Eleanor Roosevelt ring true: “One’s philosophy is not best expressed in words. It is expressed in the choices one makes. In the long run, we shape our lives, and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are ultimately our responsibility.”

THE WISDOM THAT IS FROM ABOVE

By GREG CARDOZA

When we think of the third chapter of James, the first thought that usually comes to mind is “the taming of the tongue.” We have all heard lessons on this subject and there is probably no place in the Bible that better addresses the teacher of God’s Word with regard to the good and bad that can be wrought by this little, but powerful, member of our body. James continues his address to teachers in the last six verses of the chapter, but now he deals with the action and result the teacher produces depending on the source of wisdom that is employed. The resulting scenario is quite good when God’s wisdom is used, but the opposite happens when earthly wisdom is used. While James wrote this with teachers in mind, we can all benefit from understanding and applying what he teaches here.

The Problem of Using Earthly Wisdom

James 3:14-16 addresses the action, its reason, and its result in this bad situation where the source of the teacher’s wisdom is earthly.

In verse 14 James points out the action in this bad situation: *But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.* Their actions were “bitter envying” and “strife.” They were jealous of their fellow teachers, even holding a grudge against them if they had, perhaps, more talent. They viewed preaching as a competition and all the other teachers as rivals. The word “strife” has in it the idea of one that would draw members of the church away from the body into their own “party.” This teacher was full of selfish ambition. He was more concerned with making a name for himself, being the center of attention, and getting all the glory, rather than edifying the church and bringing glory to God. In his quest for stardom, he would do whatever it took to exalt himself over those he viewed as competitors. Notice that these negative qualities were “in his heart.” These were in the “control room” of this erring teacher and guiding his actions. Proverbs 23:7 says, *For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.* Paul warns us in Romans 13:13-14: *Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.* If our hearts are filled with God’s Word we can control the desires of our flesh. These teachers were even boasting of this as if it was a good thing, but James says such talk is “lying against the truth” which means they were deceiving themselves in thinking this was the correct way to go about the Lord’s work.

In verse 15 James gives the reason for their actions: *This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.* “This wisdom” is the wisdom that governed their use of the knowledge they had concerning God’s Will. In this case, their wisdom was from earth. “Earthly” is always used to describe something from this earth, “sensual” refers to the fleshly plane, where

fleshly desires come from, and “devilish” indicates a demonic source, *i.e.* from the devil. They were preaching God’s Will, but the governing force was worldly. Their motive for teaching was self-seeking. We must be careful as teachers of God’s Word and as Christians to guard against using worldly wisdom. What does the world cry out today? It’s all about ME. The way people seek after every material pleasure days it’s all about ME. TV glorifies the self-seeker, with its “get all you can, no matter the cost” themes. For example, shows that have adultery in them convey the idea of getting what I want at the expense of others (spouse and children); it’s all about ME. The way people dress these days, with skimpy clothing, wild hair, and every part of their bodies pierced with some flashy jewelry says “look at me,” it’s all about ME. The world says, “you get what you want and grab for the glory.” This is the devil’s way: “exalt yourself.” Isn’t that what got him kicked out of Heaven? So if we employ earthly wisdom to govern our actions, then the primary reasoning will be “How can I make this work for MY benefit?” What we need to do as followers of Christ is to employ His wisdom. Did Jesus ever do anything for His own benefit? Did He leave Heaven for Himself? Did He suffer and die on the Cross for His own glory? Did Jesus ever do anything that indicated “It’s all about ME”? NO! He did it all for the glory of God and so that we could escape the penalty of our sins. We need to remember this the next time we think it’s all about ME.

In Verse 16 James tells of the result of earthly wisdom: *For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.* In this situation, there is a state of confusion. It’s a situation where no one benefits. This ought not to be, for we know *God is not the author of confusion,* (1 Corinthians 14:33). When these teachers were filled with strife and envy, the Church was in disorder. Notice also in this situation, every work is evil, which means worthless. The Church is not edified and God is not glorified: it’s a situation where everyone loses, even the self-seeking teacher (Matthew 7:21-23). In 1 Corinthians 12:7 Paul wrote, *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to profit withal.* Some of the Corinthians were misusing their spiritual gifts to glorify themselves, so Paul admonishes them reminding them that these gifts were for the benefit of every one, not just them. The teachers that James addresses, as well as all Christians, need to remember that it’s not about ME, but rather how can I benefit others and glorify God in the things that I do?

The Blessing of Using Heavenly Wisdom

In verse 13 and verses 17-18 James writes of the action, its reason, and its result in the good situation where the source of the teacher’s wisdom is from Heaven.

In verse 13 James asks the question, *Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you?* Then he answers by saying, *let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.* James asks who is using Heaven’s wisdom? He answers

by saying it's evident because they prove it with their upright manner of living. Their actions are godly, their life filled with good works, all done in meekness (strength under control), and all of this is the product of God's wisdom governing the use of their knowledge. Rather than for their own benefit and glory, their teaching benefits others and glorifies God. This is the proof that they are using the "wisdom that is from above".

In verse 17 James gives us several reasons for the wise man's actions: *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.* He lists seven characteristics of this wisdom that will produce godly actions. It's "**first pure,**" God's wisdom is not contaminated, it has no faults, it is perfect. It is "**peaceable,**" it promotes peace. Imaging how peaceful this world would be if all men employed this wisdom. It is "**gentle,**" considerate; not exercising all its rights when undue harm may come. It's "**easy to be intreated,**" open minded; willing to listen, but only accepting what is true. It's "**full of mercy and good fruits,**" it's kind; especially to those in need. It's "**without partiality,**" it's not prejudiced; God wants all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the Truth (1 Timothy 2:4). And it's "**without hypocrisy,**" it's genuine; it has nothing to hide; "what you see is what you get." These characteristics of wisdom produce the good use of knowledge and this will benefit all. All of us, teachers and non-teachers, would do well to use these characteristics as the guide for our actions.

Lastly, in verse 18, James gives the result of using God's wisdom: *And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.* Those who are guided by this wisdom will unselfishly plant the "fruit of righteousness" (the fruit that righteousness produces.) Their peacemaking ways will promote a peaceful environment for those being taught as opposed to the state of confusion mentioned earlier. This peaceful setting is like fertile soil where crops can grow and be fruitful, unlike the infertile soil where bitter envy, strife, and confusion exist. The peacemaker will work to make the environment ready to accept God's Word and grow in it, while the teacher using worldly wisdom cares only about himself. When God's wisdom is used, the harvest will be fruitful; with worldly wisdom, only "confusion and every evil work" will be the result.

All of us, teacher or not, must ask ourselves what wisdom are we using? Are we motivated by earthly wisdom to the glory and benefit of ourselves or are we motivated by the wisdom from above so that all will benefit, and God will receive the glory? We may have an abundant knowledge of God's Word, but if earthly wisdom governs our use of it, then the result will be bad. But if Heaven's wisdom is the guide then the result will be good. Let us keep this important teaching of James in mind as we labor here on Earth with our eyes fixed on Heaven. *P.O. Box 1407, Yuba City, CA 95992-1407, tcard00@yahoo.com*

SHE DIED

By GREG GAY

One night I got a call from a man in the church to meet him and his wife at the hospital to sit with a family whose relative, a lady, was about to die. The request came from a church member who was a friend of the girlfriend of the lady's son. We had not met this family before

We learned she was in her 70's. She had worked in an alcohol rehabilitation clinic for years, helping her own alcoholism while helping others. We learned she had one son who was there to care for her in her last hours along with his girlfriend. We learned she also had a daughter, who had been there earlier but had gone home before we arrived. We learned she had smoked for 50 years and that lung cancer had been diagnosed 9 months earlier. Pneumonia had set in and death was certain, the family was told.

As she neared death the family wanted some spiritual assistance, hence the calls to us. The only spiritual history we learned was that the lady had been baptized as an infant but had never practiced any kind of religion that was known. The family hoped for and asked for some sort of a blessing for her. Sadly the call for help from the church came too late to be able to help her spiritually. We talked about God, read the 23rd Psalm, and had prayer.

In such a situation about all you can hope for a loved one is that they are treated with dignity in their final hours. She was. A Doctor came by and checked on her. A nurse came by to offer a tray of food to the family. The son and his girlfriend held her hand and talked of their love for her. She struggled in her bed as though to sit up and was helped to do that. Then she leaned against her pillows, held up by her son's girlfriend while her son held her hand, and gently died. It was difficult to tell when she stopped breathing.

Our appointment with the grim reaper is only a breath away. As the old saying goes: "The young may die, the old will die." We know that is true even as we don't like to think on such things.

When our time comes to pass from this life may we be found in righteousness, having served God diligently while He blessed us with life here so we can look forward to an eternity in heaven. 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747, papagreg@aol.com

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A FAMINE IN THE LAND

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in appealing packages. We soon feel comfortable with scenes and language that at one time we would have rejected. The breaking down of barriers by familiarity results in the destruction of shame, so that we slowly come to accept that which we once denounced. There was a time when a woman, who was dressed immodestly in public, would have been scorned. Today, the same woman, can walk down the street with very little on and no one thinks anything about it. Some even come to services of the church with skirts so short and neck-lines so plunging that it is disgraceful. Nakedness and immodesty are readily accepted by the masses. Where is our shame? What has happened to our sense of right and wrong? What has happened to "shamefacedness and sobriety?" (1 Timothy 2:9) Homosexuality, same-sex marriages, promiscuity, living together without the benefit of marriage, children born out of wedlock, abortion, drinking, gambling are all accepted today by the masses. Such conduct is considered neither shameful nor wrong. Note Jeremiah 3:24-25 "For shame has devoured the labor of our fathers from our youth Their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. We lie down in our shame, and our reproach covers us, For we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers, From our youth even to this day and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God." In the long ago God declared through the prophet Ezekiel that Jerusalem was worse than Sodom and Samaria when he said "You who judged your sisters, bear your own shame also, because the sins which you committed were more abominable than theirs; they are more righteous than you. Yes, be disgraced also, and bear your own shame" Ezek. 16:52. In the final analysis people come to practice the very things they once rejected. Why? Because we have lost our shame. We are told in Heb. 3:13 "But exhort one another daily while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Deceitfulness, according to W. E. Vine is "that which gives a false impression whether by appearance, statement or influence..." Sin leaves false impressions. When we are overcome by those "false impressions" we become hardened and are led to do those things that result in the loss of shame. Some things are so evil, so vile, and ungodly that it is shameful to talk about them. Eph. 5:1 1-12 "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret." MacKnight felt the reference here was to the things that happened in the heathen mysteries. "For the impure and wicked actions which are secretly done in the mysteries by the initiated, are so abominable, that it is base even to mention them."

How can we reclaim our shame? The answer: reformation. We must reform by ceasing to practice those things declared sinful by the word of God. We must then reject (the opposite of accept) all such practices as being wrong. Finally we must distance ourselves from them, hence destroying any familiarity we might have with them.

This is done by refusing to countenance as valid any practice or behavior, regardless of how popular it might be, that is in violation of God's Word. There is a famine in the land today, and unless we take steps to correct it, we will eventually be destroyed by it.

ATTENDANCE BOOMS. . .

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expected from an organization that thrives on a "contemporary feel." No wonder the Apostle Paul wrote of those who are "Ever learning, and never able to come to knowledge of the truth." (2 Timothy 3: 7) No wonder he warned Timothy about a coming time when brethren would not endure sound doctrine! Paul commanded Timothy to "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (2 Timothy 4:2) The reason this was so important was that Paul saw a time coming when folks would simply not put up with Bible preaching. He said, "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: 3, 4)

It is amazing that the apostle looked out in the future and saw a time when people would just refuse to listen to the truth at all. He saw a time when people would call to themselves teachers who would tell them what they wanted to hear and nothing else. Paul warned that they would call for teachers after their own "lusts" or ideas. In other words, they would insist on preachers who would pat them on the back and tell them everything is all right.

How mighty is this teaching today when we are made aware of people, and occasionally brethren, who do exactly of what Paul warned. How sad to learn of brethren who see no harm in disobeying 1 Corinthians 14: 34, 35; 1 Timothy 2:11, 12; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 1 Corinthians 11: 23-29; Matthew 26: 26, 27, Mark 14: 23, etc. How sad to see folks who care not at all for the Bible pattern regarding church finances, support for preachers, needy saints, the qualifications for elders and on and on. As a young preacher, I truly believed disobedience among brethren must be due to Bible ignorance and undoubtedly, that is usually the case. However, it is a sad fact that many in the religious world, and perhaps a few brethren, do not know or particularly care what the Bible says. How tragic, how sad, and how true to what Paul warned of in 2 Timothy 4:3, 4.

We plead with all men everywhere to come back to the Bible. Let us speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent. Let us go back to calling Bible things by Bible names and let us do Bible things in Bible ways. God warned Moses to see to it that he did all things according to the pattern. What powerful advice for all today. Think on these things. DLK

LEADING THE CHURCH TO BETTER SINGING

continued from page three

importance when leaders are chosen and when those leaders choose the songs they will lead. They are; the first song, the song before the sermon, and THE INVITATION HYMN. The beginning song sets the pace for the service, especially during a gospel meeting. If the song service begins on a weary and discouraged note, the remainder of the service will not bode much better. The same is true of the song before the preaching. Nothing prepares the congregation for an engaging sermon any more than a powerful song that is led and sung well; not to speak of the fire it builds beneath the one who will preach.

Just as a song often determines how a sermon will begin, it most certainly determines how a sermon will end! Especially during a primarily evangelistic type service, the invitation song can make or break the effect a sermon has on its hearers. Many preachers have poured themselves into the effective and persuasive delivery of a sermon to have it instantly ruined by a poor song leader appointed to lead the invitation song. I have suffered through many "hymns of encouragement" that did anything BUT encourage someone to obey the gospel. There are a few common mistakes that can render an invitation song practically powerless. Some are begun incorrectly and too slowly. Most preachers wish the leader would announce the song before the sermon. In fact, I refuse to begin a sermon until the number is announced. It is devastating to a sermon when a song leader bumbles around after the invitation has been extended and calls out the number and spends 30 seconds pitching the song and walking to the front. One who is selected to lead this song should be able to have the pitch ready and begin the song the instant the preacher extends the invitation. If a man is unable to do that, in my opinion, the congregation is best served if he declines to lead that particular song.

Another mistake is leading a new, inappropriate, or overly challenging song for an invitation hymn. We have all heard of those who thoughtlessly led "O Why Not Tonight" at the Lord's Day morning service. It is just as inappropriate and, I believe, disrespectful to the preacher to lead a song that most people hardly know as an invitation hymn. Teach an invitation hymn to a congregation and have them singing it well before actually using it as an invitation song. It should be a song that has a pleading message and one that can be easily and powerfully rendered by the church. Admittedly, these suggestions are based on opinion. However, these opinions are shared by most of those who cared about good singing and especially preachers who invest themselves into the preparation and delivery of sermons to convert the lost. If each song leader would think about these things and implement some of them we would see an immediate and an impressive improvement in the quality of our singing. Surely, the

Lord is praised and He is pleased when His people render unto Him the very best possible song service! "Sing out the honor of His name; make His praise glorious" (Psalm 66:2). 106 Whiffletree Way, Dothan, AL 36303, kpresley@centurytel.net

NEW LOCATION

Dear Brethren:

The Church that was formerly known as the So. Loop Church of Christ in Dallas, Texas has relocated south of Dallas. A town that has had a population of 3,000 people is growing like wild fire with people of all races, this has never been before. Right away we began the work right outside of RedOak and is being very successful. However, we are in need of support to help with the monthly rental, we ask for a six month - one year support commitment or a one time donation of whatever you can send until we can stand on our own again. You may contact Fred Johnson at 972-617-9044 or Dominiquejj@wmconnect.com Because he made us one,
Fred Johnson

Obit. Departed

COFFEE - Ida (Graham) was born July 27, 1911 at Mt. Ida, AR and passed away July 11, 2005 in Oklahoma City. On October 16, 1932, she married Jay Coffee. They lived most of their years in Coal County, Oklahoma. Jay preceded her in death on January 27, 1984. Jay and Ida were the parents of seven children. Jay and Ida were members of the Legal Congregation, North of Coalgate, OK. Ida was a good wife and mother. The funeral was in Coalgate, OK. Randy Nelson read a poem about his grandmother. Buck Thetford gave an eulogy and the writer officiated. - *Vaden Morgan*

TOMPKINS - Ola Mae age 90 of Lexington, OK passed away Saturday, June 25, 2005 at the Noble Health Care Center. She was born February 21, 1915 in Pottawatomie County near Tribbey. She was one of five children born to Clark Stanley and Mattie Mildred Smith. She met Oran Tompkins in grade school whom she later married in 1932. The couple became parents of five children and lived on a farm in the Corbett community. In their later years they made Lexington their home. Ola was baptized on March 3, 1940 and attended the Westside Church of Christ in Lexington. Before Oran's death in July of 1991, they had been married 59 years. I considered it an honor to have known Oran and Ola. Oran and Ola's children have been very nice to me. It was a privilege and honor to officiate at the funeral of this dear lady. Jim Catlege, her son-in-law gave an interesting message about her life at the funeral. - *Vaden Morgan*

PRINCE - Mrs. Fannie Elizabeth (Lizzie) Prince, age 99 of LaGrange, GA, died at her home, May 17, 2005, 11 days short of her 100th birthday. She was born May 28, 1905 in Randolph County, Ala. She was a member of Murphy Avenue Church of Christ. She was preceded in death by her husband of 44 years, James Foster Prince, who was an Elder at the Murphy Ave Church of Christ; a daughter, Lura Wilson; and a son, Floyd Prince. Survivors include her children; Lavelle Parker, Ruth Maharry, Betty Scott, and Alice Thompson; five grandchildren, ten great-grandchildren, and a daughter-in-law, Elizabeth (Elmer) Harlin. For most of her life she was in very good health for her age. Over the last year she was bedridden. She was a remarkable Christian woman who was greatly loved by her children. This was evident by the care and concern they showed for her during a very difficult time. They willingly put their own lives on hold for their mother *Proverbs 31:28* "Her children arise up, and call her blessed;" I will always have special, fond memories of Aunt Lizzie. It was my privilege to assist Bro. Don Jackson in conducting the services at Murphy Avenue Church of Christ in LaGrange, GA. The beautiful singing was done by Glenn, Ronny, Sidney, and Cal Prince. Her son-in-law Larry Thompson led the prayer at the grave. - *Rick Martin*

GILLIAM - Annie Beatrice Bates Gilliam was born Thursday, April 18, 1912 in Wayne County Tennessee to James M. Bates and Janie Morgan Bates. At the tender age of 17 she became the bride of Samuel Harris Gilliam. They had been married for 57 years when Brother Gilliam passed away in 1986. She has been a member of the Chapel Grove Church of Christ for 70 years having obeyed the gospel in 1935 during a meeting conducted by Brother Stewart. Sister Annie was a kind and generous person. Most of us here have received gifts made by her hands when we married, when our children were born, and at other special occasions. Through the years when Lesa and I would visit, we always left with a jar of her prize winning jelly or jam along with a big hug and kiss. She was a woman who knew the meaning of hard work, and will be remembered as a person who always looked to the needs of others before her own. Sister Annie passed peacefully into the arms of Jesus on Friday, July 1, 2005 at the age of 93. She was at her home, surrounded by her children, grandchildren, caregivers, and friends, who sang, read favorite passages of scripture, and offered prayers of faith and hope. She faced death as she did life; courageously, with faith in her Lord, and the confidence that He will be faithful to His promises. She is survived by 3 sons, 2 daughters, 11 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren, 3 great-great-grandchildren, and a host of friends and brethren. She is preceded in death by her husband, an infant son, and an infant grandson. It was the privilege of this writer to assist Brother Johnny Fisher with her memorial service. - *Ed Daniel*.

Field Reports

Jonathan Bunner, P.O. Box 340395, Beaver Creek, OH 45434, August 2, 2005 - This past month time really went fast. We were pleased to have visitors the entire month of July. From July 1st until July 12th John Anderson from Burkhart, Missouri was with us. Brother Anderson got a taste of what life can be like in South America. While he was here the city of Portoviejo went on strike and closed everything down. The protesters closed all the city streets and highways going in and out of the city. We were unable to do anything what was not within a walking distance of the house. We had planned on visiting the brethren in Ambato, but the strike made that impossible. Instead we decided to take advantage of the situation and we held studies with the brethren that live nearby. Two days John gave English classes to the young people. Thankfully the strike ended in peace and John was able to go home on time. He was worried that he might have had to stay longer which would have been fine for me. On the second Sunday of John's visit the congregation in Portoviejo rejoiced because Raquel was baptized. Raquel is the lady I mentioned in my last report. On the morning of July 12th John Anderson returned home. That same night William St. John came to Ecuador for a two week visit. The first week of William's visit we spent here in Portoviejo. The second week we spent three days with the brethren in Ambato. One morning we spent with brother Chiliquinga and his family. Our visit was uplifting to them. Another day brother Villacis and his family along with Vicente Subita accompanied William and I to Puyo. This small town is an hour and a half drive from Ambato. After Ambato we spent the last few days of William's visit in Portoviejo. The brethren enjoyed having both John and William here in Ecuador. On July 26th William and I traveled to Lima, Peru to visit the brethren. We stayed in brother Motta's home. The Motta family is doing well. On Wednesday evening brother Motta asked William to preach and I did the translating. The following day was Peru's Independence Day and the brethren had planned a get together in sister Mirabel's home. Later in the day after we had eaten brother Motta asked me to give a Bible study. I decided to talk about the Plan of Salvation because there were several non-Christians present. Later we visited in the Morales' family home. Brother Morales is a gospel preacher who was converted from the cups church. They asked us to stay for their mid week service. Once again William preached and I translated for him. After services brother Angelo who is a young man asked brother Motta if it would be possible for us to come back the next evening; so we made plans to do that. On Friday we visited several families in the morning and afternoon. On Friday evening I preached at the congregation where Angelo preaches. There were two confessions that evening. On Sunday William and I split up so that we could visit both congregations. I preached once again at the congregation where Angelo goes.

William went with brother Motta and got his opportunity to hear brother Motta preach. On Sunday night William left Lima for the States. I left for home on Monday morning and arrived in Portoviejo that evening. It was good to meet the brethren in Lima. The work in Peru looks good and promising. Brother Motta is doing an excellent job. I also enjoyed working with William St. John for three weeks. Thank you all for your prayers. God Bless.

Bennie T. Cryer, 4635 Larkin Rd., Live Oak, CA 95953, August 10, 2005 - The work in Olivehurst, CA continues on in good fashion. Two have been baptized recently. In June I preached in Stockton, CA where, in the past, we labored with them for 18 years. I also preached once in San Angelo, TX, and five times at the Chapel Grove congregation in Tennessee. In July we attended the Lebanon Fourth of July meeting. I preached once in Niangua, MO and we enjoyed spending the day with Ron and Carolyn Alexander. From Missouri we went to Rogers, AR for a Wednesday through Sunday meeting. This was our first work in that congregation and they sure are a working bunch. The brethren there baptized one during the meeting and we had one confession of faults. We enjoyed staying with Jamie and Becky Whisenhunt during the meeting and they treated us with great hospitality as did the rest of the congregation. God bless all of you.

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, bookman@brightok.net, August 8 - Since last report Sally and I drove to Bakersfield, CA, accompanied by Jan Goodgion, of Wichita Falls, to conduct a meeting with the Planz Road congregation May 1-8. It was grand to see so many friends and loved ones in Christ again and to work with such an enthusiastic group. We enjoyed staying with Darrell and Gail Brewer and we appreciated the many favors showered on us by this congregation and also the good cooperation from the Brundage congregation. As usual, I attended a few nights of the annual meeting at Sulphur, OK before going to Lebanon, MO for their meeting. We flew to California for a meeting at Covina July 10-17. We enjoyed the fellowship of this warm, loving congregation and we appreciate so much the many things they did to make the meeting a success and to care for us while we were there. It was a distinct privilege to get to visit with Don McCord some. We regret that Wanda was not able to be present and we encourage all to pray for him and his family in these trying times. Since getting home, Jerry Lynn Bridgman and I preached night about in a short mission meeting July 25-29 at Springer, OK in the community building. We had at least ten non-members attend and seven area congregations cooperated in a wonderful way.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, e-mail old_paths@juno.com, August 9 - We have enjoyed being at home for a few weeks but it is time to go again. Lord willing, we leave this Lord's Day night to follow up some leads in Canada, which are an outgrowth of the Philippine work. The plan is for Brother Virgilio Danao to

meet us there and we plan to work together for a week. We will keep you updated on the results of this effort and we ask your prayers for success. The work in the Philippines began in March of 1981 and has had wonderful growth and success. While there have been difficulties, the work has now spread into Mindoro, Mindanao, Palawan as well as the beginning place on the Island of Luzon. In addition, the work in Honolulu, Hawaii grew from that work. Some of the dearest friends we have are Filipinos living in various parts of the world and they have done an incredible job evangelizing their Country. Pat and I enjoyed being with the church at Yuba City, CA last Lord's Day and look forward to returning for a weekend meeting in November. The churches in California are at peace and doing pretty well. Pray for the work everywhere. We still need help with the foreign subs. If you can help, please say plainly that your donation is for that purpose. We continue to ask our preachers to send their field reports and articles as they have time.

Phillip G. Prince, 12025 Turkey Road, Jacksonville, Florida 32221, philpgp@cybermax.net - This has been an extremely busy summer for us and it is good to be home from our meetings and singing schools. We are happy to have the opportunity to resume the work back home in Jacksonville, FL and the surrounding areas. The work in Jacksonville continues to go well and we are blessed with new prospects to study with. The congregation is at peace and we are doing our best to strengthen the faithful and ground and encourage new converts. I have been assisting with the work in Panama City, FL since November of last year. This congregation has seen its number reduced by death and people moving away to the point that there were only a handful left to keep the church going. I'm glad to report that this work is experiencing new life with visitors attending the worship service and new leads to follow up on that are the result of the television program, [Let The Bible Speak] out of Dothan, AL with brother Kevin Presley. Lord willing, a gospel meeting will be planned for the fall of this year in Panama City. We look forward to our next visit there and pray that the work will continue to grow. We have also recently worked with the congregations in Tampa and Hernando, FL, and they continue to show signs of progress and we give God the glory. I have assisted with the work in Walterboro, SC for some time now and the work there is looking brighter. The members are making efforts to grow and develop and to work in the area to build up the congregation. Please keep brother Marshall Walling in your prayers as he is suffering from the effects of cancer. Brother Marshall has been a great encouragement to me personally and remains a faithful servant in the congregation at Walterboro. Please remember Marshall and his good wife, sister Carol, in your prayers. I sincerely believe that there is great potential in all of these areas and Lord willing, we will see results soon. If you know anyone in these areas that we could contact please feel free to let us know so we can contact them with the hope of studying and bringing them to a knowledge of the truth.

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THE BACK PAGE...

WILL THE REAL ALEXANDER CAMPBELL PLEASE STAND UP?

By CARL M. JOHNSON

While the title of Dr. James O. Maxwell's book, **Don't Know Much About Church History**, reminds me of a popular 1950's song by the late Sam Cook, chapter twelve, which is entitled, "Black Presence in the Restoration Movement," reminds me of the 1960's television program, "What's My Line?" At the beginning of that TV program, the host would tell the name of a person and something unusual about the person's occupation (line). Three or more contestants would be shown as the story of this particular person was being told, and each of these contestants would claim to be the person. It was the job of the panel of semi-celebrities to guess which one of the contestants was the real writer, truck driver, or airline pilot, etc. The panel was allowed to question each contestant. The real person would know all the correct answers and the imposters would have to fake it. At the end of the interrogation, after the celebrities made their choices as to which person actually represented the highlighted profession, the host, amid a calculated air of tension and drama would ask, "Would the real (person) please stand up!"

Borrowing the above premise, suppose I tell you that there was a man named Alexander Campbell who was a great preacher for the churches of Christ and who made a tremendous impact upon the American Restoration Movement. Next, I tell you of four men, one of whom is white and three of whom are black, and I ask you which one of them is the real Alexander Campbell. You would respond that the white one is the real Campbell. According to Dr. Maxwell, however, all four of the men could possibly stand up. He points out that there were at least three black preachers named Alexander Campbell who made significant contributions to the Restoration Movement. The most influential one was Alexander Cleveland Campbell, better known as "Aleck" (p. 107).

According to Maxwell, Alexander Cleveland Campbell was purchased out of slavery in the late 1800's because he showed great promise as an effective gospel preacher. D. M. Keeble, the uncle of the legendary Marshall Keeble, baptized his wife and mother in Wartrace, Tennessee. They eventually moved to Nashville and united with the Lea Avenue Christian Church.

Around 1900, Campbell became convinced the Lea Avenue church had embraced some unscriptural practices, including the use of instrumental music in worship. He left the church when the leaders invited denominational preachers to fill the pulpit. When he protested publicly, the organ and the choir drowned out his remarks. Campbell and S. W. Womack, along with their families, formed a house church that eventually became the Jackson Street Church of Christ. Marshall Keeble and George Phillip Bowser eventually joined Campbell and Womack as the leaders of the work in Nashville.

Marshall Keeble is the name most associated with black churches of Christ in America. He was born December 1878, in Rutherford County, Tennessee, and his family moved to Nashville when Marshall was four years old. He was baptized at the age of fourteen and learned to preach by listening to Aleck Campbell and S. W. Womack. By 1908 his name was well known throughout middle Tennessee. Large numbers of blacks and whites crowded the buildings wherever he preached. His sermons were direct, frank, and clothed in earnestness. People also loved his wit. Maxwell estimates that Keeble baptized 40,000 to 50,000 people during his preaching career (p. 113).

A dear sister in Georgia gave me tapes of two of Keeble's sermons several years ago. She said that while Keeble baptized her into Christ, it was the late John Roberson of Richmond, Indiana, who taught her "the truth about the communion." Roberson's Richmond area has certainly produced its share of preachers who are outstanding in the pulpit, and who are as effective at personal evangelism as anyone in the Lord's church.

Our black brethren's roots are found in the earliest days of the church when Philip converted an Ethiopian to Christ (Acts 8:26-39). In America, records show blacks as a part of the Restoration Movement from the earliest years. Slaves attended the preaching services of Barton W. Stone at Cane Ridge, Kentucky, as early as 1815, and many of them obeyed the gospel and worshiped in the balconies constructed especially for them. Dr. Robert Hooper says that by 1838, Cane Ridge had 122 members, with seventy-two blacks in attendance (**A Distinct People** p. 256).

It is disappointing, however, that very little has been written in history books about our black brethren's spiritual roots and their contributions to the Restoration Movement. Consequently, the title of Dr. Maxwell's book, **Don't Know Much About Church History**, means more to me than just a reminder of an old Sam Cook song. Because of the remissness of historians, we don't know much about black church history. In spite of such remissness, however, many who have been overlooked in this life shall stand up among the "real" faithful servants before the Lord in the final day and be recognized and rewarded according to their labor (I Cor. 3:8). carlmj@cableone.net

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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RENEGADES, AND PROUD OF IT!

By *BILLY D. DICKINSON*

The word “renegade” is undeniably a harsh word, but it accurately describes the attitude and conduct of some in the church. Here is how the word is defined: “A deserter from one faith, cause, or allegiance to another; an individual who rejects lawful or conventional behavior” [Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary]. There are certain truths that brethren and faithful preachers have espoused for years, not because of a desire to uphold “Church of Christ traditions,” but because they are clearly established in the word of God. In fact, these points of doctrine have been defended in numerous debates, withstanding the challenge and scrutiny of false teachers.

The title of this article is: **“Renegades, and proud of it!”** What do I mean by that? Brethren not only need to be aware of the unscriptural, denominational concepts that are invading the church, but they also need to see the arrogant, divisive spirit possessed by those who seek to be “change agents” in the church. Their attitude is arrogant because they pretend to possess special knowledge of certain topics that brethren heretofore were not able to ascertain. Their attitude is divisive because they are bent on pushing their agenda. This is what it means to be a heretic: “A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject” (Tit. 3:10). Thayer points out that a heretic involves someone who is “schismatic, factious, a follower of false doctrine” (P. 16).

Yes, there are those who seem to be proud of their insolent behavior and, borrowing the language of Paul, their “glory is in their shame” (Phil. 3:19). This comes through loud and clear in their writings. They often make statements like this: “This has been the traditional teaching of the church on this issue, but after deep study on the subject I have come up with an alternative view.” Incidentally, the “views” they are pushing are not really new. They are simply a recycled version of Calvinism, Baptist doctrine, materialism, etc.- the very things that faithful brethren have stood against and successfully opposed for years. And they wonder why we are not impressed or convinced!

We are not defending the right of anyone to teach or

uphold something merely on the basis of tradition. In fact, if anyone in the religious world has consistently opposed “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matt. 15:9), it is members of the Lord’s church. That is why we have sought to maintain purity of doctrine and do only those things that are authorized in the Scriptures. However, could it be that the reason brethren have stood firmly on what some call “traditional teaching” is because it was obviously the truth? Also, when you realize that these “change agents” take a liberal, anti-obedience view toward the Scriptures, that should cause a person to think long and hard before they swallow their newfangled ideas!

The next time someone starts talking in negative terms about the “traditional teaching” of some topic, be aware that you are about to be lectured, probably in a condescending fashion, by a brother who thinks he has reached a plane of knowledge that most people should envy. It might have to do with when the Lord’s supper is to be observed: “They have a tradition to promote and protect. It is the tradition of Sunday ONLY observance of the Lord’s supper.” [All the quotations in this and the next paragraph are actual quotations] After making such an assertion, the brother actually demonstrates that he is the one who is fixated on human tradition: “My personal tradition is weekly observance of the Lord’s Supper. That is the practice I was raised with in the Churches of Christ. I have no problem with weekly observance. This is my tradition, and I have no particular desire to change it just for the sake of change.” So much for following one’s convictions! While this brother is admittedly eating the communion on the first day of the week out of a desire to follow a “personal tradition,” I am content to follow the approved example in Acts 20:7. I dare say that is true with most members of the Lord’s church and that is why the brother is still eating the communion on Sunday!

Believe it or not, it also includes the topic of hell (in the conventional sense of the term): “I will seek to demonstrate that the traditional teaching pertaining to the destiny of the wicked comes NOT from God Almighty, but from the great deceiver himself.” I doubt that most brethren are impressed with a man who sounds more like a Jehovah’s Witness than a preacher of the gospel. Thank God for those who are still holding to the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3)!

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Editorial

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES

By GREG GAY

Our collective hearts go out to the tens of thousands whose lives are forever changed by Hurricane Katrina which struck the Gulf Coast at the end of August. The states of Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi were damaged in varying degrees with the city of New Orleans receiving the most attention because of the damage inflicted by the combination of the hurricane and flood waters when their levy system failed.

I cannot imagine what it was like for the thousands of people who escaped the flood waters only to spend days in the New Orleans Superdome or the Convention Center. They faced a lack of food and water along with increasing violence and desperation without even the most basic necessities of sanitation. I cannot imagine the desperate plight of those who thought they were escaping the danger by going to their attics to escape the rising water, only to discover the water did not stop rising.

Our congregations' members nearest the storm and flood damage reported having some damage and problems like power outages, but thankfully none suffered loss of life or the loss of their homes so far as I know. Thousands of dwellings and businesses in the area have been completely flooded or destroyed.

As I write, flood waters are being pumped out of the city of New Orleans, remaining residents are being taken out of the city, bodies are being recovered and counted, and displaced citizens are being relocated to other cities and states for the time it will take for rebuilding, which will take months, if not years. Some government officials are busy helping while others are busy pointing fingers at one another for not doing what should have been done to avert some of the damage and destruction. Many lives were lost in the tragedy and many more will be forever scarred emotionally by the experience.

When we look to the history of every nation, we know that natural disasters of various kinds are not new to the earth. Tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, volcanoes, tsunamis, forest fires, blizzards, drought, famine, disease outbreaks, all of these are part of earth's existence and a grim reminder that this life is not heaven.

In the beginning of the early church one of the prophets announced that a severe famine was coming on Judea. "And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul" (Acts 11: 27-30).

Seeing what the early church did in this tragedy helps us know what we can do today when tragedy strikes

anywhere in the world. Paul wrote to Corinth, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye" (1 Corinthians 16:1). The church had regular weekly giving, but special needs called for special liberality. Funds from church treasuries were used to help brethren in far off congregations who were suffering physical needs. The money was carefully transported from the giving congregation's treasury to the leaders of the receiving congregation. The money could be easily traced and the individuals involved were very careful to be worthy of trust so the money could be given to the intended people and used for the intended purpose.

Today, when tragedy strikes, congregations' leaders can inquire if we have brethren in the area who need help. If so, then congregations can consider that need and help or not as they choose.

But what about helping those who are not members of the church out of the treasury? Obviously more than members of the church were effected by the severe famine in Judea. That was not done by the early church and therefore should not be done by us today. The only ones helped from the treasury were brethren.

However, that does not prevent us as individuals from helping others, regardless of the state of their relationship with God. Paul wrote, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). As individuals we are to do our best to help brethren first, whether through the church treasury or as individuals, but we are also to seek opportunities to help those who are not in the church.

If we live close enough when disaster strikes, we are to look for good deeds we can do in giving of ourselves in time, talent, things, and money as we are able. God's people are to be people who are "given to hospitality" (Romans 12:13). This word hospitality first means the entertaining of strangers.

When we are too far removed from a disaster to help physically what are we to do? Here are a few suggestions.

1. Pray. Whether we are near or far from a tragedy, prayer is always in order in any situation. We can relieve much of the emotional burden of a tragedy by accepting what has happened, being realistic and willing to do what we can about solving the problem ourselves, and then turning our worries and fears over to God in prayer.

2. Consider the brethren. See if there is a need among brethren that local congregation's leaders need to consider helping out of the treasury.

3. Consider those who are not brethren. We can help individually with donations of goods or money to non-religious organizations who have proven to be worthy of trust. When President Bush spoke about recovery from the storm, he advocated sending money to organizations that are known for plunging right in whenever there is a disaster to help those who are in immediate need. One of the organizations he recommended is the Red Cross. Donations to that organization can be designated for a

specific disaster.

One thing we do know, so long as the earth stands, disasters will continue to happen all over the world. Whatever happens, let us resolve that no tragedy in this life will be enough to shake our faith in God! "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof" (Psalms 46:1-3). 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747, papagreg@aol.com.

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Would it be scriptural for a congregation to have only one Elder?

Answer: There are many differing ideas about the eldership being bandied about today. Opinions vary as to the necessity, qualifications, and authority of these men who appear in scripture to be so important to the work of the church. The one aspect of this much discussed topic that seems, to this writer, to be beyond question is that in New Testament times there was always a plurality of Elders in each church, never just one. "When they ordained them Elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed" Acts 14:23. We find Elders in the church at Ephesus Acts 20:17-28, Elders in the church at Philippi Phil. 1:1, and Titus was left at Crete to ordain Elders in every city, which is equal to ordaining them in every church. Hence, we would never appoint just one man to be the Elder in a church. If a church finds itself in a situation where only one man is left as an Elder due to the death or resignation of the other Elder, what are they to do? Since a plurality is required, the only thing left is for the remaining Elder to resign and cease functioning as an Elder. He should certainly be granted the respect he has always received and his council should continue to weigh heavily upon the decision making process. But he cannot scripturally be "the Elder" of the church. Unfortunately some seem to want Elders so badly that they tend to make exceptions where God has made none. Brethren we cannot stretch the qualifications so that men who do not qualify are appointed to the office. Such practices not only violate the scriptures but actually degrade the office itself. A man, for example, whose children are not faithful Christians, just simply does not qualify to be an Elder. It is really very simple. One's children (all his children) are either faithful or they are not. One who has a child out of the church does not have faithful children. How in the world could a man qualify to be an Elder when not a single one of his children are in the church? And yet some churches appoint men in this situation. Such men are not Elders even though we

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GIVING THANKS AT THE LORD'S TABLE

By PAUL O. NICHOLS

It is apparent to many that something needs to be said and teaching needs to be done with regards to appropriate thanksgiving at the Lord's table (Luke 22:30). After all, Jesus our Lord set the example and said, "This do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22: 19). New converts are bound to be confused when they hear thanksgiving offered in so many different ways and often inappropriately. And most of the time a person who makes the mistakes receives no correction, and over and again the same mistakes are made. Brethren who have received no instruction either from the pulpit or privately are asked to serve at the Communion table. Some have never learned correct and appropriate thanksgiving. No wonder mistakes are made and thanksgiving misworded.

The elements in the Lord's Supper are nothing but common bread and grape juice in a common drinking vessel until they are sanctified through prayer and blessed by the Lord. Even our daily food is "sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. 4:4,5). When Jesus instituted the Communion the Scriptures tell us He blessed the elements. Then He declared, "this is my body", "this is my blood" (Matt. 26:26, 28), "this cup is the New Testament in (ratified by) my blood" (Luke 22:20). Jesus was not telling His apostles that the elements had become literally His body, His blood, and literally the new covenant God made with His people. The word "is" is a copula of "**symbolic representation**". These elements were **symbols of what they represented**. (Yes, they are representatives; not literally the body and blood of Christ.) They were symbolic only after they were sanctified by thanksgiving of Jesus (set apart for a particular use). They became significant by divine arrangement and recognition: They are given spiritual purpose and value and must be received as such. Otherwise we eat and drink damnation to ourselves, "not discerning the Lord's body" and shall "be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Cor. 11 :27,29).

When our Lord gave His apostles the Communion, He set the example for them and for us, and He said "This do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:20). Jesus "took bread, and gave thanks" (Luke 22:19). I have actually witnessed brethren serving at the table who failed to offer thanks. The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians "the cup of blessing which we bless" (1 Cor. 10:16). This is fundamental. To follow the example of Jesus we offer thanks. For what? The elements that comprise the Lord's Supper. After we offer our thanks, the next thing is to ask the Lord to "bless or sanctify" the bread; to "sanctify the cup of blessing". When we do this, the bread becomes symbolically the body of Jesus and the cup with its

contents becomes symbolically the "cup of the Lord" (1 Cor 11:27).

Our thanksgiving is directed to God through the name of Jesus. But I have heard, more than once, a brother waiting on the table make the error of thanking God for shedding His blood for us. God did not die for us. God sent Jesus to become our sacrifice for sin. It was Jesus who died on the cross and shed his blood for the remission of sins (Matt. 26:27).

There are brethren who seem to think they have to explain to God the meaning of the elements. They say, "We thank thee for this bread which is the body of Jesus." And again, "We thank thee for this fruit of the vine which is the blood of Christ, and this cup which is the New Testament." God knows the significance and meaning of the elements. The true meaning of the Communion should be taught the members of the church before the observance; not in the prayer. We who commune need to understand before we partake so as to do it without eating and drinking damnation to themselves.

In 1 Cor. 10:16 the apostle Paul says, "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?" In this Paul reminds us that we are to give thanks for "the cup of blessing" which is the "communion of the blood of Christ". He also tells us that the bread is the "communion of the body of Christ". He reminds us that this is what we give thanks for. And when the thanks are given and the Lord sanctifies these elements, they have spiritual significance; they have sacred purpose. If we use scriptural language in our thanksgiving, we can't go wrong.

All our prayers are addressed to God. "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . ." says the apostle Paul (Col. 1:3). In giving thanks at the table of the Lord it is appropriate to thank God (1) "for the bread which to us is the communion of the body of Christ" (2) "to ask the Lord to bless (sanctify) it for its intended use or purpose." It is also apropos to solicit his help to partake of it in the right way. There is no reason to embellish the prayer or to lengthen it unnecessarily. It is not a time for a long prayers or flowery speeches or the exercise of a large vocabulary. And when we offer thanks for the cup, one can say as an example, (1) "We thank thee for this cup of blessing" (which language is scriptural and covers both the container and its contents). (2) "Please bless it for its intended purpose." (3) "Help us to partake of it in the right way and with the right attitude", or words to that effect. And every time we partake, it is for the purpose of reminding us of the greatest sacrifice ever made—the crucifixion of the Son of God and all that He suffered to purchase our redemption and to give the hope of eternal life. It is a memorial service. We do this to show His death till he comes (1 Cor. 11 :26). - *Bonner Springs, KS*

THE CHURCH—A CHURCH OF CHRIST

BY BARNEY OWENS

In the mid 1960's my mother-in-law lived in the second house from the corner. At a right angle at the corner one building down was a religious meetinghouse. The group decided to move into a larger facility and sell this old building. Another group thinking it fitted their purposes decided to purchase it. To help with the finances they canvassed the neighborhood asking for donations to expedite their effort. Two houses further down lived a Mr. Gibson whose wife worshipped with the faithful. Mr. Gibson attended worship and preaching frequently, which presented an opportunity for our acquaintance. I visited him on various occasions with considerable joy. He being an older gentleman often related stories that were interesting and delightful. One day sitting in his porch swing, he related the above collection of funds and their visit to his house asking for money. He asked them if the church was working for Christ? Receiving an affirmative answer he said, "I will donate \$100.00 (a considerable sum then) if you will put on your sign "CHURCH OF CHRIST." He was told that this could not be done. "Well," he said, "is it not a church of Christ?" "Yes" he was told, "but we can't put that on our sign." "Alright then" said Mr. Gibson, "I will give you a \$100.00 if you will put on your sign THIS IS NOT A CHURCH OF CHRIST." Of course, they didn't get their \$100.00 and I think that Mr. Gibson knew he would not be parting with his money when he made the offer.

MAKES ONE WONDER DOESN'T IT?

If the money was to advance the cause of Christ, and if the building sought was to be used to further the cause of Christ, and if the person taking up the collection was interested in Christ being exalted in the world, why would he refuse to put a sign on the building that stated "CHURCH OF CHRIST?" Congregations in New Testament times were referred to as "churches of Christ" Rom. 16:16. The church is the "body of Christ" Col. 1:18, therefore can be called the "church of Christ." Again, the question is, why refuse to call it a CHURCH OF CHRIST?

Now, many of you reading these pages are members of a religious organization that claims to be preaching Christ, they ask you to give your money to advance the word of Christ, and want you to tell your neighbors about Christ. Why then is the building that you gather in for worship displaying a sign that declares a name other than CHURCH OF CHRIST? Is it because the word "CHURCH" is repulsive? I don't think that is the problem, because I see this appendage on most of the signs. Well then, is it that the word "CHRIST" is a turn off? Surely that is not the case because I hear the members of all the churches speaking of Christ from time to time. Then it must be that the words coupled together are repulsive. That means if the Apostle Paul were living today and wrote a letter to the church of which you are a member, as he did to the church at Rome, saying, "the churches of Christ salute you," you would find that repulsive.

WHY SAY SOME OF YOU?

"THIS IS NOT A CHURCH OF CHRIST." Writing the letter to the Corinthians, Paul chided them for refusing to wear the name of Christ and choosing another name instead. *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. For it hath been declared unto me if you, my brethren, by them, which are of the house of Chloe that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I am of Appollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? (1 Cor. 1:10-13).* Since Christianity was set forth in the world there has not been a more devoted and self-sacrificing servant of Christ than Paul. Knowledgeable in the scripture and eloquent in his delivery was Appollos. The first to preach the Gospel was Cephas (Peter). Yet none of these are worthy of disciples wearing their name. This passage is directly violated in our time as I see signboards that declare St. Paul Church. or Church of St. Peter. Others choose another name, but the principle remains. To put up another name means that church IS NOT A CHURCH OF CHRIST.

The passage reveals that two things are required in order to give authority for the name to be worn. First, one must be crucified for the name wearer. Secondly, the one wearing the name must be baptized in the name worn. Christ qualifies on both counts. Christ was crucified for us; and, Christ is the name authorized for us to be baptized into. Now if you are a member of a church that has a name other than Christ, will you test the veracity of wearing that name as given by the Apostle? Why do you say I am a Roman Catholic? Or I am an Episcopalian? Or a Baptist, or Methodist, or Presbyterian, or Seventh Day Adventist, or Assembly of God, or Apostolic (or United) Pentecostal, etc. etc. Why do YOU say that? Is it not to let others know it IS NOT A CHURCH OF CHRIST?

ASK YOUR PREACHER

You have confidence in your preacher, you depend on him to be knowledgeable in the truth, surely he can give you a scriptural reason for having the name on the place of worship that is not CHURCH OF CHRIST. When the answer is given, please send it along to me, I would like to know it, too. Or, better still; ask him to send it to me, the address is on the back page of this issue. I need to say if he agrees to send it to me; you might also (if isn't too much trouble) send it too as he may forget. Be sure to tell me he is sending the answer.

THE NAME OF THE CHURCH IS IMPORTANT

Being a member of the church that is named in the Bible is important. Wearing the name of Christ comes second to nothing. Yet that is not all the story. While some rejoice in the fact that they are a member of a church that wears the name of Christ and contend stoutly for the name of Christ to be the unifying factor for those who wish to follow the Lord, they are negligent in other things that separate a Church of Christ from those who fail to honor and glorify the Master. The cause of the Lord has received

reproach because some congregations have turned their affections from Christ to the ways of the world, allowing their light to go out without a flicker being left.

THE PROPHECY IS A REALITY

AND IN THAT DAY SEVEN WOMEN SHALL TAKE HOLD OF ONE MAN, SAYING, WE WILL EAT OUR OWN BREAD, AND WEAR OUR OWN APPAREL: ONLY LET US BE CALLED BY THY NAME, TO TAKE AWAY OUR REPROACH. (ISA. 4:1).

By reading the previous chapters it is clear that this has reference to the Messiah. Because there was a scarcity of single men, these maidens would cast off their natural modesty and appeal to a man to take away their reproach of being unmarried by allowing them to wear his name. They would feed and clothe themselves without his having to be responsible for them. Seven is a number that is indefinite—a considerable number.

SOME THAT HAVE TAKEN THE NAME CHURCH OF CHRIST TO HIDE THEIR REPROACH

Sad as it may be, some churches of Christ while condemning the religious world for rejecting the Word of God in faith and practice, have fallen into the same pit. These seemingly think their reproach is hidden because they wear the name, CHURCH OF CHRIST, but it is not hidden. Reason with me on this fact.

1. *Those practicing the class system of public teaching.* The Sunday school system of teaching brought to the world's attention by Mr. Robert Raikes was looked upon by the denominational world as a way to get children interested in spiritual things and was therefore adopted by them. Various churches of Christ did not wish to lag behind nor to allow this opportunity to slip by. Other congregations opposed this as an innovation and a perversion of the scriptures. Churches were divided, and although the New Testament instructs the whole church to gather with the learned and unlearned in one assembly, some persisted in the practice. With this scheme in place they yet would not abandon the name and continued to *take hold of the Lord, desiring that their reproach would be taken away*, therefore the name CHURCH OF CHRIST was worn and is worn by these congregations until this day.

2. *Those using mechanical instruments of music in assemblies of worship.* Once again like the churches round about, some congregations through emotion and fleshly desires, seeking to attract men to the services of worship, introduced the instrument. Once they were brought into the worship, justification for them was sought. Appeals were made to the Old Testament, then the life of Jesus, and finally, since they were not specifically condemned, they should be all right. The New Testament in every passage that deals with music in the assembly verifies that the human heart is that upon which melody is made as the voice is raised in praise to God. Churches using the instrument however used the NAME CHURCH OF CHRIST *to take away their reproach of rejecting the Lord.*

3. *Those using individual communion cups.* When Rev. J. G. Thomas of the Presbyterian Church put these into use near Lima, Ohio, the churches of Christ immediately raised

up in unison against the practice. Then a notable preacher (G. C. Brewer) introduced them into worship at the Masonic Temple (where the church was meeting) in Chattanooga, Tennessee. This was in 1914. The brethren in general called him digressive. Finally some other preachers were won over until finally David Lipscomb wrote a small piece in the Gospel Advocate stating he had changed his position and that individual cups were not a violation of scripture. The opposition of many subsided and the day seemed to be won for individual cups. In every passage that deals with the Lord's Supper, Jesus used one cup. Individual cups are a substitution for the teaching of our Lord. But, with this innovation the name CHURCH OF CHRIST was not cast away. To this day, these churches appeal to the Lord *to take away their reproach by allowing them to wear his name* CHURCH OF CHRIST.

4. *Churches cooperating with a common treasury.* As the churches looked upon the denominations, they saw them doing many things that seemed impossible for CHURCHES OF CHRIST to accomplish, because they were pooling their money. Orphanages were established, homes for the aged were built, and mission fields were opened up by these large sums of money. Once more rather than follow through with the plan given by the Lord, these engaged in the same practice as the churches of the world. Soon one church received contributions from smaller churches and these funds were dispersed to various works and preachers, with or without the supporting churches' consent. There is no such operation taught by Jesus and His Apostles. In New Testament times each church did its own work and had first hand knowledge of the operations in which it was engaged.

EATING THEIR OWN BREAD AND WEARING THEIR OWN APPAREL

While wearing the name CHURCH OF CHRIST, these congregations do not wish to depend upon the Lord for their nourishment, nor do they want to be confined with His teaching as to how they shall appear. They will and are "doing their own thing." They wish not to be judged for what they believe or practice.

Thanks be to the Lord that one can seek out a CHURCH OF CHRIST in name, worship and practice. Our wish and prayer is that each of you reading these words will determine to find and meet with the CHURCH—A CHURCH OF CHRIST.

WHO'S TENDING THE FLOCK?

(CONTINUED) BY C.A. SMITH

Through the medium of the Holy Spirit God has revealed to mankind the plan to be used in the governing of His church. The form, thus revealed, was used in the early churches according to Divine Revelation. The plan revealed is perfect and to conscientiously follow the plan, will allow the Lord's people to live in harmony and to do the work that is commanded of the church, in the Scriptures, regularly, systematically and enthusiastically. We all know that it is necessary that there be a place of worship, that

must be maintained, set times of meeting, and that there must be a decorum followed in those meetings that is consistent with Divine Commands, and approved examples. If nothing else were necessary, this would require some type of organization, would it not? However, there are other far more important things to be done, and the Lord has ordained that every congregation shall be organized with divinely appointed officers.

It is surely unscriptural to create an office that is not designated in God's plan for church government and it is also unscriptural to select men as church officers who do not meet the qualifications as given by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, in congregations where it is impossible to find men who can meet the requirements of this biblically described office, it is better to remain scripturally unorganized than to become unscripturally organized. However, having said that, I must add, that such congregations should be the exception, rather than the rule. When we read about the early Christians in the New Testament, they made themselves worthy for such an office, which should serve as an example for us and an incentive to every faithful follower of Christ today.

The Holy Spirit has given very definite qualifications for the men the church should select to rule over them. Some seem to have the mistaken idea today that if one is a fine Christian man, humble and agreeable, has a child or two, good or bad, that he will make a good elder or deacon.

The Bible definitely contradicts this idea! The qualifications for elders are given in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, where is listed some twenty-one different requirements. Let us enter into a brief and prayerful study of those requirements.

WITHOUT REPROACH - A man whose character is unimpeachable, blameless, irreproachable. This does not mean sinless, else no man could qualify (Rom. 3:23). He is to be a man that does not have a bunch of uncomplimentary rumors circulating about him. As they used to say, "Where there is smoke, there might be a little fire." If such be with one who desires to be an elder, it certainly should be investigated, for an elder needs be known for his spotless integrity and pure life. Do you meet this qualification?

HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE - No polygamist will qualify; no bachelor will qualify, nor will a widower qualify; nor one who for any reason has divorced his wife and married another, because he will have one divorced wife and one with whom he lives. As you know, the home is of divine origin and certainly the homes of church officers should be complete and happy in accordance with God's pattern. Anyway, all the teaching in the New Testament concerning marriage is based on the union of one man and one woman. Seems like many folk do not realize that or have chosen to dismiss it. Do all meet this qualification?

TEMPERATE - We have learned that this means self denying; self-controlled, one who is watchful over himself, and restrains his appetites and passions, using all in moderation so as to blend all his faculties to the highest degree of activity. Are there any "intemperate" elders out there? Are they scriptural?

SOBER MINDED - He must be one that, with a sound mind and mature judgement, demonstrates prudence; dignity; slow to speak and slow to wrath. He is not to be one that is excitable or passionate, short fused etc., but self-restrained, understanding the importance and earnestness of life. The last time you blew your top, lost you cool, did not act calm and collected, did you think such was becoming of the office you hold?

ORDERLY - A well behaved man and a well-mannered man. One who is orderly in dress and habits. One who is kind, considerate, and his inward life corresponds to his outward being. How well ordered are you as an elder?

GIVEN TO HOSPITALITY - Much is taught in the Word of God about hospitality, and is directed to all Christians. It is especially needful for those who "Tend the Flock". He will be a lover of strangers and thoughtful of others and this is a quality the elder should possess to such a degree that he will influence others to follow his example. This includes: being friendly to visitors who attend the services of the church, manifesting an interest in the new members of the congregation, taking people in your home, not just the visiting preacher, but members who are weak, whom you can encourage by association. It means being hospitable to those who are not members of the Lord's church, because for by so doing you may lead them to come to the knowledge of the beauty and wonder of the Christian home and of the lives living therein. When was the last time you invited a weak member, a stranger, or anyone into your home?

APT TO TEACH - Capable and ready to teach. Such a one does not just possess a general knowledge of the Bible, but, he is able to use that knowledge to further the cause of Jesus Christ. To do this, one must know the truth and by kind and faithful example lead the flock in the way the Lord would have them go. This means privately and publicly. Apt to teach is one qualification that is required of the elder over those mentioned for a deacon. Are you apt to teach, or do you have to call someone in every week to teach the church?

NO BRAWLER - As the Lord's elder, and as a servant of the church, you cannot get mixed up in a brawl of any type; you are not to be a controversial figure. Not a fighter or wrangler. Some you know like to be controversial, and love a good fight. How about you?

NO STRIKER - This is the last of the qualifications that we shall mention this time, but will cover the others at another time. A striker is one with an ungoverned temper, ready to resent insult or wrong, real or imaginary, one who is quarrelsome, ready to fight or strike at the slightest provocation. You know someone like that, don't you? Do you respect them?

Do you think the qualifications that we have discussed so far, present too high a standard? Should they be lowered? No! No! A thousand times no! Nothing else is acceptable with God.

- C.A. Smith, casmith810peoplepc.com, 810 NW 6th St., Andrews, TX 79714

THE QUERIST COLUMN

continued from page three

may say they are. It's time we dealt with the scriptures realistically in these matters, rather than allowing our zeal and desire for Elders to override the plain teachings of the bible.

Question: Would it be scriptural to appoint Deacons before Elders?

Answer: The scriptures do not specifically address this question, however, there are several passages that do shed light on it. Paul once mentioned the qualifications of Elders without mentioning the deacons, Titus 1:5. He also appointed Elders without any reference being made to the appointment of deacons in Acts 14:33. The qualifications of Deacons are discussed after Paul set forth the qualifications of Elders. Deacons are mentioned by Paul along with Elders in Philippi, Phil. 1:1. There is, however, no mention of Deacons in a congregation where there were no Elders. Some have suggested that the servants in Acts 6 were Deacons, and that there were no Elders in the church at Jerusalem at that time. It is true that there is no mention of Elders until later, but we do not know that there were no Elders at this time. Consider also, that the Apostles were there and they had authority over the church. Since the Elders are to oversee the work of the congregation today, who would oversee the work of Deacons if there were no Elders? We know that Deacons cannot do the work of Elders. If we had Deacons and no Elders, would there be a temptation for the Deacons to step over and assume the work of Elders? That, of course, would be unscriptural. Thus, the scriptural and safe policy, as this writer sees it, is for there to be both Elders and Deacons in the church. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade 2254 E. Raynell St. Springfield, MO 65804 or rfwade@mchsi.com)

OUR FOREIGN SUBSCRIPTIONS

We mentioned this last month but perhaps it is necessary to mention it again. We send the OPA many places overseas where those subscribers are financially unable to pay for their paper. However, the paper has done a huge amount of good in such places. In some areas, there is a work because someone sent the paper to a needy soul. This is reportedly true with Africa as well as the Philippine Islands and perhaps other places as well. Those brethren eagerly look forward each month for the paper's arrival. Some preachers report that they use the articles as seed to build sermons. We do not want to see such brethren without the OPA. Can you help us send it to them? The cost is more than a local subscription because the postage is much higher. If you are willing to donate to this worthy cause, be sure you plainly tell us that your check is for foreign subs. Please remember that everyone who works with the paper does so without

pay. It has been that way since 1932. It has always been a labor of love.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

We are required by law to publish each year a statement of ownership 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 the church, hence not intended to be supported or subsidized by church treasuries, but by the paid subscriptions of our readers.

INCREASE OF SUBSCRIPTION PRICE FOR OPA

We regret the necessity to raise the subscription price for the paper but rising costs of everything involved leaves us no alternative. We have not decided with the new rate must be but will announce it next issue, Lord willing. The higher price will be effective as of January 2006. Until then, you are welcome to renew your subscriptions at the old rate for as many years as you wish.

SUBSCRIPTION SPECIAL

Until January, 2006 when the increased subscription price takes effect we offer a special opportunity to subscribe for a friend as well as yourself. You may renew your own subscription to the paper for the old price of \$10 per year (for as many years as you wish) plus subscribe for a friend who does not get the paper, for half price. Simply send us the friend's name and address along with your \$10 and include an extra \$5 for your friend. Let us hear from you right away.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I'm looking for five serious minded young men that are interested in learning more about church leadership, teaching, and preaching the gospel of Christ. I plan to host these young men in our area for approximately six weeks next July and August. We will have a regimented study plan as well as a work (yes, I did say work - not play) schedule. I'm looking for young men who are: 1. Members of the church 2. Ages 15 to 19 3. Soberminded 4. Love the cause of Christ and desire the tools to develop as teachers and preachers. This is not a boys retreat or an opportunity to meet girls. If you are interested or if you would like for me to talk to someone who might be, please let me know. I'm best contacted at 606-271-0529. - *Doug Hawkins*

SERMONS AND WRITINGS OF HOMER L. KING

Some time ago, we were asked to mention this book of sermons again. The book is 221 pages, hard bound in attractive blue and gold, and was published in 1969. It contains many of the sermons he used in his lifetime of preaching as well as essays written for publication in *Old Paths Advocate* and perhaps other journals as well. If you do not have this book, you should. The price is only \$7.00 plus postage. In today's world, that is quite a bargain. This makes a wonderful gift for aspiring preachers. Order from Helen King, 1061 N. Pilgrim, Stockton, CA 95209

A STORY WORTH READING

We mentioned in another place this issue about our brethren sending paper to overseas readers. Years ago Bro. Don McCord, who served as Publisher of the paper for about 14 years, related the following story to me. A dear sister was reading a religious journal as she rode along, perhaps on a bus or in a car. As she read, her eyes fell on a brief request from a man in Africa wherein he asked for spiritual help. The fellow's name was E.C. Severe. The sister who read about him was Elizabeth Byford, a sister of Edwin S. Morris, one of our faithful gospel preachers. This good Sister thought of the Old Paths Advocate and wondered if it might help the man. The subscription price then was a dollar per year. She sent Homer L. King a dollar along with E.C. Severe's address. The African contacted Bro. Homer Gay and sometime later the work in what we know today as Malawi began. I have lost count of the number of congregations there, but some time ago, we were told it was over 2,000. If the story is true, it all began with a dollar. It just goes to show what a small amount can accomplish. **DLK**

MEET KIASON TURNER

I am pleased to introduce to the brotherhood, Brother Kiason Turner. Kiason, his wife Joni and son Issac, reside at 203 NE 6th Ave, Mineral Wells, TX 76067. His phone number is 817-597-8824. You may have already had the opportunity to hear this young man preach the gospel. Kiason has preached in the Texas and Oklahoma area for some time now, as well as a few other states. Kiason is talented and intelligent. He is currently employed as a Computer Network Specialist, but he devotes a lot of time to church work and study. You will find him to be very conscientious and dedicated. I have known Kiason all of his life. I baptized him into Christ several years ago. I have watched him grow up and develop into a fine Christian. He and I have studied together over the past year on a regular basis. It is without reservation that I recommend him to the brotherhood. If you can use his services I do not believe you will be disappointed. - *Melvin Blalock*



CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATES AND CHANGES ON THE WEB. AUGUST 22, 2005

I am no longer helping with the directory on the NewTestamentChurch.org website. Changes since last printing can be seen at site: oldpathsadvocate.org. For those without web access, here are the most recent changes:

California:

Manteca: Melvin Lee, new address: 1901 E. Yosemite Ave. #20, Manteca, CA 95336

Ventura: Aaron DeGough, new information: 1311 Oyster Place, Oxnard, CA 93030, 805-402-3616, adegough@gmail.com

Florida:

Ft. Lauderdale: James Nelson, new address: 10901 N W 9th Court, Plantation, FL 33324

Missouri:

Aurora: Change Sun. PM to 5:00 PM. Delete Wed. service.

Please send all updates and orders to Greg Gay, 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747, 916-771-2376, papagreg@aol.com

65 YEARS TOGETHER

Raymond and Juanita Bray wish to thank everyone for the many cards and calls they received for their 65th wedding anniversary.

50 YEARS TOGETHER

Bobby and Pearly Pepper will be celebrating their 50th Wedding Anniversary on Saturday, October 15, 2005 @ Johnny's Place, 14441 Lucas Ferry Rd., Athens, AL from 1:00 - 4:00 pm. Cards and congratulations may be sent to 11800 Joe Bob Ln., Athens, AL. We wish best wishes to this fine Christian couple.



Our Departed

BRADFORD - Roy Bradford "Brad" Karr Jr. was born Tuesday, June 16, 1959 in Carroll County, GA. He passed from this life on Sunday, September 4, 2005. He is survived by his father, Roy Karr, his mother Melba Karr, a brother Keith Karr, a sister-in-law Lisa Karr, a brother Steve Karr, nephews Josh, Donnie, and Chris Karr, and his grandmother, Christine Laney. Brad was a member of the Temple, GA Church of Christ for many years. Brad's grandfather, Hedrick Laney (deceased) had been instrumental in the early years of the Temple congregation. After high school, Brad went into the construction business where he had begun a successful career. He was good at it. He also loved good bird dogs. Brad had a knack for recognizing and bringing out the potential in a pointing dog that others sometimes missed. He was known far and wide for that. There's no way of knowing what he might have accomplished in life for life didn't give Brad what he wanted. At work, Brad had a terrible accident that left him disabled. From that point

on in life, rather than having the opportunity to pursue his goals, he was to have horrific pain, disappointment, frustration, and loneliness as his constant companions. No one except Roy and Melba and Brad will ever know the trials and battles that he faced daily from that day on. They, as well as the rest of his family and the congregation at Temple helped and supported Brad in every way they could. In the end, Brad's health could hold out no longer. Brad was loved by everyone that knew him. He had a humble and forgiving spirit. He will be sorely missed. One of the last things that Brad told his family was, "I'll be waiting for you in heaven." His funeral was held at Hightower Funeral Home Chapel on Tuesday, September 6, 2005. This writer and Bro. Charles Hurst spoke words of comfort and support to the large gathering of family and friends at the service. Bro. Jeff Thompson also spoke words of comfort and led a prayer at the grave. - Terry L. Studdard

JAMES - A.W. "Dub" James was born September 25, 1922 at Joy (Clay County), Texas. He passed away May 23, 2005 at Jacksboro, Texas at the age of 82. He was a member of the Northside Church of Christ at Jacksboro, and attended services as long as his health permitted. His wife Maryian, also a faithful member of the church, survives him, as do several other relatives. He was preceded in death by a son, Stephen James, earlier this year. Step-grandchildren shared some of their loving memories of Dub with those gathered to honor his memory, and a long-time friend, Molly Smith, also spoke before the family. I was honored by his family's request that I preach the funeral service. We miss this gentle man. - *George Turner*

Ronny F. Wade, 2254 E. Raynell, Springfield, MO 65804, rfwade@mchsi.com, September 16 - Since last reporting to the paper, we have enjoyed meetings at the following places: Bandy, KY, Houston, MO, Hillcrest, MS, San Angelo and McGregor, TX, and Lee Summit, MO. These meetings resulted in two baptisms and several confessions of faults. It was a privilege to work them in an effort to strengthen the church and preach to the lost. Lord willing, we will be with the following churches in the near future: Blue Springs near Mt. Vernon, KY Sept. 18-25, Harrodsburg, IN October 2-9, West Point, GA Oct. 12-16, and Hartwell, AR Nov. 2-6. Our meeting here in Springfield was conducted by Brother Barney Owens in August. Barney did his usual good job of forcefully and plainly presenting the truth. We are thankful for his progress health wise, and hope he will continue to improve as time moves by. Our prayers are that the church will grow and prosper both numerically and spiritually.

Joe Hisle, 18975 CR 1580, Ada, OK 74820 - It was my great privilege to hold the Labor Day meeting in Oakdale,

CA. This is the first time I have been a part of the Labor Day meeting in CA and believe me it was a treat! We had very large crowds each night with great singing and association. The Oakdale brothers and sisters worked literally day and night to make this meeting a success. We had visitors from OR, WA, AZ, TX, OK, as well as a number from the local community. It was a privilege to get to visit with most of the preaching brethren in CA. I appreciate their support very much. Best of all the meeting closed with the baptism of a young lady who had been studying with Bro. Ron Jordan for several weeks. Two sisters made confessions of fault and a brother was restored who had been away from the Lord for many years, surly the answer to many prayers. Thanks to the Oakdale congregation for inviting me to be a part of this meeting. The debate that was scheduled for Sept. was cancelled due to the fact that Bro. Stubblefield could not furnish one of their buildings for one night of the discussion. Sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused. My next meeting is in Harrison, AR, Oct. 5-9 followed by Nashville, TN, Oct. 26-30. I ask for your prayers.

Bobby J. Pepper, 11800 Joe Bob Ln., Athens, AL 35611, bjpepper1@juno.com. - The Lord's work continues to grow in truth and unity here at Sanderfer Rd. Athens, AL. In May we enjoyed having Doug Hawkins here at Sanderfer Rd., his preaching was strengthening to us all. Last month I had the privilege to baptize Selina Davis, and this morning Louise Harbin. Pray the Lord will bless them with many years of service! Last week I enjoyed the meeting with the congregation in Florala, AL. The surrounding congregations supported us in all of the services; in which many of them I haven't seen in years. Wife, and I made our home with our good friends, Robert and Mary Harrison; we are thankful for their love and hospitality. May the Lord continue to bless the brotherhood with patience and kindness as we reach out to others with the gospel! - *Our apologies for the delay - DLK*

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, old_paths@juno.com, September 15 - A few weeks ago, it was my pleasure to meet Bro Virgilio Danao in Toronto, Canada where we followed up some leads for reviving a work there. We visited several who once were faithful but are now away from the church. They showed some interest and we feel hopeful that, with some help, a work might begin soon. There are preachers who live near enough to drive up there occasionally. If you are willing to help, please contact us through the paper. Our next meetings are in the DFW area (Fossil Creek), Lebanon, MO and Yuba City, CA. We pray for success in all these efforts. The church at Fremont is at peace and that is quite a blessing. Recently, we baptized two, a young woman and young man and we hope to see more obey the gospel soon, Lord willing. Pray for the work everywhere.

Douglas T. Hawkins, 409 Worthington Pl., Richmond, KY 40475, (606) 271-0529, douglast@alltel.net, September 2, 2005 - I've recently closed a meeting in Hoyt, TX. As I expected, I enjoyed my stay with the Baker family immensely. They always make their guests feel at home. I was amazed at the nightly hospitality that they showed everyone in their home after the services. They are a credit to the cause of Christ and do their best to let the light of the gospel shine brightly in their area. I plan to be with the churches in Houston, MO and Chestnut Ridge, KY in October. Please make note of the special announcement regarding the 5 young men that I'm looking for. God bless us all. We need it.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012, pon.wjn.ks@juno.com, Sept. 9 - After our cruise to Alaska, August 7-14 with forty-some other Christians, many of whom we have known for many years, it was my privilege to preach at Pacific, WA Aug. 14. Several years ago I held one or two meetings at Tukwila, and was one of the participants in a debate on the Communion, but this was the first time to speak for them since their move to this new location. We are back home and in the work with the home congregation at Stony Point, Kansas City. Our newest convert is growing spiritually and progressing well. He takes public part in the services and is ready to do whatever he feels capable of doing. We have had a number of visitors of late. Our young speakers meeting is Sept. 23-25 and we anticipate a good turnout for that. The Lord bless all our righteous efforts.

Frank Brancato, 3012 Cattleman St., Bakersfield, CA 94550, frankbrancato@sbcglobal.net, September 1, 2005 - The work here at the Planz Rd. congregation continues to move forward at a good pace. Since last reporting, I was privileged to hold a weekend meeting here at home, with an evangelistic effort in the community. The meeting was well attended and the building was full almost every service. We had twelve visitors over the course of the weekend and six of them have since obeyed the Gospel. It is very refreshing to see good and honest hearts, and that the Gospel still has the power to save souls. We are also very happy to report that another young lady that we have been studying with was recently baptized as well. I was invited to speak at the Western Preachers Study in Fair Oaks, CA regarding effectively answering the argument that baptism is not essential for salvation. I enjoyed the study very much, and a fine spirit was had by all those who were in attendance. Lord willing, I will be in Wilsonville, Oregon November 20-27 holding their annual Thanksgiving meeting. We are looking forward to the meeting and would love for all who can to attend. Please pray for the faithful everywhere.

Billy D. Dickinson, 2850 N. Oakland, Springfield, MO 65803, bddickinson@juno.com, Aug. 15 - I have just returned home from a meeting in Bedford, IN. What a delight it was to be with them again and to see so many

friends that I have known for years! The first congregation that I worked with was Harrodsburg in the winter of 1972. That was the beginning of my association with the brethren in that area. Also, I held Bedford's first meeting in 1981, and it is uplifting to see how they have developed into a strong congregation some 24 years later. Several preachers attended the meeting: Walter Hunter (who lives and labors among them), Floyd Harris, Jr., Anthony Brockett, Cecil Smith, John Strain, and Morgan Stripling. I want to thank Andy and Pam Peek for their hospitality, as they graciously provided me with a place to stay. We had large crowds every service and it was a privilege to preach for brethren who have a love for the truth. I've also held meetings at Cable Ridge, MO and Fremont, CA. It was a first for me in both of those places. I want to especially mention that I enjoyed staying in the home of Don and Pat King. We have known each other for many years, but it was wonderful to have an opportunity to visit and get better acquainted. I have two more meetings that I am looking forward to before this year comes to an end: Ratliff City, OK (Sept. 14-18) and Lexington, KY (Nov. 6-13). Please come and help us out if you are in driving distance. Let's all support the cause of Christ in every way that we can!

Kiason Turner, 203 NE 6th AVE, Mineral Wells, TX 76067, kiason_joni@yahoo.com, (817) 597-8824, August 23 - This summer offered many opportunities to preach the gospel. It was encouraging to have a number of congregations give ear to the Word: Cleburne, TX, Ratliff City, OK, Springfield, MO (Mission Hills), Las Colinas, TX, Weatherford, TX, Jacksboro, TX. I also was able to attend the 4th of July meeting in Sulphur, OK and had the joy of speaking one morning. The first weekend in August brought me to Shreveport, LA. I worked with Brother Bobby Cunningham in an effort to make contact with the community and "sow the seed". It was wonderful to work with the Queensborough congregation and preach to them on the Lord's Day. It was raining that Sunday morning, but there was a young man (non-member) visiting, who walked to services. His determination to attend the service, regardless of the weather or other circumstances, is uncommon and praiseworthy. At this present time I have just returned home from traveling with Brother Miles King. We enjoyed a wonderful eight-day meeting in Mozier, Illinois with two members restored. It was a privilege to introduce all of Brother King's sermons and also to preach a couple of nights. The loving hospitality of the brethren there was endless. I'm looking forward to returning to conduct a meeting in the spring of 2007. I'm currently preparing to speak at the Young Speakers Meeting in McAlester, OK. Lord willing, I will be conducting a weekend meeting in Witt Springs, AR beginning October 14th. Here at home, I am currently corresponding with three inmates of a local prison as a result of our *Bible Truths* radio broadcast. Please pray for the work and for God's blessings upon the labourers.

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THE BACK PAGE...

THIS OLD HOUSE

BY CARL M. JOHNSON

After our Wednesday night worship service on August 24, we officially closed the doors on our old meeting house at Eighth Street and Oak Avenue, here in Ada. Our congregation began meeting in our new building on the Lord's Day, August 28, 2005. Our new location is at the southwest edge of town, one-half mile east of State Highway 1, on County Road 1560 (also called SW 32nd Street).

Joe Hisle's voice broke a little with emotion as he made the closing remarks at the final service in our old building. He said, "I know this meeting house is just a building. Still, there are a lot of memories associated with it. Most of us were baptized in this building. Most of us were married here, and many of our loved-ones' funerals have been conducted here. I'm reminded of the old Tennessee Ernie Ford song, 'This Old House' (written by Stuart Hamblen). 'This ole house once knew my children / This ole house once knew my wife / This ole house was home and comfort / As we fought the storms of life.'" Joe revealed that he could have quoted the lyrics to the entire song but he concluded, "This old building has served us well for forty-seven years and it has witnessed a lot of memorable events."

The evening was bittersweet indeed. We are excited about moving into our beautiful, new building, but we are a little nostalgic about leaving the place where we have created so many sweet memories. After services an emotional Bill Hisle observed, "Everything important that has happened to me in my life, has happened to me in this building." I can offer similar testimony. I was baptized in that building, I baptized my two sons there, and the funerals of both my parents and my oldest brother were conducted there. I saw tears in the eyes of many people as they hugged and consoled one another. The scene was reminiscent of a funeral service.

The entire experience of moving from an old house that has suffered many structural and demographical problems with the passing of years is actually a foreshadowing of another move that we shall make one day. The Apostle Paul explains that our physical body is an "earthly house" (2 Cor. 5:1) and that we inhabit it only temporarily while we live here on earth. Paul explains further, "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such a one caught up to the third heaven" (2 Cor. 12:2). Paul reveals that this man could have been caught up to the third heaven either in his body or out of his body. It follows, therefore, that the person and the body are not the same thing, but the body is just a temporary house in which the person dwells. When you look at me you do not actually see me. You see the fleshly house in which I temporarily live. When I look at you I do not actually see you. I see the house in which you temporarily live. I look at you through the windows in my house and you look at me through the windows of your house. Paul explains, however, that at death we shall depart from our "earthly house," and at the resurrection (I Cor. 15:42-44) the saved will move into a "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5:1). It is as though we fold our tent (2 Cor. 5:1), move out of the ghetto, and inherit a mansion in the heavenly realm (Jn. 14:1-3). Paul's revelation concerning these events offers us great comfort as we lose loved-ones to death and as we contemplate our own departure (I Thes. 4:18).

To illustrate Paul's teaching concerning "this old house" consider its application to the remarkable circumstances surrounding the death of Neta Porterfield, a devout, long-time member of the church in Healdton, Oklahoma. Neta died on March 30th of this year at the age of 87. Her mind was sharp until the day she died, but she had a lot of physical problems that caused her much pain and discomfort in her last years. In spite of her body ailments, Neta rarely missed a worship service. For several years Neta's daughter-in-law LaVerne Porterfield would drive by and pick her up for both services on Sunday and for services on Wednesday night. It was their custom on Wednesday night for LaVerne to arrive at Neta's house at ten minutes after seven o'clock. Neta would leave her house, climb into LaVerne's car, and they would drive to the house of God for worship. In view of that longstanding custom, it seems only fitting that when Neta died, she died on a Wednesday night at precisely ten minutes after seven o'clock. This time, however, she left her "earthly house" permanently in order to dwell in the "house of the Lord forever" (Ps. 23:6). - carlmj@cablone.net

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. LXXIX

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NO. 11

CAN A CHRISTIAN SERVE?

BY PAUL O. NICHOLS

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. . ." (John 18:36). This is something all Christians should understand. Why is it so difficult for Christians to realize that we are in the world, but we are not of the world? Listen to Jesus shortly before He went to Calvary. He prayed to the Father in heaven, "I have given them [the apostles] thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:14-16).

The apostle Paul shows us in Romans chapter 13 that civil authority is according to God's divine arrangement. It is given to govern the affairs of the world. It has neither part nor lot in the affairs of the church; it is carnal. Neither has the church any business messing in the civil affairs of the world, for it is spiritual. The apostle Paul says, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?"

Civil government has the responsibility of making laws, and of enforcing law and order. And if person is in violation of the laws of the land, the government has the responsibility of punishing the evil doer. "If thou do that which is evil, be afraid; 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. 13:4). That is the job of civil government.

The church is the body of Christ, made up of people who are "sanctified, and called to be saints" (1 Cor. 1:2). Our responsibilities are spiritual, for we are now "servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:18). When members of the church, citizens of the kingdom of Christ, violate the divine laws of God which apply to Christians only, the church is required to deal with such matters. But if they are guilty of civil disobedience, they are subject to punishment by civil authority. "He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons" (Col. 3:25).

In this day and time many Christians are receiving calls to sit on juries on cases which have nothing to do with spiritual matters. They are being asked to judge their fellow men and women in matters which have nothing to do with the church and things which are spiritual. Yes, juries are asked to judge a person guilty or not guilty. They may not be asked to pass the sentence, but they still do judge and cast their vote for either guilty or innocent. In 1 Corinthians chapter 5 the apostle Paul instructs the church to deal with a member who was guilty of sin, and assured them that he would be with them in spirit. And he pointed out to them and to us that we judge and deal with those who are in the church, but God judges them who are without. We have no business judging and disciplining nonmembers. Such is not the business of the church. Those who are guilty of violating civil law are to be judged by civil authority, not by Christians.

Members of the Lord's church should be some of the finest citizens in any country. The word of God teaches us to be subject to the higher powers. For they are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1). And we are told, "Submitting yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." (1 Pet. 2:13) However, there is an exception to this rule. As Peter and the other apostles told the members of the Sanhedrian court of the Jews, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). When the laws of men conflict with the laws of God, we must choose to obey God, regardless of the consequences. - *Bonner Springs, Kansas*

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Editorial

REPLACING THE VETERANS

By JOHNNY ELMORE

A country song of a few years ago asked the question: Who's gonna fill their shoes? It is not good English, but what do we expect from a hit country song? The author of the song wonders who will sing the old genuine country songs after the stars of the last generation depart the scene. Fortunately, that is not a concern of mine. My concern is who will fill the shoes of the veteran gospel preachers upon whom we have depended. Some of us in our brotherhood will never forget those valiant soldiers of the cross who preached the gospel in difficult places and under hard circumstances. Some have departed this life, others have health considerations that have limited their work, and the sunset of life looms large for those of former generations.

It was my happy circumstance to be among that large company of preachers who set out to win souls for Christ in the 40s and 50s. It was a time when optimism reigned supreme. For a few happy, delightful years, there were no lines drawn over matters that now cause division and separation, and we knew full well the meaning of David's statement: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psalm 133:1). Preachers in that time supported each other's meetings by their presence and recommended each other. When digressive preachers challenged the biblical way of worship on the polemic platform, our brethren stood together as a solid phalanx. The young preachers did not set out looking for pastorates and easy places; they held "mission" meetings in tents, empty school houses, and vacant buildings; they knocked on doors, passed out handbills, and conducted home studies. Their greatest concern was not how much money can I make, but how much good can I do? Some young preachers drove all night rather than get a motel room so that they would have twenty dollars (a good bit of money then) to put in the collection on Sunday.

Their sacrifices were not lost on our good brethren. They responded in kind. When they saw young men making such efforts, they supported their mission meetings by attending and working to help. The zeal and enthusiasm of the preachers was infectious and it resulted in congregations being established, other mission meetings held, and souls won. Young preachers attended gospel meetings, debates, and traveled with older preachers to learn as much as they could. Many of them saw the importance and the power of gospel singing and attended singing schools to study music. Young preachers became role models to other young men who were influenced to work in the church to become song leaders, teachers, and preachers.

I have met some promising young preachers lately, but I think it only fair to warn that preaching is a serious

continued on page eight

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: What are the guidelines to be used in selecting men to take part in the public worship services of the church? It is right to exclude a man just because he has been divorced?

Answer: Before one should be used as a leader in the worship service, he must first of all be a faithful Christian. He cannot be an outsider, or one who is not faithful in serving the Lord. Being used to take a leading role in such a service, however, is not a right granted, just because one is a member of the church. Those men wishing to take part, who lack the qualifications to do so, need to be trained and worked with until they reach such a point where they are able to do that which they would like to do. For example in Hebrews 5:12 the writer says "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food." Such men should not be used as congregational teachers until they learn and advance in their ability. It seems to me that one of the great problems many churches face is the use of unqualified people to carry on the services of the congregation. Men often fill the pulpit who have not studied and are ill prepared to edify. Some lack the ability to teach in a public capacity. Every man is not cut out to be a public teacher in the church. By the same token many who profess to lead singing don't lead at all. When one starts the song so low or high that the congregation cannot participate or follow in the singing, something is wrong. That person needs help and training. Often people are used just as soon as they are baptized. This could be a grave mistake. People need time to learn, study, and mature before they are given the responsibility of leading the congregation. Some seem to have the idea that they are less than they should be if they don't take an active leadership role such as teaching or song leading. That is only true if the person has abilities they are not developing or using. We have no right to refuse any man, who is qualified, the opportunity to participate in worship service simply because he has a scriptural divorce. I have no half brothers in Christ. To restrict one, solely because he has obtained a divorce according to Matthew 19:9 is wrong.

Question: Please explain Romans 8:28. Does this verse teach that everything that happens is for our good?

Answer: The answer to the above question must be settled by what is included in the "all things" of the verse. As one commentator asked "Does Paul include the devil and all his works and agents? Does he include the lusts of the flesh, which war against the soul, and

our infirmities in which we need help'?" If "all" means "all" then it would. However, the context of the passage would seem to indicate that the "all things" are limited. The previous discussion by the apostle talks about what God has done and is doing for us through Christ by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It seems to this writer that "all things" mentioned by Paul are the things he has been talking about. Why make Paul refer to things he has not even mentioned? To interpret the "all things" to mean every conceivable thing, every conceivable force and circumstance and then affirm that all these things, both good and bad, work together for our good is to miss the trend of the apostle's reasoning. Such a conclusion does not negate the providence of God, nor does it exclude Him from working providentially in our lives. It does, however, respect the integrity of the context in which the statement was made, which in the view of this writer, should be done. (*Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, 2254 E. Raynell, Springfield, MO 65804 or rfwade@mchsi.com*)

What If God. . .

WHAT if God Wouldn't take the time to bless us today because we didn't take the time to thank Him yesterday?

What if God decided to stop leading us tomorrow because we didn't follow Him today?

What if we never saw another flower bloom because we grumbled when God sent the rain?

What if God took away the Bible tomorrow because we would not read it today?

What if God took away His message because we failed to listen to His messenger?

What if God hadn't sent His only begotten Son because He wanted us to pay the price for sin?

What if the door of the church was closed because we didn't open the door to our hearts?

What if God stopped loving and caring for us because we failed to live and care for others?

What if God would not hear us today because we would not listen to Him?

What if God answered our prayers the way we answer His call to service?

What if God met our needs the way we give Him of our lives?

EDIFICATION IN THE ASSEMBLY

BY BARNEY OWENS

But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said, hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king. 1 Sam. 15:21-23.

King Saul had received the commandment of the Lord. The commandment was given in clear terms and was not misunderstood. Yet the King (in charge of the people) allowed them to disobey. In the place of obedience great sacrifices were planned as worship to the Lord. It is obvious that worship and obedience cannot be separated. Even great offerings do not please God when He has not asked for them. As we continue our probe into the things done in worship, we call look at the practices of men in these avenues of worship and observe the many things that are done "unto the Lord" which He has not requested. The Lord is not pleased with any of these. In this paper we wish to notice how men are to be edified in worship to the Lord. What has He asked, requested, or demanded of us?

Edification Was Practiced In Apostolic Day When Churches Assembled For Worship

The gospel was preached for the first time in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Thousands responded in obedience and the church began. We are immediately told of these people, "and they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). The doctrine or teaching of the Apostles was their guide. Being yoked with these other items of worship it is apparent that the writer Luke was using this of a specific time of instruction, namely, the assembly. We also are aware that Jesus, in commissioning the Apostles to preach the gospel to every man, informed them that those who became disciples (being baptized,) were to be taught the things which must be observed. "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. (Mt. 28:20). We then are not amazed that upon obeying the gospel these disciples were instructed and began to observe the things of the Lord. Teaching is the manner of edification in an assembly of worship.

Another notable example is the Gentile congregation at Troas. We are told, "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). There is no doubt that rapt attention was given to this inspired man as he instructed them in the way of the Lord. This congregation like the brethren in Jerusalem was receiving direct instruction from the Lord edifying them while they were assembled.

Spiritual strength is received from the word of God, which all disciples are to hunger to receive. As new born

babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2). As the New Testament had not been written when Peter penned these words, the majority of instruction was given when disciples assembled. This is contrary to the thinking of brethren who advocate the class system of teaching. Nevertheless it is true.

All Teaching Is To Edify The Assemble

"How is it then, brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying." (1 Cor. 14:26). There are certain things that are to be done to insure all are edified. Among these, the following should be kept in mind.

1. **There must be order to the assembly.** "Let all things be done decently and in order." (1 Cor. 14:40). The reason being "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." (Vs. 33). If confusion and disorder prevail then the opportunity to learn and worship properly is disrupted. For this reason there are rules given to govern the conduct of those assembled doing the teaching and exhorting, as well as some for those who are being edified by the same.

Remember, when the Lord speaks we are not to add to these things, that is to say, we are not to substitute our own way of doing them instead of the rules given by inspiration. Likewise, we are not to take away from these things, which means we are not to discard any of the stipulation given to us to govern our conduct in the assembly.

2. **Women are to learn in silence.** "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church." The women under consideration are the wives of the prophets. They were not allowed to ask the prophets (who had the word of God in them miraculously) questions in the assembly. Why? Because "it is a shame for a woman (any woman) to speak in the church." In the privacy of their homes they were permitted to speak and therefore could ask questions in that setting. It would be silly to advocate that the women by asking a question and receiving an answer would not be edified. Likewise, when the answer was given to their questions, more than likely those sitting by would also be edified. But practicing this is contrary to God's will and is OUT OF ORDER.

"Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." (1 Tim. 2:11-12). Look at the word "suffer." We "suffer" the exception; never do we "suffer" the rule. Paul's point here is that women are to learn in silence, and there are "no exceptions." No exceptions are "suffered or allowed" to this rule. The place of women when it comes to edification in the assembly is that of learner or listener. Paul does not say, "a woman may teach as long as she's not teaching a man." He does say she may not teach; number one. And number two; she is not to "usurp authority over the man." Teaching to edify in the assembly is forbidden to women.

In many churches women are teachers, preachers, and even called pastors. These practices are not by the will of God. Women so blinded by their wish to dominate are aiding the cause of the Devil, and assisting others to travel the road to eternal damnation by following them. *Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.*" (Mt. 15:14). If one allows himself to be led to believe women can preach in the assembly of disciples, then the ditch will be his fate.

Men Are To Edify By Speaking One At A Time

"Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted." (1 Cor. 14:29-31). The prophets (teachers) were to speak two or three statements then allow for interpretation (when speaking in a language unknown to the hearers, verses 27-28). Never were there to be several talking at the same time. Why? Because all need to learn and all need to be comforted. Therefore, the specific instance is still governed by the general rule that "all may speak one by one." As the writer went on to disallow women speaking in the assembly, it is fair to say the rule (speaking one by one,) applies only to the men.

"And the things thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou unto faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (II Tim. 2:2). The things Paul had spoken to Timothy had been verified by many witnesses. This reminds us of the practice of some churches who believe in Apostolic succession. The Roman Catholic Church thinks it can tie the present Pope to Peter. The Baptist Church affirms that its ministry goes all the way back to the one who immersed Christ. The fact of the matter, as presented in the New Testament, is that the truth is the thing that binds men in service to the Lord. Timothy had "hands laid upon him" therefore was able to commute the truth to his fellow laborers in the Lord (1 Tim. 4:14). In the present passage we learn some facts that we should call to the attention of others, as well as practice among the churches of Christ.

1. Teaching is to be done by *men*. While all are equal "in Christ" there is a difference in the work of men and women. There are things that each has been commanded. Turn to 1 Cor. 11:1-16 for a prime example. Women are named eleven times in these verses, men eight. Well, Paul instructed Timothy to commit these things to men.

2. The men are to be *faithful*. This does not mean "believing" but that they are to be men of fidelity. Reliable, trustworthy men. Men who will not mishandle the word of God. Men that will practice the things they teach to others. *"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."* (1 Tim. 4:16). Unless a man is "faithful" to obey and live for the Lord he cannot be saved himself. In Matthew 25, we have the parable of the talents. One man was condemned by Jesus because he was not faithful in his duties. The men who teach must be faithful (or trustworthy) to follow the wishes of the Lord (Lk. 6:46). He must also be faithful in expressing God's Word. Some

because of family situations, or their jobs, or the feelings of their brethren, etc. might be tempted to side-step the scripture. There are men who for "the love of money" or popularity have neglected to say what was needed to those who heard them. Teachers are to be faithful in life and faithful in teaching the truth.

3. The faithful man must be *able to teach*. This refers to his ability. Desiring to be a teacher is not enough, he must have the confidence of his hearers and a measure of ability to get the points he wishes to make across to them. A babbler will not do. To be an effective teacher growth is necessary, but it is clear that some will never attain the ability to edify a congregation, yet they are tolerated continuously. Why? Again, Why? When once a church learns that some of the men cannot and never will be able to teach, they should not schedule them to occupy the pulpit. It is not the duty of every man to teach. *Men who have demonstrated their faithfulness and have the ability to teach are to edify the assembly.*

Responsibility Of Hearers To Be Edified In The Assembly

It is commonly believed that the entire responsibility for edification is the teacher in the assembly. Some members of the church will even refrain from attending if certain people are presenting the lesson declaring, "I cannot get anything out of his lesson." As averted before, more care than usual should be taken in selecting teachers, but at the same time, being "spoon fed" the truth is contrary to modern conception. Hearers do have some responsibility to receive and be edified.

The Lord declared. *"Take heed what ye hear. Again, Take heed therefore how ye hear."* (Mk. 4:24; Lk. 18:8). What we hear must be for the up-building and betterment of the spiritual rather than the carnal. How we hear reminds us that we are to exercise care rather than being careless.

When one is before the assembly presenting the word of God we should give the utmost attention to the things said. While it is the duty of elders to watch for the flock, they are human beings and can miss something or can be wrong themselves. Sometimes a man will be invited to preach because of his winsome personality when the elders know he will present things contrary to the truth. This means that I must be careful to sift the chaff from the seed of the kingdom, allowing only the wholesome truth to lodge in my heart.

I have noticed some bring a pad and writing instrument to take notes. This is surely a good practice, unless we involve ourselves to the point that while writing one thing we miss another. I cannot blame the teacher if I fail to listen as carefully as I should.

Once the assembly is dismissed a searching of the word of God should be done to see if these things are so (Acts 17:11). Remember (especially in some cases), teachers and preachers are very apt at putting their point across even by twisting the truth. This will be to their own destruction (Gal 1:6-9). However, if I accept and follow their cunningly devised ways, it will be to my spiritual undoing as well. May we all be more careful by *"taking heed of what we hear and how we hear"* in the assembly of the saints.

10,000 TIMES 10,000 FALL BEFORE HIM!

(THE REST OF THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD)

By STEVEN BOWEN

Have you ever thought why it is that we believe it to be so urgent to follow God's pattern so closely? Why do we feel it necessary to walk an old-fashioned road in such a modern age? And why is it that we feel it absolutely essential that we lay aside every ounce of our pride that sometimes creeps in our hearts, along with any other sin "that so easily beset us?"

The answer is simple, but it's powerful: It's because Jesus is Lord - not you and me. Jesus Christ is Lord, and he is King!

I haven't shared - either in written or spoken form - this story with the aura and majesty with which it needs to be told and preached. I'm going to try here, because this story explains why we are willing - and compelled! - to lay aside our human reasoning and our frail ways. I'm going to try this, even though — as it is with so many other jobs we take on — this one is much, much bigger than I am.

This story is the story of Jesus, but it's not the one we are most familiar with. It's not one we can relate to very well, either. When we see Jesus, we tend to see Him in a manger there in Bethlehem.

Or we see Him as a worn traveler walking the roads of Israel or the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

We see Him traveling and preaching and teaching in all of His wisdom. We hear him relating the parables in their wonderful mixture of beauty and simplicity, or we sit in the crowd and listen to his remarkable sermon on the mount as he lays out the very foundation of a Christ-like life for the world to hear.

And sometimes we bring ourselves to see the most vivid scenes of all, the scenes of a battered, bloody Savior making his way slowly up the knoll called Calvary, a heavy beam and the weight of the world on his shoulders.

But I need to tell you this: Our image of Jesus Christ can't start there. We can't understand Him — and we can't understand our responsibilities to Him — if we don't see and hear the rest of story.

Jesus Christ was far more than this great teacher and this sacrificed Savior we see. Jesus Christ is God. He is Deity. When we learn to see Him this way, our picture of Him and our view of ourselves and our handling of the word of God change.

Without a doubt, it's a life-changing view.

The great apostle lays it all out for us in about as clear a way as the human language will allow. In the second chapter of Philippians, he encourages us all to be like this Jesus. He says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (v. 5). That by itself may seem difficult, but the difficulty is compounded in the next part!

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in

the likeness of men!" (vs. 6-7).

Now, that's an amazing, amazing thing!

I heard Tennessee's Ed Daniel preach a truly dynamic sermon on the Lord's Deity in Deer Park, Texas in July of this year, and His portrait of Jesus in the form of God taking on the rags of man inspired me to go back and try my hand at writing and preaching this again. Maybe my scribbled notes from that preacher's lesson will help me say this better than before.

This view of Jesus is hard for us to understand: Even though Jesus was "in the beginning with God," standing face to face with him - even though "he was God," He was willing to lay aside all that He was and all that He deserved to be, the very "brightness of his glory and the express image of his person" (John 1:1 and Hebrews 1:3).

What an expression of humility!

Listen now!

It was - and is — His right to be worshipped. It was His right to be glorified! It was his right for 10,000 times 10,000 and thousands of thousands of the heavenly host to gather around His throne and to glorify Him, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing!" (Revelation 5:11-12).

It was His right for the four and twenty elders of Revelation to fall down before Him and worship the King who "lives for ever and ever," casting their crowns before His throne (4:10-11).

It was His right for "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them" to say, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Revelation 5:13).

Do you understand that at this very moment thousands upon thousands - 10,000 times 10,000! — of the angelic and heavenly host bow before the majesty of Jesus Christ, proclaiming His holiness and power and glory?!

For eternity, Jesus - as part of the Godhead - was due - is due! — this praise and glory, and received it.

But he changed form. He went from the eternal spiritual being, God, and put on the body of a man. There could be no greater humility. He became man. He became like unto sinful man. He took on man's ailments and man's passions and man's temptations. This, the one who created all things in the beginning and dwells eternally with the Father and the Holy Spirit - He became man.

And yet, amazingly~ we look at Him, and we see Him on His knees, girded with a towel, washing the feet of the disciples.

He not only became man, but he humbled himself and became the lowest of men. He became a servant. But there's more: Once he had lowered himself with the filthy rags that are man, he "humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8).

I liked the question the Tennessee preacher posed as he prepared to close out his Texas meeting.

“You believe sin isn’t that bad?” he said, “Look at Calvary!”

Indeed, look at Calvary!

Even the angels stood ready — angrily, no doubt — as they watched men of dust brutalize now the most-humble member of the Godhead. They were perched, ready to descend in the blink of an eye to execute vengeance on this blasphemous crowd!

There at Calvary He portrayed the consequence of sin!

But, even if He had to die, why did he have to be so brutalized, probably far beyond recognition, even? What an awful death for any man, much less the Son of God.

You see, it was in the brutality of his death that we see something that we must see: We see sin for what sin really is!

No wonder the apostle concludes this segment of his Philippian letter with, “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling!” (2:12).

There is where our responsibility to Him comes in: Because He is God and worthy for 10,000 times 10,000 and thousands of thousands to bow before His throne both now and forever, we have the responsibility to submit to him, to bow before Him in honor and obedience. We have the responsibility to “have the mind of Christ” by sacrificing our own will upon the altar and submitting completely to Him - even if that means we may seem a little old-fashioned or out of step or behind-times.

Jesus is Lord, not us.

I believe He *demand*ed to die for us, and I know He demands that we obey Him. That’s why we carefully try to follow the pattern He — the Lord of lords and King of kings — gave for us to follow, instead of improving upon it with our own modern way of thinking.

The apostle gives us two wonderful reasons why we follow Jesus completely and absolutely.

We are compelled to follow Him because he became our obedient servant, as hard as that may be to image.

But the apostle doesn’t leave Him a servant in his Philippian letter. He doesn’t leave our Lord hanging brutalized on that cross.

No, indeed!

Instead, He gives a second reason why we are so compelled to follow Him. He lifts Him up as God did, and He declares the greatest truth this world could ever know:

“God has exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow . . . and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9-11).

The day will come when every man - humanist, atheist, “procrastinist” - every man will bow before the throne and confess the lovely name of Jesus, even as those 10,000 times 10,000 and thousands of thousands are doing at this moment.

“Til that day comes when we literally bow before His august presence, we give Him our complete allegiance in everything. He is Lord of lords and King of kings. - *steven.bowen@redoakisd.org*

IT ONLY TAKES ONE

By JOHN STRAIN

In the spring of 1894, the Baltimore Orioles went to play what they thought would be a routine baseball game against the Boston Red Sox. However, the events that took place were anything but routine. Orioles’ John McGraw broke into a fist fight with the Red Sox 3rd baseman. Within moments both benches cleared, the tussle diffused into the stands, and a loyal fan set fire to the bleachers. As a result the entire ballpark collapsed, and the fire eventually spread to 107 other buildings throughout Boston. All this mayhem resulted when the spark of one person’s actions ignited the combustion of a lot of other people’s reactions. As in that situation, people often fail to see how what they do and say, whether impulsively or premeditatedly, can trigger a destructive chain of events. Among other things, this incident teaches the need for men to control their actions and their reactions, or be forced to endure the destruction to follow. The apostle Paul noted that, “no one lives unto himself and no one dies unto himself.” (Ro. 14:7) From this we learn, at least two important lessons. First, our lives naturally involve the lives of those around us and second, we have a duty to the people we interface with.

As mortals, we battle daily frustrations, personal disappointments, fleshly desires, and other worldly influences. These bombardments have become an expected part of life. The actions we take, however, in confronting these different situations, will determine the future events for us and others around us. Unwittingly (yet sometimes knowingly), we may set into motion a sequence that will destroy, or at least harm, human lives, including our own. An unkind word, a lewd act, or an inappropriate gesture can initiate devastating consequences for those involved with us. In haste, for instance, because of the stress we’re under, we might unload our frustrations by becoming intoxicated with a friend. That act in turn, not only affects the persons involved, but possibly others that may be mutually acquainted with the both of us. We foolishly decide to drive our friend home, but on the way get into a fatal accident, causing our friend to lose his life. When a phone call is made to the mother of the deceased, she can only comfort herself in tears, knowing that because of our sinful acts she has to hear those dreaded words, “come down and identify the body.” Brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and loved ones of all sorts are then forced to say their last goodbyes and, with crying sobs, walk past an open casket — a casket we opened. For the rest of our life we must live with the reputation of having caused the loss of a life through a situation that we could have controlled. All we had to do was never take that first drink. In the aftermath, we may come to think though, “I could have done better.” When the truth is, we should have. It is far more prudent to estimate the outcome of our actions from the beginning and have an idea of what could happen by doing or saying certain things. After all, isn’t it better to be reflective beforehand instead of remorseful afterwards? May we all consider ourselves and others before we act or speak. Remember it only takes one.

REPLACING THE VETERANS

continued from page two

business. It is not a game or a popularity contest. All preachers, young and old, have a responsibility to “declare all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:7). The practice of leaving off unpopular subjects may please uncommitted members of the church and bring financial reward but it is not calculated to result in a crown of life. All preachers, young and old, have a responsibility to “leave worldly, empty phrases alone” (2 Timothy 2:16, Goodspeed). The apostle pointed out two who failed to do so and said that they “concerning the truth have erred” (2 Timothy 2:18). I have heard of some who have given so much heed to denominational radio and television preachers that they cannot tell at what point a person is saved. Others have come up with the concept that we are saved by grace alone and that people in all churches are saved. Could such a one defend the truth of God’s word? Surely not!

Although I certainly do not consider myself an authority on how to become a gospel preacher, I have been asked for advice. My advice for aspiring preachers is to study the word of God and commit great portions of it to memory; have respect for those preachers who have stood the test of time, but learn to think independently. Command the respect of the home congregation by steadfastness, perseverance, and commitment. Learn to sing and speak the gospel and never miss an opportunity when called upon to serve. When respect is gained, use it to enlist the help of others and conduct mission meetings, home studies, door-knocking efforts, and tract and correspondence course distribution. It is hard work, but God will bless such efforts. If choosing a wife, select a woman who is also committed—one who will go or stay, as the case may be, and one who will support her husband no matter how many hard knocks come his way.

Do not despise learning—it serves the useful purpose of better knowing and better presenting the gospel to others. A knowledge of grammar and the correct use and pronunciation of words used to convey the gospel is a distinct advantage. We are told that Moses was “learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds” (Acts 7:22). The apostle Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel, the greatest teacher of his time, and received a splendid education (Acts 22:3). The Pharisees regarded the disciples as “ignorant and unlearned men” (Acts 4:13), but they were, in reality, the best educated in the world for they had spent over three years in the school of Christ

If reports of statisticians are to be believed, churches of Christ that once led as the fastest growing religious movement of the fifties, are now far down the line behind Mormons, Pentecostals, and others. I know we live in different times now when many do

not want to hear the truth, but could our pre-occupation with entertaining young folks and with social get-togethers have any bearing upon those statistics? Someone said, aptly I think, that a gospel preacher’s job is not to amuse the goats, but to feed the sheep. A sister once remarked that churches in the New Testament met to fast and pray while we meet to feast and play.

A change of the guard is taking place. The day is far spent for some of us and shadows are lengthening. It is time for younger men to step forward and meet the test. We need faithful, dedicated gospel preachers. Paul explained to Timothy that in taking heed unto himself and in continuing in the teaching he would be saving himself and those who heard him (1 Timothy 4:16). There is no cause that is more worthy. - 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401 bookman@brightok.net

Announcements

SUPPORT FOR PREACHERS NEEDED IN THE PHILIPPINES

At this time, several preachers desperately need financial support in the Philippines on the Island of Luzon. We have known these men for several years, and they have proven themselves faithful to the Book. We have never tried to have a large number of supported preachers in the Philippines believing a few could do the job. This has proven to be wise because the work is steadily growing and at peace. There are perhaps less than 30 men who are supported from America and they have done a remarkable job. Most are taking care of a number of congregations, often preaching four or five times each Lord’s Day. Many travel, and even walk, long distances every week in order to keep the works going. Now, however, the work has grown too large for those few to continue to maintain it. We need congregations who are willing to send support directly to the preacher in the approximate amounts of \$150 per month. Will you do this? Hundreds are being baptized every year, new congregations are being established, those in error converted and the churches strengthened. If you will contact us through our regular address (1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550) or e-mail old_paths@juno.com we will be glad to give you the name and address of a preacher you can support and who will report directly to your congregation. This is an urgent need, so please do not delay. - Don L. King

ARIZONA NEW YEAR’S MEETING

Dec. 29th, 05 - Jan. 1st, 06. The Tucson Country Club Congregation is hosting this meeting with Bro. Johnny Elmore. All services will be held at Wrightstown Elementary School, 8950 E. Wrightstown Rd., Tucson, AZ 85715. Thursday & Friday 7:30 P.M., Saturday 6:30 P.M., Sunday 2 services starting at 10:00 A.M., afternoon at 2:00 P.M. For more information please contact Troy Seals 520-762-1468 and Niles Stein 520-649-7433.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE \$13 AS OF JANUARY FOR OPA

As we announced last month, it is necessary for us to raise the subscription price for the paper. This is something none of us wanted to do. We hoped that with an increase of subscriptions, we might be able to avoid it but it just is not possible. It has been a number of years since a price increase. We do all we can to keep costs as low as possible, no one who works for the paper ever receives pay in any form. It has always been a labor of love. However, postage increases over time, printing costs and other incidentals keep on rising until we have no choice but to increase to \$13. If this creates a hardship for you, please write us. Until the January issue, you may subscribe or renew at the old price of \$10 and you are welcome to renew for as many years as you wish. You may also subscribe for a friend (who does not take the paper) at half price (\$5) along with your renewal at \$10. The paper is growing, going into more places than ever before and we thank you all for helping us in the work. *The Publishers*

NEW TIME AT LEXINGTON, KY

The Lexington Church of Christ, in Lexington, Kentucky, has changed their afternoon service to 2:00 P.M.

OPA STILL NEEDS HELP WITH FOREIGN SUBSCRIPTIONS

As we have mentioned before, we send the paper to several in various countries around the world where we have work. This is an expensive venture for the paper because most cannot afford to pay for their own subscriptions, which means we must absorb the costs ourselves. In addition, it is much more expensive to mail due to much higher postage costs. We have always depended on generous brethren for their donations to help in this need. If you are willing to send your help, be sure to plainly state that the money is for foreign subs. When we receive enough to cover our costs, we will publish an announcement to that effect. You have always responded and so we thank you in advance. *DLK*

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE WEBSITE

A website has now been developed for the *Old Paths Advocate*. Some of the features of this site include: Doctrinal Issue articles, Special Issues of the OPA, upcoming articles in the OPA, Contemporary Issues for Young People, Question and Answer section, updates for the Church Directory published by Greg Gay, and a place for people to declare their status as a Conscientious Objector. You will be able to go to this website and renew your subscription or subscribe to the paper, order church directories, and announce Gospel Meetings. Meeting announcements should be sent to mmartin@bellsouth.net. We encourage congregations in the brotherhood who have their own

websites to include a link to our site. We are grateful to publishers and editors of the *Old Paths Advocate* for their encouragement in this endeavor. It is our desire that this website will serve as an addition to the OPA and will increase readership. It is not intended to take the place of the paper. Be sure to visit this site at: www.oldpathsadvocate.org.

Rick Martin, Website Publisher

Terry Studdard, Website Asst. Publisher

Brandon Steward, Webmaster

MY POSITION ON CARNAL WARFARE

I cannot participate in military service 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 thy 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 in any way, 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 any way, 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 any way 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.

1. Eric Stone, e-mail address: Stonee@hawaii.rr.com
2. Randall Wayne Cass, 2208 Dean Ave., Bakersfield, CA
3. Deila Inez Cass, 2208 Dean Ave., Bakersfield, CA
4. Randy James Whisenhunt, 804 Betty St., Springdale, AR 72762

NOTE: It is also possible to register your name as being opposed to carnal warfare on the Old Paths Advocate website at: www.oldpathsadvocate.org

Our Departed

TRIPLETT- Kenneth Stanley Triplett was born February 18, 1924 near Phillipsburg, MO. He departed this life August 11, 2005 in St. John's Regional Health Center in Springfield, MO. On July 15th 1946 he was married to Ruth Tibbs and to this union two daughters and one son were born. Kenneth obeyed the gospel early in life and served the Lord faithfully until he was called away. He regularly worshiped with the Lee's Summit church near Lebanon, MO where he served as a deacon. This kind and gentle man was loved and admired by many for his Christian demeanor and loving personality. Kenneth was confident in his faith and resolute in his convictions. A large crowd gathered to pay their respects to this good man at the Holman-Howe funeral chapel in Lebanon. Congregational singing was capably led by Charles Goodgion and this writer and Clovis Cook conducted the service. Long time friends and brethren carried his earthly remains to its resting place in the New Hope Cemetery near Long Lane, MO. Surviving are his wife Ruth, son, Mark, daughters Linda and Jerri and several grandchildren. Kenneth will be sorely missed in the home, the church, and the community where he had lived most all of this life. - *Ronny Wade*

KEETER - Don Keeter was born February 8, 1945, the 3rd of 4 children to Henry Bell Keeter and Lila Mae Campbell Keeter in Lawrence County TN. He attended Revelo Elementary School and graduated from Lawrence County High School. On October 29, 1966 Don made Norma Kay Jackson his bride. To this union were born two daughters, Tammy Jane and Donna Kay. Don was a faithful and devoted husband and father. Don attended worship with his wife and daughters for many years at the Union Hill Church of Christ of Buffalo Road. In 1985 Don, Norma Kay and girls, along with his father-in-law, Norman Jackson, began worshipping with the Chapel Grove Church of Christ. Don soon became obedient to the Gospel of Christ and was baptized into Christ by Wayne Fussell and rapidly grew in the grace and knowledge of our Lord. He and his family soon gained the love and respect of the members of the Church and Don was ordained to the office of a Deacon by Johnny Fisher on August 15, 1993. After 10 years of faithful service to the congregation as a deacon Don was ordained by Ed Daniel to the office of an Elder. He faithfully executed the responsibilities of an elder in sickness as well as in health. He led the congregation with gentleness, love, and the wisdom that is from above, leaving us a wonderful example of faithfulness. Just last Sunday he attended the morning worship service, weak and frail in body, but strong and determined in spirit. He faced death as he did life - with courage and deep abiding faith. Up to the point that he slipped into unconsciousness late in the evening on Friday, in spite of his pain, he greeted each of us by name, with a smile, and the words "I love you" and "let's pray". Early Saturday morning, the 10th of September, at the age of 60, surrounded by those he loved and who loved him,

Don left this world of pain and suffering and was escorted by the angels to paradise where he will rest with the redeemed, awaiting the resurrection at the glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is survived by his wife of nearly 39 years, Norma Kay Jackson Keeter of Ethridge, TN, his daughter, Tammy Jane Keeter Caperton and husband Wade of Leoma, TN, his daughter Donna Kay Keeter Atkinson and husband Michael of Crawfordville, FL, one brother, and five grandchildren. He is preceded in death by his parents, and two brothers. Over 300 family, brethren and friends from near and far attended a standing room only service conducted by this writer and Brother Johnny Fisher. Don's earthly remains were laid to rest in the Chapel Grove Cemetery. - *Ed Daniel*

LOCKARD - George Lockard was born February 17th, 1923. He passed from this life Tuesday, September 27th, 2005 at the age of 82. He is survived by his wife Julia of almost 60 years and three sons, Harold, Robert, Donald and their wives: seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. His is also survived by two sisters, Wilda Pearce and Mildred Bee, two brothers Hallin and Eugene Lockard. George was preceded in death by both of his parents and a sister Martha Lydick. George was confined to a nursing home where he suffered for over three years with Alzheimers and Parkinsons Disease. George was baptized June 21st, 1940 by Brother N.L. Clark while he was holding a gospel meeting at the Church of Christ at Lovejoy, PA. George remained faithful until the end. He attended service at the Church of Christ (Pleasant Valley) Indiana, PA. Eugene Lockard and Elvin Caldwell officiated the memorial service at the church at Indiana, PA Sunday, October 2nd, 2005.

Field Reports

Don Jackson, 504 E. 4th Street, West Point, GA 31833 donjackson@knology.net, October 16 - It has literally been years since my last report. I apologize for the delay. I am pretty much recovered from back surgery. The surgery was May 27 and thankfully seems to have been a success. Thanks to all who called, wrote notes, emails, or more importantly prayed for me and mine. The work in West Point continues with the congregation at peace and with a desire to spread the gospel. We just closed a meeting with Brother Ronny Wade preaching the old time gospel message. It was a pleasure to hear him again. Too, it was great to hear Brother Wayne McKamie preach at LaGrange recently. At this writing, I am preparing to go to Ardmore, OK for a meeting. Next month I will be with Lord's People at Lowery, AL, November 16-20. If you are in the area please plan to come by. Please continue to remember us in your prayers.

Don L. King; 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, e-mail old_paths@juno.com, October 13 - We recently had occasion to preach once at the congregation in Grants Pass, OR to a nice crowd as well as the home church at

Fremont, CA. We also were at the North Area congregation in Sacramento recently for a Lord's Day and enjoyed it. Lord willing we are to begin this Lord's Day at Lees Summit (near Lebanon, MO) for a week's meeting and then to Fossil Creek in the DFW area of Texas for another week. With the exception of a weekend meeting in Yuba City, CA in December, that will conclude our meetings for 2005. We look forward to the annual Philippine trip in January. Lord willing, Alan Bonifay will accompany us this trip. Brother Johnny Elmore has written the editorial for this issue and we hope you will all enjoy and benefit from reading it. This year has been fruitful and we have enjoyed working with all of you in meetings and thank you for your trust in us.

Douglas T Hawkins, 409 Worthington Pl., Richond, KY 40475, douglast@alltel.net, (606)271-0529, October 8, 2005 - We've recently closed a meeting in Dothan, AL. I was very uplifted personally by all the brethren and enjoyed my stay with my long time friends, Kevin and Bethany Presley. Everyone in Dothan, for the most part, seemed to be doing well. Bro. Ronny Wade held our fall meeting at Blue Springs and everyone here at home was very encouraged by his presence and preaching. I plan to be in Cable Ridge, MO Nov.6-13 for their fall meeting. If you are nearby, come join us. Remember brethren, "the day is far spent and night is at hand...work, for the Lord is coming."

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Dr., Ada, OK 74820. carlmj@cableone.net, Oct. 10—The Lord has blessed our meetings efforts in the last few months. I enjoyed the Eastern Labor Day meeting hosted by the Huntington, WV congregation. We were saddened by the death of Charlie Ross the first day of the meeting, but the meeting itself was good. The preaching was excellent and the preachers could not have been more cooperative. We had a great meeting in Napoleon, AL. Crowds were good with visitors from the community visiting almost every service and the meeting resulted in one baptism and one restoration. Our next meeting was with the Mill Creek congregation in Shawnee, Kansas. We had a full house every service including preachers Mike Criswell, Smith Bibens, Paul Nichols, David Griffin Charles McConnell and Gary Garcia. I stayed with long-time friends Keith and Karen Sifford. The meeting resulted in one baptism, one restoration, and one confession of faults. Last week I concluded a meeting at El Cajon, CA which resulted in one confession of faults. What a pleasure to be with this congregation! I made my home with dear friends, Larry and Laura Lay. I am currently in a meeting in Birmingham, AL. My next meetings are in Duncanville, TX and Covina, CA. I plan to participate in the annual preachers' study in Arlington, TX and I am scheduled to assist the Edmond congregation in conducting the Oklahoma New Year meeting. Cullen Smith held us an excellent meeting at home recently. The meeting was the first in our new building and we had a lot of interest from our community. May God continue to bless the

Brotherhood!

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012, pon.wjn.ks@juno.com, Oct. 10, 2005 - At Stony Point, Kansas City we had our young speakers meeting, Sept. 23-25. The men gave their talks with conviction and courage. In spite of the inflated gas prices several people from out of town and from other states attended and participated. Some speakers, especially, showed promising talents for the future of the church. On Oct. 9th, Brother Jim Franklin was our speaker at Stony Point, both morning and afternoon. When the afternoon service was over and dismissed, Brother Franklin gave us a talk and showed pictures about the work in Malawi where he lived and served for fourteen years, and where the Lord used him to help unite a divided brotherhood. The information was very enlightening, and we appreciated his answering our questions. Oct. 20th will mark my 65th preaching anniversary. I am looking forward to it. May the Lord continue to bless all our faithful gospel preachers and their efforts for good.

Michael Kidd, P.O. Box 32, Fayetteville, Ohio 45118, kiddm@fp.k12.oh.us, September 24, 2005 - The work at Blanchester continues to move forward. We moved into our building a little over a year ago. In February we began a radio broadcast entitled, "What Does the Bible Say?" This airs each Sunday morning at 8:45 a.m. on the Wilmington station (1090 A.M.). We've been working to improve the clarity of our program. Instead of using cassette tapes, we are now using C.D.'s. This makes a great difference, and the program is now very clear. We encourage all in our broadcasting area to listen to the program. We continue to pray to God for our little congregation, and that we will grow in those ways that are pleasing in his sight. Each member is working and doing his/her part in helping promote growth. By getting on our knees to pray, and rising up to work, we look forward to the increase. We have been blessed with increase during the past two months. In August a dear sister came forward and was restored to the truth. In September another dear sister was restored. We are so happy and thankful to now have them among us. Their genuine desire to please God is a great encouragement to us all. Our baptistry is now complete, with water in it and ready for use. With the carpentry work complete, it looks very inviting. We continue to have visitors on a fairly regular basis. We are thankful for them. They seem to enjoy coming and learning. We were glad to have Mark Detherage speak for us last Sunday and this past Wednesday. It's nice to have Mark and his family back in the area. My family and I enjoyed attending the Eastern Labor Day Meeting in West Virginia. We're looking forward to returning to West Virginia next week when I'll be holding a meeting at Saint Albans from September 30 through October 2. The brethren at Saint Albans are very willing workers for the Lord, and we are anticipating a good work there.

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THE BACK PAGE...

DEATH OF A SALESMAN

BY CARL M. JOHNSON

Last week (Sept. 28) while Matt Trent and I were browsing in a used bookstore in downtown San Diego, I saw a newspaper clipping taped to the wall in the "Religious Books" section of the store announcing the death of Robert Funk. The article said he died at his home in Santa Rosa, California, on September 3, 2005. I was surprised because Funk had been dead for almost a month and somehow I had not seen a notice about it until then. For years he had been in the news a great deal. He was the founder and co-chairman of the notorious "Jesus Seminar" and he spent the last two decades of his life promoting the Seminar, manipulating the media, and duping an unsuspecting public with a skill that would have made P.T. Barnum envious.

Funk formed the Jesus Seminar in 1985 and co-chaired it from the beginning with John Dominic Crossan of DePaul University. Funk, however, was the ringmaster-entrepreneur behind the Seminar. He set its goals, was its most active spokesman, and received the most media attention. The Seminar consists of a small group of self-selected marginal-scholars ("Fellows") who meet twice a year in different cities around the country and debate the reliability of Scripture.

They have concluded that the Bible is not inspired and the miracles attributed to Jesus never really occurred. They argue that Jesus was a secular sage, but not the Son of God. They claim He was a political rabble-rouser, uncertain of His mission, in constant hiding from His Roman pursuers, and that the idea of starting a new religion was the furthest thing from His mind. They conclude that Jesus died a beggar's death on the cross, His body was eaten by ravenous dogs, His resurrection is a myth, and the New Testament writers fabricated much of the Gospel message.

Such blasphemy is nothing new. Centuries ago the Jewish Talmud (commentary on the Jewish Scriptures) accused Jesus of being—among other things—an illegitimate son of a Roman soldier. What makes the Jesus Seminar different is its ability to manipulate the media into disseminating its bilge.

Generally speaking, religion news is boring for reporters and columnists. The religion editor of a daily paper is like the Maytag repairman in the TV commercials. He just does not have much to do unless there is scandal involved. Otherwise, the cycle for the religion pages is all too drearily predictable. Into this dismal situation, however, blew the Jesus Seminar. It wanted coverage! It sought coverage! It understood deadlines! It provided sensational, controversial sound-bites for the evening news. Best of all it provided colored beads! Funk captured the public's imagination by inventing a system in which the scholars would vote on the reliability of Bible passages using different colored beads (E.g. Red for authentic and black for unauthentic). This gimmick is the closest thing (outside the Vatican) that religion has ever provided to an actual election. Americans love elections: "Is Jesus going to win as Messiah or not? Tune in tonight at ten o'clock and see how the Seminar votes!"

Time magazine, Newsweek, and U.S. News and World Report devoted cover stories to the discussion of Jesus during Easter week of 1996 (4-8-96), and each magazine gave extensive coverage to the findings of the Jesus Seminar. A concerned Time magazine asks, "Some scholars are debunking the Gospels. . . What are Christians to believe?" **Newsweek** sensationally proclaims, "Rethinking the Resurrection," and **U.S. News and World Report** asks in reference to Jesus, "Who Was He?" The articles imply that the Jesus Seminar just might have viable answers to these questions.

A few years later (June 26, 2000), ABC News presented a special two-hour television program entitled, "In Search of Jesus," hosted by the late Peter Jennings. Ostensibly, the show was an objective investigation into the nature of the Jesus of history, but in reality it was little more than a forum for the Jesus Seminar to disseminate its propaganda. The media continue this trend even unto this day. Funk and associates have been featured on PBS radio, "Larry King Live," "The History Channel," "The Discovery Channel," etc. All of this media coverage is a testimony to the promotional skill of Funk.

When I first saw the newspaper article about Funk's death, the title of Arthur Miller's classic play, "The Death of a Salesman," flashed into my mind. In the play, a man starts out to pursue the American dream as a salesman. The play ends in tragedy, however, as the man commits suicide because he fails not only as a salesman, but also as a husband and a father.

Robert Funk was a brilliant salesman, but his life also end in tragedy. He earned his Bachelor's of Divinity and his Master's at Butler University, and he taught for a time at Texas Christian University. Ironically, these two institutions were begun by decendants of our own American Restoration Movement. Somewhere along the way, however, Funk left the fundamental moorings espoused by that movement. Consequently, instead of eulogizing a great defender of the truth and a faithful brother in Christ, we are left only to mourn the death of another salesman. carlmj@cableone.net

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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REMEMBER THE SCARS

BY RICK MARTIN

In John 20:19-28 we see that the disciples of Jesus were gathered in a room and the door was shut. They had gone through some difficult and trying days. They had seen their Savior taken away by force and crucified on a cross. They had turned away with broken hearts. Perhaps they had spent their time saying why did this have to happen? They must have said "why did he allow himself to be put to death?" "We needed him so much." They spent hours wondering and weeping.

As they sat in that room that evening I wonder what they talked about. In my imagination I can hear one of them say "I hope it's true that he is alive, but I just can't see how that could be." Then another would say "but Mary saw him, surely she recognized him." As they sat and talked and hoped and despaired the mighty miracle happened and Jesus came and stood in the midst of them. When Jesus saw the disciples he said "Peace be unto you." As soon as Jesus had spoken he showed them his scars.

As we look again at Jesus and the disciples in the room, we see that there are only ten disciples present. Judas had committed suicide and we do not expect him to be there. The other missing disciple was Thomas. Later on the other disciples met up with Thomas and told him they had seen the Lord. Thomas had a hard time believing such a thing and he wanted more proof. Thomas wanted to touch the print of the nail in his hands and thrust his hand into the pierced side of the Savior.

Eight days passed and here the disciples are once again in a room. This time Thomas is present. If Jesus is alive, he wants to know it. Once again Jesus appears in the room and this time he goes directly to Thomas. Jesus shows his scars to Thomas and invites him to touch them. There is no record that Thomas touched Jesus, but when he saw the scars, he exclaimed "my Lord and my God."

The great blind songwriter Fanny Crosby wrote *My Savior First of All*, and in the refrain of that song she wrote the touching words. "I shall know him, I shall know him by the print of the nails in his hands." Miss Crosby seems to portray the idea that when she got to heaven she might not readily recognize the Savior among the great throng of saints. She imagined He bears in heaven, as He did when He appeared to Thomas, the print of the nails in his hand. Whether that sentiment is true or not, I do not know, but it

is touching to think, that when we gather on heaven's shore that we will be able to recognize him by the thing that caused him the most excruciating physical pain while he lived on earth.

I have to believe that the disciples, and especially Thomas, from the first time they saw Jesus continued to remember His scars throughout their lives. Today we must also remember the scars of Jesus.

When we remember the scars we will take Jesus as Lord. After seeing the scars of Jesus, Thomas proclaimed "my Lord and my God." We cannot help but accept Jesus as Lord if we truly remember his scars. Letting Jesus be Savior is an easy proposition, but letting him be Lord is more difficult. We need to realize that if He is not our Lord, he will not be our Savior. The term Lord describes some one who has undisputed possession of a person or thing. Jesus is to be the absolute ruler and controller of our lives. This is where we run into a problem. We do not want to turn control over to anyone else and we want to be the master of our own fate.

The problem that we have is who is on the throne in our minds. Is it Jesus or self? When we remember the scars of Jesus and what he has done for us, we will put him on the throne. Often times when asked, "Who knows what is best for me?" or immediate response is "I do", but think about how many times we have done what we thought was best in a situation only to have it turn out to be all wrong. We must come to realize that Jesus and God know what is best for us.

We must follow Jesus' instructions explicitly. We can know that Jesus is Lord of our lives by looking at our obedience. When we obey everything Jesus says then He is Lord. If we obey only the things we want to, he is not our Lord. We must have complete trust in Jesus and realize that he only wants what is best for us. We must do what He says, go where He sends, say what He instructs and think how He tells us. We must reach the point where we are not only willing to hear the Lord's commands, but also carry them out. Jesus is Lord whether we accept Him or not. It is hard to understand how anyone could remember the scars of Jesus and not accept him as Lord.

When we remember the scars of Jesus, we can avoid and overcome sin. One often hears today that a sermon should be relevant, implying perhaps that in time past some sermons or sermon topics tended to be irrelevant. I suspect

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Editorial

THE YEAR IS OVER

By **BENNIE T. CRYER**

Another year has quickly passed. It is difficult to believe we are in the last month of 2005. This division of time is arbitrary and time would certainly go on without it but it does provide us with an opportune time to reflect on some things that have occurred in this year. It is a good time for self examination to see whether we have grown in our service to the Lord. We can determine whether we have met our spiritual goals we set for ourselves. This is a time for remembering. An apostle wrote, *Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance* (2 Peter 1:13).

We do not want to forget the good things that have happened this year. I think the church is growing here in America not only in number but in strength. Members and church leaders seem more interested in learning more about God's word. This is enabling more to sow the seed of the kingdom in the hearts of honest men and women and we are already reaping a more bountiful harvest. *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it 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* (Isaiah 55:11). The Lord's work in foreign lands is prospering. It has been thrilling to read the reports our preachers from these lands give us. *Go ye therefore and teach all nations.* . . is not an empty shibboleth in the brotherhood. This year as well as the past decades we have seen this being fulfilled before our very eyes. If I know the brotherhood this work will continue and will sow the seed in new nations in the soon coming new year and in the years to come. May God continue to bless the seed sowers and the good seed they sow here in America and all over the world.

Along with this growth comes added responsibility in keeping the seed we sow pure. The church in the New Testament had this responsibility as it grew. It was difficult to keep the world out of the church. Much space was used in the New Testament dealing with problems that came into the body. The apostle's doctrine, inspired by the Holy Spirit, won the day for the most part. In the centuries that followed the pure seed was not always sown and most of the church went into apostasy. So far as we are concerned we can look back on this year and see events and doctrines tainted with denominationalism creep into the church in isolated places. We have seen good men meet these, for the most part successfully, head on. God said in Isaiah 62:6 *I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence.* Thank God for their tribe! At the close of this year let us remember that if we hold hands with denominational doctrines and practices, and those we style as digressive brethren we identify ourselves with the Edomites who, instead of helping God's people stood *on the other side, and wast as one of them*

continued on page three

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: Could you discuss racism? What exactly is it? What scripture does it violate?

Answer: Webster defines racism as "the practice of racial discrimination, persecution, etc." T. B. Maston in his book "Christianity and World Issues" says "Racism is the dogma that one ethnic group is condemned by nature to congenital inferiority and another group is destined to congenital superiority." It cannot be proven, either biblically or scientifically, that one race is either superior or inferior to another. Anytime we discriminate on the basis of race, color, or economic standing we are violating a fundamental biblical principle, the command not to "hold the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons" (James 2:1). Before the crystallization of segregation among Southern churches of Christ, some of the most outstanding preachers the church has known spoke out against the sin of racism. David Lipscomb and E.A. Elam advocated mixed congregations. Lipscomb not only preached to black people, but felt that every Southern church should be integrated and that black people should be encouraged to attend every service of the church. When a Texas church refused membership to a black, Lipscomb was justifiably upset. He wrote: "Our treatment of the Negro at best is that of criminal indifference and neglect." Even though the views of Lipscomb, Fanning, and Elam may not have been held by a majority of the members of churches of Christ, they were held by that courageous few who were touched by both a love for the fundamental principles of the message of Jesus, and for the dignity of their fellow man. Racism is sinful because it is plain and simple "respect of persons." James declares in James 2:9 "But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors." We are told in the second chapter of Galatians that Paul withstood Peter to his face, because he was to be blamed, over a matter that involved discrimination. Prior to this Peter had eaten with Gentiles, however, he withdrew himself on this occasion and refused to do so. Hence, Paul condemned his hypocrisy and inconsistency. The sin of racism needs to be exposed for what it is, a failure to respect someone different from ourselves as a bona fide member of the human family. The sin is even more grievous when we refuse to accept a brother in Christ just because of the color of his or her skin. The scripture tells us that "God looketh upon the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7). One is a Christian who has "obeyed from the heart." The color of his skin does not matter. His financial standing does not matter. Where he originated does not matter. What matters is his standing before God. To refuse to worship with any Christian just because of skin color is reprehensible. The scripture says "by their fruits (not color) ye shall know them" (Mt. 7:20).

Eugene Lawton, in an article published in the 20th Century Christian in 1968 tells of two black preachers who wanted to attend a debate held at a "white" church. They were met

at the door and told that it was not an integrated meeting. What a shame. These men were brethren in Christ, yet they were not permitted to enter the building. Can anyone imagine our Lord doing such a thing? Surely not. Racism can manifest itself in a number of ways such as: discouraging black brethren from attending or cooperating with white churches in gospel meetings, or refusing Christians of any color from worshiping together in the same place whether the crowd is predominately white or black. Racism rears its ugly head when language toward any brother is derogatory or demeaning because of his color or economic status. No person should ever be asked to leave an assembly based on his skin color or economic situation, nor should he be barred from such assembly. Our love for one another should be without hypocrisy (Romans 12:9). "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also (1 John 4:20-21). *Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, 2254 E. Raynell Springfield, MO 65804 or rf Wade@mchsi.com.*

THE YEAR IS OVER

continued from page two

(Obadiah 10-11).

Looking back over this year it is easily seen that some old problems have attempted to rise again. Social drinking, gambling, watching indecent pictures whether moving or still, wearing immodest apparel, sisters trimming or cutting their hair, and such like sins have been noted. It is high time we all remind ourselves that *there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death* (Proverbs 14:12). We need to remember the time proven principle that one wrong step leads to another as Adam, Eve, and David found out. One drink of alcohol, one draw on a marijuana cigarette, or one sniff of other potent drugs leads to another. Paul's advice to youthful Timothy was *Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart* (2 Timothy 2:22).

Many have written that if we forget the past failures we will repeat them. In this last month of 2005 we all need to examine our lives and determine to do all we can for the cause in 2006.

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WHO'S TENDING THE FLOCK

(CONTINUED)

By C.A. SMITH

We ended our last article by asking the questions: Do you think the qualifications that we have discussed so far, present too high a standard? Should they be lowered? Brother Wayne McKamie well said concerning God's standards, in his study of modest apparel, by stating: "Has God ever lowered a standard? He has raised many of them." The answer is a resounding "NO!" Amen! and Amen! If God's standards are lowered, they are lowered by self-serving individuals, who do not respect "Thus saith the Lord."

In this article we wish to continue the study of qualifications for the men the church should select to rule over them. Please remember that we must not try to make qualifications that fit some individual because the individual must fit the qualifications!

GENTLE - which simply means that one who desires the office of an elder must be patient; meek; and considerate. Certainly, he should not be harsh, stern, bitter or unkind in manner. He must be polite and courteous. Gentleness is not weakness, but harshness is?

NOT CONTENTIOUS - Even truth and right should not be maintained in a contentious spirit. "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work," (James 3:16). This does not mean that the elder is not to contend for the Truth, but not to contend and become belligerent over unimportant matters.

NOT A LOVER OF MONEY-NOT GREEDY OF FILTHY LUCRE - One who loves Christ and the souls of men more than great riches. Not concerned about material wealth, but concerned about spiritual wealth. The elder must be an example in giving of his means. In fact he should give more in proportion to his ability than anyone else in the congregation.

RULES WELL HIS OWN HOUSE; HAVING CHILDREN THAT BELIEVE. - Brother Ronny Wade stated it well in the Old Path's Advocate "The Querist Column", October 2005, when he said: "A man whose children are not faithful Christians, just simply does not qualify to be an Elder. It is really very simple. One's children (all his children) are either faithful or they are not. One who has a child out of church does not have faithful children. How in the world could a man qualify to be an Elder when not a single one of his children are in the church? And yet some churches appoint men in this situation. Such men are not Elders even though we may say they are. Amen! Need more be said. I think not!"

NOT A NOVICE - Not a new convert. Why? Because he is not sufficiently taught in the Holy Scriptures, and has not had the experience in handling matters of the church. If such were chosen, he no doubt be so elevated, and caused to think of himself as full-

grown, which would be very injurious to him and the church.

GOOD TESTIMONY FROM WITHOUT - Not only must believers reverence the character of the elder, but non-members likewise. He must be respected by all who know him. A man that has a checkered past cannot qualify for an elder in the church.

NOT SELF-WILLED - Yes, he is to be firm and steadfast in purpose, but he must not be so stubborn that he will cling to his own will and refuse to listen to reasoning that is contrary to his thinking. One who cannot cooperate, but must have his own way does not qualify to be an elder.

LOVER OF GOOD - Only men are capable of good or evil - therefore, men of like mind and spirit who are interested in the things of Christ and His church need apply for this exalted office.

JUST - He must be exact and fair in his dealings. This includes divine as well as human laws, with of course, the divine taking precedence.

HOLY - Devoted to God "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15,16) One elder said: three words, sober, just and holy present the three sides of human duty. Sober, duty to one's self, just, duty to man; holy, duty to God.

SOUND IN THE FAITH - The elder must be able to judge between truth and error and to watch for and deal with the wolves that spring up in his own midst. He must guide the church into the pathway of righteousness by teaching sound doctrine.

NOT SOON ANGRY - Some seem to take pride in the fact that they have a quick temper, but that is not something to be proud of if you would be an elder. You must overcome your temper and bring yourself into subjection. With God's help it can be done, and it must be done before one can be an elder in His church.

No man can possess these qualities to a measurable degree and not be a power for good. Men will naturally seek his counsel. He will inspire confidence and enthusiasm in all with whom he has to do.

In conclusion, please always remember the solemn warning given in Revelation 22:18, 19 when choosing men to serve as elders. If you will heed this admonition, things will work out well, with God's help and the cooperation of the congregation. Listen to it: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the works of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto those things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in the book."

These articles were written with malice toward none, but with love and concern for all!

810 NW 6th St., Andrews, TX 79714

LEARNING FROM THE TSUNAMI

By TAYLOR JOYCE

The gigantic tsunami that rolled across the Indian Ocean in late December 2004, evoked, as such catastrophes always do, questions about why it occurred. A variety of pundits have been quick to offer an opinion.

Scientists see it as purely a natural phenomena. In the past, meteors or asteroids falling into the sea, volcanic eruptions, or huge landslides, have sometimes triggered tsunamis. The Indian Ocean tsunami was caused by a powerful seaquake measuring 9.0 on the Richter scale. The angry sea then generated waves, which may have been upwards of 90 feet high, and these rushed to shore leaving unimaginable death and destruction in their wake. No natural disaster has ever before claimed so many lives. The death toll has climbed beyond the 130,000 who lost their lives in a cyclone in Bangladesh in 1991 and is still climbing. The total loss of life may never be known.

On the other hand, religious leaders have also been heard from. Rowan Williams, the archbishop of Canterbury, suggested in a newspaper article the disaster should cause Christians to question the existence of God.

Islamic web sites are filled with speculation that the disaster was Allah's (their name for the Supreme Being) punishment of non-believers, perverts among tourists and governments supporting "crusaders" (their term for Christians) in their conquest of Muslim lands. They seem to ignore the fact that most of the victims were Muslims and that most of the financial and other help is coming from the so-called crusaders.

A leading Muslim cleric declared that the devastation was Allah's punishment for allowing gays into the affected countries. He added that in the vacation resorts "in Islamic and other countries in South Asia, and especially at Christmas, fornication and sexual perversion of all kinds are rampant." He also said, "It happened at Christmas, when fornicators and corrupt people from all over the world come to commit fornication and sexual perversion." His comments are not unlike those of televangelist Jerry Falwell, who blamed gays and pro choice advocates in our own country for the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

It has also been suggested in some Muslim sources that nuclear tests by Israel, India and the United States caused the tsunami. There is no end to the speculations, but most of them can be dismissed, as one writer put it, as "the woolly-headed reactions from lightweight theorists." Ultimately, perhaps the most that we can say is what the psalmist said as he pondered some of life's perplexities, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it" (Psa. 139:6).

There are, however, things to be learned from the horrendous tragedies that befall mankind. They remind us how tenuous our hold on life really is. Death can

come when we least expect it, which underscores the wisdom of living each day as though it might be our last. Or, as the Bible puts it, "Prepare to meet thy God" (Amos 4:12).

There is also wisdom in the words of Robert Harkrider. In his discussion of the sounding of the trumpets in chapter 8 of the book of Revelation, he notes that the first four trumpets describe natural calamities reminiscent of the plagues that befell Egypt during the lifetime of Moses. He then adds: "When natural calamities occur in our own times, they should serve as reminders of our weakness and helplessness. We may think ourselves self-sufficient, but we are constantly reminded by storms and natural disasters that we are not in control of our world. When earthquakes, hurricanes, and tornados disrupt the physical world, affected human beings should be sufficiently reminded of their limitations and frailties, and turn to Almighty God who created and sustains the universe" (Revelation, 100).

Christians believe that God can turn the worst evil into the greatest good just as He did at Calvary. Through the alchemy of grace He blends sorrow and tragedy into joy and glory.

Those times when things happen which we cannot explain are the times when we most need faith in God and trust in His benevolent goodness. To abandon faith and hope at such a time is a double loss. Such abandonment cannot undo the tragedy. It can only compound it. To lose loved ones and possessions is indeed a bitter loss. To allow that to rob life of its meaning and to take away hope for the future is an even greater loss - a loss beyond measure. So, come what may - tsunami, tornado, volcanic eruption, sickness, death, whatever - the bottom line must always be the words of the Master, "Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22).
- 1713 Savannah Drive, Fort Smith, AR 72901

REMEMBER THE SCARS

continued from page one

what those people really mean is they no longer wish to hear about doctrine or responsibility, opting instead for a diet of self-help, the power of positive thinking sermons, or sermons about relationships. People have become so sophisticated to sit and listen to some lowly gospel preacher speak passionately about sin and damnation. They would rather go to some place where they have games and entertainment and that serves coffee and donuts, where instead of listening to a sermon about their sins they can laugh with a stand-up comedian and go back to their broken homes and defiant and deviant lifestyles, feeling great and thinking all is well with their souls.

The avoidance of the use of the word sin or the refusal to recognize the awfulness of sin is the root cause of the turmoil and strife in current religious life. It accounts for the casualness with which so many people are treating God. When we remember the price that was paid to redeem man

from sin we can see the awfulness of sin. The scars of Jesus should motivate people to overcome and avoid sin.

There are some practical and relevant principles that we can use to overcome sin. 1.) We need to understand that sin has its attractions. That's why people do it; it does no good to pretend that sin has no attraction. Venting ones anger provides a certain temporary satisfaction. Indulging in sexual immorality is enjoyable. Wallowing in envy and jealousy can be pleasurable. We should not let sin blindsides us. 2.) We need to change the way we think. By renewing our minds everyday, we become the sort of people who know God's will and instinctively live it. It is easy to be good when times are good. It is when tough times come, when temptations strike that you know what a man is really like. 3.) We must also educate. Preachers and teachers still need to preach and teach about sin. They must continue to condemn sin in the lives of people. 4.) We can avoid and overcome sin by developing self-control. A sure sign of a Godly person is the way he controls his words, his anger and his lust. So many people lack self-control, so they give in to every sin that comes along. 5.) We can avoid and overcome sin by knowing the value of good company and the dangers of evil company. 6.) We can avoid and overcome sin by understanding that Satan lies. Satan tells the adulterer or adulteress that they deserve to enjoy a relationship because of the loneliness in their own marriage. He tells the backslider that his departure from the church is understandable given the unfriendliness and uncaring attitude of the members. Satan is certainly able to spin the lies. Sin is such an awful and terrible thing. When a person realizes all that was done to keep man from having to pay the consequences he will avoid it. Jesus died because of sin. We need to remember the scars and avoid sin.

We need to remember the scars of Jesus when we face trials and difficulties of life. During our dark hours Jesus can bring us peace. No matter what type of trial or difficulty we may face in life we can have peace with Jesus. He is able to deal with any circumstance that we may face. It is amazing how quiet and peaceable our heart can be when Jesus is walking with us through a desperate situation. When you are down, discouraged and thinking you just cannot face one more trial or difficulty in your life, remember the scars. Jesus can help.

In the late 1800's civil war general, John B. Gordon was running for senator in the state of Georgia. At that time senators were elected by members of the state legislature. There was a member of the legislature and a former comrade of the general who for some reason had an extreme dislike for the general and he vowed that he would never vote for him. The day came for the election and the general sat on the platform as each man stood to cast his vote for or against the general. Finally the time came for the man who disliked the general to stand and cast his vote. As he stood he saw the general sitting on the platform and he noticed across his face a terribly ugly scar. The scar was the result of a wound the general had received in a battle and it was a testament to his devotion and suffering for the cause. When the man saw the scar, he dropped his head and with tear in

his eye and a quiver in his voice, he whispered, "I cannot vote no, I had forgotten about the scar."

Today when we refuse to let Jesus be in control of our lives, when we commit some sin by doing something that we should not do, or by saying some hurtful words that we should not say. When we refuse the peace that Jesus gives and want to throw up our hands and quit because of some difficult situation in our lives, we should drop our heads in shame because **we, have forgotten about the scars of Jesus.**

Announcements

THANK YOU!

Last month we requested help from our readers to pay for foreign subscriptions. You responded and we received enough to take care of the situation for the time being. Our sincere thanks to those who donated to this need. - DLK

UNITY

When brethren, who have been divided, are willing to come together with humble hearts and with contrite spirits, to pray together, discuss their differences, laying aside all former feelings of animosity, prejudices, and biases, it is generally conducive to achieving the desired results, which is, "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Such was the case with brethren whom brother Johnny Elmore and myself met with as arbitrators. The brethren who meet at the Hwy 53 congregation north of Healdton, Oklahoma, and the brethren whose meeting place is located in Ratliff City, Oklahoma, came together "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love. . ." (Eph. 4:3), and achieved their purpose and intent, and set out to begin a healing between them that we trust will have an influence on others, who need to be like-minded and do like-wise. Brother Elmore and myself believe them to be honest and sincere, and commended them for their willingness to follow the teaching of the Word of God, in regard to love, unity, and peace. May God bless them, is my humble prayer. - C.A. Smith, 810 NW 6th St., Andrews, TX 79714, casmith810@peoplepc.com

CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATES, NOVEMBER 15, 2005

Reminder, directory changes since the last printing can be seen at website: oldpathsadvocate.org. Here are the most recent changes: California: Sacramento, N. Area. Remove Daniel Chaney & Bob George. Georgia: Knoxville: Change Lloyd Lambright phone to 478-953-0352. Tennessee: Chapel Grove: Remove Don Keeter. Add: Steven Patton, 8 Alexander Springs Rd., Ethridge, TN 38456, 931-829-2485. Texas: Irving: Add Irving Church of Christ, 108 West Grauwylar Rd., Irving, TX 75061. 1/2 mile south of Hwy 183 at the O'Connor Exit, turn left on Grauwylar. Services: 9:30 AM & 4:30 PM, Wed. 7:30 PM (Last Sunday of the month 1:00 PM).

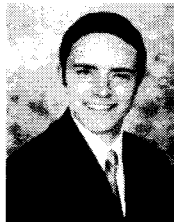
Bruce Bailey, 1625 Trinity View, Irving, TX 75060, 972-438-7082, baileybruce@comcast.net, Duane Fancher, 3525 Briarcliff Ct. N., Irving, TX 75062, 972-256-2141, duane.fancher@juno.com, Riley Phillips, 1420 Old Orchard Dr., Irving, TX 75061, rileyphillips@juno.com. Please send all updates and orders to Greg Gay, 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA 95747, 916-771-2376, papagreg@aol.com

ANNOUNCEMENT

I've currently gotten two verbal commitments from young men for next summer. I'm looking for three more to join us. Again, I'm looking for young men between the ages of 15-19 who are members of the church and serious about the work of the church and its leadership. If you would be interested in our study, please let me know. I'm best contacted at 606-271-0529. - *Doug Hawkins*

MEET BROTHER JOHN STRAIN

John Strain is another of our young preachers. John was born and raised in Harrodsburg, IN and is the grandson of the late Robert (Bob) Strain. John is a fine young man who has been preaching for the past two or three years. He recently conducted a meeting at his home congregation with very gratifying results. He has preached in Missouri, Mississippi, Indiana, and Alabama. Currently he is a student at the University of Indiana where he will graduate next spring. At that time he would like to be engaged in full time work either holding meetings or extended work. For references you may contact the leaders at Harrodsburg or the Highway 84 church in Brookhaven, MS. You may contact John at 9232 First St. Harrodsburg, IN 47434.



Bonds of Matrimony

PARKER-KIRBY

Scott Parker and Kristen Kirby were united in marriage on September 23, 2005 in Edmond, Oklahoma. Scott is the son of Larry and Jonette Parker, members of the Capitol Hill congregation in Oklahoma City and Kristen is the daughter of Larry and Elaine Kirby of the Oakwood congregation in Edmond, OK. Scott and Kristen are members of the Oakwood Church of Christ and will make their home in Edmond, OK. Both are very dedicated and active workers in the church. Scott is an excellent song leader and a real good teacher. Kristen exhibits a good Christian character and example before all. We all wish them a long happy life together. - *Edwin S. Morris*

Our Departed

KRAMER - Byron (Bun) Kramer of Woolrich, PA was born February 20, 1915. He departed this life Thursday,

October 20, 2005 at the age of 90. He is survived by his wife Elsie (Courter) Kramer. They celebrated their 69th wedding anniversary June 30, 2005. In this age and society that is something to boast about. He is also survived by one daughter Judith (Kramer) Garrison and her husband Mahlon Garrison; Two grandchildren Sally and Ricky Garrison, also one brother George, Jr. Stover and two sisters Jessie Stover and Anna Mae (Stover) Garbrick. Brother Kramer was a member of the Flemington, PA congregation and was one of the main teachers. He will be sadly missed by all of the members there. Brother Kramer was well known throughout the brotherhood and very well thought of and highly respected. He labored in the Lord's vineyard for most of his life preparing his soul for eternity by teaching the Word of God and telling others about the way of salvation, he was a good Bible scholar and loved to discuss the Bible. My wife and I have known Brother Kramer for over 55 years. Over the years we have spent many days and nights in his home and I must say we were always treated like royalty. I will surely miss this good, God loving, God fearing man. As I stated in my message; With the departure of this good man, a light has gone out in family, a light has gone out in the community, a light has gone out in the home, and a very bright and shining light has gone out in this congregation. A void will be left that cannot be filled by someone else because God has given each of us our own individual characteristics. Brother Kramer was well known and well thought of by the brotherhood. Evidence of this fact was shown by the large audience that attended his funeral service. There were members from several congregations from other states, and many friends and relatives from the local community. I was honored when asked by Sister Kramer and her daughter Judith if I would officiate the memorial service. Using the scriptures I spoke words of comfort, consolation and most of all hope.

-*Brother Eugene Lockard*

McCOMBS - Beatrice McCombs was born April 18, 1927. She passed from this life Saturday, October 8, 2005. She is survived by three children, Catherine and her husband Duane Trimble, Shirley and Marvin McCombs and a daughter-in-law Shirley (Reiter) McCombs and five grandchildren. She is also survived by three sisters Julia Lockard, Daisy Dowell and Louise Rummel. She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband Oliver on February 1, 2003, her son Harry on July 4, 2004, and a daughter Connie who died many years ago at a very young age. Beatrice was a house wife, a very good cook and an excellent baker; she could make the best canned pickles you ever ate. Beatrice was a member of the Church of Christ at Lovejoy, PA. She was devoted and was always there unless she was sick and unable to attend, she remained faithful until death. She will be sadly missed by her family and all who knew her. The large audience of friends and neighbors that came to the funeral service to pay their respect for her

and to the family showed that she was well liked. Brother Eugene Lockard officiated the memorial service speaking words of comfort, consolation and hope.

HOUSE - Elmo J.R. "Sonny" House was born May 22, 1935 at McAlester, Oklahoma and departed this life August 28, 2005 at the age of 70 in McAlester OK. He was married to Shirley Brown on November 23, 1955 in McAlester, Oklahoma. To this union were born three children: two daughters, Jennifer Butler of McAlester, OK and Barbara Brown of Canadian OK.; one son Timothy G. House of Choctaw, OK. Randy Tidmore and Mike McFarland conducted the service at Bishop Funeral Home in McAlester. Burial was at Shady Grove Cemetery, OK. Elmo was baptized in 1957 at Sulphur, OK and was an ordained preacher of the gospel. He entered into the ministry evangelizing in Gretna, FL, Little Rock, AR, Memphis, TN, and McAlester, OK. Elmo loved his country, his family, his home, but most of all he loved God and the church. His first love was studying God's word and doing the work of an evangelist. God blessed Elmo with the talent of preaching and saving souls. All those who knew him and heard him preach knew his vast knowledge of the scriptures. He was known for his love of the truth and always stood for what was right. Elmo founded the Hereford Lane Church of Christ in McAlester in 1972 where he worshipped until his health forced him to retire. He loved to sing and to attend worship services. He was carried to rest by his son-in-law and grandchildren: Philip Butler, Abbie Brown, Angela Schirlls, Heather Parker, Julie Walters, Jason Walters, and Joshua Walters. Elmo was loved and respected and a godly example to all who knew him. He was a spiritual inspiration and a blessing to us. It was an honor for me to know Sonny and support him in his labor for the Lord and to be a part of the service. He will be sorely missed.

FISHER - Uba Elizabeth Fisher was born September 3, 1917 in Gunter, Texas and passed away on October 31, 2005 in Bedford, Texas at the age of 88 years. The funeral service was held at the Bluebonnet Hills Memorial Chapel November 2, 2005. Her husband Burt preceded her in death. She faithfully cared for him about 12 years in their home. Sister Fisher took her marriage vows seriously and never stopped until they were separated by death. Her example is one of great value. Her children, Billy Ray, Brendia Jean Watts, and Walter Lee Fisher survive her along with many brethren and sisters who also loved her. She was a long time member of the Fossil Creek congregation. Her burial was in the Pleasant Grove Cemetery near where she had once lived. Keith Minter and the writer were honored to speak words of comfort at the service. - *Don L. King*

NEWMAN - Carmen Lou Newman passed away August 4, 2005 at the age of 82. She was a long-time member of the Yuba City, CA congregation. Carmen was preceded in death by her husband, Al, and one son. She

is survived by 2 daughters, 5 sons, 21 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren, and 12 great-great-grandchildren. A large crowd assembled to pay their respects to this dear, gentle woman. Her warm hugs were loved by all and she is missed by all who knew her. I was honored to conduct the service. - *Greg Gay*

MEENTS - Ralph Meents departed this life October 13, 2005 at the age of ninety-eight years, five months and five days. He lived a full and good life and like Job came to his grave "like a shock of corn cometh in his season." Ralph was a kind and gentle man, loved, respected, and admired by the many who knew him. He was a long time member of the Lord's church and had been active in the Lee's Summit church since 1928. A large crowd gathered at the Holman-Howe Chapel in Lebanon, MO to pay their respects to his memory, and celebrate his life and accomplishments. He made many happy memories for his family and friends. He is survived by one son, two daughters, a sister, and several grandchildren and great grandchildren. His son Donnie and son-in-law Lowell Richardson serve as Elders in the Lee's Summit church. His wife Pearl preceded him in death. This writer and Brother Don King were privileged to conduct the memorial service. Burial was in the New Hope cemetery, not far from where he had lived most of his life. - *Ronny F. Wade*

NORFLEET - Dora Ann Orear Norfleet, one of our dear sisters here in Yuba City, CA passed away October 4, 2005. She was 91 years old. She was born near Colorado City, TX but had lived in this area for 66 years. She had prepared well for this time in her life and did not want us to be upset by her death. She was a fine Christian having been baptized into Christ as a teenager. She is the mother of one of our Gospel preachers, Bobby Orear who lives in Sentinel, OK. Two other sons also survive her: Travis of Loma Rica, CA and Roger of Idaho. - *Bennie Cryer*

HODSON - Lola Imogene Hodson passed away October 23, 2005 at the age of 74. She was born in Cleburne, TX and passed away in Roseville, CA. She was the wife of one of the elders of the Fair Oaks congregation, Harvey Hodson. Imogene was loved by all of us. Even though she was very ill she came to the church services as long as she could. She loved the Lord and served him as long as she could. We will miss her. She is survived by her husband, Harvey and their two daughters: Cynthia of Lenexa, KA and Evelyn of Orangevale, CA along with 6 grandchildren. A brother, Charles Berna of Stockton, CA and a sister, Lois of Orangevale, CA also survive her. Michael Fox and I attempted to speak words of comfort to the family - *Bennie Cryer*

HELVEY - Flora Helvey departed from this life November 6, 2005. She was born December 12, 1917 in Pauls Valley, OK. She was the wife of Earl Helvey who served as an elder in the 64th Street church in

Sacramento, CA. She is survived by her husband Earl, a son, John, two daughters: Joyce Flores and Judy Soulsby. A son Bennie, preceded her in death at the age of 11. Flora loved God and the church. She loved to sing and help others. She will be missed by all. Years ago Earl selected Jimmy Winchester and me to conduct their funerals. We count that as an honor. - *Bennie Cryer*

Field Reports

Brett Hickey, 208 Crosshaven Court, Antioch, TN 37013, (615) 501-9246, unityseeker@hotmail.com, November 8 – Since reporting this summer, we have enjoyed meetings at Neosho, MO, Bandy, KY and White Bluff, TN. I enjoyed Nick and Sally Nichols' overflowing hospitality and Bible discussions while at Neosho. I was impressed with this congregation's blend of warmth, strength and fervor. The breadth of maturity and interest among a number of young families are evidence of long-term influence of godly parents and grandparents and bodes well for the future. Several went door to door to get the word out. As I went from place to place talking up the meeting, I was impressed that multiple people remembered already receiving a flyer for the meeting. Brethren from a number of places helped make the meeting a success. We were glad to see a sister restored to duty. During our brief visit with the Bandy brethren, we found their zeal for the church as hot as ever. Phillip Scott always encourages me and this time was no different. Unity and good leadership are two of Bandy's obvious strengths. The Turnbo's opened their home to us at White Bluff. I learned more about Brother Kimbro's journey to the truth and his many years of service and grew in respect for his work and determination. The Burns congregation and Nashville supported every service of the meeting. I was moved that twenty-eight of the brethren from Brookside squeezed our meeting into their schedule. This concludes our meeting schedule for the year. We look forward to our next meeting at Mission Hills in Springfield from March 26-April 2, 2006. Despite smaller crowds due to travel and sickness, our fall meeting at home in Nashville with Joe Hisle went well. Joe's preaching and company is always uplifting. We flooded the community near the building with 2,200+ postcards for the meeting. We followed this up with personal invitations door to door two hours a day for four consecutive days to the 300 homes within a half mile of the building. Matt Usery went out with me on two days. We supplemented this effort with letters and phone calls to those who have been the most responsive to us over the last year. We have been intensely working this area for about a year and the Lord has been blessing this work. Some of these folks accounted for the thirteen outsiders who visited during the five day meeting. Others agreed to studies. We expect an even greater harvest as we persevere in the work of the Lord. *We shall reap if we faint not!*

Jonathan Bunner, P.O. Box 340395, Beavercreek, OH 45434, November 8 – A few days ago my family and I traveled to Ambato to visit the brethren in that city. I have some disappointing news to report to you about the congregation in Ambato. Both Brothers Segundo Chiliquinga and Vicente Villafuerte and their families have left the truth. Both brethren are attending the cups church again. Brother Villacis told me that this news does not really surprise him because these brethren have been inconsistent in their worship. Some Sundays they would decide to meet in their homes and at their own convenience. Other Sundays they would worship with brother Villacis. While in Ambato we visited with brother Villafuerte and his wife Fanny. They received us well. Nevertheless they are convinced that it does not matter if one or many cups are used for the Lord's Supper. We were unable to visit brother Chiliquinga. Thankfully Brother Segundo Villacis and his family are doing well. Brother Villacis is doing an excellent job in Ambato despite the problems with the other two families. Brother Vicente Subita who I baptized several months ago is growing and is a faithful member of the church. Also brother Villacis is holding studies with three families every week. All three families are attending Sunday and Wednesday services. A man named Jose and his wife Martha are close to obeying the gospel. Also while in Ambato we looked at an apartment that brother Villacis had heard about and wanted me to see. The purpose of the apartment is centrally located and will be great for the church in Ambato. Lord willing in a few days brother Villacis is going to rent the apartment. The work in Portoviejo is going slow, but we are doing the best we can. Victor and I have recently started a new Bible study with a man named Pedro. He has attended two Sunday services. We think with time and patience Pedro is going to obey the gospel. Pedro says that he has no religious background. He says he has always believed in God, but never took religion serious. It is evident that he reads often because he does have knowledge. He told me he needs someone to explain to him things that he does not understand. Pedro is a man in his mid fifties, a widower, and well educated. He is a high school teacher. He would be a great leader in the church if he obeys the gospel. This past month I have spent a lot of time on making the Iglesia de Cristo Latina webpage better. The webpage is www.iglesiadecristolatina.org. In my opinion this is the best we have done with the webpage. I received an e-mail from a lady here in Ecuador asking for directions to the church building. She says she will be coming in November to Portoviejo and wants to worship with us. Of course, this is the purpose of the website, we want to reach the lost. Thankfully we are averaging 30 to 40 hits a day. Although the website is directed to the Latin-American work 78% of the hits come from the USA. I encourage you to visit our page even if you do not speak Spanish. You can still give us your opinion of the site. Thank You!

Richard DeGough, 1907 Tully Rd., Hughson, CA 95326, rldegough2@aol.com – The end of another year is fast approaching. I enjoy the journals coming to us. The articles lately such as Ronny Wade's "Famine in the Land," Don King's "Attendance Booms at Denominational Churches," and Paul Nichol's article "Giving Thanks at the Lord's Table," and also the one by Barney Owens "The Church - A Church of Christ." We have had some good meetings this year at Turlock. Barney Owens held our Memorial Day meeting and Ron Alexander was here earlier. Both men preached soundly and the church was strengthened. We heard Ron Alexander in Tehachapi for two nights and enjoyed the preaching along with association with brethren from there and Bakersfield. I continue to preach at home, Atwater, Fremont, and Clovis. We appreciate the invitation and opportunity. It fell our lot to fill in for Brother Bennie Cryer who was scheduled to hold a meeting in Atwater but sickness prevented him from doing so. It was my privilege to hold it. Bennie is now doing well, for which we are thankful. We are blessed at Turlock with several young men teaching on Wednesday nights. Josh Cutter, Jacob Carr, Seth Nelson, Devin Nelson, and Jace DeGough are sound and improving weekly. Our short meeting with Don McCord in January was good for us because of Don's sound and timely subjects. All of these men dealt with the simple truth. They are not "experimenters" with the Truth, seeking something new. Just the old time gospel was their theme. The Truth will prevail and the Church will stand in this world until time is no more. May God bless all the brethren in every Country. Our prayer is that souls will be saved and unity and love will prevail "for we be brethren."

C.A. Smith, 810 N.W. 6th St., Andrews, TX 79714 (432), casmith810@peoplepc.com. – The wife and I attended the annual Sulphur meeting and enjoyed every minute of it. It was a great spiritual feast that gave me the boost that I needed. My brothers and sisters from various states came to enjoy the meeting, and enjoy it they did, as young and old made melody in their hearts, by singing the great songs of the church. The preachers did not have an axe to grind, nor a fence to erect, but preached the old-time gospel in all of its power and simplicity. Brethren who prayed, prayed earnestly and fervently for their brothers and sisters who needed God's aid in their lives, due to sicknesses, death of loved ones, and for strength and courage to continue in fighting "the good fight of faith", so that they may "lay hold on eternal life." Brother Miles King and Brother Randy Tidmore did an excellent job of directing the meeting, and the brethren at Sulphur did all that they could to make the meeting a meeting that all could enjoy and be uplifted by. You will note in a separate report about some who have been divided for some time, coming together as one. This really made my trip to Oklahoma exciting and wonderful. I preached for the brethren north of Healdton,

who meet at Hwy. 53 congregation. I could not help but think of the early church meeting in various brothers and sisters homes. Too, I remember as a boy, many times going with my daddy, Tom Smith, to places where they met in private dwellings. The service there was very inspiring, for the brethren and sisters reverently and scripturally worshipped God in spirit and in truth. I would like to request that all of you pray for our son-in-law, who now has gotten past the problems with his heart, but is now in need of a kidney transplant. Soon, we trust, they will get all the red tape out of the way, so that his brother can be tested, which, we hope will result in a match. His name is Dyke Culp, and he is the husband of our daughter Connie. If members of his family cannot produce a match, we will have to search for others who are willing to donate a kidney for him. He is a faithful member of the Lord's church, and we know that all of you will want to take his case to our Heavenly Father in prayer. Please pray for us, here in Andrews, that we continue faithfully doing the Lord's will. May God bless all of the saints, as we, in our feeble ways, serve Almighty God, under the authority of Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550, old_paths@juno.com, November 13 – October 15-23 we were in an enjoyable meeting with the church at Lees Summit, near Lebanon, MO. Crowds were excellent all week long and we appreciated the help coming from area congregations and preaching brethren as well. Some also attended from the community. The church recently lost two of their long-time members to death, which added a somber note to the meeting. However, a fine spirit prevailed and we pray that good was accomplished. We enjoyed our stay with Dave and Lela Doing, as always. We began at Fossil Creek in the Dallas-Fort Worth area on October 30 continuing through Nov. 6. We appreciated fine crowds and cooperation from other congregations and preachers during the meeting. The brethren had worked hard for the meeting, advertising it well, and it showed. Our sincere thanks to Randy and Rhonda Cantrell for keeping me in their home during the week. There were two who requested prayer for wrongs. Lord willing, we will be at Yuba City, CA for a weekend meeting beginning this Friday night. Pray for us in the work.

Ronny F. Wade, 2254 E. Raynell, Springfield, MO 65804, rf Wade@mchsi.com, November 7 – Yesterday we closed a very good meeting with the Hartwell congregation near Huntsville, AR. Crowds were excellent with visitors and outsiders present at every service. The church here has almost doubled in size within the last two years. Brother Daniel Smith currently works among them. Jared Lankford came down for the week-end and rendered valuable assistance while there. Jared is a young man with a desire to preach the gospel. We certainly wish him well and recommend him heartily. Brother Jimmy Smith drove over from Harrison for most

of the night services. I don't know of a preacher who attends more meetings than Jimmy does. He is selfless in this respect. In October we were privileged to be with the church in Harrodsburg, IN where the one hundred thirty-six year old bell still calls the worshippers together each Lord's Day. We had good cooperation from surrounding churches and this helped make our meeting successful. Next we were at West Point, GA where Don Jackson lives and labors. We had an enjoyable time with the faithful of this church. Brethren from far and near came to help and encourage us. Currently we are at home. The work here moves forward as we endeavor to preach the good news to those of our area. The Lord willing we go next to Ok. City, OK (21st St.) Nov. 18-20 then to Dothan, AL for the annual Alabama New Year Meeting Dec. 27-Jan. 1. We hope many of you can join us there for this great meeting.

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, November 7 – I spoke at Rockwall, TX October 2 and spent some time studying the rudiments of music with members of the congregation. Don Jackson held a meeting with the congregation here October 19-23 with 4th Sunday singing. We enjoyed having him and hearing him speak again. We are leaving in the morning for Napoleon, AL for a meeting November 9-13 – an occasion we surely are anticipating. We expect to be in Tucson, AZ December 29-January 1 for the first ever New Year meeting there. The folks there tell us they are excited, and we are, too.

J.W. Kornegay, 1543 Sid Mitchell Rd., Youngsville, NC 27596 – I am trying to revive the church at Roanoke, VA. They have seven in attendance. Bro. Joe Brown is doing his best to hold the faithful together. They need help. Anyone desiring to find work and live in that area would be a blessing to the Lord's cause. Oct. 19-23, I held a meeting at Beatrice, W. VA. They have eight members. We were happy to see Ervin Waters, Joe and Alice Bunner from Fairmont attend one service. One was restored. Bro. Jerry Harris at Melbane, NC seems to be recovering some from amputation of the right leg above the knee. John Kornegay and family go to Burlington to help in teaching at the church there. They have only one brother to conduct the services and seven women. We at Raleigh have 14 attending. One family drives 135 miles. We have four or five unable to attend services.

Douglas T. Hawkins, 409 Worthington Pl., Richmond, KY 40475, douglast@alltel.net, 606-271-0529, November 10, 2005 – I am currently in a meeting with the brethren at Cable Ridge, MO and am enjoying my stay with long time friends Tim and Tammy Thomas. I've enjoyed seeing old friends and hope that good has been done while I've been here. This is my last meeting for 2005 and I'll be sitting down to plan next year's schedule before long. I'm excited about and look forward to the opportunity to work with our young men in an

effort to encourage their greater involvement in the work and leadership of the church. So far I have two verbal commitments for next summer. I'm looking for about three more. Pray for our efforts.

Greg Gay, 1820 Casterbridge Dr., Roseville, CA, October 2-9 – I was in a meeting at Garretts Creek, West Virginia. We stayed with my brother-in-law, Wyn Baker and family, and could not have been treated better. The congregation is blessed with several small children, which is wonderful. They are increasing their influence in the community through their local radio program. I enjoyed spending time with preaching brethren Ryan Connor and Sean McCallister. We had many visitors from surrounding congregations plus I was delighted to see Keith and Connie Bullock who traveled from Cincinnati for one night of the meeting. I was also able to preach the last Sunday night at 18th St., Huntington. Our work continues here with 64th St., Sacramento. Several wayward members have returned recently for which we are thankful.

Gregory S. Robbins, 7440 Hwy. 6, Apt. 1012, Hitchcock, TX 77563 – It has been a while since I last wrote, due to hurricanes and other issues. In the month of August 26-28, to be more precise, I and Aubrey Ballard and Kisson Turner, held a young peoples meeting in McAlister, OK. I would like to thank all the brethren there, for the support and encouragement they gave to us. The work is going well here in the La Marque area, we have many visitors to this part of TX, many are members of other congregations but most are visiting and or visiting relatives. That is a door that has given us several opportunities to study with people. If you are in the area, come and visit, if you know of any one that lives down here let us know. We just finished a meeting with Brandon Stephens, he did his usually good job at the pulpit. He is a man that is very true to the book. Please notice, I have changed my phone number, it is (409)986-4749. I would also like to say to all the young people of the Church, let no one despise your youth and contend for the faith.

Miles King, 8586 Wilderness Trail, Scotland, AR 72141 – We are so thankful to report the church at Scotland is doing much better. We have had some very good "visiting speakers" the past few months. At present I'm in Groveland, MA where the church meets in the home of Bro. & Sister David Johns. Most of the members drive some distance to worship here. There are other brethren who come to these New England states on business, tours and visits. We were so glad to have Floyd & Betty Harris of Springfield, MO come by for a short visit. This past Lord's Day Bro. & Sister Chad Wilson from Bedford, Indiana was with us for worship services. Brethren pray for this effort. I must return home after this week. The brethren here at Groveland are contacting other preachers to come their way. In October we had Kiason Turner hold a short meeting at Witts Springs, AR. We were glad to have Kiason and his wife stay in our home during the meeting. We are always thankful to see the news and the good reports in the Old Paths Advocate. Pray for us in the Lord's work.

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THE BACK PAGE...

WATCH DOG OR MAD DOG?

BY CARL M. JOHNSON

Daniel Sommer was born ten years before Abraham Lincoln was elected President (1850), and died in Indianapolis the year Franklin D. Roosevelt finished his second term (1940). Spanning an era that began during the lifetime of Alexander Campbell and lasted until the lifetime of Homer L. King, Sommer helped draw the battle lines within the Restoration Movement on such issues as instrumental music, religious education, missionary societies, rebaptism, the located pastor system, the civil government, and the acceptable basis of religious unity. In a career lasting seventy years as an editor (**Octographic Review**; **Apostolic Review**), evangelist, and writer, the pugnacious Sommer is remembered as the "most hated" and "most loved" man in the brotherhood in the post-Civil War era.

Sommer was born into poverty in St. Mary's County, Maryland, on January 11, 1850, to German emigrants John and Magdalen Sommer. John was a hard-working blacksmith who drank too much and he died at an early age leaving his widow with no money and a large family. Nine-year-old Daniel was the oldest child in the family and he got a job helping build roads. He would rise before daylight, put his breakfast and lunch in a sack, and walk several miles to get to work on time. He would walk back home at night and fall exhausted upon the floor, only to repeat the procedure the next day.

Sommer began school at the age of seven, but he attended only a few months of each year for about five years. He dropped out of school in the spring of 1862 in order to return to work and did not set foot inside a school again for seven years when he enrolled in Bethany College. He was baptized at age 19, decided then that he wanted to devote the rest of his life to preaching the gospel, and figured Bethany was the best place to prepare. Sommer admits, "Probably no young man ever went to college who was more ignorant than I was when I reached Bethany." Determined to succeed, however, Sommer recalls, "I spent so much time studying by lamplight that my eyelids became sore." At the end of his first year one professor said, "Considering where you began, you have made more solid progress than any other young man under my instruction."

Sommer's stay at Bethany College lasted only about three years before he dropped out and began preaching full-time. During his stay, however, he observed that there were two differing philosophies emerging within the school that mirrored a movement taking place within the entire brotherhood. The divergence was over how to apply the silence of the Scriptures to innovations in the church.

This controversy intensified when L.L. Pinkerton introduced the first instrument of music into the church in Midway, Kentucky, in 1859. Nobody could deny that the instrument was an innovation, but was it an innovation that was permissible? Brethren and religious journals began taking sides immediately. Because the Scriptures are silent on this subject, Sommer and mentor Benjamin Franklin, editor of the **American Review**, and **Gospel Advocate's** Tolbert Fanning and David Lipscomb argued that instrumental music was a violation of the plan to restore New Testament Christianity. Isaac Errett, editor of the **Christian Standard**, and J. H. Garrison, editor of the **Christian Evangelist**, argued that it was merely an expedient such as songbooks and it did not affect the validity of worship.

During this period Sommer declared war on any kind of innovation he believed to be unscriptural. He fiercely charged that Errett and friends "adopted certain popular arrangements such as the hired pastor, the church choir, instrumental music, man-made societies to advance the gospel, and human devices to raise money." He added, "They thereby divided the brotherhood and became responsible for all the evils resulting from the division which they caused" (Morrison, **Like a Lion**, p. 19). At a historic gathering at Sand Creek, Illinois, in August of 1889, Sommer preached to a crowd of 6,000 and declared that if brethren continued to practice unscriptural innovations in the church, "we cannot and will not regard them as brethren." Representatives of area churches signed the "Address and Declaration" in support of Sommer's position.

Sommer's self-appointed role as watch dog of the brotherhood cost him dearly in friends and earned him an unflattering reputation. As a young man he had become very skilled in using an ax to cut down trees. Some of his critics argued that when he became a preacher and an editor he continued to "grind his ax" and wield it against his own brethren.

In the spring of 1879 Sommer was bitten by a mad dog and contracted rabies. Some of his critics saw great irony in that tragic event. They concluded that because he barked too much at his own brethren, Sommer may have been more of a mad dog himself than a watch dog. Remember, however, that because Satan stalks us like a roaring lion (1 Pet. 5:8), it may be better to have a watch dog who barks too much than to have one that never barks at all.