

N.W. 21st Street Church of Christ



1984 PREACHERS' STUDY

THE PREACHERS STUDY

Northwest 21st Street Church of Christ, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

December 1984

Once again the Editors and Publishers of THE WATCHMAN are pleased to be able to provide this publication of the STUDY NOTES. There were many in attendance, and the study was one which provided much for Spiritual growth and consideration. This editor was able to attend the study for the first time since we have been publishing the notes. To be able to attend and participate is a great blessing.

Many cannot attend the study for various reasons, therefore we have made an effort to extend the value of the study to others by way of publishing the notes of the various speakers. We are pleased to have 100% participation in this year's study, therefore all the subjects are herein presented. Our hope is that you, the reader, will receive benefit from the time and effort which is the result of these studies, and that God will receive the Glory. Let each of us strive to grow in these spiritual truths, and study to strengthen our spiritual well being.

A special note of appreciation is in order. For Charles and Barbara Everett, who have printed, and put together this volume we owe a great debt of appreciation. Without their effort and love for the printing of the Words of Life, our dream could never have become a reality. They, as well as others have devoted many hours to our efforts, enabling us to bring to our readers quality material for spiritual growth and development. We do appreciate all that they have done.

Finally, we pray that you, the reader, shall receive the benefit from the various efforts herein presented.

Editor: Lonnie K. York

It was our intention to provide variety in the subject matter for this study. To this end subjects were chosen in the Old Testament, some on current issues in the church today, some were standard in the New Testament for the purpose of review and several topics dealt with preacher's problems and certain aspects of their work. Two sessions dealt with home life with emphasis on the responsibilities of husband and wife, father and mother. Most of the subjects were proposed by preachers who had been asked to submit suggestions.

Several speakers were placed on the program who had never spoken before. This made it necessary to exclude some who have spoken most every year in the past. A good many preachers attended who were not on the schedule. This was of great value to the discussion periods and added a lot to the study. The speakers were all very cooperative and helpful. It was our pleasure to work with them.

The members at 21st Street, worked tirelessly day and night to provide lodging and food for the many who came and to tend to every detail that needed attention.

Our thanks to all who helped make this year's study a success.

*Doug Edwards
Irvin Barnes*

THE DECEMBER 1984 STUDY

The 1984 study was well attended with much interest shown during every session. Every one present expressed a desire to contribute or learn. The topics presented by the preachers reflected a great deal of study and research. One preacher mention he had spend about 200 hours preparing his topic. We also commend Irvin Barnes and Doug Edwards for their contribution and assistance in the study.

Although the study is now history, we hope the printing of these topics by THE WATCHMAN will be of value in the future. The 21st Street Congregation of Oklahoma City was honored to have had the opportunity to host the study.

*The Elders of the 21st Street Congregation
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Winston Cutter & Clifford Arney*

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MODERN PALESTINE AND THE JEWS

By Doug Edwards

For over 3,000 years the Jews have been a controversial and unusual people. At one time they were God's chosen people. Romans 3:2 tells us that they enjoyed many advantages including the oracles of God. Yet, they as a nation rebelled against God and were rejected by Him. They were destroyed as a nation in 70 A. D., in the destruction of Jerusalem. Over the years many false doctrines have emerged dealing with the Jews. In this article we would like to explore the false teaching that Palestine belongs to Israel in fulfillment of Biblical prophecy.

Perhaps a little history of Palestine would help at this point. After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D., Palestine was controlled by the Romans. Rome's grip on this part of the world soon weakened, and the Moslem empire conquered it. The Ottoman Empire then controlled Palestine from the 16th century until World War I when the British defeated Turkish forces and captured Jerusalem.

After capturing Jerusalem, the British let it be known that they would not mind the Jews being restored to Palestine. As World War I ended, many Jews did settle in their ancient home land. In the 1930's and 40's the Hitler regime began to systematically try to annihilate the Jews. Millions were cruelly put to death through various kinds of torture. This persecution by Nazi Germany brought many more refugees to Palestine.

The wealthy Arabs of that region soon resented the Jews and demanded the British stop them from coming in. In 1947, the problem between the Jews and Arabs was turned over to the United Nations. The United Nations decreed that there should be two states in Palestine - one Jewish and the other Arab. In 1948, the Jews proclaimed the area given them as "The Republic of Israel".

The history of Israel since 1948 has been stormy and violent. Israel is practically surrounded by her enemies. She has found herself in many armed conflicts.

Many maintain that the modern day events concerning Israel are actually the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy. Many well known preachers, such as Jerry Falwell of Moral Majority fame, have gone public in their support of Israel. They teach that the Jews are still God's chosen people. Ex-Prime Minister Begin of Israel certainly believes this to be true. He knows and uses many passages from the Old Testament that deal with Palestine belonging to Israel. Does Palestine, by promise, belong to the Jews?

The Promises To Israel

Every promise in the Bible to the Jews as a nation falls into one of three categories: (1) It has been literally fulfilled; or (2) It was conditional, and dependant upon the Jews obeying certain conditions. They violated those conditions and thus voided the promise. or (3) The promise has a spiritual application and is fulfilled in Christ during the Christian Dispensation. We will find these three points to be true in the various land promises given to the Jews.

After the Flood, man began to worship idols. God chose Abraham to be the one through whom the Savior would eventually come. Some very special promises were made to Abraham in Genesis 12. He was told a great nation would come from him (verse 2), and that all families of the world would be blessed in him (verse 3). Then in verse 7, God said: "Unto thy seed will I give this land". So a very important part of the promises made to Abraham involved the land that this great nation would settle on.

In Genesis 15 the Bible indicated to us that God made a covenant with Abraham. In Verse 18, God tells Abraham the dimensions of this Promised Land. He says: "unto they seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, Euphrates". The river of Egypt was not the Nile, but a river in the midst of the wilderness. The boundaries include a total area of about 60,000 square miles.

Did God ever give this Promised Land to the Jews? Some want us to believe that God never did completely give the Jews their land, so He will do it in the future. We maintain that the Bible plainly teaches that God has already given the Jews all of the land that He promised.

In proof that God did give the land that He promised to the Jews, we ask the reader to carefully notice Joshua 21:43. After Israel's having conquered the Promised Land, the Bible says: "And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which He sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein." All that God ever promised them, Joshua said they received.

In Nehemiah 9:7, 8 we find another statement telling us that Israel received all of her land. It tells us that God "... madest a covenant with him (Abraham) to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words for thou art righteous." This is a fulfillment of Genesis 15:18-21. The Bible also tells us that Solomon reigned over all the kingdoms from Euphrates to the border of Egypt (I Kings 4:21).

We hope that the reader can see that the Bible teaches that Israel received all of the land promised to her. The reason we have emphasized this is because some teach that Israel never did receive all of the Promised Land, and that God will give it to her in the future. Today there are two basic arguments presented to support the view that Palestine belongs to the Jews. First, the land was promised to the Jews as an everlasting possession. Second, the land was promised to Abraham and his descendants. Abraham never did literally possess the land; therefore, the promise must be applicable to the future, when Abraham will return to earth and will possess the land along with the Jews.

The first argument centers around the words "everlasting" or "forever". In Genesis 13:15, God said: "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and they seed forever". Then God added in Genesis 17:8: "And I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." It is argued that these words mean eternal and that land will always belong to the Jews. Richard W. Dehann, on page 85 of his Book *Israel and the Nations In Prophecy* says: "Moreover, restored Israel shall inherit the land God gave to Abraham and his seed for an everlasting possession."

It should be obvious to all that the words "forever" and "everlasting" cannot mean eternal, as used in the verses where the land promises are recorded. This earth will be destroyed when Christ returns (II Peter 3:10). These words simply refer to a long indefinite time. In Genesis 17:13, physical circumcision was said to be an "everlasting covenant". Yet, Paul said in Galatians 5:2: "... if ye be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing." If we can understand that circumcision was "everlasting", yet was only binding until the end of the Jewish Age, then we ought to be able to understand the same thing about the everlasting possession of the land. The land was an everlasting possession until the end of the Jewish Age.

The second argument to support the view that Palestine belongs to the Jews centers around the idea that Abraham would personally receive the Promised Land. Genesis 17:8 is used as support. The passage reads: "And I will give unto thee (Abraham), and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein

thou art a stranger, all of the land of Canaan” Another passage used is Acts 7:5, which says: “And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on; yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.” We are told that Abraham never did personally receive the land in his lifetime; therefore in the future he must return to earth to receive his inheritance. This also means the Jews must receive the land.

There are two ways to answer the above argument. First, the Bible is very plain in teaching that the land promise was fulfilled (Joshua 21:43, Nehemiah 9:7, 8). Even though we may not exactly understand how it was fulfilled, the Bible says “the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers.” Second, the promise to Abraham was fulfilled through his posterity (his descendants). It is not unusual for a promise to an individual to actually be fulfilled in his descendants. An example of this is found in I Samuel 15:28, which reads: “And Samuel said unto him, the Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine that is better than thou.” Saul, of course, is under consideration here. The kingdom would be taken from him and given to another. The neighbor was David. Yet Saul remained king until his death, and then David became King. It ought to be obvious to all that the kingdom was taken from Saul when it was taken from his posterity. In exactly the same way the promise to Abraham was fulfilled in his posterity.

The Covenant of Blessings and Curses

A close examination of the scriptures will reveal that the initial promise to Israel to receive the land was unconditional. There were “no strings attached” to their receiving it. God promised them the land and they received it. Their keeping the land was conditional and dependant on the Jews obeying certain conditions.

Just before they entered the Promised Land, Moses called the children of Israel together and gave them the covenant of Blessings and Curses. The passage is found in Deuteronomy chapters 28 - 30. They were to receive many blessings if they faithfully kept the Law of Moses. Notice how the word “if” is used as being conditional. God would set them on high above all nations if they obeyed the commandments of Moses (28:1). All of the blessings would overtake them if they obeyed God (28:2). The Lord would establish them as a holy people if they kept the Law of Moses (28:9). The Lord promised to make Israel the head and not the tail if they obeyed the Law (28:13). Their keeping the land was also conditional upon obeying the Law of Moses. The Lord repeated this in II Kings 21:8, where He said: “Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them.”

There were also many curses to fall on Israel if she disobeyed God. They ranged from diseases, to famines, to removal from the land and captivity among the nations. In Deuteronomy 28 there are also several verses that deal with Israel's punishment for disobeying God. Verse 64 says: “And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people from one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve others gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone.” The prophecies of Deuteronomy 28, were fulfilled in the Assyrian captivity of Israel in 722 B. C. and the Babylonian captivity of Judah in 606 B. C.

There are several other passages that prove that Israel's keeping the land was conditional upon keeping the Law of Moses. Moses warned Israel that if they went after graven images “that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall be utterly destroyed” (Deuteronomy 4:26). In Deuteronomy 30:15 -20,

Moses set forth the choice of Israel to life and good as opposed to death and evil. In verses 17 and 18, Moses tells them if they follow after other gods they "shall surely perish, and . . . shall not prolong your days upon the land." On the other hand, if they love God and keep his commandments "thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them." (Verse 20). Then, Joshua warned Israel to "know for a certainty" that if they sinned they would "perish from off the good land which the Lord your God hath given you." (Joshua 23:13).

The Return of Israel

God had promised Israel that if she disobeyed Him, one of the curses to come upon her would be captivity in a foreign nation (Deuteronomy 28:63, 64). The Bible indicates that the Babylonians became God's instrument for punishing Judah. Babylon emerged as the leading power in the world in 612 B. C. It was during this year that they defeated the Assyrians at Nineveh. In 606 B. C. Nebuchadnezzar put down the rebellion of Jehoiakim king of Judah (II Kings 24:1 - 7). Babylon again attacked Jerusalem in 597 B. C. King Jehoiachin and other important dignitaries were carried off to Babylon (II Kings 24:8 - 20). Judah later rebelled, and the wrath of Babylon was felt again. In the year 586 B. C., Jerusalem was destroyed and the temple burned (II Kings 25:1 - 10). Thus the proud nation of Judah ended. The curses had found their fulfillment.

Our God is very merciful. He promised Israel that when she found herself in captivity, if repentance occurred, that she could be returned to her homeland. This promise follows the covenant of blessings and curses (Deuteronomy 28) and is found in Deuteronomy 30:1 - 4). We will quote the entire passage and ask our readers to carefully study it:

"And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; That then the Lord will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee."

Those of the premillennial persuasion generally believe that this return is still to be fulfilled in the future. Those readers who have the Oliphant-Rice Debate will remember that this passage is one of the major "proofs" that Rice utilized in maintaining that the Jews in the future would be returned to Palestine. This passage, however, does not refer to a still future return of the Jews. It had to be fulfilled during the time of the Law of Moses (verse 2). Verse 10 also tells us they would return if they kept "his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law." Our readers all know that the Law of Moses was done away with at the cross of Christ (Colossians 2:14, Ephesians 2:15). The return of Deuteronomy 30:1 - 4 was conditional upon true repentance and obedience to the Law; therefore, it had to be fulfilled in the return from Babylonian captivity.

There are two important considerations to be made concerning this captivity. First, the length of captivity was to be 70 years. God promised Judah and her neighbors in Jeremiah 25:11, 12: "And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation . . ." Then over in Jeremiah 29:10 - 14, God promised that the Jews would be returned after the 70 years of captivity. In verse 10 God said: "I will visit

you, and perform my good word toward you." Where was it that God spoke that good word? It was in Deuteronomy 30:1 - 4. As a matter of fact, Jeremiah's words in 29:14 are almost a direct quote of Deuteronomy 30:1 - 4. The passage reads: "And I will be found of you, saith the Lord: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you saith the Lord; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive." The books of Ezra and Nehemiah describe this return from Babylon, which incidentally began in 536 B. C. exactly 70 years after their captivity began.

The second important consideration to be made about this captivity is that only a remnant would return. The Lord never promised to bring back the whole people, only those who return to him with all their heart (Deuteronomy 30:1 - 4, Jeremiah 24:7). Isaiah prophesied that only a remnant would return to God during the captivity and these would be returned. He said: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God." Ezra tells us this remnant did return back to their homeland. He said, "And now for a little space grace hath been shewed from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place . . ." (Ezra 9:8). Nehemiah also speaks of this remnant. He wrote: "And they said unto me, the remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach . . ." (Nehemiah 1:3). If the reader will look down to verses 8 - 11, of Nehemiah, he will see the writer alluding to Deuteronomy 30:1 - 4. There are many other passages that mention the remnant that returned after the Babylonian captivity (Haggai 1:12 - 14, Ezekiel 6:8, 14:22, Micah 2:12, Zephaniah 2:7, 9).

The Restoration of the Jews and Spiritual Israel

The return from Babylonian captivity was a very essential ingredient in God's scheme of redemption for fallen man. Many of the return passages dealt with this period of time. There are some return passages, though, that do not seem to fit in with the return from Babylon. We will see that those restoration passages were fulfilled in the establishment of spiritual Israel - the church.

It is important to understand the relationship of Jesus to prophecy. Revelation 19:10 teaches: ". . . for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Thus we learn that Bible prophecy centers around Jesus. At the same time we ought to remember that the Old Testament as a whole pointed forward to the coming of Christ the Messiah. The Apostle Paul wrote: "For Christ is the end of the law of righteousness to every one that believeth." (Romans 10:4). The word "end" basically means aim, goal or fulfillment. Hence we learn Christ was the fulfillment of the law. We need to keep these thoughts in mind as we continue to study these restoration promises.

The one restoration promise that we would like to look at is found in Isaiah 11:1 - 12. In the latter part of this section it reads: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, . . . and he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." (verses 11, 12). It is thought by some Bible students that this passage still has a future fulfillment for the nation of Israel. By looking at the context, though, we can determine that the passage has reference to the establishment of spiritual Israel (the church) and not physical Israel.

In verse one Isaiah says: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out his roots." Obviously this Branch is Jesus (cf. Jeremiah 23:5, Zechariah 6:12, 13).

We ought to remember that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. This passage, then, will find its fulfillment in Jesus. Verses 6 -8 describe a condition of peace. Animals that are natural enemies are described in this figurative passage as dwelling with one another. Lions, wolves, bears, lambs, cows and little children are mentioned as associating together. This should probably be understood as a symbol of peaceful conditions within the Lord's kingdom. Ephesians tells us of this peace that Jesus brought to this world. Paul wrote: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." (Ephesians 2:14) The kingdom of God is also said to be one of righteousness, peace and joy (Romans 14:17).

Continuing in Isaiah 11, verse 9 says: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." This passage tells where these things will occur--in the Lord's holy mountain. What is meant by this "holy mountain"? We believe this to be a reference to the church. Isaiah 2:1 - 4 tells of the mountain of the Lord's house being established in Jerusalem. The prophet is referring to the church. In the latter part of this verse it speaks of the knowledge covering the earth. Jesus said the gospel would be preached in all the world (Matthew 24:14). By the time of his writing to the Colossians, Paul said the gospel had been preached to every creature under heaven (Colossians 1:23).

Isaiah 11:10 then states: "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious." The word "ensign" is from a word that means "a signal or token," and refers to the gospel of Christ which was a token of God's good will and salvation. Notice that the things mentioned in this text would come to pass in "that day". If this is still future, the Gentiles (you and I) are still to seek Christ and no Gentile can now have forgiveness of sins. The truth of the matter is that Paul refers to this verse when discussing the salvation of the Gentiles during the Christian Age. He says in Romans 15:12: "And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust."

Then in Isaiah 11:11, 12 the prophet talks about the "remnant" to be returned. In Romans 11:1 - 5 Paul talks about such a remnant. After having asked the question "hath God cast away his people?", Paul argues that some Jews did obey the gospel and become a part of spiritual Israel. He said in verse 5: "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."

We can be safe in concluding that Isaiah 11:1 - 12 finds its fulfillment in spiritual Israel (the church) and not some future age. To apply this passage to some future age is to remove the current hope of the Gentiles.

As a bit of summary we have learned that there are many passages in the Old Testament that foretell of a restoration of Israel. We have seen that these were fulfilled in (1) the restoration of Israel after Babylonian captivity, and (2) the establishment of spiritual Israel in the form of the church under the New Covenant. There may be some passage that find their fulfillment in both of these areas.

It should be emphasized that God had a plan for the salvation of man. This plan was hidden in past times but now has been revealed (Ephesians 3: 3 - 5). It involved Jesus as a sacrifice for sin (1 Peter 1:18 - 20). The return of physical Israel from Babylonian captivity was a key ingredient in God's divine plan. It allowed Jesus to be born in Palestine in fulfillment of prophecy, and spiritual Israel to be established in the right place - Jerusalem.

The Hope Of Israel

On two different occasions the Apostle Paul spoke of the hope of Israel. In Acts 26:6, 7 before Agrippa Paul said: "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews." Then in Acts 28:20 he said: "For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain."

There is one common point to be noticed in both of these passages. Paul was in chains for preaching the hope of Israel. What was it that Paul had preached? Paul had preached "Jesus Christ and him crucified" (I Corinthians 2:2) everywhere he went. He emphasized in the synagogues and other places that Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Forgiveness of sins and the church were other key ingredients of Paul's message. In short, Paul simply preached the gospel.

From this we learn that the hope of Israel involved Christ and his gospel. The Jews, of course, misunderstood this. They wanted a conquering Messiah to literally reign in Jerusalem on David's throne. They wanted Israel to again become a powerful nation. The Jews would not accept Christ and his spiritual kingdom; they wanted a physical kingdom. Too many people today are making the same mistake those first century Jews did. Make no mistake about it-- the kingdom of Christ is spiritual, not physical (John 18:36).

The one hope, the only hope, Israel has is the gospel. Israel, as a nation, is no longer God's holy nation. The church has become that nation (I Peter 2:9). However, this does not mean that all Jews are lost. Paul asked: "Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of the tribe of Benjamin." (Romans 11:1). The Jews, as individuals, must obey the gospel. Paul said the gospel was God's power for salvation "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Romans 1:16). There are no special favors awaiting the Jews that are not also available to you and me.

The one hope, the only hope, Israel has is the gospel. Israel, as a nation, is no longer God's holy nation. They were like a potter's earthen bottle, when once broken they could not be made whole again (Jeremiah 19:1 - 11). In Matthew 21:33 - 44, Jesus gave us a parable dealing with the Jewish nation. He pointed out that they beat and killed God's prophets. Then they took the Son and killed Him. Jesus then said: "The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (verse 43). That nation, of course, was the church (I Peter 2:9).

Does this mean that God has cast away the Jews? Those are almost the words of Paul in Romans 11:1, 2, where he said: "Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite . . .". The Jews and Gentiles all receive equal blessings in Christ. There are no special favors awaiting the Jews that are not also available to you and me.

"CONGREGATIONAL COMMUNION"

By Glen Osburn

Introduction

"So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us." —II Thessalonians 2:15

In fulfilling the exhortation of this verse we have often had to defend the necessity of one cup, one loaf and fruit of the vine being used to observe the Lord's Supper. However, there are other aspects relevant to the observance of the communion that also must be defended, such as the day and frequency of its observance.

The aspect we will discuss, however, is: Do the scriptures teach a congregational assembly is required or necessary for the observance of the Lord's Supper?

I. The Lord's Supper is a tradition to be kept by the Church.

A. Tradition defined:

1. "The handing down of information, beliefs, and customs . . ." - Webster's.
2. "A giving over which is done by word of mouth or in writing, . . . what is delivered, the substance of the teaching: . . ."—Thayer's.

B. Traditions were to be kept if delivered by the Lord.

1. In Matthew 28:19, 20 the Lord told His disciples to make other disciples baptize them then teach them " . . . to observe ("keep strictly" - Thayer's) all that I have commanded you . . ."
2. Paul, in his preface to describing the proper way of observing the Lord's Supper to the church at Corinth, tells us his source of authority is "The Lord". "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that . . ." — I Corinthians 11:23.
3. The Lord's Supper is a tradition delivered by the Lord. — I Corinthians 11:23.

C. Traditions were to be kept if delivered by the Apostles.

1. The source of any apostolic tradition was the Lord, through the Holy Spirit.
 - a. "For to us (Apostles) God revealed them through the Spirit: . . . Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, . . ." — I Corinthians 2:10 - 13. Note, II Timothy 3:16
 - b. One of the Holy Spirit's tasks was to speak for Jesus (John 16:13) and bring to the Apostles " . . . remembrance all that I (Jesus) said . . ." - John 14:26. This would also include the writings of Mark and Luke on the subject of how the Lord instituted His memorial supper.
 - c. Paul writes: "If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandments." — I Corinthians 14:37
2. The Apostles claimed this authority in establishing traditions.
 - a. "So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us (Apostles)." — II Thessalonians 2:15. Note, Matthew 16:19.

- b. Paul, in writing the church at Corinth, said: "... I praise you because you hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you." – I Corinthians 11:1, 2.

3. The Lord's Supper is a tradition delivered by the Apostles. – I Corinthians 11:23

II. The tradition called the Lord's Supper includes a congregational assembly.

- A. "So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another." - I Corinthians 11:33.

- 1. The eating of this passage is the Lord's Supper. Notice the immediate context, verse: 34, "If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you may not come together for judgment." There is no "judgment" for coming "together to eat" the Lord's Supper.
- 2. The brethren were to "come together to eat" the Lord's Supper.
- 3. Coming "together", as a church (verses 18, 20, 22) was a condition or qualification to be met before they were to eat the Lord's Supper.
- 4. They were to "wait" for one another.

- a. "Wait" defined: "to look for, expect, wait for, await" – Thayers's.
- b. The brethren were told to "expect, look for" and "await" the other members of the Corinthian congregation to assemble before observing the Lord's Supper.

- c. These brethren obviously knew each other, would know who was ill or traveling (I Corinthians 12:25, 26), and also would know when they were all assembled.

- 5. Paul, an Apostle, told the church at Corinth to wait the observance of the Lord's Supper until they had all come together.

- B. Paul begins his correction of the Corinthian brethren on the subject of the proper way to observe the Lord's Supper by saying (I Corinthians 11):

(verse 17) But in giving this instruction, I do not praise you, because you come together not for the better but for the worse.

(verse 18) For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part, I believe it.

(verse 19) For there must also be factions among you, in order that those who are approved may have become evident among you.

(verse 20) Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper,

(verse 21) For in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk.

(verse 22) What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God, and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you.

(verse 23) For I received from the Lord ... (Lord's Supper delivered).

- 1. Paul begins and culminates his thoughts with "I do not praise you (verse 17), I will not praise you (verse 22).

- a. His lack of praise was due to their failure to "hold firmly to the traditions"(verse 2) just as Paul delivered them.
- b. Earlier, he had praised them for holding firm to some traditions, but now he was NOT praising them for they had apostacized.

- 2. This text contains basically four thoughts:

- a. They came together for the worse: "do you despise the church . . .?" (verse 17, 22).
 - b. There was "division" when they came together "as a church" (verses 18, 19, 21).
 - c. They were taking their "own supper", a situation which antagonized the division that existed (verse 20, 21).
 - d. What they were practicing, when they met "together", could not be the Lord's Supper (verse 20).
3. Paul attacked the division within the Body by:
- a. Eliminating their "taking their own supper", telling them to eat at home, OUTSIDE the assembly or "church" (verse 22).
 - b. Re-establishing the correct way to observe the Lord's Supper, IN the assembly of the church.
4. In this text, the term "come together" is synonymous with "the church", i.e. a congregational assembly.
- a. " . . . when you come together (1) as a church (2), . . ." - I Corinthians 11:18.
 1. Greek, "sunerkoma", definition: "To come together, . . . to assemble." - Thayer's.
 2. Greek, "ekkleesia", definition: "a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place; an assembly. . . (No. 4, a) an assembly of Christians gathered for worship." - Thayer's.
 3. In I Corinthians 14:23 both words are used in unison again.
 4. This is a congregational assembly.
 - b. " . . . do you despise the church (1) . . ." - I Corinthians 11:22.
 1. Greek, "ekkleesia", definition: Note main definition about, No. 2. "(4, b, aa) a company of Christians (Thayer comments: those who anywhere, in city or village, constitute such a company and are united into one body)." - Thayer's.
 2. Immediate context! shows the terms "meet together" (verse 20) and "church" (verse 22), are speaking of the same thing.
 3. This is a congregational assembly.
 - c. "Therefore when you meet together (1), it is not to eat the Lord's Supper, for in your eating each one takes his own supper. . ." - I Corinthians 11:20, 21.
 1. Literal translation: "Coming together therefore ye into one place, it is not (the) Lord's supper to eat." - Interlinear Greek - English New Testament, Donald R. White - Editor, page 618
 2. Paraphrase: Your practice of each taking his own meal, when you come together into one place, is not the Lord's Supper.
 3. Paraphrase: The purpose of your meeting together in one place is to observe the Lord's Supper however, in your case, it is not the Lord's Supper you are observing.
 4. " . . . this is not to eat the Lord's supper. To act thus is unworthy the subject of your meeting. To act thus is not to eat the Lord's supper. It is not to show forth the Lord's death." Thereby declaring that this is the chief object of meeting. When the teacher reproves his pupils for wasting time, he can not remind them more forcibly of the object of coming to school, nor reprove them with more point, than to say, "When you act thus, this is not to assemble to learn." - Alexander Campbell, The Christian System, pp.277.
 5. "Paul is saying, "Although it should be the case that you come together to eat

the Lord's supper, because of the way you are acting, you are not doing it. You are doing something else. You are doing something you ought not to be doing." – Thomas B. Warren, *When Is An Example Binding?*, page 149.

6. This is a congregational (church verse 22) assembly for the purpose of observing the Lord's Supper.
- C. "Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ? (verse 17) Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread." – I Corinthians 10:16, 17.
1. "We" means "We, the assembled" Alford's Greek Testament, Volume 2, page 558.
 2. "We, the many (viz., believers assembled; so the Greek), are one bread (by our partaking of the same loaf, which becomes assimilated to the substance of all our bodies; and so we become) one body (with Christ and so with one another.)" – Jamieson, Fausett and Brown, commentary, pp. 1209.
 3. All those who partook of one loaf, were one body.
 - a. "one loaf"
 1. "one", definition: "emphatically, (b) one, alone" – (W. E. Vine), therefore correctly translated one unit of bread or "one loaf" in New International Version, Revised Standard Version, The Simple English, Goodspeed, New English, Norlie, and Modern English New Testament.
 - b. "one body" used contextually in a congregational sense.
 1. "a number of men closely united into one society or family as it were: a social ethical, mystical body" – Thayer's.
 2. "Now you (congregation at Corinth) are Christ's body, and individually members of it." – I Corinthians 12:27.
 4. The Lord's Supper must be observed in "one body" i.e. congregational assembly, if it is to fulfill the design of showing the fellowship or "sharing" a congregation has with Christ.
 - a. "This, which confirms what is set forth in verse 16, teaches the basic fact of unity on the part of the assembled company of fellowship with Christ and with one another." – W. E. Vine, *Commentary on I Corinthians*, page 138.
- D. "And on the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, . . ." – Acts 20:7.
1. Literal translation: "And on the first (day) of the week, the disciples having been assembled to break bread, . . ." – *Interlinear Greek - English New Testament*, Donald R. White - Editor, page 506.
 2. Purpose is stated by Aorist Infinitive.
 - a. "to break", Greek; "klasai" . . . aorist 1, infinitive of "klao". – Wigram, *Analytical Greek Lexicon*, page 231.
 - b. "The infinitive is used in Greek, as in English, to denote the purpose of action of the principal verb. The original dative force of the infinitive, expression that to or for which anything is done, come out plainly in this usage. I want to compare two

English sentences: "I am going to the temple to pray," (there is the infinitive.) And, "I am going to the temple for prayer," (there is a noun in the dative case). Both sentences express purpose. Also in John 21:3, there is the statement, "I am going to fish," from *hupago halieuein*. There is the infinitive, the same kind of expression that we have in Acts 20. It is saying, "... the reason why I am doing this, the purpose I have in doing this." ... So, there is in this passage a purpose phrase, the aorist infinitive, the disciples came together to break bread! The purpose for which the disciples came together was to break bread. As we know from I Corinthians 11:20 ("It is not possible to eat the Lord's supper."), Paul made it clear this was what their purpose should have been; viz., to eat the Lord's supper." —Thomas B. Warren, Editorial in the *Spiritual Sword*, Volume 13 - July, 1982 - Number 4, page 2, 3. (Note also: Summers "Essential of New Testament Greek", page 132: Dana and Mantey, page 199: A. T. Robertson, page 989, 1087 - 1089.)

3. "Synecdoche", the term "to break bread" is a figure of speech in which a part is put for the whole. The part, "to break bread", signifies the whole observance, the Lord's Supper.
4. In this text, "to break bread" must have been the Lord's Supper.
 - a. Paul rebuked the church at Corinth for coming together "as a church" (I Corinthians 11:18, 20, 22) and eating a common meal. "Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink?" -- I Corinthians 11:22.
 - b. The purpose of the disciples coming "together" (assembled) in Acts 20:7 was "to break bread."
 - c. Therefore, due to the lack of censure by Paul (as he was present), the assembly of the church in Troas for the purpose of breaking bread (Acts 20:7), must be the Lord's supper instead of a common meal.
5. Summary: The church in Troas assembled on the first day of the week for the purpose of observing the Lord's Supper.

III. Conclusions:

- A. We find that the Lord's Supper is a tradition delivered by Jesus (I Corinthians 11:23), through the Apostles (II Thessalonians 2:15), to Christians living today (Matthew 28:19,20).
- B. Since the Lord's Supper is a tradition of God, and not of man (Colossians 2:8), we are bound, therefore, to "stand firm and to hold to" (II Thessalonians 2:15) this tradition.
- C. The Lord's Supper, by its design, is a congregational tradition (I Corinthians 10:16; Acts 20:7) and therefore is to be observed only when a congregation assembles "together to eat" (I Corinthians 11:33).
- D. An assembly of the church, gathered for the purpose of breaking bread (Acts 20:7) is the factor determining the frequency with which the Lord's Supper is to be observed (i.e. the first day of every week).
- E. We do not find the Lord's Supper being observed outside of a congregational assembly.
- F. Communion without an assembly of the church is foreign to the scriptures.
- G. These conclusions, obviously, eliminate any scriptural approval of the concept called the "traveling", "roadside" or "vacation" church.

VERBAL INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

By Carl M. Johnson

I. BIBLE IS INSPIRED OF GOD (II Timothy 3:16, 17)

Numerous verses set forth the Bible's own claim to be miraculously inspired of God. What does this mean?

A. Modernists View

1. Believes in God, but not the God of the Bible.
2. Believes in Christ, but not the Christ of the Bible.
3. Believes in inspiration of the Bible, but does not mean by "inspiration" what the Bible means.
4. Believes writings of Paul were "inspired" in the same sense as were the writings of Shakespeare, Milton, Tennyson, and Poe. Such bears the marks of literary Genius.

B. Bible's Own View

1. **INSPIRATION** (Theopneustos): "God-breathed". The term signifies that the writings of scripture are the result of a certain influence exerted by God upon their authors. God speaking through men. (II Timothy 3:16)
2. **Promises of Jesus.** Promised certain ones would receive miraculous inspiration (Matthew 10:18, 19; John 14:26)
3. Christ kept His promise, when in Acts 2, "all filled with Holy Ghost . . ." God spoke His will through them.
4. **Gift of Prophecy:** The people in the early Church did not have the completed New Testament in its written form, but there was a desperate need for Divine instruction and guidance. To meet these needs, God placed in the early Church special gifts.
 - a. These were temporary in nature, and they ceased when the will of God was fully revealed and complete. (I Corinthians 12, 13, 14).
 - b. Only the Apostles had the ability to lay their hands on others to impart spiritual gifts. (Acts 8:14 - 17).
 - c. One critically important gift was that of Prophecy. This was not just foretelling of the future, rather "to speak for or in behalf of." These spoke for or in behalf of God.
 - d. They were prophets because God spoke through them.
 - e. Every word (inspired word) came about as the result of the miraculous gift of prophecy.
5. **I Corinthians 2:9 - 13:** One of the clearest passages on inspiration.
 - a. Verse 9; Paul refers to certain "things" which God prepared for them that love Him. Verse 10: "But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit." Verse 12: "But we received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God."
 - b. Note: God revealed - by the spirit- the "things" Revelation came to "us" (apostles and those upon whom they imparted the gift of prophecy.) We have received the direct revelation - so how does the revealed message come from them to us?
Answer: "Which thing also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth,

but which the Spirit teacheth" - verse 13.

- c. God revealed the things to certain ones (who possessed the gift of prophecy) who in turn spoke it (and wrote it down) as they were directed by the Holy Spirit.

II. EVIDENCE OF INSPIRATION

Volumes have been written as evidence that the Bible is inspired of God. We shall note a few.

A. PROPHECY FULFILLED:

Predictions made and fulfilled in Bible prophecy is as valuable a piece of evidence as is needed to establish the Bible as inspired of God. Prophets of God wrote of future events as confidently and accurately as if the events were occurring that very day.

1. Prophecy - Had to be specific, thus more than a guess. An example would be predicting the Presidential election. But, suppose a man who lived in Egypt 2500 years ago prophesied about the existence of the United States, wrote of Reagan by name, named appointment, margin of victory, and the policies he would enact, that would be true prophecy. The prophecy of Daniel concerning the four universal empires was given hundreds and hundreds of years prior to their fulfillment. Daniel alone is irrefutable evidence of inspiration.
2. Examples of Fulfilled Prophecy.
 - a. In the days of Babylon's glory, Isaiah prophesied of its total destruction (Isaiah 13: 17 -22). For 2000 years now, history has stood as irrefutable proof of inspiration of Isaiah's prediction.
 - b. Ezekiel - Egypt not totally destroyed, but perpetually weaker and degraded in comparison to newer powers (Ezekiel 29: 13 - 15). History shows it has come to pass exactly as the inspired man of God said.
 - c. Of the Jews: Ezekiel speaking for God said, "I will scatter thee among the nations and disperse thee through the countries." (Ezekiel 22:15). "... among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known:" (Jeremiah 9:16). All one has to do to see this fulfilled prophecy is to view the large Jewish populations in America.
 - d. The Babylonians are gone. Egypt is weak and degraded among world powers. The Jews are living monument to the reliability of every Bible prophecy.
2. Detailed Prophecies of Christ: No more concrete evidence exist than these. Ordinarily one's biography is written after he has lived. With Jesus Christ, it was written generations before his birth.
 - a. Birthplace - Micah 5:2
 - b. Virgin Birth - Isaiah 7:14
 - c. Work of his forerunner, John - Malachi 3:1
 - d. Many things about His character, ministry and death - Isaiah 53
 - e. Burial - Isaiah 53:9
 - f. Resurrection - Psalm 16:10
 - g. In all, over 300 prophecies in the Old Testament directly relate to the birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Christ. How can we account for these detailed prophecies that were written hundreds of years before, and were perfectly fulfilled? They were the inspired writings of spirit-filled men.

B. UNITY OF THE BIBLE: One of the most powerfully convincing evidences. The Bible is

one book, but it is made up of many books. Thirty-nine in the Old Testament, and twenty-seven in the New Testament. It is one in theme and purpose.

1. Theme of the Bible: "Coming of Christ" Of the Old Testament, "Christ is coming", and of the New Testament "Christ has come and will come again."
2. Purpose of the Bible: The Glory of God; shows the need of salvation of man; and that it is in and through Jesus Christ.
3. From the first to the last the Bible was written by about forty writers over a period of 1600 years.
 - a. Begun by Moses in the desert of Arabia, and completed by John on the isle of Patmos.
 - b. Writers not conscious of the works of others.
 - c. Widely separated in geography and in time.
 - d. They were fishermen, farmers, shepherds, soldiers, and kings.
 - e. Wrote in places, pastures, prisons, and tents.
 - f. Some highly educated, some unlearned.
 - g. These were not a literary people - yet, when these writings are brought together in one sacred volume, there is perfect unity - there are no contradictions.
4. Alleged Contradiction: Skeptics and unbelievers often make the following arguments against the Bible. "The Bible is filled with errors, myths, and self-contradiction". Several reasons:
 - a. Ignorance: challenge such to "produce one"! Such do not even know the truth. They also fail to read exactly.
 - b. Failure to be fair with the Bible: eg. Cain's wife. Genesis 4:16, 17. This does not say that he went to Nod to get his wife, only that he lived there with his wife. It is logical to assume he had his wife before and that she was one of the daughters of Adam mentioned in Genesis 5:4.
 - c. Misinterpretation of the Bible: Paul and James contradict each other over Faith and Works: (James 2:24; Galatians 5:6) They do not contradict, rather they complement.
 - d. Blind prejudice: many people do not want to be convinced that the Bible is the word of God. Regardless of the proof, they will not accept it.
5. Some more thoughts:
 - a. If a 40 piece orchestra should suddenly begin to play in perfect timing, melody, and harmony, it would be evidence of direction by a single mind.
 - b. If 40 archers, in 40 different places, widely separated in time, should shoot arrows and hit target dead center . . . 40 men widely separated in geography, with varied backgrounds, and living over a period of 1600 years, should each write down a few lines, and these lines when brought together constituted a beautiful poem, it would . . .
 - c. Likewise, because of marvelous unity, the Bible must be directed by a single mind—
—God.

C. SCIENTIFIC ACCURACY: There is also the witness of scientific facts stated in the Bible, unknown and unaccepted when they were written, but known today to be accurate.

1. "Circle of the earth". (Isaiah 40:22)
2. "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." (Job 26:7) Some ancient minds thought the earth rested upon the back of elephants, a man, etc. Bible-force-nothing physical.
3. "The host (stars) of heaven cannot be numbered" (Jeremiah 33:22) The scientist Hippocrates, a Greek astronomer who lived hundreds of years after Jeremiah said, "There are 1,056 stars in heaven, I have counted them." Hundreds of years later, Ptolemy agreed that was all. Not until 1610 A.D. did Galileo look through a telescope and proclaim, "There are many more stars!" Modern astronomers claim 100 Billion stars in our galaxy alone.

D. TESTIMONY OF ARCHAEOLOGY: Attest to the inspiration of the Bible. Many criticisms that the Bible is historically inaccurate has been refuted by the archaeologist's shovel. eg. In the Old Testament the Hittites are mentioned over 40 times. Critics claim that there was no such people. "... until 1906 excavations were begun at Begazhey (90 miles east of Ankara, Turkey), which proved to be the capital of the Hittite Empire."

III IT REMAINS UNCHANGED

Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." Divine providence through the centuries has been working in many ways to fulfill this promise.

A. EVOLUTION OF THE BIBLE: By the time of our Lord--

1. It was evident that the Old Testament cannon (books regarded as having Divine authority) was well defined: clear distinction was made between what was scripture and non-scripture.
2. New Testament: as to the New Testament, not long after they were written they were being read regularly in church assemblies. (eg. Paul - Colossians 4:16, read-make copy-pass it on) Soon Paul's letters were carefully gathered into a single whole, next came the four gospels and then all the others followed. Gradually, each book on its own merit, took its place in accepted cannon of the New Testament scripture.
3. No later than the middle of the second century the Apostle's letters became widely read in public meetings, and that same century, substantial lists of New Testament books appear.
4. Origen, in the Third century, names the New Testament books.
5. In 367 A. D. Athanasius of Alexandria published a list of twenty-seven New Testament books accepted in his time. Same as ours today.
6. None of the original manuscripts remain because papyrus was not very durable, and it eventually decayed. But, many copies were made on more durable material (vellum) and today we have thousands of manuscripts (4,500 of the New Testament) that are accurate copies of the originals.

B. THE APOCRYPHA: Fifteen more books, sometimes erroneously referred to as the "Lost Books of the Bible", were not added to the Bible by the early Christians for good reasons. They were never accepted by the Jews as a part of inspired Scripture. They were filled with historical inaccuracies and myths. They were never quoted by Jesus nor the apostles. It was not until 1546 that they appear in the Catholic Church's Bible, when they were officially inserted. Today they are not added.

C. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and Aramaic, the New Testament was written in Greek—but through the years has been translated into almost every known language in the world.

- D. Sir Frederic Kenyon, Director of the British Museum for years, said, "The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries."

IV. TRIUMPHS THE TEST OF TIME

"But the word of the Lord endureth forever" (I Peter 1:25). History has proven the Bible to be like the Irishman's wall which was built four feet wide and three feet high." "Why so foolish to build a wall wider than high?" "So if a storm should come and blow it over, it will be higher afterwards than before!"

- A. No book has weathered so many storms and survived as the Bible. Emperors and Kings; Power hungry churchmen; Infidel scholars have howled and raged against the Bible. In both ancient and modern times mobs burned the Bible in public squares and soldiers have ransacked homes to find and destroy it. All opposition has proven futile. Like the Irishman's wall, The Bible comes back higher than before in influence and power.
- B. In 1229, the Catholic synod in Toulouse, France forbade the laity (people) to possess the Scriptures (except Psalms and a few verses in the prayer books)
- C. Voltaire, 18th century philosopher, boasted he would dis-credit the Bible and predicted there would not be one found on the earth before his century was over.
- D. Thomas Paine, Revolutionary statesman, attacked the Bible in his book "Age of Reason" where he predicted that in 50 years the Bible would have disappeared except for a volume in a museum here and there. Those 50 years have come and gone four times, his book is scarcely mentioned, read, or heard of, while every year multiples of millions of copies of the Bible are printed.
- E. The American Bible Society, one of 35 national Bible Societies, is now circulating over 70 million copies per year. There is now in existence one copy of the scriptures for every human being on the earth.
- F. The Bible has survived, and it is widely distributed, and this supports the faith in its inspiration.

CONCLUSION

Limited to a very narrow choice to make about this book. Either a worthless fraud and Jesus an imposter; or written and true word of God. Fulfilled prophecy; unity; scientific; historical; archaeological confirmation; influence our culture.

"TRAINING LOCAL TEACHERS AND EVANGELISTS"

By Bob Loudermilk

INTRODUCTION:

My discourse for this occasion will be concerned with the training of local teachers and evangelists. In common with most preachers, I would rather **preach** than talk **about preaching**; i. e. talk about the methods and plans of preaching. Yet I am happy to be assigned this topic as I feel very strongly about the need of training our local teachers and evangelists.

For Christianity to propagate itself and spread throughout the world, there must be a corps of trained men to take its message to every creature. Christ saw the need for trained men. He kept the apostles in his immediate company for some 3 years and then gave them the heavenly guidance of the Holy Spirit before sending them forth. The apostle Paul set forth the responsibility of training men to preach when he wrote to Timothy, "*And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also*" (II Timothy 2:2 —N.A.S.V.). Paul is saying, "Timothy, pass on the torch! The torch in you own hand has been lighted with the truth of God, so you are now to light the torch in the hands of others who themselves may be able to light still another and another until around the world the glorious light of the gospel of Christ will be seen from generation to generation and will be passed on even until the end of time."

"To you from falling hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high."

(John McCrae, "In Flanders Field")

DEFINITION OF TERMS:

- A. "Training" - As we speak of "training" we simply mean to make skillful by teaching and practice. (Thorndike, Barnhart Dictionary).
- B. "Local Teachers" - W. E. Vine, says of the word "teacher" —"Of teachers of the truth in the churches" and he list several passages which we will notice:

Acts 13:1 - Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers

I Corinthians 12: 28, 29 - And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

Ephesians 4:11 - And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets, and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.

Hebrews 5:12 - For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God

James 3:1 - Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we incur a stricter judgment (N. A. S. V.).

Our teachers are very vital to the work and growth of the congregation. Have you ever stopped to think just where we would be without them? Many churches among us have no elders or evangelists working with them and the teachers, therefore, play a very vital role in the life of those congregations.

- C. "Evangelist" -- "Lit., a messenger of good . . . , denotes a preacher of the gospel" (W. E. Vine). This word is found 3 times in the New Testament:

Ephesians 4:11 -- And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets, and some, evangelists . . .

Acts 21:8 -- And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cesarea; and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.

II Timothy 4:5 -- But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

What greater thing could a man do than that of preaching the precious gospel of Jesus Christ! We should approach this study with a great deal of reverence and sobriety. Let us understand that these positions have been set in the church by the almighty hand of God. These positions have been, as it were, cleansed and sanctified by the blood of Christ. Let us never forget that it is through these positions (along with the others that God has ordained) that the gospel of Jesus Christ is to be carried to a lost and dying world. What a great and honorable work; that of preaching the gospel of God's Son!

The purpose of this study is to consider how we can be more effective in the training of our local teachers and evangelists in order that they might be prepared to engage themselves in this work of spreading the gospel.

I. IT IS VITALLY NECESSARY THAT WE TRAIN OUR TEACHERS AND EVANGELISTS

A. We recognize the vital need of training in the vocational and professional world.

1. We demand that the engineer, the architect, the medical doctor, and the surgeon be trained. Even our plumbers and carpenters are well-trained and qualified.

- a) Let me illustrate it like this: If I were in the hospital and one of my good brethren walked in wearing a surgeon's gown, gloves, and mask I would immediately ask, "What do you think you are doing?" He replies, "I'm going to remove your appendix. Brethren, I can guarantee you that I would want someone to get me out of that hospital! WHY? He is my brother and friend. But the point is, he is not qualified to be a surgeon. He has had no training in that field.

- b) We demand such training in the medical field.

2. Yet, brethren, we often expect men to enter the field of preaching and teaching with very little, if any, training.

- a) "If the doctor whose knife delicately removes a portion of the brain must approach his work with thorough knowledge, intensive training and extreme seriousness, what

must be the approach of the preacher who operates on the soul, and whose effects must be weighed on a scale of eternal values."

(Preaching: Man and Method" by: Stafford North, page 8)

b) In the parable of the Unjust Steward, Jesus made a statement that has a great deal of meaning along this line.

1) **Luke 16:8 – *And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.***

2) The idea seems to be that people in the world are "wiser (more innovative, more practical in their pursuit of temporal things) than people in the kingdom are in spiritual things.

3) They are often wiser in the way they operate

a) In the business world there is almost no end to which people go to accomplish their purposes. And I am not saying that it is always wrong or evil.

b) The point is, **THEY WORK AT IT!** They do lots of planning, exert great amounts of energy, and spend substantial amounts of money and time.

c) Compare that with the way we sometimes seek the lost. Or with the way we train our men to teach and preach.

B. Our Past Efforts of Training

1. Some of you preachers and teachers can remember when you gave the first lesson. You reached the mid-teen years and the brethren said that it was about time for you to begin teaching. And so the scapel of the word was thrust into your hand and you were expected to do some kind of spiritual surgery but you had no training. Therefore, what you thought was going to be a 30 minute "hum-dinger" turned out to be a 5-minute "knee-knocker". Remember? In various areas, young men are expected to get up and give lessons with very little, if any, instruction.

2. Young men entering the field of preaching have at times been expected to "do the work of an evangelist" with very little instruction or training.

a) Perhaps all he has done is to travel to a few meetings with another preacher. In times past, this seems to have been our main avenue of training. A young man would travel to a few meetings with an older preacher, speak at near-by congregations on week-ends, and by the end of the summer he is expected to do the work of an evangelist. In the eyes of some, perhaps even in his own eyes at times, he has been trained.

b) **Personal Example:** I well remember when I entered the field of "full-time" preaching some 12 years ago. After being asked by the brethren to "come work with them", we enthusiastically made our way to this west Texas congregation. After securing an apartment, unloading our belongings, and getting our utilities hooked up, it finally dawned upon me: "I really don't know what I am supposed to be doing!" "How do

I get started?" "How do I schedule my time?" "How do I plan the work?" "Where do I find leads to study with?" "How do I develop my own personal study habits?" "What if someone dies and I have to actually work with the family in a funeral situation?" I am thankful those brethren were longsuffering! If I had been exposed to some guided instruction and carefully planned training I am convinced that my efforts would have been much more productive.

3. In the past, we have basically allowed our teachers and preachers to train themselves.
4. We often have simply used the "trial and error" system. This is what I used those first few years. I would try something and if that did not work I would try something else.
 - a) It is a TRIAL system. Trying to the preacher and the congregation.
 - b) It is an ERROR system. Chances for error are great due to the fact that the preacher knows nothing about what he is doing.

C. The Bible Dictates that we Train Our Teachers and Evangelists.

1. *II Timothy 2:2 – And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

a) "Commit"

- 1) In the original this word signifies "to deposit; to intrust, commit to one's charge" (Thayer).
- 2) What Timothy had heard of the apostle among many witnesses, he was to commit to others. He must not deliver anything besides what he had heard from the apostle. He was to commit them as a trust, as a sacred deposit, which they were to keep and to transmit pure and uncorrupt unto others.
- 3) The idea of the word being entrusted to us is a beautiful concept. Great is the responsibility of the preacher to that message. There are other beautiful, tender, and sacred trusts—the trust a sick man puts in his doctor, the trust a friend reposes in a friend, the trust a bride puts in her husband, the trust a child puts in his parents. All these are sacred trusts. But none of them is comparable to that trust which God reposes in the preacher who proclaims the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Preachers and Teachers, may we never be guilty of betraying that trust.
- 4) Notice Paul's attitude as he realized he had been entrusted with the gospel. This is a POWERFUL CONCEPT!
 - a) *I Thessalonians 2:4 - But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God which trieth our hearts.*
 - b) *I Timothy 1:11, 12 - According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who*

hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.

c) *Titus 1:3 - But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour.*

d) Paul took his responsibility very seriously. He knew he had been entrusted with the gospel by the God of heaven.

5) As preachers and teachers, we have been entrusted with the gospel.

a) In Matthew 28:18 - 20 and Mark 16:15, 16, we find Jesus giving what we commonly call the "Great Commission", where we are commanded to go and teach all nations, baptize them, and then teach them to observe all things. This we understand to be a Great Commission. The word "commission" means "the act of entrusting, as a charge or duty; the thing committed, entrusted, or delivered." By the giving of the Great Commission Jesus not only AUTHORIZED but OBLIGATED his followers to proclaim His message, the gospel, to the world. Yes, we too have been entrusted with the gospel.

b) Does our attitude reflect the fact that we have come to the realization of such a fact? Do we understand the great privilege of being entrusted with the good news of God's Son?

b) "Faithful men"

1) "Faithful" - "worthy of trust; that can be relied on" (Thayer).

2) Not just faithful in the sense of "believing" but in the sense of "trustworthy".

c) "Be able"

1) "be able" - "sufficient in ability, i.e. meet, fit" (Thayer).

2) To "be able" means to be competent; to be qualified.

3) So we are not just to train them to teach. But it is qualified by the fact that they must be "qualified" and "able" to teach others also.

4) In this way the torch of the light of the knowledge of Christ would be passed on from generation to generation. Paul taught Timothy who will teach others who will teach still others; an endless chain of "teacher-training".

2. *James 3:1 - Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment (N. A. S. V.).*

a) This verse was issued, not because of a fear of having too many teachers. How do we know that? We know it because of what Jesus said in Matthew 9:37, 38 - "... The

harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest" (NASV).

- b) It would be illogical for James to come along many years later and say, "Now I don't want too many workers out there; there might not be enough for everyone to do. We just need a few teachers." That is not the point.
- c) The warning of James is issued to eliminate UNQUALIFIED TEACHERS. The call was for wise teachers (James 1:13), not for foolish ones.
- d) Teachers are necessary, but incompetent and unworthy ones do much harm.

D. Who Is To Train Local Teachers and Evangelists?

- 1. It is not necessary that we erect institutions named after a well-known preacher in order to get the training done.
- 2. Preachers have the obligation of training others (II Timothy 2:2).
- 3. Elders can train men to teach and preach.
- 4. Experienced teachers can assist in this work.
- 5. **EXAMPLE:** In every profession, those in a particular field have the responsibility to train others who would enter the profession (nurses, doctors, therapists, etc.). Certainly we have the responsibility to teach others the work of preaching and teaching.
- 6. We hear people talk of a "lost art". It became lost because one generation failed to teach the next generation.

E. When Do We Begin This Training Process?

- 1. The training process can begin at childhood.
 - a) *II Timothy 1:5 - When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.*
 - b) *II Timothy 3:15 - And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*
 - c) We need more mothers like, Hannah of old, who gave her son, Samuel, to the Lord "all the days of his life."
 - d) Our young men need to be raised to support the work of preaching and teaching.
- 2. A little encouragement goes a long way with a young person.
 - a) The power of planting the seed in their mind while they are young.

- b) **EXAMPLE:** Juan Rodriguez, Jr., a very active evangelist in Old Mexico, told me when it was that he decided to make it his goal to preach the gospel. A respected brother from the States was visiting with his father about the needs of the work in Old Mexico. Juan, Jr., then just a child in years, was listening in on the conversation. The brother looked at him and said, "You can begin right now, young man, to prepare yourself for this needed work. Begin now to study the English language so that you will be prepared." In relating this story, Brother Juan put it to me this way, "I took him serious!" Oh, the power of planting a seed in the minds of young people!

3. The Power of Expectancy.

- a) Psychologists recognize the fact that expectations held over a period of time, either consciously or subconsciously, affect attitudes—and attitudes influence actions. Expectations function inexorably, whether you create them yourself or whether someone else holds them for you.
- b) The power of expectancy has been known and recognized for many centuries. The ancient King Solomon, whose name is synonymous with wisdom, said, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Several centuries later, the Roman emperor and philosopher, Marcus Aurelius wrote, "A man's life is what his thoughts make of it." In more recent years, John Steinbeck, Nobel Prize-winning novelist said, "It is the nature of man to rise to greatness if greatness is expected of him."
- c) The power of expectancy is seen in education. Some revealing research recently completed demonstrates that when teachers are told that certain students will show outstanding achievement, the unconscious effect of the teachers' expectation produces a marked and rapid growth in the performance of the students. The opposite is equally true. A thoughtless teacher can quickly destroy a young person's ambition and learning ability by exhibiting the expectancy that a student will fail.
- d) Obviously, then, the power of expectation can work negatively or positively.
- 1) May we use it in a positive way as we prepare our young men for the greatest work on earth: preaching the gospel of God's Son

II. THE PROCESS OF PREPARATION

A. The Preparation of Self

1. There may be many opinions regarding the various facets of the preacher's life and work, but on one matter there is total agreement: a good preacher must be a good man. Paul specified that the word was to be entrusted to "faithful men". It is not enough for preachers to be clever, brilliant, educated, or humorous: they must be godly. In order to preach well one must live righteously. Ronald Sleeth said, "Many excellently prepared sermons have failed because the preacher forgot to prepare himself along with the sermon."
2. People do not, or should not, expect preachers to be perfect. But they have a right to see an example of zeal and courage in the battle for righteousness. Very few audiences will listen with respect to a preacher who refuses to listen to himself.

3. *1 Timothy 4:12 - 16 (Read and discuss)*

- a) Paul is urging Timothy to set the proper example.
- b) Notice verse 16, "take heed to thyself and to thy teaching." It is significant that the EXAMPLE is put before the TEACHING.
- c) A three-fold goal which I have set for myself; actually a three-fold responsibility:
 - 1) I am first responsible to "save myself"; to "keep ME right". I can not help any one if I do not do that. (II Timothy 2:15).--Read it!
 - 2) See my family saved; serving God diligently. A great tragedy: to win the world to Christ only to see my family lost.
 - 3) Then, take the gospel to as many people as I can possibly reach in a life-time.

4. There are personal qualities which a preacher must have to be an effective spokesman for God. *(From chapter two of "Preaching: Man and Method" by: Stafford North)*

- a) A sense of burden
- b) Sincerity
- c) Enthusiasm
- d) Humility
- e) Meekness
- f) Patience
- g) Purity
- h) Intellectual Competence
- i) Good health
- j) Leadership.

5. Developing the proper attitude toward teaching and preaching.

- a) Have you ever taken the time to study Paul's attitude toward his work of teaching and preaching?
- b) Gratitude
 - 1) *1 Timothy 1:12 - And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.*
 - a) When is the last time we just got down on our knees and "thanked God" for the great privilege of proclaiming His Word?
 - b) What a joy and a delight! To be privileged to take His glorious gospel and preach it to a lost and dying world! I do not deserve such a blessing!
- c) Concern and Love for the Lost
 - 1) Romans 10:1 *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer for Israel is, that they might be saved.*

- 2) *Romans 9:1 - 3 - I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart, For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren my kinsmen according to the flesh:*

d) Sense of Responsibility

- 1) *Romans 1:14 - 16 - I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to Jew first, and also to the Greek.*
- 2) *I Corinthians 9:16 - 23 - For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel. For though I be free from all men yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews, I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law of God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law; To the weak became I as weak that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.*
- 3) The responsibility of preaching is a great one and a young man should seriously contemplate this before entering the field.
- a) Advice one of our older preachers gives to young men who ask him if they should enter the field of preaching: "If you can do anything else do it!" Think about that and I believe you will get the point.
- b) A young preacher among us once became discouraged and had decided to give up preaching. He had experienced some depressing problems. Went to an older preacher expecting to receive a certain amount of sympathy. After the young evangelist told his story the older man's advice was short and to the point. He simply told him, "QUIT IF YOU CAN!" That young evangelist is no longer young, and he is still proclaiming the gospel in a "full time way" today.
- e) A Comprehension of the Constraining Love of Christ
- 1) *II Corinthians 5:9 - 15, 18 - 21 - Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ: that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences. For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:*

And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the world of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew not sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

- 2) It has to be something that we comprehend in a personal way. By that I simply mean that it is not enough for a person just to believe, "Jesus died for the world." Let us comprehend the fact that in dying for the world that he died for ME and for You!

- f) In order to effectively serve God as teachers and preachers we must develop all of these attitudes. Let us now discuss another way we can prepare for this work:

B. Preparation Through the Development of the Necessary Knowledge and Skills

1. In every vocation and profession there are certain skills and attitudes, and a certain amount of knowledge that must be developed before a person is qualified for the position. In preparing for this STUDY I took the time to read through the books of I and II Timothy and Titus several times in order to try to gain an understanding of what all is involved in the work of an evangelist. I chose these three books as they are the three that we recognize as having been addressed to preachers. A careful study of these books will reveal what knowledge, skills, and attitudes that a man will need in the work of an evangelist.
2. Through a study of these three books a person is able to identify the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary in order to be effective in his role as a preacher.
 - a) By identifying what is required, a person can then chart his own progress, recognize where his weaknesses lie, and then proceed to gain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that he needs to overcome those weaknesses.

b) CHART:

Role or Skills	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes	Goals
Public Preaching				
Reprove			Meekness	
Rebuke			Gentleness	
Exhort			Patience	
Warn			(II Tim-	
Charge			2:24, 25)	
Private Teaching				
Care-Taker				
Example				

- c) Every man who aspires to teach or preach should take a thorough study of I, II Timothy and Titus. You cannot find a direct list of qualifications for the teacher and evangelist, as you do for the elder and deacon. But, as to the complete work of an evangelist, it is exemplified in the book of Acts, and fully outlined in the books of I and II Timothy and Titus.

- d) Bear in mind that all of the work of a preacher is found outlined and defined in the New Testament. Anything that is not outlined therein, and that is not inherent in the responsibility of any faithful Christian (hospitality, visiting the sick, etc.) is not the work of the preacher.

C. Preparation Through the Training Sessions

1. We have established the fact that we have the responsibility of training men to teach and preach. One of the most effective ways I have found to involve myself in such training is to schedule several "sessions of training" for the aspiring teachers and evangelists.
 - a) Parallel: As a brotherhood we are known for great singing and I think this is true for several reasons: (1) We expect it, (2) Various qualified song-leaders have conducted "schools of training" in order that people might learn how. The results shine!
 - b) Our teaching will greatly improve if we simply create the same conditions. Let us expect great teaching from our teachers. Let us encourage qualified teachers or preachers to conduct sessions of training for those interested in learning and developing their talents
2. Getting Started
 - a) Find out who is interested in being involved in the training sessions.
 - b) An experienced, qualified teacher, evangelist, or elder should take the lead.
 - 1) Decide on a time (same day each week) and a place.
 - 2) Decide how many weeks the training session will last.
 - 3) Outline the material to be covered in each session and the goal of each session.
 - 4) Plan to "stick with it", even if only two people show up. Many times others will later get involved once they know that the sessions will continue consistently.
 - 5) Be prepared and organized.

3. Material to be covered

- a) Begin by having each man give a short talk on what he desires to accomplish in the sessions (areas he desires to improve in, where he feels he needs some assistance, etc). Allowing each man to "open up" in this way will "break the ice" which will enhance the session.
- b) Discuss the NEED of Training.
 - 1) Giving our best.
 - 2) Becoming more active in the Church.
 - 3) Increasing our knowledge, understanding, and skills.
 - 4) Developing more teachers, evangelists, elders, deacons and personal workers.
- c) Preparing the Lesson (Sermon)
 - 1) Inform them about the good techniques for planning a talk or lesson.
 - 2) Point out the steps taken in good sermon preparation:

- a) Select your subject carefully.
 - 1) Think of the audience, the occasion, and what you are best suited to talk about. Think of the NEEDS of the audience.
 - 2) Decide whether you wish to inform, convince, stimulate (inspire), or actuate (move to action).
- b) Study your subject thoroughly.
 - 1) Think about your subject and jot down every idea that come to your mind.
 - 2) Read all you can about your subject using various versions of the Bible a concordance, a topical and reference Bible, commentaries. Then proceed to books and tracts about your subject.
 - 3) Talk about your ideas to others and this will help to sharpen your ideas as well as gain new ones for you.
- c) Organize your information clearly.
 - 1) Write down the purpose of your speech: to inform, convince, stimulate, or actuate.
 - 2) Write down the subject sentence summarizing the information you wish the audience to gain, stating the proposition of which you wish them to be convinced of, urging the attitude to which you wish to inspire them, or suggesting the action which you wish them to take.
 - 3) Support your subject sentence with three or four main points drawn from:
 - a) The phrases in a verse or two of scripture, called the TEXTUAL METHOD.
 - b) The main ideas from several verses or a chapter, called the EXPOSITORY METHOD.
 - c) Another method is to (1) tell a Bible story and, (2) tell the lessons to be gained from the story.
 - d) You may wish to take a subject or idea and then make each main point an example.
 - 4) Plan the conclusion to follow the main points.
- d) Practice your talk repeatedly.
 - 1) The "training sessions" provide a place for each teacher to practice his talk out loud.
 - a) Use a tape-recorder; a valuable tool.
 - b) Provide constructive criticism.
- d) Inform them about certain fundamental principles of delivery in public speaking.
 - 1) Speak up!
 - a) Speak loudly enough to be heard
 - b) Use the proper speed to be interesting.

- c) Learn to emphasize important words and key points.
- 2) Look at the audience.
- 3) Be alert and active.
 - a) Use of gestures
 - b) Change of facial expression
 - c) Movement.
- 4) Appear natural!
- 5) Avoid Distractions!
 - 1) Dress in a way that will not be distracting.
 - 2) Avoid annoying habits: looking at the ceiling, rocking back and forth, etc.
- 4. Other areas can be covered in the training sessions
 - a) Detailed study of various doctrinal subjects
 - 1) Each member should take notes and ask questions.
 - b) Train the men how to teach from "house to house"
 - 1) Some know how to teach in the pulpit but know nothing about private teaching.
 - 2) They will need training in several areas:
 - a) How to seek prospects and arrange for the study.
 - b) How to prepare for the home study.
 - c) How to prepare the presentation.
 - d) How to answer objections.
 - e) How to use tools in teaching (identical Bibles, charts, films, sheets, etc.)
 - f) How to use fact.
- 5. Recommended Books to assist in the conducting of training sessions:
 - a) "Preaching: Man and Method" by: Stafford North.
 - b) "Sermon Design and Delivery" by: Thomas H. Holland.
 - c) "If You Want To Preach" by: Don DeWelt.
 - d) "Church Leadership Training" a booklet by: Stafford North.
(revised and edited by: Glen Osburn and Greg DeGough)
 - e) "From House to House (A manual on Personal Work)" by: Ivan Stewart.

D. Preparation Through Individual Training.

1. A "training session" is a valuable way to learn. I would also like to offer some practical suggestions for all aspiring teachers and evangelists; some things they can be doing at home to assist them in their training.
2. Read through the Bible constantly.
 - a) By reading three chapters in the Old Testament and one chapter in the New Testament every day, you can read through the Bible once per year.
 - b) As you read, keep a pen and a stack of 3x5 cards at your side. Write down ideas for sermons, scriptures you wish to remember, passages you desire to go back to and study, etc.
 - c) It is a MUST that teachers and preachers stay in the Word!
 - d) Have you ever wondered, "What can I preach on; I just cannot find any ideas!" As long as I am on a daily Bible reading schedule my well never runs dry for it is fed by an ever-flowing stream. The 3x5 cards always contain plenty of material to speak on.
3. Take college courses in areas that will help in preaching: speech, english, history. Often there are seminars offered that can be very valuable: memory, speed-reading and comprehension, communication, creative writing, etc.
 - a) We have teachers at home presently enrolled in courses at the local college, striving to increase their skills at teaching. I commend any brother who will take the time, effort, and finances to do that.
4. Encourage local teachers and aspiring evangelists to build a library of good books that will assist them in their studies.
 - a) Do not buy at random or on impulse. You will waste your money.
 - b) Get with some brother who "knows books" and will recommend some to you.
5. Start a filing system.
 - a) File away newspaper articles, tracts, letters, etc.
 - b) Such can be helpful when studying a subject or getting up a sermon.
6. Be a student all of your life. You have many years of intensive study ahead of you on many themes. Never think of your studies as finished.
7. Set goals for yourself.
 - a) Decide what it is you desire to accomplish.
 - b) Write it down in order to crystallize your thinking.
 - c) Develop a plan of action for achieving the goal.
 - d) Develop a sincere, burning desire (this will put action into your plan).
 - e) Develop a dogged determination to follow through on your plan.
 - 1) This is the application of sustained effort, controlled attention, and concentrated energy. It is the refusal to be side-tracked, or steered off course.

- f) These are the basic principles of goal-setting used in the business world, the school systems, the field of sports, etc.
- g) These principles are a valuable aid to aspiring preachers and teachers.
 - 1) Teachers and Evangelists must have "self-motivation".
 - a) Nobody forces them to get up; to study; to use self-discipline.
 - b) Must make a decision to do it.
 - 2) Teachers and Evangelists must set goals
 - a) For reading and studying the word
 - b) For preparing new sermons.
 - c) For developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed in preaching.
 - d) "He who aims at nothing will surely hit it".

III THE REWARDS OF TEACHING AND PREACHING

- A. This work affords opportunity to develop one's creative talents and to cultivate creative skills.
 - 1. Skills in writing (letters, articles, sermons, etc.)
 - 2. Skills in teaching (both publicly and privately).
 - 3. Ability to work with people (visiting, counselling, etc.)
- B. This work affords every gospel preacher the privilege of immersing himself in the study of God's Word.
 - 1. While others occupation calls them to toil with tools, machines, or figures, he is privileged above all to search the scriptures; to meditate upon them day and night; to dig deep into the gold mine of Truth and uncover costly nuggets.
 - 2. The privilege of sharing these truths with others.
- C. The privilege of being a worker for the King.
 - 1. In this country, some consider it a great honor to serve on the staff of the governor, even more so the president
 - 2. How much greater is the honor to be a representative of the King of Kings!
 - a) I Corinthians 3:9 - For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.
 - b) The privilege of knowing you are involved in the greatest work in the world!
- D. The Joy of Helping People
 - 1. Our primary work is to save lost men from the doom of damnation. We become all things to all men that we might win some (I Corinthians 9:22).

2. We spend many hours helping people salvage their lives from wreck and ruin.
 - a) You might help save a man from the enslavement of liquor
 - b) Some mixed-up child may listen to your counsel and be profited.
 - c) Time and again you will have opportunity to work toward strengthening marriages that are being torn apart.
 3. The joy of assisting people in gospel obedience as they surrender their life to the Master.
- E. The last and most important aspect of our reward is that by faithfully preaching and living the gospel we will save not only our hearers but our own souls as well.
1. *I Timothy 4:16 - 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.*
 2. *II Timothy 4:5 - 8, 17, 18*

CONCLUSION

I Corinthians 15:58 - Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Times of discouragement are bound to come. As we walk through the valleys may we ever remember the promise of I Corinthians 15:58. Heaven will surely be worth it all!!!!

ROLE OF THE HUSBAND AND FATHER IN THE HOME

By Jerry Dickinson

Recently, a Psychologist in Austin, Texas conducted a study to determine the factors which were most influential in the lives of children today. I am glad to say that according to this study mother still comes in number one. Mothers have more influence than anyone or anything else in the lives of their children even today. That is the good news. The bad news is that father comes in third. According to the study television beat out dad for the number two spot. Considering more of the immoral and ungodly trash that is on television today all of us ought to be alarmed and concerned. As Christians we must decry a culture that relegates the father to a lower position than television.

In this article I want to discuss the role of the man in the home from a Biblical standpoint. The remarks that follow are not based on my personal expertise, wisdom, or experience, but on scriptural principles. Actually, I want to consider the man's position in the home as it pertains to four different roles he sustains. The Bible indicates that the man sustains at least these four roles. Note them with me.

(1) LEADER

The man sustains the role of the head or leader of the home. The man is the provider-- not only of the temporal needs of his family, but of their spiritual needs as well. In Ephesians 5:22-33, Paul teaches that the man is the head of the wife even as Jesus is the head of the Church. So called "liberated women" notwithstanding, the Bible clearly teaches that the man is the head of the wife and thus the leader in the home. Paul uses three words that deserve special attention. He uses the word **submit**. The woman is to submit to her husband, Paul avers, as unto the Lord. Next, Paul says the wife must be **subject** to her husband in every thing. Finally, he declares that wives should **revere** their husbands in their roles as leaders in the home. If a woman wants to please God she will submit to the words of the Holy Spirit and recognize and respect the man's role in the home.

I want to quickly add that the Apostle Paul is not saying that the man is to be some kind of dictator in the home. I know some men that think that they have the right to make their wives do virtually anything they ask of them no matter how demeaning or degrading it may be. I have even seen some men purposely embarrass their wives in public just to show everyone that they were the boss. For shame! Paul had no such petty behavior in mind. I know he did not for after declaring that the man is the head of the wife he declared that husbands should love their wives as they love themselves and as Jesus loved the Church.

In I Peter 3:7, Peter declared (according to Phillip's translation) "Similarly, you husbands should try to understand the wives you live with, honoring them as physically weaker yet equally heirs with you of the grace of this life. If you do not do this, you will find it impossible to pray properly." We men need to make a greater effort to understand the women we are married to. We need to recognize that they have different needs and different problems than we do and hence dwell with them accordingly.

I have no doubt that a Christian woman will gladly submit to a man who is what he ought to be as an understanding husband. Too many men, however, want to be boss in everything but spiritual things. Many men want to tell the wife how to spend the money and conduct temporal affairs, but when it comes to taking the kids to church or teaching them about the Lord, he sluffs that off on the wife. That is a woman's job, you know. No, mister, that is the man's job too. He is to be the head in everything -- especially the spiritual things. May the Lord give us fathers who are the spiritual leaders in their homes!

(2) INSTRUCTOR

A literal translation of Ephesians 6:4 reads, "Provoke not your children to wrath, but nurture them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." Now, the mother certainly is to instruct her children, but in Ephesians 6:4 Paul is speaking directly to the fathers. The father is to be the instructor of spiritual things to his children. In Proverbs 22:6 Solomon states, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." The word "train" could be translated "catechise". The word "catechise" means to instruct orally by means of questions and answers. Many denominations have catechisms used to train their members in the dogmas of that denomination. This word brings to mind the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 6:7 "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Father's if we want our children to be grounded in the Lord and his way we must take the time to perpetually talk to them about spiritual things. It is the man's job to take the lead in instructing his children.

(3) DISCIPLINARIAN

Paul declared in Ephesians 6:4 that fathers are to nurture their children in the discipline as well as the instruction of the Lord. In I Samuel 2:24 it is said that Eli talked to his evil sons about their evil ways. He instructed them that they were doing wrong and God would punish them if they did not cease. Eli's problem as a father was, however, that whereas he instructed his sons, he did not discipline and restrain them. In I Samuel 3:13 we are told that God was displeased the Eli because he did not restrain his sons. Talk is fine, and we must instruct our children, but there comes a time when action is called for. Discipline is required if a child is to be molded into what parents and God want the child to be.

Solomon said: "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." (Proverbs 19:18) "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." (Proverbs 22:15) "Withold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." (Proverbs 23:13, 14) "The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame. Correct thy son and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul." (Proverbs 29:15,17)

Different children respond differently to different kinds of discipline; but Solomon's wisdom cannot be lightly dismissed. Fathers, we have the responsibility to take the lead in the disciplining of our children and molding them into the men and women we want them to be.

(4) EXAMPLE

The last role I would like to consider is that of the man as an example and role model for his children. Fathers, what are your children going to remember about you? What kind of an imprint are you stamping into that young mind that looks to you for instruction and direction? I believe I can tell you that it is almost certain that your children are going to turn out just like you. You need not expect your children, when they grow up, to: 1) Study if you don't; 2) Put the church above everything else if you don't; 3) Be honest if you're not; 4) Use good language if you don't; 5) Control their temper if you don't; or 6) Be caring, godly parents if you're not.

I believe David must have been tormented by the fact that he had not been the example to his son Absalom he should have been. Hence, at the death of the boy he moans amid his scalding tears,

"O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" God forbid that our children should ever be lost because we fathers failed to be the men, husbands, and fathers we ought to have been.

In conclusion, I offer the words of God himself about a father. The words were uttered in Genesis 18:19 with reference to Abraham. "For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." Abraham had confidence in God, but it is obvious that God had confidence in Abraham as a father. What a thought! I pray to God that He may have such confidence in me. I pray that He who is our heavenly Father may have such confidence in each of you as fathers and husbands who read these lines. May it be so!

TILL WE COME TO THE UNITY OF THE FAITH

Ephesians 4:13

By Irvin Barnes

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Read Ephesians 4:7 - 16--This lesson is for the most part a word study from this passage.
 - B. Some of the things to be learned or proven from such a study:
 - 1. That there are no modern day apostles nor prophets.
 - 2. Miraculous gifts were temporary.
 - 3. That complete revelation would come.
 - 4. Through complete revelation all believers can come to a common faith.
 - 5. That God's revealed will can be understood.
- I. Christ accomplished His mission on earth and left the affairs of the Kingdom into the hands of men. (Ephesians 4:7 - 10).
- A. Christ descended from heaven, descended into the lower parts of the earth and ascended far above all heavens.
 - 1. In so doing he was able to make full or complete **ALL THINGS**.
 - B. All things refers to all spiritual things--to complete the arrangement which God had initially planned.
 - 1. Ephesians 1:10- - all things
 - 2. Ephesians 1:19 - 23---all things
 - C. At this point Christ had completed his mission on earth, had done all that needed to be done in order for men to capably serve God in view of eternal life.
 - D. This passage shows essentially that Christ was given to make it possible for men on earth to assume a position of spiritual function---that human beings can now do a spiritual service for God.--
- II. Begin a more detailed and expository study of the words and phrases beginning with verse 11 and continuing with verse 16.
- A. The apostles, prophets, evangelists and teachers here refers to those who were set in the church from the first and received either the baptism of the spirit, (apostles Acts 2:1 - 4) or the spiritual gifts by the laying on of the apostles hands. See I Corinthians 12:28 - 31.
 - B. All these inspired offices were temporary to carry the church through its infant stage.
 - 1. It will be shown later that in its mature or adult stage provision has been made for un-inspired elders, deacons, evangelists and teachers.
 - C. Note word definitions and applications:
 - 1. "Gave some," not all but some--implies chosen few
 - 2. For the purpose of or in order to
 - 3. Perfecting of the saints--"perfecting" complete furnishing

4. **Ministry:** service ministering of those who execute the commands of others Th. P/336.
5. **Edifying:** structuring: to build up as in-constructing an edifice
6. **Till:** Strong's, "as far as i. e. up to a certain point - till, until denoting the terminus." Terminus (Webster) termination, final goal. Thayer (page 408) a particle indicating the terminus ad quem: as far as, unto, until.
7. **We all come** --arrive at or attain
8. **Unity of the faith:** unanimity or agreement
9. **Knowledge of the son of God:** full recognition or discernment to a precise and correct knowledge.
10. **Unto a perfect man:** completeness of full age: brought to its end, finished; wanting nothing necessary to completeness. (Note: until we rise to the same level of knowledge which we ascribe to a full-grown man, until we can be likened to a full grown man.)
11. **Measure:** the required measure, the due fit, measure the proper, that is ripe, of full age.
12. **Stature:** (as big as)– as old as, as tall as

D. Inspired offices were to last up to the point of complete revelation at which time the infant stage of the church would be passed and by the complete revelation the full-grown aspect of the church would have been attained.

III. Correlation of Ephesians 4 and I Corinthians 13: Passing away of spiritual gifts and coming in of complete revelation.

Ephesians 4

1. Inspired offices named, spiritual gifts implied.
2. Till: indicated a point at which inspiration would cease.
3. Unity, knowledge, perfection or perfect man, fullness of Christ.
4. No more children
5. May grow up unto him

I Corinthians 13

1. Spiritual gifts named, prophecies tongues, knowledge.
2. Failure of gifts predicted: tongues to cease, prophecy to fail, and knowledge to vanish away.
3. When that which is perfect is come.
4. When I was a child.
5. Became a man

IV. Verse sixteen describes the framework of the church once inspiration has ceased and complete revelation has come by means of inspiration and has been confirmed by miracles in the infant stage of the church.

A. Note the church in her full grown stage:

1. **Whole body fitly joined together:** one part compliments and works in harmony with every other part.
2. **Every joint supplieth:** each member can now function, a spiritual gift no longer necessary: (Note every joint as compared to some in verse 11.)
3. **Effectual working in the measure of every part**

B. In the "full grown" stage of the church provision has been made for the appointment of officers in the church according to qualification:

1. Teachers: II Timothy 2:2
2. Deacons: I Timothy 3:8
3. Elders I Timothy 3:2

4. Evangelists: II Timothy 4:5

CONCLUSION:

- A. Some were set into the church in its beginning, (infant stage) as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers and were endowed with the Holy Spirit so that the New Covenant might be revealed and to give the early officers of the church the knowledge to carry on the work of the church by inspiration until the revelation was complete.
- B. When the revelation process was complete, the complete and all sufficient will of God was given when the spiritual gifts and the inspiration was no longer needed.
- C. After complete revelation was given the church passed into the "full-grown man," stage and the inspired officers of the church were replaced by uninspired men who are now appointed according to qualification.

PRIVATE BIBLE STUDY VERSUS SUNDAY SCHOOL

By Raymond Fox

Introduction:

There is a need for Christians to study God's word together more frequently than the occasions of public worship. (Hebrews 3:13; Acts 5:42)

There are Scriptural methods for filling this need in private Bible study.

Restoring New Testament Christianity includes restoring the intensive dedication to the word of God found in the early disciples of Christ.

I. Two Scriptural methods of teaching – Acts 20:20

A. The nature of public teaching.

1. Definition of "public".

- a. Thayer -- "demosios" – publicly; in public places; in view of all.
- b. Arndt - Gingrich – "demosios" - Public; in the open.
- c. Webster – "public" – of or relating to or affecting all the people; accessible to or shared by all the members of a community.
- d. I Corinthians 14:23 illustrates a public assembly that is open, in view of all, so that the unbeliever or unlearned may enter.
- e. This definition would include public worship assemblies, but would also include other forms of public teaching.

2. Examples of public teaching.

- a. Luke 5:15 – The multitudes came together to hear Christ because of his reputation.
- b. Mark 2:13 – Jesus taught the multitudes by the sea side.
- c. Acts 2:6 – The multitude came together to hear the apostles.
- d. Acts 20:7 – When the church came together to break bread, Paul taught them.
- e. I Corinthians 14:23 -- The whole church comes together.

3. Public invitation – Implied in the definition of "public" is the unlimited nature of the audience. In Acts 2:6 the multitude came together as a result of the word being "noised abroad".

4. Purpose – The purpose of public teaching is to publicly declare the word of God. Paul regularly sought public places (Acts 17:17) to enable him to preach the word of God to whomever might gather to hear.

5. Women are forbidden to teach publicly.

- a. I Corinthians 14:34, 35 -- This prohibition against women teaching applies to the public assembly of the church. That it is a shame for women to speak (teach) in the church means this command was not intended for just the wives of the prophets.
- b. I Timothy 2:11, 12 – This prohibition is against women teaching in public. The public role of men (such as leading in prayer – verse 8) is placed in contrast to the public demeanor of women.

- c. The New Testament assigns public positions of leadership, including public teaching to men (II Timothy 2:2; Ephesians 4:11). Women did not occupy offices as public leaders or functionaries of the church.
 - d. There are no examples in the New Testament of women teaching publicly either in or out of worship assembly.
 - 6. Undivided assembly – teaching in public assemblies was accomplished without dividing the assembly into public groupings.
 - a. The public assembly of the church for worship was not divided, but always came together in one place. (I Corinthians 14:23).
 - b. There are no New Testament examples of teaching accomplished in public groups that are available to the public. There are no examples of Jesus segregating the multitudes into groups when he taught them.
- B. The nature of private teaching.
- i. Definition of “house to house”.
 - a. Thayer – “kat’ oikous” – opposite of “publicly”; in private houses.
 - b. Arndt - Gindrich – “kat’ oikous” – in private.
 - c. Webster – “private” – intended for or affecting a particular person, company or interest; withdrawn from company or observation.
 - d. The exact word “private” does not have a direct correlate in New Testament Greek. “House to house” is found once in Acts 20:20. The word “private” that occurs several times in the King James Version is from a Greek phrase “kat’ idian” which literally means “by one’s self”.
 - 2. Examples of private teaching.
 - a. Luke 10:23 – Jesus taught his disciples privately.
 - b. Luke 18:31 - 33 – Jesus privately taught his apostles about his death (Mark 10:32; Matthew 20:17)
 - c. Acts 20:17 – Paul called together the elders of Ephesus.
 - d. Acts 18:26 – Aquilla and Priscilla took Apollos aside to teach him.
 - e. Galatians 2:2 – Paul consulted privately with the leaders of the church in Jerusalem concerning the gospel for the Gentiles.
 - 3. Private invitation – The idea of “private” teaching implies the teaching is limited to a certain group or individual. In Acts 20:17 Paul specifically invited the elders at Ephesus to meet him at Miletus to teach them.
 - 4. Purpose – The purpose of private teaching is to instruct an individual or a select group with teachings designed and intended specifically for that group or individual. (Acts 20:17; Acts 18:26).
 - 5. Women permitted to teach – The overall picture in the New Testament of a woman teaching portrays teaching in private, discreet circumstances.
 - a. Titus 2:3 – The older woman is a teacher of good things.
 - b. Luke 2:36 - 38; Acts 21:8, 9 – Prophecy as a form of teaching must have been private and not public utterance.

- c. Acts 18:26 - an example of a woman teaching a man.
 - d. II Timothy 1:5; 3:15 - an example of a woman teaching a child.
 - e. Where a woman may teach (privately), she may teach anyone and where she may not teach (publicly), she may not teach anyone.
6. Private teaching by definition forms a select group or class of people. To say a class of any nature, including a private group, is wrong is to say that private teaching is wrong.
- a. The determination that defines who the private teaching is specifically intended for is the same determination that defines the private group or class.
 - b. Webster defines a class as a group, set, or kind sharing common attributes. In the case of Jesus privately teaching the apostles, the apostles formed the group. In the case of Paul teaching the Ephesian elders, those elders formed the group.
 - c. The distinction must be made between public groupings or classes and a private group or class of people. The New Testament gives no examples of public grouping or classification; however, every example of private teaching is an example of a class of people, a private class. A logical mistake is made in assuming all groupings is wrong because public classification is wrong. A public grouping is a classification of the public crowd into groups available and open to the public. A private group is a specified set or class of people not open to the public. The New Testament is silent on public classification but exemplifies private classification.

II. The errors of Sunday School.

- A. In general the Sunday school method of teaching is not entirely consistent with either public teaching or private teaching. It is neither exclusively public or exclusively private. Sunday school has some components of both methods and thus forms a third category of teaching not found in the Scriptures.
 - 1. Though proponents sometimes label Sunday school as private teaching, it is in reality public insofar as the public is invited, it functions as a public work of the church, and it is a publicly called assembly. Yet, in contradiction to its public nature, women are allowed to teach. Furthermore, the method itself is an example of public grouping or classification not found in the Scriptures.
 - 2. If, for the sake of argument, it is granted that Sunday school is private, this method does not fully abide by the Biblical guidelines for private teaching. In many Sunday schools women are only allowed to teach other women and children, not men. Also public announcement and invitation makes Sunday school inconsistent by definition with private teaching. The Sunday school classes are open and available to all.
- B. Thus Sunday school creates a public atmosphere in which a woman is allowed to teach and where the woman may fill the capacity of a public teacher of the church.
- C. Sunday school creates public groupings or classifications not found in the Bible.
- D. In some cases the children are omitted from the regular worship while attending Sunday school, thus creating a division of the assembly.

III. Principles and precautions for private teaching.

- A. In principle and practice, private Bible studies are authorized by the Scriptures as private teaching if they follow the guidelines for private teaching.
1. Private studies should be conducted on a level of private initiative and not as a public work of the church. The decision to convene should be individual and not congregational.
 2. Private teaching should be confined and limited by private invitation and not a public announcement.
 3. The leadership of a private study must maintain control over who attends so that the private study does not evolve into a public work.
- B. General precautions.
1. Private Bible studies should not be allowed to isolate some groups of people within a congregation from others and thus segment the body.
 2. Private Bible studies must have good leadership and direction so as not to become a seed bed for error. (II Peter 2:1).
 3. Bible study cannot become an escape from other spiritual responsibilities. It is easy for one to think that he has fulfilled his spiritual responsibilities by studying with other Christians in the congregation. He must not simply study but also conform his life to the word and tell others about the gospel.
 4. Private Bible study among Christians is not group therapy but preparation for the battle.
 5. Women who privately teach others must be careful to always maintain a humble attitude of submission.
 6. Private Bible study with other Christians can never become a substitute for edifying public teaching.

THE TULSA TRIAL

By Wayne McKamie

Thursday March 15, 1984 is a date that will live long in the memory of the Lord's people. On that day a Tulsa County District Jury returned an unanimous verdict in favor of Marian Guinn and against the one hundred - ten member Collinsville Church of Christ.

Marian Guinn was reared in Kansas. Her early life was difficult in that she was married and a mother by age sixteen. After a bitter divorce and custody battle she relocated to Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

The brethren in Collinsville learned of her through her sister and brother-in-law, who were members of the congregation. The Church reached out to her in love and compassion. Food, money, automobiles, baby sitters, etc. were given again and again. With the Churches help she was able to complete her studies as a registered nurse.

For four years Marian Guinn was a faithful member of the Church. In 1979 it began to be common knowledge that she was sexually involved with Pat Sharp, pharmacist and ex-mayor of Collinsville. This relationship was to result in a divorce in the Sharp family, and in many problems for the Church of Christ.

In response to the rumors that began to spread in the small town, the elders contacted Marian advising her that she should not continue to see Pat Sharp in that he was not a scriptural subject for marriage, and that such conduct was bringing shame and reproach on the church. In that many visits, prayers, and admonitions did not effect any change, the elders then notified her that the Church would withdraw fellowship as mandated in I Corinthians 5.

In response Marian Guinn wrote a long emotional letter to the Elders. Excerpts from the letter indicate that she was not penitent.

"I have never fully adopted your doctrine and never will . . . I was a Baptist and always will be."

"You have no right to get up and say anything against me in Church."

"I have no choice but for all of us to attend another church, another denomination where men do not set themselves up as judges for God. He does his own judging."

The letter was hand delivered to Elder Witten one week before the withdrawal. Ron Witten told her that the elders still had a responsibility to her and to the church in that she was still a member of the Body of Christ.

On October 4, 1981, the Church withdrew fellowship. The congregation had done this twelve times in the prior twenty years but never before for the sin of fornication. The following letter was read before the congregation:

To the family of God, the Church that meets in this location:

After much time spent in counseling, exhorting, encouraging and prayer, we the elders of the Collinsville Church of Christ, have no alternative but to lead in the "withdrawing of fellowship" from our sister in Christ, Marion Guinn. A statement was read to the congregation last Lord's Day, September 27, 1981, in which a plea was made on Marion's behalf, for individuals to contact her for the purpose of encouragement. During this past week several of the members have contacted her both personally and by letter, but has not resulted in a response by her. We find Marion to be in violation of the following scriptures, which will be read by Ron Witten: (Read

Ephesians 5:1 - 3; I Corinthians 5:9; I Thessalonians 4:1 - 4; Hebrews 10:25, 26 and 13:17).

The following scriptures give us instructions relative to dealing with those who are in violation: (Read by Allen Cash, Matthew 18:15 - 17; II Thessalonians 3:6 and I Corinthians 5:11).

We would encourage you as Marion's brothers and sisters in Christ to continue to pray in her behalf and to contact her for the purpose of encouragement and exhortation. The true purpose for the administration of church discipline is stated in I Corinthians 5:5 "to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Prayerfully Yours in Christ,

Ted Moody

Allen Cash

Ron Witten

The Elders, Collinsville Church of Christ

Marian Guinn's sin was never mentioned in the assembly except in the reading of the scriptures that named it. The Elders believed this was necessary in order to obey God and, too, so others would not think she was guilty of various other sins.

On October 26, Sister Marian Guinn filed a \$1,350,000 lawsuit against Ron Witten, Alan Cash, Ted Moody, and the Church of Christ at Collinsville, Oklahoma. The suit consisted of three parts.

1. Invasion of privacy by the publication of private facts (withdrawal statement and notifying the four congregations).
2. Invasion of privacy by intrusion upon seclusion. (three meetings with the elders).
3. Intentional infliction of emotional distress (all mentioned before and after withdrawal).

The brethren immediately appealed to the United States Supreme Court, asking that the case be thrown out on the basis of jurisdiction. This was in the Spring of 83. In the Fall of 83 the Supreme Court denied the writ and gave jurisdiction to the Tulsa District Court to hear the case.

The trial was held in Tulsa during the second full week of March. The events of those four days were unique. Tomy Dee Frasier, lawyer for Marion Guinn, said "We find absolutely no law precedent. This was new ground."

Others who figured prominently in this trial were Trueman Rucker, lawyer for the defense, and a member of the Church of Christ; Judge Tony Graham, and a jury composed of seven men and five women. The jury included no members of the Church; only four attended religious services of any kind. The trial was billed as the Scarlet Letter Trial. The media loved it. On any of the four days one would have seen law students who skipped classes in Tulsa to be present; A Jehovah's Witness from Washington State; half the congregation in Collinsville; the interested and the curious. Two hundred plus filled the courtroom, some standing, some sitting in the windows. Bibles were common place as the people followed the references to sin and censure.

Some of the memorable and meaningful statements came from Tomy Frasier, Marian Guinn's wheelchair-bound, profane, salty, lawyer.

"It doesn't matter if she was fornicating up and down the street, it doesn't give them the right to stick their nose in her private business."

"He's single, she's single, and this is America."

"The elders were like men running around in the dark with swastikas on their arms."

"Gestapo types"

"The KKK"

"A cult"

"Goon squad"

"The Ayatollahs of Collinsville"

"Mrs Guinn was not aware of the churches doctrine when she became a member. They showed her two or three film clips. She didn't know about I Corinthians 13" (referring to I Corinthians 5).

"She's as well-known for fornicating as a person can get."

"It will make them aware that they can't stick their ----- noses in people's business without their full permission."

Marian Guinn, Frasier's only witness, made the following statements:

"What I do or do not do is between God and myself . . . I'm really upset that these men have the authority to mess with someone's life like that."

"I'm not saying I wasn't guilty. I was, but it was none of their business."

During the four trial days the people listened to Marian Guinn acknowledge that she had sex with Pat Sharp. They heard everything from Bible quotes to profanity. Finally the moment came. The jury retired for a five hour deliberation. They returned a unanimous verdict. The Church of Christ was guilty as charged. The Church must pay three hundred ninety thousand dollars to the person who admitted that she was guilty. Marian Guinn said, "A wrong has been righted." Sue Hillard, Marian's oldest sister, said, "Marian has just taken and taken from all of us and she's still doing it."

Marian Guinn, a former welfare enrollee, is indeed still taking but now it is in six figures. She who sued the Church for invasion of privacy, sold the rights of her story to David Alexander, one of many television and movie producers who bid for the right to put this sensational story on main street America. Sister Guinn will no longer need her nurses job at the Oklahoma Osteopathic Hospital in Tulsa

As soon as the trial was over, the brethren in Collinsville began to move from what to what's next. A Blue Ribbon Committee of brotherhood lawyers was formed to prepare the appeal. The appeal is as follows:

- 1. The Tulsa County District Court has interfered in the Constitutional principle of separation of Church and State and has restricted the defendant's right of freedom of expression of religious beliefs.*
- 2. That the Tulsa County District Court has prohibited the defendants right of free speech by not granting a qualified privilege and requiring the plaintiff to prove actual malice by the defendants in making said statements.*

The Tulsa Trial focused attention on the old knotty problem of withdrawing from the withdrawn. I Corinthians 5 was the core and crux of the trial. When Marian Guinn realized that withdrawal was imminent, she quit. In effect she said you can't fire me, I quit. Tony Frazier said, "Although it may be possible to discipline members, she quit the church so the church lost the right." Elder Witten's view was "you can't withdraw from us; we have to withdraw from you."

Does the Church of Christ, any church, have the right to exercise discipline? Can this responsibility be evaded by the Church or avoided by a wayward member? Is withdrawal an obligation rising

from a relationship in the body of Christ or is it predicated only on association in a local congregation? Is it possible for one to quit and render God's plan null and void? These and other questions were amplified by the trial; they are important.

It would appear that one may not thwart the plan of God by simply beginning to operate outside the local congregation. In other words, if disciplinary action may be exercised only over individuals who acknowledge membership at the time the action is contemplated, what about heretics outside the congregation? Must the leadership of a congregation stand by and watch the flock deluded, mistreated, and led astray so long as the heretic doesn't claim to belong to the congregation? If that's true, then he could not be marked (Romans 16:17), identified publically in writing (III John 9), or exposed (II Timothy 3:8, 9).

I Corinthians 5 states, "any man that is called a brother." The action seems to be mandated whether he acknowledges it or not. Can any truly believe that the guilty one in I Corinthians 5 could thwart the thrust of action by announcing that he was no longer a member of the Church of Christ in Corinth, and then defy the Church to act?

Marian Guinn and her lawyer based their case on the idea that fellowship terminates at a local level, and that one may remove himself from divine jurisdiction. Throughout the trial membership in the Lord's Church was compared to membership in a lodge or club. That was, and is an error. One may no more resign from sonship than he may resign from the human race! If Marian Guinn were to return to the Church today, she would not be told to repent and be baptised; she is still a sister in Christ! She is even now to be "admonished as a brother." On this point David Lipscomb once stated:

"There is nothing more plainly taught in the Bible than that the Church, the individual congregations at Corinth, at Thessalonica, at Ephesus, constituted the body of Christ and the individual members were parts of this body. To withdraw from this body was to withdraw from Christ. The idea that a man can be a member of Christ, can be in Christ, and yet in no congregation or body of Christ is an idea that has no foundation in the Bible." Brother Sewell, when asked if a member who requested permission to "withdraw from the congregation" because the majority of the members "had turned against him and his wife," replied, "We have no scriptural example of anything like the above. Where one individual complains of a whole congregation, we very naturally suppose that he is wrong himself. It very rarely occurs that a whole congregation will array itself against all the efforts of one of its own members. We have not known an instance of the kind. The probabilities are that the above-named member is either morbidly sensitive and suspicious of his brethren or he is in some way radically wrong himself and they do not wish to encourage him in his wrong course . . . if in such a case a member withdraws, he withdraws from the church of God and ought not be recognized as a Christian by any congregation till he mends his ways. And, moreover, when a member gets wrong and all gospel means fail to get him right, the congregation where he belongs, instead of allowing him to withdraw from them as in good standing, ought to withdraw from him for walking disorderly."

The above quotation from Lipscomb makes sense to me but may not to a jury selected off main street United States America. It is very evident that the trend now is that feeling is running against organizations and for the individual, regardless of what is demanded. An astute observation on this point was recently made in an editorial in an Oklahoma City paper.

"Juries have a tendency these days to award unconscionably high amounts as punishment in lawsuits and the Collinsville case is no exception."

"Citizens ought to be equally apprehensive about how jury verdicts such as in the Collinsville case can circumscribe a person's ability to speak freely when he knows what he has to say is the truth."

"As for the question of religious freedom, it is ironic that so much concern has been expressed in Congress and the national media about how the wall of separation between Church and State is endangered by efforts to authorize prayer in public schools. Yet a much more serious threat to that wall is posed by the courts and intruding on the religious principles and practice of Churches."

How true the foregoing observation. We could wish that the courts would have the judgement of Gallio. Acts 18:15, "But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look yet to it: for I will be no judge of such matters."

It doesn't take a Solomon to see the signs of our times. The Tulsa Trial would have never materialized twenty years ago. If such is upheld by the Supreme Court, the floodgates of assault will open every fundamental church in America. No doctrine or leadership or preacher will be safe. The way will be paved for court supervision of all disciplinary action and wholesale intrusion into all church affairs. The trial of that small rural church was the trial of every congregation in America!

The Church must wake up, and take note of what our American society has become. The values have changed. No longer do we have religious and moral absolutes. We are shot through with humanism. I predict we will see more and more conflict between social policy and religious belief, and the judicial system will be used by society. We must not, however, allow sinful people and ignorant juries to control the practice and set the standards of the Church of Christ. We must continue to stand up and let the world know who we are and where we stand.

UNSCRIPTURAL METHODS OF MAKING DISCIPLES:

The Crossroads Philosophy of Evangelism

By Glenn Ballard

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The Great Commission - Matthew 28:18 - 20
 - B. The church must exercise this commission today.
 - C. If we are not making disciples, not only will the church not grow, but it will be in danger of gradually dying.
 - D. As important as the Great Commission is in our day, the method by which we accomplish discipleship is no less important.
 - E. The end does not necessarily justify the means.
- I. Cults Exist (Moonies, Hare Krishnas, Jim Jones's People's Temple, et al.)
- A. These use unscrupulous methods to make and retain followers.
 - B. Similar tactics have been adopted by some who wear the name "Church of Christ".
 - C. Known as the "Crossroads Philosophy (Methodology) of Evangelism".
- II. Crossroadism
- A. First practiced in Gainesville, Florida by a congregation known as the Crossroads Church.
 - 1. Introduced by minister, Chuck Lucas.
 - 2. Used in Campus Ministry at University of Florida campus.
 - 3. Since 1973, Crossroads Church has baptized between 200 and 300 people each and every year.
 - 4. They retain about 90% of all converts.
 - 5. Reported that over 100 churches of Christ now use the Crossroads methodology.
 - B. Crossroad Operation defined
 - 1. **Crossroad** — by this I mean the church of Christ in Gainesville, Florida from which emanates virtually all of the teaching, guidelines, and counsel associated with the philosophy.
 - 2. **Operation** — by this I mean "a carefully planned, highly structured, constantly vigorously executed, and loudly promoted method of running a church." (This definition is quoted from John Banks, minister of the El Cajon Boulevard Church of Christ in San Diego, California.)
 - 3. Based on what I have learned, this is an accurate definition of a Crossroads Operation. It is much more than a simple program for evangelizing a community. It is a method of running a church, and in my opinion, a method of running the lives of its members.
 - C. Crossroadism has received much bad press.
 - 1. Charges against them include: "destroys families," "turns young people into spiritual zombies," "they brainwash their converts," and they are an "evil cult."
 - 2. Some church services have been picketed by families of new converts.
 - 3. Parents have formed the "Save Our Children Organization," (also know as S.O.C.O.).

- D. While there may have been some distortions and untruths circulated about some of these congregations, and while not all of the churches associated with Crossroadism practice that method of evangelism exactly the same, I believe there are certain things that can be ascertained to be generally true of the Crossroads philosophy.

III. Principle Objectives and Activities of Crossroads Operation.

The description of these activities has been taken from a book entitled, "Understanding the Crossroads Controversy" By Dr. Robert Nelson, a member of the Crossroads Church and a student of the Crossroads School of Evangelism, and thus an expert in this field.

- A. **Total Commitment** – When a person genuinely repents, he will turn his whole existence over to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Total commitment can be categorized into at least three areas: Time (Colossians 4:5), Resources (II Corinthians 8:1 - 5), and Self (Galatians 2:20, Matthew 10:39). Thus, their time, money, physical possessions, everything about them is the Lord's. Either Jesus is Lord of all, or He is not Lord at all. The only acceptable relationship to the Lord is one of total commitment.
- B. **Evangelistic Bible Studies (Soul Talks)**** – a regularly scheduled, weekly Bible class conducted in the community and directed by a trained member of the church. Members are required to supply the audience of non-Christians. (Due to bad publicity, the name "soul talk" is no longer widely used, although for a good while this was the common designation for this activity.)
- C. **Daily Contact** – if personal contact with other Christians is not possible, they should at least talk with one another on the telephone everyday.
- D. **(Quiet Time)** – a regularly scheduled personal time to be spent alone in prayer and meditation on the Word.
- E. **Prayer Partners** – two committed (according to Crossroads definition of 'total commitment') Christians of the same gender who have committed themselves to helping one another become the best Christians possible. They discuss any problems, sins, or decisions they are contemplating and pray about them.
- F. If properly handled, and scriptural guidelines are observed, all of these are worthwhile objectives and/or activities.

**With regard to item "B" above, I do not condone a "Bible class" arrangement for teaching the church, but I heartily recommend Bible study with alien sinners.

IV. Crossroads Principles in Actual Practice

There is a significant difference between what Crossroadism claims to be (theory) and what it has become in actual practice. Crossroadism is wrong, not because of its objectives but because of the tactics employed and the regular abuse of certain activities to achieve their objectives.

A. Emphasis on "Total Commitment"

1. Commitment is equated with being an active participant in all activities assigned by the church leaders (regularly scheduled church services, weekly soul talks, daily meetings with prayer partners, daily quiet time, etc.). If a person is truly "fully committed" to the Lord, then he will be fully participating in every activity.
2. Participation in every activity is pictured as a "doing of God's will".
3. Absence for any reason is an indication of wrong priorities, and is rarely excused.
4. Members are made to feel guilty if not fully participating. They are not "totally committed" to the Lord according to the Crossroads definition.
5. In fact, this is probably the single most serious objection that is regularly made by those who have been converted through churches using the Crossroads approach, but have sub-

sequently been able to free themselves from the movement. Many report that they were manipulated by almost unbearable peer pressure to yield unquestioning obedience to any and everything the Crossroads leaders required of them. If they do not, they are rebuked for not being "totally committed".

6. The scriptures certainly teach total commitment to Jesus Christ. However, this commitment is to the Crossroads Operation and the Crossroads trained minister. And much of what is done in the name of commitment is actually done out of fear and a sense of guilt.

B. Evangelistic Bible Studies (Soul Talks)

1. Prospects are investigated and information is passed on to soul talk leader.
2. Prospect is often "confronted with his sins" at his very first soul talk, and is made to feel worthless and guilty. (This process is referred to as "conviction" and "cost counting").
3. The prospect is psychologically pressured to accept the Crossroads definition of "total commitment".

C. Prayer Partners

1. Matter of choice. However, if one is "totally committed", he will have a prayer partner.
2. Typically a "Junior – Senior" relationship.
3. Junior partner is usually a new convert, while the senior partner may have been in the "Operation" for a year or two.
4. Has become the "regular baring of the soul" of the junior to the senior.
5. All plans and decisions must be discussed.
6. Often, information is passed up to Crossroads leaders.

D. Challenging - also known as Admonishing.

1. When weakness or sin is observed in another member's life, he is made to feel guilty for not being "totally committed".
2. Sin includes missing a soul talk, failure to attend a devotional, dating an unacceptable person, undesirable social relationships, or not having enough enthusiasm.
3. A favorite question within the Operation is, "What is more important to you, the Lord, or your job; family; education; etc." or "What's the matter with you? Don't you want to go to heaven?"
4. Members are told that if they are not fully participating in every church assigned activity then they do not love Jesus, they are not "totally committed", and are second-class Christians.

E. Shunning

1. The withdrawal of warmth and fellowship from one who is not measuring up to the group standards.
2. Expressed in many ways. (A cold look, an impersonal handshake, not speaking to or associating with, etc.)
3. Psychological message is sent, "You are not measuring up, I know about it, and it's time you made a change."

F. Pruning

1. Way of dealing with those who will not measure up.

2. One minister was quoted as saying, "Get with it, or get out."

V. Biblical Errors of the Average Crossroads Operation

A. DIVISIVE

1. Reports of disunity include verbal disputes, estranged membership, and church capture by the Crossroads faction.
2. Virtually all Crossroads Operations move into existing church facilities.
3. Their aim is to bring everything about the church (its building, literature, long developed good-will, media efforts) into compliance with the Crossroads philosophy.
4. Romans 16:17, 1 Corinthians 1:10, 11, Proverbs 6:16, 19.

B. MAN-MADE LAWS FROM GOD'S GENERAL COMMANDS

1. Much Biblical teaching is general.
2. The sin of the Pharisees was taking general instruction and adding to it their man-made traditions and interpretations, and then binding them upon men.
3. Matthew 15:1 - 9, Matthew 23:1 - 7.
4. Crossroadism has legislated specific ordinances and activities from Biblical generalities.
5. The traditions of the average Crossroad Operation; the soul talks, prayer partner practices, challenging, shunning, pruning, etc., are not found in the Word of God.
6. The majority of the members time is required to be spent in these activities.

C. INEXPERIENCED LEADERSHIP -- "YOUNGERS INSTEAD OF ELDERS"

1. Day to day functioning of operation is in the hands of young men.
2. Almost all Crossroads trained ministers are in their 20's or early 30's.
3. Majority of members are students.
4. Discipline is often exercised by the young without the knowledge or sanction of the elders.
5. Crossroads leaders admit there are abuses by "some of our young and overly enthusiastic members."
6. The Crossroads system regularly produces such abuses.

D. FEIGNED LOVE

1. Crossroads Operations are often defended because "they have so much love and concern for everyone."
2. The "love", which is programmed and practiced and turned off as readily as it is turned on, is feigned love.
3. **Feign** -- to give a false appearance of, pretend, sham.
4. **Unfeigned** -- not simulated, genuine.
5. 1 Peter 1:22

E. MISAPPLIED PROOF TEXTS

1. Members regularly quote the same verses to family members.
2. A favorite Crossroads passage is Matthew 10:34 - 37.
3. To apply this passage to Crossroadism in an attempt to justify its unscriptural practices is a flagrant misapplication of scripture.

4. This passage is regularly used to split life-time friends, families, spouses, and churches.

F. SPIRITUAL ELITISM

1. Paul describes the unity of Christians in the local congregation in I Corinthians 12:25 - 27.
2. But the Crossroads element within a congregation usually forms a very distinct and exclusive group. In fact, they have often been accused of forming a "church within a church".
3. Where a Crossroads Operation invades an established church, the Crossroads converts generally follow the Crossroads leaders rather than the elders.
4. Those not willing to embrace the program are treated as second-class or disinterested Christians.
5. There are reports that the Crossroads oriented churches have formed their own separate brotherhood, proclaiming that only those churches structured according to the Crossroads philosophy are the true New Testament church, and only those who share the Crossroads technique are really Christians. These ideas "justify" them in dividing dead churches or in carrying away as many of their members as they can possibly recruit.
6. Romans 12:3, Galatians 6:3, Philipians 2:3

G. LACK OF FAITH IN THE WORD OF GOD TO SAVE

1. The power to convert and to mature one in Christ is in the Word of God, not in the method.
2. Romans 1:16, Hebrews 4:12, Isaiah 55:10, 11.
3. Demanding a particular method (such as Crossroadism), and attributing all success to it betrays a basic distrust in the power of God's Word.

H. CULTIC ASPECTS

1. Highly adored human leaders. Mission Magazine, May 1979, Crossroads: Cult or Commitment?, by James Robinson, page 8: "Crossroads is an extremely legalistic group, Bible-oriented to a fault, patterned in personality down to the smallest detail after the meticulous perfectionism of its leader, Chuck Lucas." Furthermore, a Crossroads recruit from Gainesville reported to me that Chuck Lucas is commonly referred to by the young members as their "spiritual Moses" and that many of the young girls in the group regularly "swoon" when his name is mentioned.
2. Strong "in group" versus "out group" identifications. Either it is done "our way" or the "wrong way".
3. Mass participation in numerous meetings, partly for the purpose of emphasizing and enforcing the rules of the group, for example, soul talks and devotionals six nights a week.
4. Ways of observing, interrogating, and dealing with potential defectors before they become disruptive to the group, for example, prayer partners and pruning.
5. Interpreting any objections to their practices as being done by their enemies and they are thereby being persecuted.

VI. Conclusion

- A. Some things about the Crossroads Philosophy are Biblical.
- B. There is much emphasis on soul-winning, commitment to Jesus, and the one-another aspects of Christianity.

- C. Regardless of the fact that extremism can enter any of these areas, the areas themselves are priorities of the New Testament.
- D. However, true spirituality and commitment to Jesus Christ are what the New Testament describes them to be, not what a Crossroads trained minister may say they are. Mere men do not have the authority to assign specific activities to God's general commands and then tell those who do not abide by this man-made and man-ordained system that they are lost and eternally condemned. I am not advocating that we condone behavior that is in obvious violation of God's will. But at the same time, we cannot go to the other extreme and become overbearing with the less mature. The mature should not look down on babes in Christ, as is often reported to be the case within a Crossroads Operation. The immature need to be helped by the strong . . . not challenged or chastized by older Christians. There is, of course, a significant difference between one who is immature and one who is weak or indifferent. When it becomes necessary from time to time to reprove the weak, in keeping with Paul's instruction in II Timothy 4:2, we must always do so in the spirit of unfeigned love and with much compassion. See I Thessalonians 2:7, 8, 11; II Thessalonians 3:14, 15; I Peter 5:2, 3, et al. In contradistinction to these scriptural guidelines, the Crossroads approach is characterized by an attitude of censure and condemnation, and is accompanied by intimidation and the intentional infliction of guilt. This manner of dealing with the immature or weak Christian will not hasten heartfelt, genuine obedience to God's will, although it might, and in many cases does, provoke conformity temporarily.

VII. Bibliography

The information contained in this outline was gleaned from the following sources, most of which are available for your personal inspection.

1. **Understanding the Crossroads Controversy** by Dr. Robert Nelson, Gainesville, FL, 1981.
2. **Beyond Crossroads** by James S. Woodroof. Struggles Publishers, College Station, Tx, 1981.
3. **The Crossroads Controversy** by Gordon Ferguson. Star Bible and Tract Corp., Ft. Worth, Tx, 1983.
4. Sundry articles from the Escondido California Times-Advocate, San Diego Union, the Gospel Advocate, Contending for the Faith, and Mission Magazine.
5. Personal interviews with some individuals who were personally acquainted with Crossroads activities.
6. Letters from dozens of churches that had first-hand experience with a Crossroads faction.

THE ROLE OF A WIFE AND MOTHER IN THE HOME!

Proverbs 14:1

By Jimmie C. Smith

Introduction:

In general, we are far removed from the joyful Abraham and Sarah when they conceived and gave birth to Isaac! We bear little resemblance to Rachel, or Hannah, or Elizabeth (mother of John). A large segment of mothers in America today view children only as an encumbrance; a financial hardship, a burden. More are likely to "blame" God than view them as "an heritage from the Lord" (Psalm 127:3). (With more than a million and a half abortions yearly).

The most insidious enemy of natural affection is selfishness. The Bible forbids such when it commands the wife and mother to "love" their husband and children. Love concerns itself with the welfare of another (I Corinthians 13).

There are mothers who are forced to work outside the house. But there are also those who are more concerned with freedom, escape from boredom, and the desire for a "paycheck". As such they have little consideration for the psychological and spiritual needs of their offspring.

Theodore Roosevelt said: "Into the woman's keeping is committed the destiny of the generations to come after us The way to give a child a fair chance in life is not to bring it up in luxury, but to see that it has the kind of training that will give it strength of character."

A recent "Dear Abby" column advised parents to give their children twice as much time and attention and one-half as much material goods.

I. The Glory of Motherhood

A. Perhaps, at this point, we should mentally underline the word mother. Merely the ability to bear children does not make a female a mother. I read of one aid to dependent children recipient who filled out the necessary government forms. She brazenly answered the "occupation" blank with one word—"breeder"! Yes, she had borne children, but who in his right mind would call her a mother? She was nothing short of a leach, a parasite, and a disgrace to the human species. And few, if any are more to be pitied than her offspring.

"Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri. He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab; for his mother was his counselor to do wickedly. Wherefore he did evil in the sight of the Lord like the house of Ahab: for they were his counselors after the death of his father to his destruction."

B. "Even a child is known by his deeds." (Proverbs 20:11. "A child left to himself bringeth shame to his mother". (Proverbs 29:15).

The molding influence of the mother is traceable in the lives of the majority of faithful men and women serving the Lord today. A good mother is worth a hundred preachers in her influence over her own child. Who can place a price tag on the value of a good mother and wife? Solomon said her price tag is "far above" rubies.

C. Before there was a Samuel, there was a Hannah who prayed for a child and vowed to "give him unto the Lord" (I Samuel 1:10). Before there was a Moses to defy Pharaoh, there was a Jochebed whose courage and maternal love was sufficient to defy Pharaoh's evil decree (Exodus 2:1 - 3; 6:20). Before there was a Timothy, there was a Lois and a Eunice (II Timothy 1:5). And what greater tribute could be paid to a woman than was paid when God chose a virgin, named Mary, as the one

through whom would come the long-awaited Messiah (Matthew 1:20 - 23).

D. We need mothers who see their position as one of the grandest and noblest in God's creation. Mothers who can say as a godly mother of our times: "I've never been applauded by the masses, but I've shared with God the wonderful miracle of creation and I've had the thrill of hearing a tiny, lisping voice whispering 'you are the bestest mover in the whole world!...I'm just a housewife, but if I had my life to live over and could choose any position in the world, I would choose no other way!'"

E. Jesus said the greatest in His kingdom would be those who served others. Because I believe in degrees of punishments, I also believe in degrees of rewards. I have no doubt but that the places of highest esteem will be the thrones of those humble women who have sacrificed their own comfort and pleasure to perform the tedious and sometimes monotonous day-to-day chores of the house and in loving surrender have borne the wearisome cross of child-care.

F. When those little feet begin to tread the paths of righteousness and ultimately profess the sweet name of Jesus, let none forget the one who first guided and set them upon that way. Paul certainly did not, he said: "I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which was first in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also." (II Timothy 1:5)

G. When Paul was setting forth for Timothy the limitations for women with respect to public teaching, showing that it was because of Eve's transgression he said; "Nevertheless she shall be saved through childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety" (I Timothy 2:15).

Though the meaning of this verse is often debated, the meaning seems rather simple to me; and further, it shines with a description of the dignity and position of the woman. The statement places the domestic life of the woman in contrast with the public life of the man. The point is that the man labors in a public role or realm for the lifting of fallen humanity; whereas, the woman labors in a private role or realm for the rise of humanity. While both roles or realms are of vast importance, the role of the woman in giving rise to humanity is by far the greater and more important role.

H. The case is that though woman was first in the fall of humanity, she is now first in the rise of humanity. Christian women should be impressed with their peculiar and far-reaching role. Even within the bounds of certain limitations, the average Christian woman contributes far more to the spiritual climate of society than does the average Christian man.

The same qualities that make women to be loving sympathetic mothers, also make them angels of mercy to the sick and the elderly. Many Christian women spend hours each week doing for others; and all the while, they feel that they have no part in the work of the church. Beyond question, men should take time to give honor and dignity to their good women.

II. The Role of Woman in the Home (Titus 2:3-5)

A. The idea of a woman as the center of a home, devoted to housekeeping and home-making for her husband and children, is considered out-dated today. Even much more in **practice** than in **theory**. But so many of the Bible's demands also fall into this category, such as: marriage, modesty, goodness, the hair issue, etc..

B. Woman is a teacher, whether she desires it or not. She teaches first by example, which is the very best method; for the younger always imitate. A woman always teaches when she imparts knowledge, give counsel, shows how or even shares life with those who are younger or less mature. The subject matter of this text is that of character-molding for the younger wife and mother. The aged woman is to be her instruction in "all good things".

C. Funk & Wagnall's defines "sobriety" as: "Possessing properly controlled faculties; even-tempered, well-balanced, temperate in action or thought." Solomon said, "She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness" (Proverbs 31:26). No place on earth is godly, refined, cultured, scriptural speech needed more than in the homes of the land where mother is the first and most effective instructor.

III. To Love their Husbands

A. This certainly proves that "love" can be learned. In Romans 12:10, Paul exhorted the brethren, "Be tenderly affectioned one to another . . . in love of the brethren." Maybe you have heard that "feelings cannot be commanded"; apparently Paul had not read that book. Love is essential for happiness if two people live together. Where there is love, a marriage can survive sickness, in-law interference, a rigid schedule, and financial adversity. But it does not take much to destroy a marriage in which love has grown cold.

B. Funk & Wagnall's defines love as, "A strong, complex emotion or feeling causing one to appreciate, delight in, and crave the presence or possession of another, and to please or promote the welfare of the other; devoted affection or attachment; specifically, such feeling between husband and wife or lover and sweetheart . . . to have a feeling of affection or tender regard for; hold dear; to have, or regard with, the affection that is characteristic of the sexual relation . . . Love in its full sense, denotes something spiritual and reciprocal."

C. You loved him as a sweetheart or you would not have married him. Now you must learn to love him as a husband. To keep a marriage the healthy, happy institution that God designed requires **Love!** Loving a companion is a full-time job, a God-ordained one. Love creates **appeal**. Wives respect your husband's willingness to work and support you. This is love expressed; love and **dependence** thrive together!

IV. "To love their Children"

A. To have children is a requirement for elders and deacons and for poor widows who are taken into the care of the church (I Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:6; I Timothy 5). Parental love is a natural desire prearranged by God. This love for children prompts action, and this action is carried out in the purpose of marriage— a desire to reproduce ourselves (Genesis 1:28; 9:1; I Timothy 5:14).

B. It seems strange that some must be taught to "love their children". It comes easy and natural for God-fearing people. But when people cease "to retain God in their knowledge", it is but a few steps until they are also "without natural affection" (Romans 1:28 - 31). In an age such as this, when so many "feminists" (?) are demeaning the role of a mother who is "tied at home because of her children", it is more needful than ever to teach women to "love their children".

C. The mother's love which is akin to the love of God reaches its height when it fulfills its purpose in the care of her offspring. This God-given instinct is to be observed even in the little girl at a very tender age as she tends her dolls in such a motherly way. It is the right of little children to have individual love all day long and to have more than the tag-end of affection from a tired-out mother. How unwise is the mother who dares to think that the character of her own born child can be molded better by a person she hires to do the job while she seeks employment elsewhere.

D. To "love children" includes discipline, for love consists of stern devotion to the right. Love is not pampering. Loving children carries with it the responsibility of always doing for them what is best regardless of what it takes (Proverbs 22:6). If it were true that every woman could not help but love her children, this admonition would have been needless. Love "seeketh not her own" (I Corinthians 13:5). The woman who puts her career or material things above the emotional and spiritual welfare of her children, does not love them as the Bible demands.

V. "To be Discreet"

A. In the Greek the word "discreet" means: "safe, sound in mind; self-controlled, moderate as to opinion, sober, temperate." Solomon said, "Houses and riches are the inheritance of fathers: And a prudent wife is from the Lord" (Proverbs 19:14). "When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee." (Proverbs 2:10, 11).

If you are a wise-hearted mother, you will seek the wisdom of God in rearing your children. You will make Bible reading a habit!

VI. "To be Chaste"

A. Funk and Wagnall's defines "chaste": "Free from sexual impurity, modest, virtuous. Pure in thought. Pure in style; free from literary or artistic extravagances." This quality will be evidenced in speech, conduct, and dress. Solomon said, "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is a rottenness in his bones." (Proverbs 12:4). The adulterous wife was stoned to death under the Old Testament; or if accused, made to drink a drink, and if guilty; her body would begin to rot and she would die shamefully.

VII. "Keepers at Home"

A. Thayer defines it thus: "prop. the (watch or) keeper of a house. (b). trop. Keeping at home and taking care of household affairs, domestic."

Webster defines the preposition "at" as: "In, on, or near in place or time, as at-school, at one o'clock;"

The single woman may choose any honorable profession she pleases, but a married woman has her profession cut out for her. Marriage for women means the career of homemaking. God set in order the home as He did all nature. Paul said, "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, given none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully" (I Timothy 5:14).

B. The idea of married women leaving their homes in this country to do public work began as a need during war times. Many women discovered they liked the freedom gained for independent living. Some enjoyed the financial security; while others enjoyed the sociability found in public life and abhorred the boredom and stigma of the title "just a house-wife".

C. It is all amazingly similar to the way the adversary visited mother Eve in the garden home. He tempted the woman with an offer to a fuller life; just as he tempts her daughter today. Through disobedience to God's will, the first home was broken down, and both the man and woman were driven from the beautiful garden (Genesis 3:24).

D. It is the duty of the husband to support and maintain the wife as long as she lives with him; He even takes a vow to do it when married; and this duty is not relieved if his wife has independent means adequate to her needs. The Bible still says: "...And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." (Genesis 3:16) "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." (I Timothy 5:8) Webster defines "infidel"; "Having a lack of faith; in opposition to some specific divine faith;" I must of necessity agree with sister Hazel Loughmiller of Brazil, Indiana, who said: "Many women are making and encouraging their husbands to be infidels."

E. The home is a woman's natural environment. There is as much art in making a barren house a glistening, comfortable home as there is in painting a picture or writing a book. As a career for

women, homemaking, more than any other occupation in the world, offers the greatest opportunities for leisure, for growth of mind and spirit, for exercise of the body, for the molding of character in the little ones, and for the expansion of spiritual qualities as love is shed abroad to those in distress.

Any woman who has the intelligence to keep her home in order is wise enough to be a force for good in any community. Why, oh why, will our women seek emancipation from such a rewarding life?

F. The wealthy home may have deep pile rugs; the latest suits of furniture; the most expensive crystal, chinaware, and silver; the finest stereo and color television set; and yet be as cold as a refrigerator, with no warmth, no glow of affection for each other, no feeling of hospitality given. May I suggest that the woman usually sets the mood for the home!

The log cabin deep in the hills where poverty is written upon all of the surroundings and where only bare wood constitutes the floors may yet furnish one with a joyful, warm, homey comfort, rather than the wealthy one. One is a home because of love. The other is only a house, because love is absent. As goes the old adage that clothes do not make the woman, neither does the house or its contents make the home.

G. The Christian wife's role as homemaker includes creating an atmosphere of love, happiness, contentment, and tranquility for the husband. Too many times women fail to be thankful for what the husband provides, and put constant pressure on him for more money or furnishings. Contentment on the part of the homekeeper will do much toward holding a family well intact and provide many pleasant memories for each member as he departs to build his own love nest. Proper household management is a vital area in "guiding the house".

H. It has been said by different writers that one good mother is worth a hundred school masters and may I add that a mother is worth more to her children than any number of baby sitters (read article).

There is not one verse of scripture given to baby sitters!

I. But, **We need the money!** First remember: You are a Christian who has chosen to become a wife and a mother. You made the choice! Christ teaches the responsibilities of making important choices in Luke 14:28 - 30. He talks about building a tower and first counting the cost thereof. As a Christian mother, you cannot begin to build a child and then abandon it before that child is completed and able to face this world on its own!

J. One should also recognize that there are enterprises mothers can seek at home. When we preach "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. . ." (Matthew 6:33), I am afraid that we conjure up a picture of always doing "church work". The essence of seeking the kingdom of God first is found in letting Christ be seen at all times in your life; striving to make Christ's way, your ways; His thoughts, your thoughts; His attitudes, your attitudes.

However, there is more to it than this. It is also done by fulfilling the responsibilities that God has given you and here is where we come back to Christian mothers.

VIII. What about the virtuous Woman of Proverbs 31?

A. I believe there are many good works that mothers with children at home can do for others such as telephoning, cooking for the sick and bereaved, baby-sitting in situations where it is needed, sending cards to shut-ins, and many more worthy deeds. Once children are in school for a number of hours during the day, a mother can also do hospital visiting, serve meals to bereaved families and other activities where children can be distracting.

B. But--have you noticed as we have been studying the responsibilities that God has laid down for Christian wives and mothers, nowhere did He make them responsible for making the living (supporting the family)?

However, the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 is sometimes used to justify and exemplify mothers working outside the home; but a close study of this will show the following:

(1) Her concern and activities are all geared toward her husband and children.

(2) Nowhere do the Scriptures say that she had a job or a career outside of the home. She was involved in 'activities' outside the home, but her "occupation" was being a wife and mother.

(3) She did make money for the family but it was extra money that she made by selling linen garments which she made herself. This would have undoubtedly been done occasionally when she would have garments ready, have made the garments at home (including weaving the fabric). Just as she made clothes for her own family. Nowhere is the indication given that she left her children and went to a factory every day to make garments nor that she was away from home selling garments every day.

(4) She was a wise manager, as evidenced by the fact that she bought a field (a wise use of money). However the field could have been bought with money that her husband provided. The Scriptures do not say that she bought it with her own money--only that she planted a vineyard from "the fruit of her palms" (lit. meaning: from her earnings). Since her money obviously came from the sale of linen garments, this would have been the money that she used to plant the vineyard. The Scriptures do not say that she "did" the planting--only that she bought the things to plant the vineyard. This could have also included hiring someone to plant the vineyard.

(5) She did have servants (and was a wise manager over them) who possibly worked the fields for her; thus, still no indication that she left her children regularly in order to work the fields.

(6) She was busy, resourceful and fulfilled as women today can be, without having a career away from home and without neglecting her responsibilities to her husband and children. Thus she was praised by her husband and blessed by her children.

C. Again, God has given the responsibility of providing the financial and spiritual needs of the family to the husband. The word "husband" comes from the term "house-band". It is his responsibility to hold the family together. The word "wife" means "weaver". She handles the intricate workings within the family.

D. There are Christian husbands today who want their wives to work; who want their wives to fulfill not only their roles as wives and mothers, but also carry out part of their husband's responsibilities!

Christian fathers as well as Christian mothers need to realize the basic truth: Christian fathers who are afraid of unpaid bills and unfilled wants as well as Christian mothers who are anxious about the lack of money in order to be able to live in today's society are experiencing "heart-trouble" that can be diagnosed as "lack of faith". Back to Matthew 6:33 "Seek ye first... and all these things shall be added unto you."

This is not a promise that I make to you; this is a promise that God makes to you. And God is not slack concerning his promises. David said, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want" (Psalm 23); He also said, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psalm 37:25).

E. Is there anyone in this audience who does not prefer the traditional Bible structure? Of course, I prefer this way. I grew up with pretty strong feelings, and you can not just sweep them under the rug. I believe in the mother staying home and being with the children. The circumstances in which I was raised were not easy, but my family tried to make the best of it. We sacrificed—yes! But no one would ever know it to look at us.

IX. Mama—your Child Needs You Now!

A. Dr. James Dobson wrote after attending a national conference on child development in Miami, Florida: "Virtually every report of research presented during that three day meeting ended with the same conclusion: The mother-child relationship is absolutely vital to healthy development of children. The final speaker of the conference, a well-known authority in this field, explained that The Russian Government is currently abandoning its child-care network because they have observed the same inescapable fact: Employees of the State simply cannot replace the one-to-one influence of a mother with her own child. The speaker concluded his remarks by saying that feminine responsibilities are so vital to the next generation that the future of our nation actually depends on how we 'see our women.'" (via *Is a Job Really Worth It?* by Sue Hill Boggs page 46).

B. And if you do not believe that the teenagers need Mama at home; you have closed your eyes! "Between 1960 and 1980, while the death rate for all Americans dropped by 19%, the death rate for 15 - 24 year olds rose by the same amount, largely due to an increase in adolescent suicide. The suicide and murder rates for white male teenagers are the highest in American history. Suicide is now the number two cause of death among 16 to 19 year olds (*Family weekly*, Sunday News/paper insert, December 9, 1984, page 4).

C. Pre-schoolers are not the only children who need their mothers—so do **in schoolers**. A noted child-development expert was once asked at a Senate hearing, "What age do you feel is most critical in the development of human potential?" He replies, "I knew I was expected to say the first six years (and they are extremely important), but I said the junior high school years instead. Nowadays they are the most critical in terms of the destructive effects on a young person's development." (Susan Byrne, *Psychology Today* May 1977, pages 45, 46).

D. Mothers, your school-age children, including your teenagers (or maybe I should say especially your teenagers) need you just as much as when they were tiny—maybe more. They come home and go straight to their rooms, but they want a mother available.

I know in my own life this was true. My mother was a full-time mother who always tried to be home when we kids arrived. And in the years since, I have realized that it was Mother that made the difference between coming home to a house and coming home. All my brothers and sisters I am sure feel this way too; and if there is any tender childhood memories, it is when her "hands held the distaff" or "reached forth to the needy". (Proverbs 31:19, 20). (Bessie Hancock)

E. A very interesting article appeared in the *Scene Magazine*, a part of the Sunday Dallas Morning News, that proved very enlightening on this particular point. It was written by Rita Chapman, the mother of four children, entitled **We Need Fewer Day Care Centers and a Return to Dedicated Motherhood**.

Mrs. Chapman has been a teacher in the State of Texas; at the time she wrote the article she had just finished a year of teaching three and four year olds of middle and upper-middle-class parents in one of Dallas's better "private preschool-day-care centers. The enrollment was approximately 150 youngsters with over half being there for full time day care. Mrs. Chapman says: "After discovering the awesome difference between the part time preschool child and the full time day care child, I am totally convinced that once a woman has borne a child she owes that child **her-self** more than anything else the first five years of his life." She concluded her article by stating: "Let us not become so brain-washed as to believe that day care centers are the panaceas for the homebound female. Let us not

justify ourselves by saying, 'It's good for him. He's there with other children . . .' He's there with other children, but there's a good chance that he'll not be with another person **all day who loves him—really loves him.**"

"I fear for the working mother who is deluded to believe that some kind, patient woman will tend to her child's emotional needs until she can take over; that someone else will see that her child discovers he is unique, until she can pick him up at the end of the day—when she is perhaps so tired that the best he can hope to hear is, 'It's time to go to bed.'"

"I fear for the future of the child whose hunger for love and recognition must be satisfied in large groups. I beg mothers to wake up, to experience the precious dawning of their child's life with him. Evening comes quickly—but in the evening may be too late." (via **Is a Job Really Worth It?**/ Sue Hill Boggs, pages 47, 48 Quality Pub.).

X. Teach them to be "Good"

A. What better character quality to possess. One who is morally upright, whose ambition centers more in pleasing God than pursuing a career. It takes a "good tree" to produce "good fruit" (Matthew 7:17), and it also takes a good woman to make a good wife and mother. Young man, if you want a good home you should at least start out with the right building material!

XI. "Obedient to their own Husbands"

A. No young lady should marry the kind of person she cannot submit to. Nor should any young man marry a young lady who either does not know, or else does not respect God's instructions regarding spiritual and domestic headship (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:22 - 25).

B. It takes strength of character and enormous self-discipline to be a woman in subjection. God has never made any law of subjection depend on what others deserve. We are to be subject to rulers—written to Christians under a ruthless tyranny (1 Peter 2:13). Christians were told to be subject even to "forward" masters.

C. It is only rationalization for women to blame their husbands for their insubjection. God never commanded husbands to keep wives in subjection. He told wives to have enough self discipline (temperance) to keep themselves in subjection and promised there would never come more than they could bear (1 Corinthians 10:13).

D. And there are the husbands who believe "subjection" means the wife can never express a difference of opinion. He tells his side and then closes the subject, "Let us not argue," or "That is enough." Yet no one will claim to be better than the Lord, and even He allowed a woman to reason with him and to change his mind (Mark 7:26 - 30).

Conclusion:

"That the word of God be not blasphemed." The idea is that even the Word of God is evil spoken of when those who profess to believe it disregard its domestic instructions.

DEUTERONOMY 24:1 - 4

By Jimmy Cutter

The Old Testament contains 600 commandments that were given which the Israelites were expected to keep as evidence of their loyalty to God. These commandments were not a complete list of all the things one should or could do to please God, but were used as a model. These Mosaic laws are only contained in four of the thirty-nine Old Testament books: Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. There are two kinds of laws: apoditic and casuistic. Apoditic laws are commands that begin with "do" and "do not" (eg. Leviticus 19:9 - 14). Most of the 600 Old Testament commands are casuistic (case-by-case or hypothetical) laws (eg. Deuteronomy 15:12 - 17). Casuistic laws are introduced by "when" (eg. Exodus 21:1 - 6) or "supposed that" (Deuteronomy 22:13) or "if". Persons spoken of in casuistic laws are in the third person. Casuistic laws have a protasis and apodasis of a conditional sentence. Deuteronomy 24:1 - 4 is a casuistic law.

In exegeting Deuteronomy 24:1 - 4 a major problem that needs to be solved is the problem of construction. The major problem that needs to be solved with this passage is that of determining where the hypothetical case being described is and where the legal pronouncement (the actual law) is. English translations may add to the problem. The King James Version translates the passage this way:

When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife: Her former husband, which sent her may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the Lord: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

The King James Version and the American Standard Version, adopting the Latin Vulgat's construction, are liable to the interpretation that: 1) divorce and the writing of divorce are being provided for (verse 1b); 2) the woman is given permission to remarry (verse 2); 3) the first husband is not allowed to remarry his former wife if she has been married in the meanwhile (verse 4).

However, in the Hebrew text this law begins with a series of conditions (protasis) in verses 1 - 3, and the law (apodosis) is only given in verse 4. (The series of conditions are connected by the Hebrew conjunction "waw" (and) in verses 1 - 3.)

The oldest and most important translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, the Septuagint, adopts this construction [with the conditions connected by "and" in verses 1 - 3 (protasis), and the demand of the law only in verse 4 (apodasis).]

When a man taketh a wife, and marrieth her, and it cometh to pass, if she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found in her some unseemly thing, that he writeth her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it into her hand, and sendeth her out of his house, and she departeth out of his house, and goeth and becometh another man's wife, and the latter husband hateth her and writeth her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it into her hand, and sendeth her out of his house, or if the latter husband, who took her to be his wife, die, her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the Lord: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

The Revised Standard Version and other modern translations more correctly adopt this construction of the Hebrew text and Septuagint by giving the conditions (the hypothetical situation) in verses 1 - 3, and the demand of the law only in verse 4.

When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favour in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, and if she goes and becomes another man's wife, and the latter husband dislikes her and writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies, who took her to be his wife, then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the Lord, and you shall not bring guilt upon the land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance.

(Also see the New English Bible, New American Standard Version, and others)

Modern scholars of all theological persuasions consider that: 1) the demand of the law or legally binding pronouncement comes only at verse 4; and 2) verses 1 - 3 constitute a series of conditions added by the conjunction "and".

Grammatically then, verses 1 - 3 constitute the situation and conditions and verse 4 states the law that must be followed. Therefore, the law of Deuteronomy 24: 1 - 4: 1) is not a law instituting divorce or prescribing the bill of divorce (Jesus' questioners notwithstanding Matthew 19:7,8) ; 2) does not give permission for the second marriage of the woman (it is just assumed that she may remarry); and, 3) the divorce, bill of divorce, and second marriage are only parts of the description of the situation which had developed. The legal enactment (the law) is only in verse 4 (the first husband may not remarry the woman when the conditions in verses 1 - 3 exist).

In the situation of Deuteronomy 24: 1 - 4 three conditions are to be fulfilled before the law is applicable. After the man and woman are married (the situation) the conditions are: 1) the woman is divorced and handed proper papers to establish the divorce; 2) the woman remarries (it is assumed she may); 3) the second husband divorces her or dies (here it would appear she is free to marry a third man). Then the law here (verse 4) prohibits the first husband from remarrying her.

Although the origin of marriage and its ideal are given in creation (Genesis 2), the origin of divorce, the rightness or wrongness of divorce, and the question of remarriage are not directly addressed in the Pentateuch. No Hebrew law institutes divorce any more than it does concubinage or polygamy.

Notice now the situation and conditions described in verses 1 - 3. First, the man in this hypothetical situation marries this woman. Now the series of conditions:

1. **She does not find favor in his eyes.** This phrase used 45 times in the Old Testament does not help contribute to the situation this law describes.

2. **He finds some indency in her.** "Some indency," "some uncleanness," or literally "nakedness of a thing" comes from the Hebrew "ervath dabar". "Ervath dabar" is used only two times in the Old Testament. Deuteronomy 23:14, the only other place "ervath dabar" is found, refers to sanitation rather than a moral offence, and therefore does not furnish us a clear definition for the term here in verse 1. "Ervath" (from "arah" - "to be naked") elsewhere describes: 1) the shameful exposure of the body (Genesis 9:22; Exodus 20:26; Lamentations 1:8; etc.); 2) ellicit and abnormal sexual practices (Leviticus 18:20); 3) exposure of human excrement (Deuteronomy 23:14).

There are certain things that this term could not refer to. Here is a list of them (notice the situation, the crime, the passage, and the law to be followed):

1. Married woman caught in adultery - Deuteronomy 22:22 - both die
2. Engaged woman caught in adultery - Deuteronomy 22:23, 24 - both stoned
3. Engaged woman raped - Deuteronomy 22:25 - 27 - man dies, woman guiltless
4. Virgin not engaged - lie with man - Deuteronomy 22:28, 29 - married; never divorce

5. Married woman -- suspected adultery -- Numbers 5:11 - 37 -- bears guilt (Leviticus 20:10)
6. Newly married wife -- suspected premarital unchastity -- Deuteronomy 22:13 - 21 -- guilty stoned; not guilty -- never divorce
7. Bestiality -- Exodus 22:19 -- married or unmarried death
8. Incest -- See Leviticus 20:11f for punishment
9. Homosexuality (for men) -- Leviticus 18:22; 20:13 -- death
(female perversion in this area is not discussed in the Pentateuch)

Being childless is an obvious setback for a wife in Israel (1 Samuel 1:5 - 7). Rabbinic rule recognized ten years of childlessness as grounds for divorce. "ervath dabar" would seem to refer to anything other than the punishable acts mentioned above.

The lack of specificity in this term led to many debates centuries later. The school of Shammai said the term must refer to some sort of lewd behavior on the part of the woman, immorality. It is interesting and very important to note that sources extant are not specific as to the kind of immoral behavior. The school of Hillel put emphasis on "dabar" and did not take "ervath" to mean lewdness but defect. If a woman "burned bread" the husband was justified in divorcing her. These rabbinical schools assumed Moses was laying the basis on which divorce could be granted.

Despite these laxities, divorce of the wife by the husband was generally condemned. And, as interesting as these much later developments were, they (like all other rabbinical traditions) must be read back into the original law.

We are without clear definition of "ervath dabar". It seems to describe anything other than punishable acts mentioned.

3. He gives her a bill of divorce. This statement is still part of the protasis (the situation and subsidiary conditions of verses 1 - 3) and not a part of the apodosis (the legally binding enactment of verse 4).

Here is an example of a bill of divorce:

On . . . day of the week . . . day of the month . . . in the year . . . I, who am also called son of . . . of the city of . . . by the river of . . . do hereby consent with my own will, being under no restraint and do hereby release, send away, and put aside thee, my wife . . . who is also called daughter of . . . who is this day in the city of . . . by the river of . . . who have been my wife for some time past! and thus I do release thee and send thee away and put thee aside that thou mayest have permission and control over thyself to go to be married to any man that thou mayest desire; and that no man shall hinder thee from this day forward, and thou art permitted to any man, and this shall be unto thee from me a bill of dismissal, a document of release, and a letter of freedom, according to the law of Moses and Israel.

.....the son ofWitness
the son ofWitness

4. He send her out of the house. No provision is given in the Old Testament for the wife to divorce her husband. It is likely that they did not.

5. She marries another man. The rightness or wrongness of the second marriage is not the point of discussion in the law. Since the woman's function and occupation was marriage it is likely that she would remarry.

6. The second man hates her. The word "hate" is frequently used to describe a man's attitude toward a woman. This "hate" is not necessarily a violent aversion, but used as an antithesis to love (eg: Genesis 29:31, 33). The point of the law here is that the second husband did not want the woman to continue as his wife. The reason is not given nor considered important.

7. The second husband dies or divorces her. This hypothetical situation assumes the possibility of divorce, with proper papers given to establish the divorce. Theoretically, the woman is free to marry a third man.

Death also dissolved the marriage (eg: I Samuel 25:31, 40; II Samuel 11:27).

Now we come to the legally binding pronouncement of Deuteronomy 24:1 - 4. The law is found in verse 4. After the situation and subsidiary conditions of verses 1 - 3 are met, the law in verse 4 states that the first husband may not remarry her. This law is an absolute, permanent prohibition, expecting the strongest degree of obedience. (The shift from third person to second person in verse 4 is grammatically referred to as an anacoluthon. It does not soften the prohibition).

Three reasons are given for the law.

1) She is defiled as far as the first husband is concerned.

2) For him to take her back is an abomination in the sight of the Lord. The word "abomination" occurs 116 times as a noun and 23 times as a verb. The occurrences cover a variety of acts. [For eg: a) food prohibitions (Deuteronomy 14:3); b) idolatrous practices (Deuteronomy 7:15); c) magic (Deuteronomy 18:12); d) sexual offences (Leviticus 18:22f); e) transvestite clothing (Deuteronomy 22:5); f) ethical wrongs (Deuteronomy 25:14 - 16).] Common to all these uses is the notion of irregularity. This act offends the accepted order, ritual, and morals. In Deuteronomy 24:1 - 4 God is offended should this prohibited act take place.

3) The land is made to sin which the Lord gave them. The land is personified - spoken of as sinning.

In conclusion, a study of Deuteronomy 24:1 - 4 suggest that Rabbis were on the wrong track on this passage as well. The law of Deuteronomy 24:1 - 4 is not a law instituting divorce, nor prescribing the bill of divorce. This passage is not teaching on conditions of divorce, but prohibiting (verse 4) the first husband from remarrying a woman who had in the meanwhile married another man (the conditions of verses 1 - 3). No wonder Jesus, instead of disputing in detail the presuppositions of his audience, moved back to the original ideal for marriage in Genesis 2 (Matthew 19:8).

GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE CHURCH

By Smith Bibens

Introduction:

When Jesus walked among men, His purpose or mission was often misinterpreted or misunderstood by those He dealt with. The Jews, and even His own disciples to an extent, expected that the Messiah would deliver the nation of Israel from the yoke of Gentile domination, and establish an earthly kingdom that would encompass the earth. When Jesus came preaching a spiritual kingdom, His message and mission were rejected by the Jewish nation.

When Jesus spoke, He was even misunderstood. Christ's bodily temple was confused with the earthly temple (John 2:20). The new birth was confused with physical birth (John 3:4). The Water of Life was confused with physical water (John 4:15). Spiritual nourishment was confused with real food (John 4:33). Christ's departure was confused with suicide (John 8:22). Spiritual bondage was confused with physical slavery.

It is little wonder then that men have been confused about, and have misunderstood His purpose for the church which He promised to build (Matthew 16:18).

The Premillennialist believes the church to be an afterthought of God. The church is thought of as an interim measure, not according to the original plan of God. This plan was thwarted by the Jews, says the premillennialist. They refused Jesus as their king, so the kingdom was postponed, and the church temporarily put in its place. We are still to expect the kingdom's establishment, say the premillennialists. Such a teaching flies in the face of God's omnipotent power.

Some conceive the church to be a mere human institution, with a corporate structure and hierarchy like any other organization of men. The church then becomes whatever man's dogma and doctrine dictates. This is true of the denominational "churches", but it certainly was not God's plan for the church.

At the other extreme we see those who believe the church to be a nebulous entity composed of all people in all churches or religions that are in communion with God. These people deny that God ever intended to create an institution for His purpose. These people forget that the church is a part of God's eternal purpose or design in the scheme of redemption.

Some view the church as a sort of philanthropic institution, but not essential to salvation; if they believe in the need of salvation at all. The reasoning put to us at times goes like this: Just as a gardener may choose to join a garden club, or an environmentalist may choose to join the Sierra Club; so, saved persons may choose to associate themselves with whomsoever they will in the way of organized religion, or they may choose to ignore it all together. After all, they reason, you can be a gardener without being in a garden club, and you can be an environmentalist without being in the Sierra Club so why insist that a saved person must be in the church?

Others, among the modernists' camp, view the church of the New Testament as an outdated and archaic institution- a dinosaur - which is no longer relevant for today's world. These people have what they call a "church", but it is recast in their image of what a church should be not God's. These people believe the church must change with the times. Unfortunately, people tend to change from spiritual to carnal, when they depend on their own devices (II Timothy 4:3, 4).

Because of these attitudes, we have seen the rise of the "social gospel" in the last 100 years. Men would not attend to the purposes and mission God has set before the church, so they have invented their own. The salvation of souls is traded for the mission of saving men's bodies. The mission of the church is perverted. Instead of striving to bring men into a right relationship with God, these men have turned the church's purpose into making men right with their world. Instead of

preaching that aims to make man acceptable to God, preaching is heard that seeks to make man acceptable to himself. Even political agitation in the interest of correcting social injustice becomes the mission of the church under the social gospel. Instead of glorifying God in the church (Ephesians 3:21), man is glorified. The church is thought of as an aspirin for all that ails the world. Man's crying need for spiritual salvation is neglected, while every imagined need of man's physical existence is "ministered" to.

As a corrective to these wrong views of the church and its purpose, we must consider from a Biblical perspective what God's purpose for the church is. What is it that God is accomplishing in and through the church? What aims, goals, missions must the church recognize and pursue?

At the outset it is important that we understand that God's ultimate purpose is the **spiritual salvation of mankind**. The purpose of God for the church is intimately bound up in the purpose of God for mankind. The goals, aims tasks of the church are in accord with God's goals, aims, work in the interest of the human race.

A. The Purpose of the Church is the Spiritual Salvation of Mankind.

1. The purpose of God is to save men from their sins and the spiritual consequences of their sins.
 - a. from guilt, Romans 5:1; Hebrews 10:22.
 - b. from spiritual death, I Peter 1: 3 - 5; Ephesians 2:1; I Corinthians 15:55 - 57.
 - c. from the wrath of God, Romans 5:9.
 - d. from spiritual bondage, Romans 6:17, 18.
2. It is important to indicate the negative consequences of this, i.e. what salvation does not include:
 - a. Salvation does not imply material prosperity or worldly success.
II Corinthians 6:10; Acts 3:6; II Timothy 6: 6 - 8
 - b. Salvation does not promise physical health and well-being.
 - 1) The gift of healing was a gift given by the Spirit to the early disciples. It was one of several bestowed. Acts 3:9; 8:7; 14:9, 10; I Corinthians 12:28.
 - 2) As in Christ's earthly ministry, these were signs to confirm the word.
John 3:2; 20:30, 31; Mark 16:17 - 20; Luke 10:9; Acts 8:6, 7.
 - 3) These gifts have passed away. We have the confirmed word.
I Corinthians 13:8 - 10; James 1:25.
 - 4) It is evident that the purpose of the Saviour and of the early church was not to heal the physical infirmities which were manifestations of the sin-cursed world, but to provide a remedy for the spiritual infirmities of humanity. That physical health is not to be considered a "right" of those who are saved may be seen in these passages: I Timothy 5:23; II Timothy 4:20; Philippians 2:26,27; II Corinthians 12:7 - 9.
 - c. Salvation does not include the guarantee of deliverance from physical hardship or danger. Acts 5:40; I Corinthians 4:9 - 13; II Corinthians 11:23 - 28.
 - d. Salvation does not include deliverance from social injustice and persecution. Matthew 5:11, 12; I Corinthians 7:20 - 24; I Peter 2:18 - 25
3. It is the purpose of God that man be saved from his sins and the spiritual consequences of his sins in the church. The following establish this fact:

- a. The church has been in the eternal purpose of God which He wrought in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 3:10, 11; II Timothy 1:8 - 10.
 - b. The church has been bought with the blood of Christ. Acts 20:28. The blood of Christ was shed for the remission of sins. Matthew 26:28. The church consists of all those who have had their sins remitted.
 - c. Baptism is for the remission of sins. Acts 2:38; 22:16. Baptism, by virtue of the forgiveness of sins, saves us, I Peter 3:21. In Acts 2 we read of the first preaching of the gospel, with the invitation to "save yourselves" sounded out to the audience. They cried "... what must we do?" The answer was: "Repent and be baptized ... for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Those who were respondents were added to the church (Acts 2:47).
 - d. Christ is the Saviour of the body, (Ephesians 5:23). The body is the church, (Ephesians 1:22, 23). Dare any man claim the church is non-essential to salvation? There is no promise of salvation outside the church.
 - e. All spiritual blessings are in Christ Jesus, (Ephesians 1:3). To be in Christ is to be in the church, (I Corinthians 1:3; I Thessalonians 1:1; Ephesians 1:22, 23). Therefore, all spiritual blessings are in the church.
4. From these scriptural facts, it follows that the purpose of the church, the mission of the church, is a spiritual one.
- a. The salvation God has provided is a spiritual salvation.
 - b. The church is the place of this salvation.
 - c. It follows, that God's purpose for the church is not concerned with the mundane and temporal aspects of earthly life, but with the spiritual realities that are concerned with eternal life. Therefore it is said in the Scripture, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth." (Colossians 3:1, 2).
 - d. It is not then the purpose of the church to be involved in:
 - 1) Social reform
 - 2) Recreation
 - 3) Business
 - 4) Politics
 - 5) Secular education
 - 6) Medicine
 - e. Although these things have their proper places in our world, and we enjoy the benefits of these things in our lives: i.e. we enjoy the benefits of medical advances made in universities and hospitals; technological advances made by the schools and businesses of the land; the freedoms of America that have resulted from social reforms and politics in the past; it is not the purpose of the church to be involved in these things. There are many institutions and concerns that devote themselves to these things of earth. Some better, some worse. The church, however, has a higher calling and purpose. The church is designed by God to seek and promote the spiritual salvation and spiritual welfare of lost mankind.

B. God's Purpose for the Church is defined in the Bible.

1. God's word, the Bible, must be our source of guidance and information as to the particulars of the church's purpose or mission in this world.
2. All things pertaining to life and godliness are found in the Scriptures. (II Peter 1:3; II Timothy 3:16, 17).

3. The church, as we have seen, is essential to God's provision for man's life and godliness. It stands to reason then that we will find infallible guidance concerning God's purpose for the church on the pages of Holy Writ.
4. We will not turn to the theological schools of the day to discern what our mission is. We will not seek to the patterns of denominational practice for the pattern of the church's purpose. Whatever works or methods are in vogue among the denominations must not be used to define what the church's mission and message should be. The New Testament church of Christ is distinctive in this one fact: where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent.
5. We must turn to what the Scriptures reveal of the efforts of the established church of the New Testament in accomplishing God's purpose for the church, for our direction. The church is established in Acts 2. From this point on, in the Acts of the apostles and in the letters they wrote to the various churches, we will seek direction on the purpose of God for the church. We will be thereby infallibly instructed and led to a complete understanding of our purpose, our work, our mission as the distinctive New Testament church of Christ. The practice of those men who were guided by the Holy Spirit, and the practice of those who were taught by inspired men, are safe to follow. They represent divine instruction.

C. *The first mission of the church is seeking the lost through evangelism.*

1. When Peter and the other apostles stood upon the day of Pentecost to proclaim the good news of salvation in Christ, they were acting in obedience to the prime directive of the Lord, and manifesting the prime purpose for the church: preaching the gospel to the lost to save them from their sins and convert them into Christ's disciples.
2. The Great Commission is the foundation of the church's purpose and work. (Matthew 28: 19, 20).
3. Further, the church is styled the "pillar and ground of the truth". (I Timothy 3:15).
4. Also, the church, as Christ's body, must be concerned with Christ's mission. (Luke 19:10).
5. As the Lord felt the urgency of His mission, so must we. (John 4:34, 36; 9:4).
6. When the church is not zealously seeking the lost, through the preaching of the gospel, it is failing in its purpose.
7. The Lord has commissioned us to go and preach the gospel. We obey the Great Commission individually and congregationally.
 - a. Our individual responsibility taught by:
 - 1) **The Parable of the Talents** (Matthew 25:14 - 30). This is a judgement parable. We will one day be held responsible, each and every one of us individually, for our employment of the talent(s) God has given us. Each of us, who are accountable to God at all, have at least this talent: the ability to learn. If we had not this capacity, we would not even be responsible to obey the gospel. If, however, we have the ability to learn what we must do to be saved, we have the ability to learn what we can do to serve and to help save others.
 - 2) **Matthew 5:14 - 16** A young man had obeyed the gospel and had faithfully attended church services for six months. One day he was approached by the preacher who asked, "What have you done in these six months to lead others to Christ?" "Well," responded the young man, "I am still a learner." To which the preacher responded, "When does a candle begin giving its light? When it is lit or six months later?" The young man took the lesson to heart. His first efforts were feeble, but he began to lead others to Christ, and in time he became a great personal worker for the Lord.
 - 3) **The example of Aquila and Priscilla**, (Acts 18:26)
 - 4) **Seeking men's souls is the greatest employment we can be engaged in in this mortal life**, (Proverbs 11:30; James 5:20).

- b. As congregations of the Lord's church, we have the responsibility to send qualified preachers and evangelists to preach God's word, for we cannot always reach with our own efforts all those who need to hear the gospel. The Lord, in His design for the church, has provided us with direction on how to carry this work forward. (Romans 10:13 - 15).

1) The evangelist or preacher is sent by the church to the lost.

- a) He is sent to those who have not heard. (Romans 15:20, 21).
- b) He has the responsibility to teach them whatsoever Christ has commanded (Matthew 28:20). After conversion comes edification (Acts 14:22). (We will speak more of edification as a mission of the church directly.)
- c) He may assemble with a congregation and "teach much people". (Acts 11:26; 18:11).
- d) He may break new ground in the Lord's work, planting new congregations where none were before. We see this done in the evangelist Phillip's work, and in the missionary ventures of the Apostle Paul; (Acts 8 and 13ff).
- e) He has the right to be supported in this work. To make his living of the gospel. (1 Corinthians 9:6 - 14).

2) Local churches have the responsibility of sending and supporting the preacher and evangelist to the lost. Examples:

- a) Antioch congregation, (Acts 13:1 - 3; 14:27, 28).
- b) Macedonian congregations, (II Corinthians 11:8, 9).
- c) Philippi, a congregation in Macedonia, is specifically commended. (Philippians 1:3 - 5; 2:25 - 30; 4:14 - 20)

D. Secondly, the mission of the church is to edify itself.

1. The Great Commission entailed a twofold responsibility, evangelism and edification. This is the second great purpose of the church. The disciples who were made by preaching and conversion, were then taught, edified, and confirmed in the truth. (Acts 14:22), that they might persevere in their salvation.
2. The need for edification as a part of God's salvation program, lies in the fact that salvation has both a remedial aspect and a preventive one.
 - a. When the gospel is preached, and men obey, they are cleansed from their sins, and placed in right relationship with God.
 - b. They must then sustain this relationship by faithfulness until death. (Revelation 2:10)
3. When the gospel was first preached, and the first converts made, we see that this is exactly what happened. (Acts 2:41, 42).
4. We see this done further in the work of the Apostles and evangelists in Acts and the epistles. (Acts 14:21 - 23; 1 Timothy 1:3; Titus 1:5).
5. The purpose of edification however cannot be served exclusively by the preacher, neither indeed can be. Remember, his first responsibility is to preach to the lost. The pattern we see in the Scriptures reveals that in due time elders were ordained in the churches, to fill this need. (Ephesians 4:11, 12).
6. The elders were qualified men (1 Timothy 3:1 - 7, Titus 1:6 - 9), who were ordained by an apostle or an evangelist to the task of shepherding the local congregation. Their responsibility was limited to the flock over which they were overseeing. (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17; Titus 1:9).
7. The elders, of course, were qualified from among those men in the church who were faithful teachers. (See the qualifications given by Paul.) This points up the fact that there were

- those who were teachers without being ordained to the eldership. They edified the church through their teaching. (II Timothy 2:2; Acts 13:1)
8. The public worship of the church is for edification. (I Corinthians 14:26).
 9. As with evangelism, edification may be public or private. (Acts 20:20).
 10. As individual Christians, we have a responsibility to "edify one another." (I Thessalonians 5:11)
 11. Edification is both positive and negative. (II Timothy 3:16, 17; 4:2).
 - a. Positive: exhortation, instruction, encouragement, comfort.
 - b. Negative: discipline, chastisement, rebukes, reproof, correction.

E. *Thirdly, the church relieved the necessities that were lacking in the disciples that were poor or destitute.*

1. This was certainly not the primary mission of the church, and the church was not 'commu-nistic' in the economic sense, but it is very evident that the church has the responsibility of relieving those of its number who lack the necessities of life or are unable to provide for themselves. (Acts 4:34, 6:1 - 6).
 - a. The ministry to the poor and destitute saints, while consisting in physical relief, is a spiritual work; it is in accord with the spiritual mission of the church.
 - 1) In the Fall, man's relationship with his fellowman was marred, as well as his relationship with God. Man's unkindness to his fellow man is a reflection of his unspiritual condition. Cain, who slew his brother Abel, had the attitude, "Am I [my] brother's keeper?"
 - 2) The answer of Jesus and the Gospel is a resounding, "Yes!"
 - a) The Good Samaritan, (Luke 10:25 - 27).
 - b) James 2:14 - 17
 - c) I John 3:11 - 18
2. As with all things that pertain to life and godliness, the New Testament furnishes us with the plan of operation in performing this ministry.
 - a. **Individual** responsibility: Galatians 6:10; James 1:27; Romans 12:13; I Timothy 6:17 - 19; Example of Dorcas, Acts 9:36 - 43.
 - b. **Congregational** responsibility: Acts 11:29, 30; II Corinthians 8:18 - 21 (Congrega-tional cooperation in sending relief); I Corinthians 16:1,2 (The plan for raising the funds).
 - c. The congregational responsibility does not supercede the individual responsibility. (I Timothy 5:3 - 10, 16; Ephesians 4:28).
3. All charity, alms, or benevolence, must be for the right motives and not to be seen of men. (Matthew 6:1 - 4; I Corinthians 13:3).

CONFESSION OF SINS

By Melvin Blalock

Introduction

The confession of sins is a great Bible doctrine, but it has been greatly misunderstood and perverted. Indeed, the forgiveness of sins for the erring child of God is a wonderful spiritual blessing attainable only through our propitiatory who is Jesus Christ. The apostle John writes: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. . . . My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John 1:9, 10; 2:1, 2) What would life be, if after we were immersed for the forgiveness of sins, there was no second law of pardon for the erring child of God? David of Old, expressed his feelings about the weighty burden of unconfessed sins in Psalms 38:1 - 4: "O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me." He felt the need of confessing his sins, just as we do when we err. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord: and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." (Psalms 32:3 - 5)

Confession is the only remedy for the sin sick soul for we know that it is utter folly to think that we can hide our sins from God. Adam and Eve were not able to hide themselves from God following their rebellion in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:8, 9). Achan attempted to conceal the accursed thing in the floor of his tent, which God had forbidden the Israelites to take. He was not successful in concealing his sin and it resulted in his death and his household. (Joshua 7). Our evil deeds cannot escape the awareness of an omnipotent God. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened into the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (Hebrews 4:13) Solomon gave the best advice to the erring child of God in Proverbs 38:13: "**He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.**" Solomon included repentance in his advice when he spoke of forsaking our sins. Confession is of no value if repentance is not evidenced by the forsaking of our sins. When we speak of the necessity of confession we always infer that repentance is essential to forgiveness. Someone said, "confession should be an announcement of repentance."

I. There are several types of confession depending on the circumstances.

- A. The private sin requires that we seek God's forgiveness by entering into our "closets" and confessing that sin to God. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) See also Matthew 7:6.
 - 1. The Roman Catholic practice of confessing private sins to a priest is one of the most erroneous practices ever devised by man.
 - 2. Recently the Pope emphasised the necessity of articular confession to all Catholics. It seems that many Catholics have ceased coming to the priest and were merely asking forgiveness of God. The Pope told them that they could not circumvent the church or their parish priest and receive forgiveness of their sins.

3. As a people who are learned in the scriptures, we realize that every child of God is a priest. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation . . . (I Peter 2:9) "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." (Revelation 1:6)
 4. Jesus Christ is our High Priest. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:15, 16) "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;" (Hebrews 7:25, 26).
 5. No priest or preacher can serve as mediator between God and his children. This is a function belonging exclusively to Jesus Christ. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;" (I Timothy 2:5)
 6. In matters of a private sin a child of God may confess privately to God and receive forgiveness. Much harm can be done by confessing private sins publicly.
 7. It is a true maxim that says our confession should be as public as the sin.
- B. There is the private sin involving a brother. Many mistakes are made in this realm.
1. In this case reconciliation must be made between the parties involved if possible and God's forgiveness sought. "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. (Matthew 18:15). "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him." (Luke 17:3, 4)
 - (a) This confession and repentance is to be sought after and obtained.
 - (b) If reconciliation is not achieved, then there is further recourse for the one who has been injured.
 - (c) The next step is to take two or three witnesses that every word may be established.
 - (d) The last and final step for those who will not repent is to bring them before the church and if they will not hear the church they are to be withdrawn from. (Matthew 18:15 - 17)
- C. The third type of confession is of a **Public** nature because it is a sin that is widely known. It is essential to the well being of the church.
1. Sins of immorality are almost always of a public nature and are a reproachment to the church and the name of Christ. They must be dealt with by the church. "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleaven. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:" (I Corinthians 5:6, 7)
 - (a) These sins have a bearing on our fellowship.
 - (b) Once this sin has been purged from the church, how can the offender be restored to fellowship unless the church knows of one's repentance.

2. Those who cause divisions and offenses must be marked and avoided. "Now I beseech brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them." (Romans 16:17)
 - (a) Without a confession of sins how would we know to cease marking and avoiding these brethren?
 - (b) (Robert L. Whiteside --Commentary on Romans) "Judaizing teachers were the main trouble makers in the territory of Paul's labors; they were determined to convince the all Gentile Christians that they had to be circumcised and keep the law, or they would not be saved. They were professed Christians."
 - (c) The heretic is to be dealt with publicly, because his sin is public (Titus 3:10, 11).
 - (d) The disorderly walker is to be withdrawn from making it necessary to have a public confession, that he may be restored. (II Thessalonians 3:6)
 - (e) Those who have left the church and gone back into the world. "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica." (II Timothy 4:10).
 - (f) In all of these cases, as well as others that are of a public nature, the penitent believer should desire his brethren to know that he has repented, that he may be received into the fellowship of the faithful. The church is responsible to know!

EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

3. At times some respond at the public invitation simply because their emotions have been stirred.
 - (a) An article recently appeared in the (Gospel Advocate, September 20, 1984, "Why Come Forward," by K. W. Franklin.)
 - (b) Notice the reasons given for response: "Gospel preachers through the years have motivated people to respond to the invitation for two major reasons --to obey the gospel to become children of God or to be restored as erring children of God and ask forgiveness for bringing reproach on the body of Christ. In my early days many more responses were for baptism than restoration. However, in the last 20 years the situation has reversed and it is not surprising that some preachers have 65 'responses' with only one or two baptisms. Also, the statements being made by those responding makes us wonder whether they need to come forward.

"A recent bulletin (with names omitted) gives the following remarks by those responding during a meeting: 'wants to get his priorities back in order', 'want to grow as Christians', 'wants to improve his attitudes', 'wants to thank the Lord for helping her', 'wants to be more faithful', 'was serving two masters', 'wants to give her life back to the Lord', 'wants her heart right', 'wants to act more like a Christian', 'wants to give more of their heart', 'wants to be more faithful', 'wants to give more time to the Lord', 'wants to adjust her priorities', 'needs to be more effective', 'wants to strengthen his love for the Lord', 'wants to grow more', 'thanks everyone and asks for continued help'. --(All are noble resolves) - - M.B.

"Now let us make some observations. If we need to respond to an invitation to state we want to do better and should do better, then we should come forward at every service. That is the goal of every faithful child of God and we should determine to do better every morning as we start the new day. It would be a good thing to re-

dedicate our lives to the Lord every day, but we do not have to come forward at a public meeting to do that.

"If we need to come forward to have brethren pray for us, then I am wondering if the general prayer in public worship does not mean anything to us, because in that prayer we usually pray for one another, or at least we should.

"If we need to come forward to make sure we have forgiveness for mistakes in our routine lives, why do we ask God in the prayer in the public assembly to 'forgive us of our shortcomings and transgressions'? Don't we have any faith in that public request? Otherwise, we all need to respond at every service. Must a personal prayer be made for each individual?

"Do we come forward viewing the preacher as a kind of special priest who has a special power of intercession? Has the preacher been substituted for the priest? Does he take the place of the confessional?

"Do we come forward because we do not believe (I John 1:7), that the blood of Christ continues constantly to cleanse the faithful child of God?

"Or do we come forward as a result of over-emotionalism? Could it be that preachers are just motivating and not preaching? . . .

"At one well known congregation I could write the 'response' list in advance as the meeting time approached. By knowing the appeal of the preacher and the emotional level of the congregation, I made very few mistakes as to who would 'respond'.

- (c) Notice the concluding paragraph of this article: "What kind of sin needs to be confessed publicly? In one high pressure meeting, the preacher said, "If you have had one evil thought, you need to come forward . . ." Also, in that same meeting this statement was made, "If you have sinned in any way, you have lost your priesthood and you need to come and let us pray for you." I wondered how the preacher could retain his so-called priesthood under such definition. "Secret sins" (Psalms 90:8) should be confessed secretly, private sins between individuals can be resolved and forgiven privately (Matthew 18:15 - 17), and this leaves only public sins to be confessed publicly. However, in modern "responses" little is said about sins at all. Let us give this emotionalism back to the sectarianism where we borrowed it in the first place."

D. The public confession should be handled in the most appropriate way depending on the circumstances.

- 1. Some are of the opinion that the penitent saint must walk down the aisle, shake hands with the preacher, confess his sins and have the prayers of the church in order to secure forgiveness.
 - (a) This rule begs for an example or command that cannot be sustained in the scriptures.
 - (b) While this is an acceptable means of acknowledging public sins, we cannot insist upon it as the only proper course of action.
 - (c) The time to confess our sins and pray for God's forgiveness is at the time of

repentance. It is absurd to think that we must wait until the church assembles in order to receive forgiveness for our sins.

- (d) God who knows the hearts of his children will surely accept the prayer of one who repents. He is able to pray directly to the Father through Jesus Christ. **No man or group of men stand between him and the throne of God.**
- (e) **The truly penitent soul will not want to keep his repentance a secret.** If his sin is public he will desire his brethren to be informed of his confession and repentance. **The brethren must know,** before full fellowship can be extended.

2. The case of Simon the Sorcerer is a case that teaches us much. (Acts 8:18 - 24)

- (a) Notice that Peter did not insist on Simon coming before the church. Probably all of the church was not even aware of Simon's sin.
- (b) Furthermore, Peter did not insist that he or John pray for his forgiveness.
- (c) Peter's statement is indeed interesting when you consider that the Catholics claim Peter as the first Pope.
- (d) One might suppose that Peter recognized the priesthood of the believer when he told Simon to pray for his forgiveness.
- (e) It was Simon who desired the apostles' prayers in his behalf.
- (f) Simon's request manifested a humble and penitent heart.

II What About-- "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16)

- A. (Comments by Burton Coffman) "One to another . . ." "Mutuality is certainly implied by this. There is no class of men set up in God's church to hear confessions. No so-called 'priest' ever had the right to hear the confessions of the penitent, unless he himself, in turn, would likewise confess his own sins to the confessor. As Roberts aptly wrote:

"The Roman Catholic doctrine of auricular confession has no support from this passage. 'Elders' does not refer to a priestly set of workers. And not even the elders ever had the power to absolve a sinner or set terms and conditions of his forgiveness."

"The cathartic effect of confession, as mutually engaged among Christians, is helpful and beneficial, the purpose of such confessions being that of enlisting the mutual prayers of Christians for each other. There is not in view here any requirement for Christians to confess their sins 'to the whole church', a practice which is not only not in view here, but which, under certain circumstances, can have a positively detrimental effect. The holy church itself is not a 'priest' standing between the penitent Christian and his forgiveness."

- B. (Guy N. Woods Commentary on James) "This injunction, by James, is associated logically and grammatically with the section immediately preceding it. It is affirmed of 'him that is sick', (verse 15), that 'if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him.' Inasmuch as the Lord forgives the sins of the people only when they confess, and turn away from them, there is a confession implied in the instance cited. Moreover, the word 'therefore' (oun) indicated a close connection with the statement preceding it, and is a conclusion drawn from premises on it. Confession and prayer are enjoined in this section. The verbs are present imperatives, and mean. **'Keep on confessing your sins one to another . . .'** It is significant that this passage does not deal with confession to God (that is implied in verse 15), to the elders or preacher exclusively, **but to one another.** It thus becomes the duty of

elders and preachers to confess their sins to other members of the one body as for others to confess sins to them.

"This passage is often cited by the Catholics to support their doctrine of Auricular Confession (confession in the ear), the practice of regularly confessing to a priest; but the words 'one to another' constitute a fatal addition, insofar as the doctrine is concerned! If this teaches that one is to confess to the priest, it teaches as clearly that the priest must then immediately confess his sins to the confessee! (A practice, we may add, not characteristic of them.) Nor are the sins here contemplated such as are against men only, on the assumption that because they are to be confessed to men, they must be against men. The noun designates transgressions against God's law, whether such involves the relationship of God or man. The word 'confess', from *exomologeisthai* (present middle imperative), means to agree to; to acknowledge; to confess, is therefore, to acknowledge wrong. Taught here is the simple obligation of all Christians both to confess their sins to each other and to pray for each other."

- C. (Adam Clarke) "This is a good general direction to Christians who endeavour to maintain among themselves the communion of saints. This social confession tends much to humble the soul, and make it watchful. We naturally wish that our friends in general, and our religious friends in particular, should think well of us; and when we confess to them offenses which, without this confession, they could never have known, we feel humbled, are kept from self-applause, and induced to watch unto prayer, that we may not increase our offenses before God, or be obliged any more to undergo the painful humiliation of acknowledging our weakness, fickleness, or infidelity to our religious brethren."

CONCLUSION

The confession of faults is a very important part of the Christian faith. The Bible teaches that confession of sins is essential to our forgiveness. (1 John 1:9) The confession should be as public as the sin. Confessing our sins is somewhat like an apology. We apologize to those who are offended. We may admit our error to others, but until we have sought forgiveness from God and those offended we have not effected a true confession. It is a good and expeditious way of acknowledging our public sins when we come before the assembly and confess our faults, asking our brethren to pray with us that we may be forgiven. To say this is the exclusive means of pardon is to advance a doctrine unfounded in the sacred text.

BIBLE GUIDELINES FOR SUPPORTING PREACHERS

By Terry Baze

Introduction— The subject at hand is most certainly a Bible topic and therefore worthy of our consideration. The truth in this or any Bible subject is important for us to understand and practice. In order to learn the truth, we need only to set aside human opinion and study the scriptures related to the supporting of preachers. Thus we can put to rest the endless questions, discussions, disputings, and strife that sometimes arise when this subject is brought up.

Very little will be accomplished by our study however, without an honest effort by both congregations and preachers alike to commit themselves to practice the truths taught by God's word concerning this matter.

1 Corinthians 9:1 - 19

First Corinthians chapter nine was written by Paul primarily as a defense of his apostleship. There were false teachers among the Corinthians who were taking support from them evidently simply to get gain. They obviously felt it in their best interests to undermine Paul's influence among the Corinthians and therefore disclaimed his apostleship. They did this in a number of ways:

1. They said that Paul had not been with the Lord as had the other apostles.
2. They said that Paul did not live like the other apostles, in that he had no wife and he refused support for his preaching.
3. Therefore, they argued that since he did not accept support, he was in effect admitting that he had no right to it, and thus was not an apostle.

The whole chapter, even though discussing the validity of Paul's apostleship, illustrates what had been taught in the previous chapter; self denial for the good of others. Those with "knowledge" should be ready to surrender their rights to the "weak". Paul now shows in his own life how he followed this rule. He could have claimed support for his preaching, but he waived his right, subjecting him to many hardships. This is a principle that quite possibly is non-existent in our preaching today.

Verse 1 - Paul begins his defense of his apostleship. To answer their first charge, he had in fact seen the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:5 - 8; Acts 9:10) Then he reminds them of his work among them and offers it as proof of his apostleship. - **Verses 1 and 2.**

Verses 3, 4 - Paul then answers the charges concerning the differences between him and the other apostles. He informs them of his "power", or right to eat and drink. This right came from what the Lord had told the twelve in Matthew 10:9, 10 and the seventy in Luke 10:7, 8 as they were sent to preach. The interrogative mode used by Paul here, was often used to express the strongest affirmation.

Verse 5 - He addresses his right to have a Christian wife with him while he preached, as others did. While he and Barnabus had the right to have a wife and be supported, they did not avail themselves these privileges by choice.

Verse 6 - Paul then asks in the same manner, if he and Barnabus did not also have the right to abstain from labor and to receive support as the others were doing? The word "only" implies that all the others did forbear working (accept support).

In verses 7 - 14 - Paul gives at least five reasons why they had the right to support:

1. Common sense - verse 7
2. Authority of the scriptures - verses 8 - 10.
3. Having sown spiritual things, they deserved the physical things - verse 11.
4. Example of priests under Jewish law - verse 13.
5. Law of Christ - verse 14.

All of these are proofs the inspired apostle presents to prove the right to receive support for preaching the gospel.

Verse 7

1. A soldier has the right to be supported by those he serves. He does not go at his own expense. Any preacher who is fighting for the cause of Christ in the army of the Lord is entitled to support from those to whom he renders service.
2. The planter of a vineyard eats the fruit thereof. The church is compared to a vineyard, and a work of the church is planting seed by the preaching of the gospel. This is done by sending preachers to preach (Romans 10:14, 15). Thus they are entitled to support for their preaching.
3. The feeder of a flock drinks of the milk from the flock. The church is compared to a flock and a part of the preacher's work is to feed the flock, entitling him to support from the flock.

In all of these illustrations, Paul asserts the right of those who labor for the Lord to live by that labor. The preacher is entitled to a living by the work he does. Yet as II Thessalonians 3:10 states, "If he does not work, neither should he eat." For the person who thinks that the preacher's job is less than work, - -you have never preached.

Verse 8 - Paul says that it is not only common sense that says this, but so also does the law.

Verse 9 - The ox, when treading out the grain, was allowed to eat what he needed while doing so. It was not merely that God cared for the ox, (which He did), but to cultivate feelings of justice and equity. This moral principle is found throughout the context of Deuteronomy 24:10 - 25:4, where this passage is from. By calling on people to exercise gentleness and gratitude, even to a dumb animal, it is clear that God desired to impress on them to act justly toward the human workmen as well. This principle is used also in Matthew 10:10 - . . . for the workman is worthy of his meat. Luke 10:7, 8 - . . . for the labourer is worthy of his hire. I Timothy 5:18 - For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And the laborer is worthy of his reward.

Churches do not give the preacher anything. Faithful preachers earn every dime they are paid, and some they are not paid.

Verse 10 - "Altogether" here means chiefly or mainly. This was written primarily for our sake, Paul says, not just for the ox. It was written to teach that those laboring in the service of the Lord were entitled to a living from those for whom they labored. It is only fair and right that he enjoys the fruit of his toil. So also in God's husbandry it is right and proper that they who toil for the advancement of His cause should be supported and rewarded.

Verse 11 - This is the third reason Paul gives and is in fact the real issue. Is it to be regarded as unfair or unjust to receive material things in payment for having provided spiritual things? The same thing was said to the Romans (15:27) in regard to contributing to the needs of those in Judea.

Without the support of preachers, the ministry is in bad shape. We all understand that doctors, lawyers, farmers, or mechanics should be allowed to attend mainly to their work. No doctor could accomplish much if his attention was constantly turned to engage in some other activity. The same is true with the preacher. If he must take most of his time in working to provide for the wants and needs of his family, he simply will not accomplish much in working for the church. Men gladly pay the mechanic, painter, doctor, or lawyer, understanding that they receive a valuable consideration for their money. But what about preachers? Is not a man and his family benefited by the labors of a faithful preacher? Are not the affairs of the soul and eternity as important to a man and his family as those of the welfare of the body? Most of the time, we are benefited by the service of a faithful preacher to a far greater extent than the amount of compensation which he receives.

Sometimes not much of the preacher's work is visible to the average church member, and he is not brash as to give a detailed report of all he does each day. So some think he has little to do, and that they are contributing to a loafer who is on a perpetual vacation at the churches' expense. This can contribute to the preachers being underpaid, depreciated and looked upon with little respect. This just may be part of the price of preaching that one must pay.

Verse 12 - The Corinthians had supported others, perhaps even those opposing Paul, and had supported them well (I Corinthians 4:8; II Corinthians 11:20). But if anyone had a right to their support, it was Paul. "Never the less" - an exception to the rule. Paul did not exercise his right of support for good reason. He wanted to be above suspicion. He preferred to suffer and labor with his own hands, lest the gospel should be hindered by suspicions against his character.

Our right to anything is of itself no sufficient reason for claiming it. We are bound by our relation to Christ to consider whether we shall most advance His cause by claiming or waiving it. Lack of adequate support has often hindered the progress of the gospel. Those who argue that Paul is here recommending "tent-making" as a proper way to support the ministry, fail to see the underlying reason for his attitude toward receiving support from the Corinthians. No preacher, including Paul, can do his best in presenting the gospel if he has to spend too much time making a living or living on what he makes. On the other hand, no man should enter the field as simply a means of gaining a livelihood. It is honorable to "make tents", as Paul did on occasion, for the right reasons. I doubt it is honorable to "make tents" to keep from fully preaching because one is unwilling to endure hardness, or because one does not want to answer to anyone. Remember, God wants preachers to be supported for their preaching - verse 14. It is no worse to preach for money than it is not to preach for money. Both are wrong.

Verse 13 - The fourth reason Paul gives to prove his point is the example of the priests living off portions of the offerings in the temple and sacrifices at the altar. (Leviticus 6:16, 26; Leviticus 7:31 - 38, Numbers 18:8 - 19; 24 - 31). It is interesting to note that what these priests received was of the very best that the people had to offer.

In I Samuel 2:12 - 17, 27 - 36, Hophni and Phineas, sons of Eli, treated the offering of the Lord with contempt and demanded that they be given raw meat to roast before any of it was offered to the Lord. They greedily looked upon the sacrifices of the people and demanded the choicest parts for themselves. Perhaps some today, with extravagant tastes have hindered the cause by demanding more than they have a right to receive or than people are able to supply. But this was the exception then and now, if indeed it exists at all.

Verse 14 - The final reason that Paul gives to prove that preachers have the right to receive support is that the Lord Jesus appointed, commanded, or ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of it. He has made this a law. He has required it. They who are sent forth by Him, who dedicate their

lives to this work, (not only to the apostles, but to all who are duly called to this work), should be supported and maintained in this work. Once again we cite Matthew 10:10; Luke 10:7, 8; and I Timothy 5:18.

It is not that they should grow rich or go hungry, but that they should have such a maintenance as to constitute a livelihood. They should be comfortable, having their needs met so as to keep their minds from being burdened with cares and their families from want. They are not to receive so much as to lead them to forget their dependence on God, or on their brethren. Probably a fair rule is that they should be able to live as the mass of the people among whom they labor and live. That they should be able to receive and entertain the poor and be hospitable in sharing their blessings for the good of the work.

Remember that this is a command from the Lord and must be obeyed if we are to please Him. A preacher is entitled to support and the church is required to provide it. This is the rule, tent-making is the exception. God has given an express command. The support should not be regarded as a gift, any more than the wages anyone might earn. It might do some churches well to consider also that James 5:4 condemns those who fail to pay what is due the laborer who has toiled for them.

Verses 15 - 19 - Paul further explains the reasons he refused his right to support. It is feared that many preachers of today are lacking in these qualities. While Paul readily forfeited his rights for the good of the brethren among whom he worked, many preachers of today gripe and complain when such situations arise and then unseemly vanity is sometimes seen when they boast of their "sacrifices" in preaching. Then there are those, when similar circumstances have arisen, who leave the field of preaching and voluntarily devote themselves to some other calling when they might still have opportunities to preach. A man whose heart is not in preaching, and who would be as happy in any other calling, is not fit to be a preacher and perhaps he never has had the right spirit. What an indictment of one's life must it be for him to turn away from preaching the truth of God, to a perishing world, in order to avoid inconvenience, deprivation, and hardship, in an attempt of possessing a greater share of the earth's wealth.

II Corinthians 11:5 - 13, 20

Paul is in this chapter warning the Corinthians about the false apostles which had been undermining his influence. He is here justifying himself of their accusations and presenting his ministry to be compared with theirs.

Verse 7 - This verse is best understood connected with verses five and six. Paul says that perhaps he was inferior to the other apostles in speaking, but certainly not in his understanding and knowledge. He then asks as it were, "What is my offence?" "Where have I not proven my apostleship?" "Is it because I have not accepted your support?" His sarcastic question is, "Have you been so completely taken in by these false apostles that you could believe I have sinned because I did not demand your money when I preached?" This, they charged against Paul, because in this, he differed from the other apostles. Yet the Corinthians knew Paul had refused to accept support to avoid suspicion (I Corinthians 9). Paul said that he had abased (lowered) himself, by laboring with his hands and neglecting his right to receive support, thus submitting voluntarily to poverty, in order to exalt them. It was for their own good that he had done this.

Verse 8 - His answer to their charges is that he had in fact received support for preaching to them from others. During his eighteen month stay at Corinth, he received no support from them. He decided because of the circumstances in Corinth that the gospel would be hindered by his receiving support from them.

It was also in irony that he stated he had "robbed" other churches. He does not mean that what he received was against the will of those helping him, but that he had deprived others of their goods by receiving help from them while preaching to the Corinthians. By "robbed", he indicates that he did not render an equivalent to them for what he received. They supported him while he worked for another (Philippians 4:14 - 18). In light of this, we can be reasonably sure that Paul was too busy preaching to continue his trade any longer than necessary, till his support was adequate. Yet he was determined to stick to his policy of not taking support in this area. "To do you service" simply means that he received support so that he could preach, not so that he could work with his hands and keep from preaching.

Verse 9 - When he was in need, and what his own labor did not furnish, the churches supplied. Even while laboring with his hands, he was in need. The brethren from Macedonia were obviously the Philippians (4:15, 16), where the Bible says that they sent once and again, to his needs.

Verse 10 - Paul had not been chargeable to the Corinthians and did not intend to be. Achaia was the region where he was being so viciously attacked and thus why he acted in this way while there.

Verses 11, 12 - Paul did not refuse their help because he did not love them, but because he had determined to cut off all occasion for his enemies to charge that he was seeking gain of them.

The false teachers received support from the Corinthians and would have liked for this difference between them and Paul be eliminated, thus they would have an equality with him. But Paul's attitude proved their accusations wrong and was an advantage he had over them, because they would not imitate his unselfishness.

Verse 13 - Paul here dismisses his enemies as false apostles.

Verse 20 - Titus no doubt had informed Paul of this situation. These false apostles had brought them into bondage. They had become lords over God's heritage and devoured the substance of the Corinthians. The Corinthians had put up with all of this from the false teachers, surely they could put up with a little boasting from Paul.

II Corinthians 12: 13 - 17

Verse 13 - At the height of sarcasm, Paul asks forgiveness when they knew there was nothing to forgive. The only thing they had lacked, or the only way that they were inferior to other churches, was that he would not accept support from them. Most churches would readily forgive a preacher for such conduct. It is also implied in this verse that other churches were actively supporting preachers.

Verse 14 - It is not natural for children to provide for their parents, but rather that parents provide for their children. Paul, their spiritual father, chose to act in the same way. He provided their spiritual needs, he labored and toiled as a father for his children. He sought their welfare by his self-denial. "Ought not" is to be understood in a comparative sense. The apostle used this analogy only as an illustration of why he did not take advantage of his right as a minister of the gospel. He does not mean that grown children have no obligation to their needy parents.

He also says that he was not after their goods, but their souls. In Acts 20:33 he said that he had "coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel". What a noble attitude the apostle displayed. He preached to save souls, not to make money. It seems that we have a lot of men who want to preach, as long as they can pick the place and are paid like a business executive. Some will not even consider a field of labor unless the money is right.

Verse 15 - Paul was willing to spend and be spent for their souls. He was willing to sacrifice self in order to benefit those among whom he worked. He portrayed the attitude that Christ exhibited in Mark 10:45; He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.

This is another admirable quality that is found lacking in preachers of today. Instead of being ready to spend and be spent, many talk of quitting and in fact some do quit preaching when the going gets rough. Paul suffered all, yet never talked about quitting. Where would the church be today if sacrificing preachers of the past felt so sorry for themselves that they quit? Many churches that exist today and thousands of Christians are the enduring work begun by underpaid and mistreated preachers. They labored under trying circumstances, but kept preaching, for they labored not for the meat which perishes, and they kept on preaching because they looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. If conditions were such that they had to make tents for awhile to support themselves and their families, the tent-making was secondary. It was not the tail that wagged the dog. Faithful preachers do not quit, they do not even talk about quitting.

It might be good for preachers to remember what Paul told the young evangelist, Timothy, in II Timothy 4:5. He told him to suffer hardship, indicating that doing the work of an evangelist would involve many hardships. Sometimes young men who aspire to preach the gospel only see the pleasant side of preaching. They hear the complimentary remarks and see some very enjoyable times and feel like they would like that sort of lifestyle. Some then begin to preach, having only seen a rose colored picture of what preaching is all about, then become very discouraged when the grim reality of working to save the lost is realized. The glamour has faded away, the going gets difficult, it becomes easy to find fault with brethren and slowly they find that preaching is not what they thought it would be, and some then quit. We must all realize that not everyone is cut out to preach and perhaps the best rule of thumb to follow is simply to quit if you can. Do not preach if you can do anything else. Do yourself and the brotherhood a favor. But if you must, preach the word with all that is in you. Do not look back, do not give up, do not quit or perpetually gripe and complain and feel sorry for yourself because of the circumstances surrounding your preaching. The kingdom of God has spread, not because of rich churches sent out fat salaried preachers, but because humble men of God put their trust in the Lord, suffered hardships and sacrificed self to do the work of an evangelist. It is not better educated preachers that is needed today. It is not more equipment and more money, it is dedicated soldiers of the cross willing to spend and be spent, willing to go anywhere to tell souls in darkness the glorious gospel of Christ.

Philippians 1:5

Verse 5 - For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now. Fellowship - koinonia - means partnership, participation, benefaction, to communicate, distribute or contribute. Fellowship here probably refers to more than just their contribution to his support, yet definitely includes it. They evidently began to support him from time to time beginning at the conversions of Lyddia and the jailor.

Philippians 2:25

Verse 25 - Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labor, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

Epaphroditus was sent by the Philippians to deliver their support for Paul and remain there to serve him while Paul was in prison in Rome. Not only did they send support to Paul, but this implies that they supported Epaphroditus to make the trip and to assist Paul while with him.

Verse 10 - In accepting this gift, Paul exercised his right to receive support (I Corinthians 9). He ascribes this gift to the providence of God and rejoices in the Lord because of it. In that they revived their giving, indicated they had given previously. Although it had been some time, it was only because they lacked opportunity to support him, not because they neglected him.

Verses 11 - 13 - Paul shows his ability to be content with whatever state he was in, whether he received the Philippian gift or not. He was however, in need and thankful for it. In their giving they not only benefited Paul, but themselves as well. Paul rejoiced, not so much because of his want, but to see their interest in spiritual matters.

There are some lessons here for preachers

1. Paul was content in whatever state he was in.
2. This was something that he had to learn.

His experiences taught him to depend on God and that God would provide regardless of his lot. (Matthew 10:9, 10; Luke 10:7, 8). He had experienced abasement (i.e. made low socially and economically). He had experienced abundance, or more than just his needs. He had been full and he had been hungry. There is a lesson in this for those supporting preachers. There is certainly nothing wrong for a preacher to have more than he needs at times, because he certainly will have plenty of times when he is in need.

Verse 14 - Even though Paul could be content without their support, he commends them for their generosity. He was not to be neglected even if he could be content being in need. "Communicate" - means to share. The Philippians had made a common cause with Paul's afflictions by sending help to him, and by sending Epaphroditus to assist him. Using the word affliction, Paul shows that he was in need when the gift arrived.

Verse 15 - The events mentioned here occurred approximately twelve years before this epistle was written. Paul does not say that he had never previously accepted offerings from other churches, nor does he say that in later times other churches had not helped him. But at this particular time, none helped him except the Philippians.

Verse 16 - "Once and Again" - They sent over and over, according to his needs. Beside gifts to Paul, they also contributed "beyond their power" and "out of their deep poverty" for the poor saints in Judea (II Corinthians 8:1 - 4). They set an example for the church in all times, as they continually provided support to Paul as long as there was opportunity, in spite of their own economic deficiencies.

Verse 17 - Paul was not covetous of their possessions, but he rejoiced in their supporting him because it would contribute ultimately to their own good. Herein lie some valuable lessons for our congregations:

1. Whatever Paul enjoyed in the work, they were partakers with him (1:3 - 7). There is great joy for all when the word is being spread, converts made and churches established. There is great joy even when the work is being done in areas other than where the support is coming from.
2. Jesus said that it is more blessed to give than to receive, so fruit is grown in their own Christian lives by supporting the work.
3. Their eternal reward is enhanced as a result of their supporting the gospel (Matthew 10:4, 42).

Verse 18 - The gift must have been generous and substantial, for he said that he now had "all things" and "abounded". They provided more than simply what he needed. He now lacked nothing. All sacrifices made in Christ's name to help those who preach the gospel, go up to God as an odor of a sweet smell, acceptable and well pleasing.

Galatians 6:6

Verse 6 - Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

This verse goes with the preceding verses concerning sharing one another's burdens. The following verses teach that we will reap what we sow and not be weary in well doing. These thoughts certainly go along with this verse which simply indicates that those who have been taught spiritual matters should concern themselves with providing for those who teach such things.

Conclusion

These are the primary verses which teach that preachers have the right to live of the gospel because God has said it should be so. There are a few secondary verses which imply that churches supported preachers to preach. Several verses mention the church providing for the travels of preachers as they went on their ways (Acts 13:1 - 5; 15:3; 17:14, 15; I Corinthians 6:6, 11; II Corinthians 1:11, Titus 3:13; and III John 6). There are also other places that mention Paul providing for himself and these passages all explain his reasons (II Thessalonian 3:8, 9, - to set an example for those who were not working; Acts 20:33, 34 - verse 35 - "so laboring you ought to support the weak".) There are also many general principles in the New Testament for congregations to consider when supporting a preacher. Matthew 7:12 - "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Matthew 6:21 - "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Matthew 25:31 - 46 - the actions of the righteous and the unrighteous.

We have achieved a level of prosperity for the common man that is the envy of the world. It is tragic that these material goods have engendered within many a greed for more and more, without a just sense of stewardship. With our blessings, it should never be necessary for preachers to have inadequate support and be forced to leave the field of preaching. While many congregations lavish their resources on cathedrals of pride, trying to keep up with their denominational and digressive neighbors, worrying about landscaping and their image, doors of opportunity around the world may be slowly closing, while eternity bound souls perish. Let each individual preacher and every member of the church understand their responsibilities of spreading God's word and determine to follow the truth of God's word on this very important subject. Remember, I Corinthians 9:14 - Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

ABOMINATIONS

By Ron Alexander

The old law was taken out of the way, nailed to the cross of calvary and has absolutely no authority over Christians today. However, Paul tells us in Romans 15:4, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." Many lessons are learned from the study of the Old Testament. In Revelation 21:5, "the abominable shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." Yet very little is said in the New Testament about abominations. We get a much better picture of abominations in the study of the Old Testament.

The word, "abominations" is used in different ways in the Old Testament. Certain meats were an abomination to the children of Israel (Leviticus 11). Genesis 43:34 teaches that it was an abomination for an Egyptian to eat with a Hebrew. Shepherds were an abomination to the Egyptians according to Genesis 46:34. Our study will focus on people who became an abomination to God or activities and things which became abominations to God.

Eight Hebrew words were translated into the English words abominable, abominably, abomination and abominations. These words are very similiar and generally mean: to hate, disgusting, filthy, detestable, to smell bad, to be abhorred, to stink, to loathe, to pollute, to be enraged, angry, and defy. These definitions picture God's attitude toward people or things which are an abomination to him. The Bible teaches that God and Christ are the same yesterday, today and forever (John 8:58; Hebrews 1:12; 13:8; Revelation 1:4). If God found certain things or people to be disgusting, detestable or hated at one time he must today.

God has changed the way he ruled his people from the Patriarch law, to the law of Moses, to Christianity, but this was not a change of God's attitude. By changing the laws with which God ruled his people, he was educating the human race spiritually. Paul says in Galatians 4:24, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." God was not changing his attitude, he was changing our attitude so that we could and would accept Jesus Christ.

So many scriptures are found in the Old Testament dealing with abominations, we will attempt to simplify our study by placing them into categories. By far, the largest list of scriptures deal with idols or idolatrous worship. In Deuteronomy 7:25, 26, graven images are pictured as abominations to God and the children of Israel were forbidden to bring them into their houses, "lest thou be a cursed thing like it." They were further instructed to utterly detest and abhor it for it was a cursed thing. He warns them, "lest thou be snared therein: for it is an abomination to God." Peter, in 1 Peter 4:3, places "abominable idolatries" in the group of sins that Christians are to leave behind before they give account on the day of judgment.

Deuteronomy 18:9 - 14 lists several activities that were evidently used as a part of idolatrous worship. Such things as divination, observers of times, enchanters, a witch, a charmer, a consulter of familiar spirits, a wizard and a necromancer, were sometimes used as a form of idolatry. Each of these designates supernatural power to something other than God.

Several sex related sins are also considered abominations to God. God has always expected men and women to occupy different roles in life. This was obvious when God placed Eve in the garden as Adam's help meet. In Genesis 3:16 God speaking to Eve, "and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall have rule over thee." God places the husband at the head of the house and the woman in subjection to him (Ephesians 5:22, 23). Throughout the Bible, God portrays men and women in separate roles.

Anytime, either men or women, step out of their God given roles into the role of the opposite sex, God finds them unacceptable. In Leviticus 18:6 - 30, incest, sodomy and bestiality are all said to be abominations. In Leviticus 18:22, "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind, it is an abomination." So, homosexuality, so prevalent in our day, is considered an abomination. Paul in

Romans 1:26, 27 states, "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust toward another: men with men working that which is unseemly . . ."

A similar line of thought involving the distinction between men and women is found in Deuteronomy 22:5. "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth to a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment. For all that do so are an abomination to the Lord our God." We may not know everything about the clothing of that day, but one thing is sure, there was a difference between what a man wore and what a woman wore. Anytime either men or women wore something considered to be clothing of the other sex, they became an abomination to God.

Some think this verse forbids a woman to wear a man's armor or other clothing specifically worn in battle. However, this verse also forbids a man to wear a woman's garment and it makes little sense for him to be forbidden to wear clothing that a woman would wear into battle. This verse must be talking about the everyday clothing of both men and women.

There is no verse in the New Testament that absolutely forbids men or women to wear the clothing of the opposite sex. However, we do find several verses that deal with the way women are to dress. Sometimes this is an attitude which is exhibited by the type of clothing to be worn, especially when modest apparel is under consideration. Since no explicit instruction is given to men about their apparel, this seems to separate men and women into separate groups and reinforces the distinction between men and women.

One thing is certain, men are forbidden to become effeminate. I Corinthians 6:9 says, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, . . ." God will not tolerate our crossing the lines of sexual identification. When we do, we become disgusting and detestable to him.

In spite of what society has tried to do, there are types of clothing that still pertain to men and some that pertain to women. The unisex movement has attempted to remove lines of distinction between men and women. As Christians, we should always choose the safest possible path in making our calling an election sure. Christians should always choose clothing about which there is no doubt to whom it pertains.

Under the old law some sacrifices were not only deemed unacceptable, but were an abomination to God. Deuteronomy 17:1 reads, "Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the Lord thy God any bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish, or any evilfavouredness: for that is an abomination unto the Lord thy God." God has always expected the very best from his people.

Not only did they have to offer animals without blemish, but they were commanded to live good lives. In Proverbs 15:8, 9, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight. The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord: but he loveth him who followeth after righteousness." That same principle still applies today. I Peter 3:12 says, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." Paul wrote to the Corinthian brethren, "For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward . . ." We must willingly offer our bodies as a living sacrifice unto God.

Seven abominations are listed in Proverbs 6:16 - 19. "A proud look" strikes at the very heart of Christianity. One of the most important attributes of God's servants has always been humility. If we are unwilling to humbly submit ourselves to God's word, we can never live lives acceptable to God.

"A lying tongue" and "a false witness that speaketh lies" are also an abomination to God. In Proverbs 12:22, "Lying lips are an abomination unto God". One of life's most difficult challenges is to express ourselves in a way that everyone understands exactly what we mean. If people cannot believe us when we speak of everyday things, they certainly will not listen when we talk to them about the scriptures.

"Hands that shed innocent blood" are also an abomination to God. Most of us are never tempted to take someone's life, because we are aware of the severe penalties both in this life and in the life to come.

"A heart that deviseth wicked imaginations", is also an abomination to God. Some people always seem to devise new methods of cheating someone or to do some evil. Those not using "honest weights" in Deuteronomy 25:13 - 15 would fall into this category. In Proverbs 15:26, we are told that even "the thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord". Tied closely to this idea, would be "feet that be swift in running to mischief". Some may not devise wicked imaginations, but as soon as it is suggested they are ready.

The last in this list of seven abominations is "he that soweth discord among brethren". We had better give serious consideration to this thought and be very careful not to be guilty of sowing discord among brethren. The church is made up of God's people, purchased by the blood of Christ. As Christians, we must not say or do anything that might cause hard feelings or divide brethren. What sin could be more serious than causing division in the Lord's church?

Finally, our attitude about sin and sinners is very important. In Proverbs 17:15 we read, "He that justifieth the wicked and he that condemneth the just, even both are abominations to the Lord". When someone does wrong, it is sometimes difficult not to attempt to justify them, especially if that person is a friend or a part of the family. Yet, at no time can a Christian justify sin in anyone's life. This does not mean that we should be quick to condemn someone when they have done wrong. We must approach them with love attempting to help them overcome the sin in their life. We must abhor evil, but not the person guilty of the evil. On the other hand, sometimes we hear someone condemn the just. Christians must always stand for right and against wrong.

Briefly, we have studied some things which God has found disgusting, detestable, and filthy. If God hated certain things at one time, how could he suddenly find these same things acceptable? Especially when we find most of these same things reiterated in the New Testament. We hope you will prayerfully consider these things.

ESTABLISHING NEW CHURCHES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

By Johnny Elmore

Introduction:

Since we cannot look at everything in the Book of Acts, I propose that we analyze the efforts of the greatest evangelist and builder of churches who has ever been known, the marvelous apostle to the Gentiles, better known as Paul. I believe Paul is an example to those of us who aspire to be evangelists, soul-winners, and personal workers. Paul said, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1). There is certainly one outstanding difference in the work of the apostle Paul in that he is what has been called a "plenipotentiary", that is, invested with full power to carry out God's will. He was not dependent upon any congregation for his orders. He had authority granted him which no evangelist possessed then and which no evangelist possesses today.

A Look At Paul's Methods

Jesus promised his disciples that "ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The Book of Acts could be divided into two parts. In fact, it has been said that we could start at Acts 13:1, and find a complete story as we read the rest of the book. The word has been spread in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and Galilee. The persecutions described in Acts 8:1 - 4 resulted in the gospel being spread throughout Palestine. We are told in Acts 11:19 that it resulted in some traveling as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, however, their preaching was to Jews only. The next step in spreading the Word was not by apostles, but by "men from Cyprus and Cyrene" (Acts 11:20). These men came to Antioch and preached unto "Greeks also". Could it be that they had heard of Peter's work among the Gentiles? The results were good, for a "great number believed, and turned unto the Lord" (Acts 11:21). Jerusalem heard about it and sent Barnabas, which resulted in "much people" being "added unto the Lord". It was then that Barnabas went to Tarsus looking for Saul, and brought him to Antioch, where they stayed for a year and "taught much people" (Acts 11:24). Now we are ready to see the beginnings of the great labors of Saul.

The First Preaching Tour

Beginning in Acts 13, the Holy Spirit commanded the church at Antioch to "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13:2). Notice the manner of separation: "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away" (Acts 13:3). Now let us trace Paul's first journey.

1. **Antioch.** Their trip began at Antioch in Syria.
2. **Selucia.** Their first stop was the seaport of Antioch, called Selucia. It was about sixteen miles from Antioch. Evidently John Mark met them there.
3. **Salamia.** Landing at Salamis, in Cyprus, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews" (Acts 13:5). Evidently there were no results. If so, they were not mentioned.
4. **Paphos.** The preachers traversed the island of Cyprus, possibly visiting previous work of those on the island, ending up at Paphos, a distance of a hundred miles from Salamis. At Paphos, a false prophet and sorcerer named Elymas Bar-Jesus tried to withstand Barnabas' and Saul's teaching of Sergius Paulus, the procounsul of the island. DeWalt thinks that he railed and contradicted them as

they spoke. Saul rebuked him in no uncertain terms and the false prophet became temporarily blind, and Sergius Paulus believed. This resulted in two things: (1) Saul's name being changed to Paul, after Sergius Paulus; and (2) Paul's taking command. It is a fact that after this incident Saul is called Paul, and Acts 13:13 says, "Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos", showing that Paul was in charge. It is significant that Paul is mentioned fifth at Antioch (Acts 13:1), but is now mentioned first.

5. **Perga.** Leaving Paphos, they travel to Perga, located a few miles up from the coast of Asia Minor. There is no record of anything that might have taken place there, except that John Mark displeased Paul because he "went not with them to the work" (Acts 15:38). We can only speculate why.

6. **Antioch of Pisidia.** The apostles' next work was at Antioch of Pisidia, which was about 125 miles from Perga, over some of the roughest terrain imaginable. Here they "went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down" (Acts 13:14). Paul's opportunity came and he preached Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ of God. A request was made to hear more the next sabbath. What do you suppose Paul and Barnabas were doing during the week? Paul later said in Ephesus that he "ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31), and that this was done not only publicly but also "from house to house" (Acts 20:20). I am persuaded that this was Paul's method, and this is our authority for door-knocking and home Bible studies. The Jews' violent rejection of Paul's teaching led to his turning to the Gentiles, who "were glad, and glorified the word of God", and as many as were disposed to eternal life "believed" (Acts 13:48). Other results were that "the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region" (Acts 13:49).

7. **Iconium.** From Antioch, the apostles went southeast to Iconium, which was about 90 miles away, where they entered the synagogue. The attendance at such services was for only one purpose, which was to preach Jesus as the Christ. The result was that they "so spake that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed" (Acts 14:1). Here their preaching stirred up the city and they were forced to leave to avoid being stoned. The American Standard Version says that some "believed" and that some were "disobedient". Coffman shows that the term "believed", used here in contrast with the term "disobedient", is a figure of speech which stands for all that is involved in becoming a Christian. I believe, brethren, that we would do well to follow closely the method and message of the apostles that we, too, might "so speak" as to reach the hearts of those to whom we preach. Unfortunately, the city was shaken and divided equally for and against the apostles, and they were forced to make a hasty retreat to avoid being stoned. Someone has said that everywhere Paul went, there was either a riot or a revival, and I might add that sometimes there were both.

8. **Lystra.** The next stop was Lystra, where the Bible says: "And there they preached the gospel" (Acts 14:7). Evidently there was no synagogue and they proclaimed the gospel in the streets, apparently by the city gates. Here Paul healed a crippled man, confirming the word they preached as truth. The people wanted to worship them as gods, and the record says: "scarcely restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them" (Acts 14:18). Their rejection of this sacrifice, coupled with the prodding of the jealous Jews, resulted in Paul's being stoned, and left for dead (Acts 14:19). There is no mention by Luke of their having left any disciples, but we learn of some who accepted the gospel from II Timothy 1:5, among whom were Lois, her daughter, Eunice, and young Timothy.

9. **Derbe.** The next day, Paul went with Barnabas to Derbe. The record says: "And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra.

10. **Lystra,** 11. **Iconium,** 12. **Antioch.** They then returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, evidently thinking it was just as important to confirm the saints as it was to convert sinners, for they

retraced their steps, "confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Jesus said: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19, 20). Incidentally, they appointed elders in every church, evidently by the same method in which they were ordained (Acts 14:23).

13. **Perga.** This time they preached at Perga. If there were results, they are not mentioned.

14. **Attalia.** They went down to Attalia, and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they "gathered the church together", and "rehearsed all that God had done with them" (Acts 14:27).

15. **Antioch.** What were their results? They had traveled about 1,300 miles, preaching at Salamis, Paphos, Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Perga, and probably everywhere else they could find some who would listen. They left disciples behind in Paphos, Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium and Lystra, and evidently set several churches in order. More importantly, they had "opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles" (Acts 14:27). Verse 28 says, "And they tarried no little time with the disciples". Chronographers have estimated that they were in Antioch for about two years. If so, in the space of three years they accomplished this labor, even appointing elders. After the council recorded in Acts 15, we are told that "Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also" (Acts 15:35). We learn from Acts 15:32 that the brethren were "exhorted" and "confirmed" by their teaching and preaching. I believe the same results would follow today if we had something of the same type of instruction. We are now ready to look at Paul's second journey.

The Second Preaching Tour

I am passing over the results and the impact of the meeting at Jerusalem over the question of circumcision, and the quarrel between Paul and Barnabas over John Mark, except to say that the quarrel resulted in Barnabas taking John Mark with him to Cyprus, and Paul choosing Silas as his new companion. A statement in Acts 15:36 indicates that there were brethren, i.e. churches, "in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord". It was Paul's desire to visit them again to "see how they do" (Acts 15:36). Conybeare and Howson relate a passage in the Song of Solomon to this statement: "Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth" (Song of Solomon 7:12). Surely this is an example of church visitation which is so important. Isn't this "confirming of the churches" an important part of an evangelist's work?

1. **Antioch.** The second preaching tour begins at Antioch.

2. **Syria and Cilicia.** We do not know a great deal about these churches, mentioned in Acts 15:41, but probably Paul established some of these during his stay in his hometown in Cilicia, before his first preaching tour (Acts 9:26 - 30). Conybeare and Howson believe that Paul may have visited them often, since it is easier to travel from Antioch to Tarsus, than from Antioch to Jerusalem.

3. **Derbe.** It is mentioned that he visited Derbe, but again, no mention is made of a church there (Acts 16:1).

4. **Lystra.** It is mentioned that he came to Lystra, and that there were brethren there (Acts 16:1 - 3). Here they picked up Timothy, who became a companion and helper of Paul.

5. **Cities of Iconium and Antioch.** The cities of Iconium and Antioch are not specifically mentioned, but we may infer that they visited them from Acts 16:4, 5, since they would have been directly on the route to Phrygia and Galatia, and these cities were where Paul had previously established churches.

6. **Phrygia and Galatia.** From Antioch in Pisidia, they headed northwest to Phrygia and further north to Galatia (Acts 16:6 - 10). From what is said, we might think this was hurriedly passed over, but we learn from Galatians, chapters 1 and 4, that more than one congregation sprang up from his labors there.

7. **Bithynia,** and 8. **Mysia.** While in Phrygia and Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. They attempted to enter Bithynia but were again forbidden. They passed by Mysia (or through Mysia, American Standard Version), and were driven straight across the country to the seaport of Troas.

9. **Troas.** At Troas, evidently Luke joined them and Paul learned why God had mapped out their route. In a night vision, Paul saw a man of Macedonia who beseeched: "Come over into Macedonia and help us" (Acts 16: 8 - 10). Just here, I could only wonder if our tight schedule of evangelism sometimes causes us to be in an unfruitful place, and could keep us from either going to a more fruitful place or prevent us from staying in one?

10. **Samothrace.** Apparently they spent the night in Samothrace, an island in the Archipelago of the Aegean Sea (Acts 16:11).

11. **Neapolis.** Next they stopped at Neapolis, a city of considerable size. Why didn't they preach here? "To the Jew first, and also to the Greek" was God's order. Evidently they found no opening here so they went to the next city.

12. **Philippi.** Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke now enter Philippi. Evidently there was not a Jewish synagogue in this city, but after several days they learn that on the sabbath day some Jewish women were in the habit of congregating on the river bank for prayer. Perhaps we can learn something of Paul's method here. He apparently always began with someone with whom he had the most in common. In this pagan city, at least the Jews believed in the same God. Perhaps we would not consider Lydia a good prospect for conversion since we may infer that her heart was closed in the sense that the pious and earnest heart of a Jewish worshipper might be closed. But some of our modern personal work instructors have shown that a person who is strong and steadfast in belief is sometimes the best prospect. In this case, they would be right because Lydia's heart was opened by the preaching of the gospel, and she and her house were baptized. And who would think that a jailor would be a good prospect? But the jailor who imprisoned Paul and Silas was baptized along with his household. These families formed the nucleus of the church. We infer from Luke's use of pronouns that he stayed on in Philippi. McGarvey said: "It is implied that Timothy also remained with Luke, to still further instruct and organize the church." It is a fact that we find this church at a later period fully equipped with bishops and deacons (Philippians 1:1). It seems to me that Paul not only converted them to Christ, but also to evangelism. Philippi was always one of the best to support Paul in his preaching efforts.

13. **Amphipolis and Apollonia.** Paul and Silas simply passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia. Why did Paul pass these cities by? Were they too small? Could we not infer that it was the synagogue in Thessalonica, about 100 miles from Philippi that was drawing Paul onward?

14. **Thessalonica.** In Thessalonica, Paul followed his usual course of finding the synagogue and preaching Christ to the Jews. Undoubtedly his choice of sermon was dictated by their need. Three sabbaths they reasoned with them. The results were great. Some Jews believed, a great multitude of Gentiles, who McGarvey thinks were Jewish proselytes, believed, and many chief women. The whole town was aroused, Paul was arrested, and bond money had to be put up to get his release, and they left town by night. Paul later wrote, "For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God" (1 Thessalonians 2:9).

15. **Berea.** The next stop was at Berea, where again they found a synagogue of the Jews (Acts 17:1). Berea was about 60 miles southwest of Thessalonica. Here they found a group of Jews who actually acted like civilized beings. Instead of prejudice, they received interest and consideration. The best kind of soil for reception of the truth is a heart that will give an honest hearing and "search the scriptures daily". The result was that many of them believed and "not a few" of the Greeks (Acts 17:12). Again, embittered enemies from Thessalonica followed Paul, causing him to leave for another place. It is estimated that he stayed in Berea two or three months.

16. **Athens.** Paul's next stop was Athens, some 250 miles by land. We can only conjecture why brethren accompanied Paul to Athens, but they took back a command for Silas and Timothy to meet him there. Some say that Paul had not originally planned to evangelize Athens, but "while Paul waited for them" - what would he do? What would a person do to whom Christ was all? He "disputed" in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons (Acts 17:17). McGarvey said: "But there seem to have been none among the Jews or devout Gentiles there to receive the truth." But when Paul said the fruits of pagan idolatry everywhere, "his spirit was stirred" (Acts 17:16). Paul talked in "the market daily with them that met with him" (Acts 17:17). He talked so much that they called him "a babbler". This talking resulted in getting him a hearing at the famous Areopagus or Mar's Hill, where he preached a masterful sermon on "The Unknown God" to the original hippies and existentialists. McGarvey said, "The excellence of an argumentative discourse is measured by the degree of adaptation to the exact mental condition of the audience, and the conclusiveness with which every position is established." He concluded with the theme of the resurrection and with mixed results—"some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter Howbeit certain men clave unto him and believed" (Acts 17:32, 33). McGarvey said: "We find, however, no subsequent trace of a church in Athens within the period of apostolic history" DeWalt, however, says, "that the church in Athens was one of the strongest congregations in the second and third centuries."

17. **Corinth.** Paul's next stop was Corinth. It was about 40 miles from Athens by land and a five hour trip by sea. Paul arrived, alone, and evidently, penniless. He found lodging with Aquilla and Priscilla and supported himself by making tents. It is speculated that they were disciples at this point, but we have no way of knowing. Paul preached in the synagogue, but his manner was less aggressive. However, when Silas and Timothy came, apparently with an offering from Philippi, he changed his manner, and being "constrained by the word" (American Standard Version), he "testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ" (Acts 18:5). This brought a rupture with the Jews and Paul said, "From henceforth I will go to the Gentiles" (Acts 18:6). Paul left the synagogue, but went next door to a Gentile proselyte's house, and wonder of wonders, the ruler of the synagogue, obeyed the gospel, with his house, and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8). It appears that Paul had about decided to move on, not only because his helpers had arrived to take over, but also because of the Jews' intense hatred for him, but the Lord spoke to him in a vision by night, reassuring him of his protection and saying: "I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:10). Paul continued there a year and a half "teaching the word of God among them" (Acts 18:11). McGarvey said: "The word 'teaching', which describes his work, shows that during this long period he was executing chiefly the second part of the apostolic commission, 'teaching them to observe all that I commanded you' 94

(Matthew 28:20)." McGarvey also notes: "His stay of eighteen months in Corinth may be taken as an indication of the time which he would have spent with some other churches had he been permitted to do so."

18. **Cenchrea.** Heading for Syria, Paul crossed the Isthmus some eight or nine miles to Cenchrea, the harbour of Corinth. Later, we read of a church at Cenchrea (Romans 16:1), and McGarvey infers that it was probably planted during Paul's stay in Corinth.

19. **Ephesus.** Aquila and Priscilla accompanied Paul to Ephesus, where Paul entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. He promised the interested Jews that he would return, if God wills, and leaving Aquila and Priscilla to prepare the ground as well as they could, he hurried on.

20. **Caesarea.** He landed at Caesarea, went up and saluted the church, probably seeing Philip the evangelist and his gifted daughters, Cornelius and many others.

21. **Antioch.** Paul arrived in Antioch, after some three years' absence, and after having traveled more than 2,600 miles. What were his results? In addition to confirming the established churches in Asia Minor, Paul had added the continent of Europe, establishing churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, maybe Athens, Corinth, and perhaps Cenchrea. What a report he had to give and what a reunion it must have been! This concluded the second journey. We are ready to look briefly at the third journey.

The Third Preaching Tour

1. **Antioch of Syria.** DeWalt has calculated that Paul spent about two months at Antioch before he left again.

2. **Provinces of Galatia and Phrygia.** McGarvey said the "he must have made the circuit once more from Antioch around through Syria into Cilicia, and thence by way of the Gates of Cilicia into the elevated tablelands of Lycaonia and Pisidia, past Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and the Pisidian Antioch. This was his third visit to these communities, and his passage through Galatia and Phrygia was a second visit to the churches which he had planted there. If we may judge from the rapidity of his passage, he found the churches in all the regions in such a condition that they did not specially need a protracted visit from him, yet his work among them, brief as it was, consisted in 'establishing all the disciples'."

3. **Ephesus.** We conjectured that Paul left Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus to do ground work and now Luke gives us an example of the kind of work they did, (Acts 18:24 - 28). They "took . . . unto them" Apollos, an "eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures" and "expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly". Apollos left for Achaia with recommendations, and had great success with the Jews of Corinth, where even Paul had not had such success, showing the value of a variety of talents among preachers. Now Paul came to Ephesus, as he promised and as God willed. The record says that Paul found "certain disciples" (Acts 19:1). DeWalt says: "The fact that there were Christians in Ephesus before Paul arrived is fine testimony of the good work of Priscilla and Aquila. Here Paul corrected some on the baptism of John, baptized them, laid hands on them and they received spiritual gifts (Acts 19:1 - 7). McGarvey said that this "shows that Paul was in the habit of inspecting the condition of the disciples already found in a place, before adding to their number; and it is a precedent worthy of careful imitation by modern evangelists."

Paul evidently held a three months' meeting in the synagogue "disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts 19:8). The American Standard Version says, "reasoning and persuading". I like this method of preaching. Let us have more of it. When a determined

minority of the Jews became hardened, and resorted to ridicule and contradiction. Paul withdrew the disciples, taking with him the largest portion, it seems. The school of Tyrannus was secured. We are told that Paul stayed on another two years, and so effective was this effort, that "all they which dwelt in Asia (the Roman province) heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10). The result was that we read later of "the seven churches of Asia" (Revelation 1:4). We could have a lot to say about the events at Ephesus, the book burning, the seven sons of Sceva, and the riot of the silversmiths, but we pass on to say that Paul had "purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem" and ultimately to Rome. He had also given instructions concerning a collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem. In writing to the Corinthians Paul stated that "a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries" (I Corinthians 16:9). Because of the fruitful work in Ephesus, he decided to stay until Pentecost, and sent ahead to Macedonia Timothy and Erastus. Now, after the uproar in Ephesus, Paul departed for Macedonia.

4. **Troas.** Although it is not mentioned in the Book of Acts, DeWalt places the visit to Troas here, reasoning that the visit to Troas, mentioned in II Corinthians, occurred right after Paul left Ephesus. He had written the corrective letter of I Corinthians and sent it by Titus, expecting Titus to come back to Ephesus before he left. Now he looked for him along the way, anxious over the way his letter had been received. But when he arrived in Troas, he had not met Titus. Now we can understand his words in II Corinthians 2:12, 13. "Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence unto Macedonia."

5. **Macedonia.** The cities of Macedonia were Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. Evidently Paul met Titus at Philippi, where Titus brought the wonderful news that the church in Corinth had received Paul's letter with a humble spirit, and that most all in sin had repented. Paul then wrote a second letter, possibly sending it ahead by Titus. In Macedonia, Paul gave them "much exhortation" (Acts 20:2). This must have taken several months.

6. **Corinth.** At Corinth, Paul spent three months. During this time, he labored with the Corinthian church, wrote the book of Romans, probably Galatians, and took a collection for the saints in Jerusalem. Learning of a plot against his life, he returned through Macedonia, rather than sailing for Syria.

7. **Philippi.** From Paul's mention of the "days of unleavened bread", we learn that it has been nearly a year since he left Ephesus. He has only forty days to reach Jerusalem with his bounty by Pentecost.

8. **Troas.** Taking five days to reach Troas, he spent seven days there. Why the delay? Surely it must have been to worship with the saints there on the first day of the week. There, Paul preached a lengthy sermon, and although he had been up all night, he sent the seven brethren with him ahead to the ship, and walked the twenty miles or more to Assos. No doubt he had many things to settle alone with God.

9. **Assos.** When the ship arrived, Paul was ready to board.

10. **Mitylene.** The ship probably anchored overnight at Mitylene, as was customary.

11. **Chios.** Again, an overnight stop in a channel! "ever against Chios."

12. **Samos.** Another large island, Samos, with an overnight stop.

13. **Miletus.** The American Standard Version leaves out Trogyllium. But at any rate, Paul sailed on by Ephesus. He was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem and he knew he would be detained by his many friends. Arriving at Miletus, he found there would be time to speak to the Ephesian elders, so he sent word, and they met him at Miletus, a distance of thirty miles. We are happy he did, for he reminds them of his ministry among them, how he served them with "all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations" (Acts 20:19). He reminds them that he had "kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). Paul tells them that he counts not his life dear unto himself, and warns them that grievous wolves will enter the flock, and that men would arise speaking perverse things. He reminds them that he has "coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel," but that with "these hands" I have "ministered unto my necessities." After a sorrowful farewell, he left them.

14. **Cos.** They left and traveled to Cos, where the ship anchored.

15. **Rhodes.** Another celebrated island, and another overnight stop for the ship.

16. **Patara.** At Patara, they found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, where they immediately put out into the open sea and the last leg of their trip.

17. **Cyprus.** They did not stop at Cyprus, although within sight of it, and passed it on the left.

18. **Tyre.** The Ship unloaded at Tyre, and Paul spent seven days there, which must have included a Lord's Day. When he left, evidently the whole congregation, women, children, men and all walked with the preachers to see them off.

19. **Ptolemais.** Paul spoke to the brethren at Ptolemais for one day only.

20. **Caesarea.** At Caesarea, Paul and his company stayed a while with Philip the evangelist. Another old friend, Agabus, predicted that Paul would be bound if he returned to Jerusalem. Paul's emphatic words when he looked at his friends' faces and saw them wet with tears, rips at our hearts, "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13).

21. **Jerusalem.** Paul had brought with him the bounty taken among Gentile churches and he was gladly received at Jerusalem. Thus ends his third, and, so far as divinity records, his last preaching tour. Paul had traveled approximately 3,400 miles. With the exception of his work at Ephesus, he has spent most of the time, some four years, strengthening and confirming the churches he established. I want to make a few brief observations about his work

Some Observations

1. **Place.** The place of evangelism was important to Paul. Place was also important to the Holy Spirit. What are our motives for going to a certain place? Why did Paul go to some cities and not others? Why did Paul choose mostly larger cities? Why did the Holy Spirit forbid him to preach at first in Asia, and forbid him to go to Bithynia and stop in Mysia? Was Macedonia higher on the list of priorities? Why did Paul begin at the Jewish synagogues?

Are these worthy motives for evangelism? "I went to visit my daughter in Timbuktu and there wasn't a congregation there. You preachers need to get busy." Or, "I wish there was a church in New York City. I had to go there on business and I had to fly to Pennsylvania to find a place to worship." Or, "I wish you preachers would establish a church in Hawaii so we could go there on vacation." Or,

"My daughter and her husband have quit the church. They live in Chicago and I believe they would go back if there was a closer church."

I submit that Paul went where he did because the soil was better there. I believe he chose the larger cities because there was a greater opportunity for spreading the gospel in outlying regions.

2. **People.** Why did Paul go to the Jews first? Of course, it was God's order, but it was also those with whom he had the most in common. Why go to religious people first? A man said to me: "I am not a preacher, but I have always thought that if I ever started preaching I would go to the bars and beer-joints to begin." I thought at the time that might be valid, but that was not what Paul did. He evidently believed that a devout Jew would make a devout Christian. Suppose Paul found the people were not honest? Did he spend time and effort with them anyway? Suppose he found that they studied just to pass away the long, dreary night? No, I am persuaded that he carefully tested the soil of their hearts, and turned away when he found they were not honest and sincere. He tested the Athenians with the touchstone of the resurrection doctrine.

3. **Time.** Why did Paul spend two years in one place and very little time in another? I believe the success with which the gospel was attended was the determinant in the length of stay. Why did the Holy Spirit once direct Paul away from Asia and another time allow him to work there? Did it not have to do with what Solomon said: "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven"? (Ecclesiastes 3:1) We know one thing. It was not because the brethren would support him at one place and not at another.

4. **Companions.** Why was Paul careful to take men with him that he thought could provide help, seldom going by himself? We cannot discount the human factor. Preachers get discouraged, lonely and blue. Paul was no exception. The presence of other brethren seemed to build Paul up and give him courage. Why did Paul refuse to take John Mark and split up with Barnabas over it, even though he spoke well of Mark later? Again, the human factor. Compatibility is necessary when our lives depend upon it. What were the advantages of more than one going? Just as Paul could not take advantage of the open door at Troas because he was so concerned about Titus and Corinth, we cannot work if we are troubled in spirit. Stewart has emphasized the great psychological power of a silent partner who reinforces the spokesman, and even provides a measure of peer approval for the prospect. Why did Apollos go to Achaia (Corinth) after learning "the way of God" more perfectly? Was it not because his prospects would have seen a direct conflict in his teaching on baptism before and after he learned the truth? Consistency is important. Why was Apollos successful where even Paul was not so successful? Is this not proof of the old idea that different preachers are able to reach different people?

5. **Method.** Why did Paul emphasize "Jesus as the Christ" at times in his preaching and "The Unknown God" and "The Resurrection" at other times? Didn't Paul always address his teaching to the needs of the people? I know of preachers who have gone to a place where there was absolutely no contention over the subject and have preached on "Sunday School". Others have made "The Evils of Tobacco" their first sermon. Why was Paul careful to ask about their baptism on one occasion? Isn't it important to find out exactly where the prospect is? Why did Paul evidently hold long meetings some places and preach only one sermon at others? I believe we cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of "confirming the saints", if we are truly interested in the salvation of men's souls. Incidentally, where there is interest, long meetings might be an advantage. Some may remember a mission meeting at Mustang, Oklahoma some years ago where we ran a meeting longer because there was good interest, resulting in several baptisms and confessions. T. B. Larimore once held a gospel meeting in Sherman, Texas from January 3 until June 7, 1894. During this meeting he preached twice every day and three times on Sunday, 333 sermons, and baptized 254. Prior to Walter Scott's accepting the invitation to evangelize the Western Reserve, he spent two months in prayer and study and in consultation

with the brethren. During the years 1827 - 1830 while carrying out the assignment it meant being away from home and his three children. In addition, he gave up preaching for the church in Pittsburgh, and his academy. He preached two or three times daily, and led a difficult life with constant travel on horseback, sleeping and eating wherever he could, but he baptized thousands.

Did Paul rely entirely upon public preaching, as we do sometimes, or did he teach privately and write letters as well? To ask this question is to answer it. See Acts 20:20.

What do you think Paul would have thought about the effectiveness of television, radio, and newspaper preaching? Surely all these methods have their place in spreading the gospel, but the churches that grow the most have effective personal work efforts going on. I read this illustration which seems to make the point. There was a deer hunt where the main objective was to kill as many deer as possible. During the hunt, a man finds 30 or 40 deer grazing at a clearing. Upon seeing the deer, he has to make a choice which gun he will use to shoot the deer. He has with him two guns a 30.06 rifle and a 20-gauge shotgun. Which one should he use? If he uses the shotgun, he could hit almost every deer. If he used the rifle, he would hit one or two. Many people would argue to use the shotgun in order to hit them all instead of using the rifle and hitting just a few. But the problem is that if one uses the shotgun, all the deer will be hit but none will be killed. If the rifle is used, most of the deer will be missed, but there will be one or two that can be taken home. The lesson is obvious, and shows the reason that Paul was interested in teaching "from house to house".

Was Paul interested in training others to do personal work? Was not this another reason he took others with him? Don't you think this is what he did in Ephesus when he said: "But have shewed and have taught you publickly, and from house to house?" (Acts 20:20). Which had you rather have ---a salary of \$2,000 per month or a penny a day doubled each day? A penny that is doubled appears to be very cheap wages. Wages of a penny the first day, two cents the second, and four cents the third day does not seem like very much. However, after only 31 days, this salary would equal over 20 million dollars--not a bad month's wage. The point is that nature has shown that multiplication works and is the fastest method to reach the world. Jesus and Paul employed this principle as the plan to bring the world to Christ. It has been estimated that at the close of the first century, there were over 6 million Christians in Asia Minor alone.

WHEN THERE IS NO GROWTH

By Randy Tidmore

Thesis: To discuss some problem areas in church growth, and some possible solutions.

Introduction:

There is a growing concern among our brethren about "church growth". This has been manifested in different ways, people say things such as:

"Why can't we grow like we used to?"

"People just don't come to meetings like they once did."

"Has the gospel lost its power?"

The fact that this topic and related ones were considered worthy of the study indicate the concern that we have for Church growth.

How should we determine church growth? Shall we use the statistics of the church during the first century? -- we certainly are not growing as they did. Shall we use the statistics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? -- we are not growing as they did, either. Should we consider anything beyond "just holding our own", as growth? -- even at this, in many cases, we are not growing.

"In 1957, 5,320 churches in the Southern Baptist Convention reported not one baptism during the entire year. Those churches are dying. If they continue the present pace it is but a matter of time until they will not exist at all. Some of them have gone several years without baptizing anybody. Any church that ceases to win people to the Lord and baptize them eventually ceases to be. The church that majors on anything other than evangelism soon has nothing to major on." (Personal Soul-winning, by Leonard Sanderson, page 6)

I have heard brethren say that they just could not seem to get anywhere when, in fact they had baptized thirteen in the past year. During my talk, I shall consider anything beyond "just holding our own" as growth. Did your home congregation baptize anyone last year? If not then that congregation is in danger of dying.

This lesson will be dealing with:

- 1) Problems with establishing a congregation.
- 2) Problems hindering an existing congregation's growth.
- 3) What can "I" do?

God Has a Plan For Selecting A Field of Labor

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."
(Mark 16:15)

Though the whole world is our field of labor, the pattern for establishing congregations in the New Testament was a "natural outgrowth", with the exception of an inspired order, such as the Macedonian call. (Acts 16:6 - 10).

"Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison. Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word." (Acts 8:1 - 4)

The saints went to the outlying areas preaching the word, which resulted in the establishment of congregations. The apostles were fulfilling the great commission through others (but the apostles stay- ed at Jerusalem. (verse 1)

Today, our evangelistic efforts should be to build up local congregations by evangelizing the surrounding areas. When we have enough converts from one area, and they have been strengthened to the point of being able to take on the responsibilities of leadership roles in a new congregation, then a new congregation should be established. When a congregation is started in this fashion there is little chance of it failing.

Some attempts have been made to establish congregations that do not fit this pattern. If we have tried to start a congregation and failed, we should try to understand why we failed, and learn as much as we can through our observations for future reference.

Why was the place chosen for establishing a congregation? -- is a good question to ask ourselves. Some places have been chosen because:

- 1) A member can get a raise, or a promotion if he will move to some isolated area where there is no congregation --so he moves there and tries to start one.
- 2) Several members like to vacation there, and it is so inconvenient for them to have to drive so far for services on Sunday morning.

Sometimes, we fail to establish a congregation due to such haphazard methods of choosing an area.

However, sometimes we feel we must try to establish a congregation in an isolated area due to unavoidable circumstances. Maybe someone that lives in an area away from a faithful congregation, while visiting friends or relatives, attend a gospel meeting, is converted, and will have to return home where there is no faithful congregation. Maybe he seems very sincere and we feel we really need to start a congregation. We have no way of knowing the chances of success for a congregation being established, but we can hardly afford not to try. If the prospect turns out not to be what we thought and the rest of the "soil" in the area is not fertile, then we will fail.

When an attempt is made to establish a congregation, it should be attempted with not only a commitment to the area, but also the patience to see it through.

Some other observations and questions concerning failed attempts at establishing congregations have been:

- 1) Do we need a "seed congregation" in order to establish a congregation?

In a "natural outgrowth" we would have this seed congregation which is ideal. However, having a "seed congregation" move to an isolated area would not guarantee success. we have some established congregations that do a great deal of work that do not grow.

2) Was the preacher financially hindered?

Sometimes, the struggling new congregation has insufficient funds to try several desired efforts. They can not afford a television or radio program, nor newspaper articles, nor even a good selection of gospel tracts. This can be a hindrance, but every congregation can afford door knocking –it is very cost effective, and a more effective means of personal work than some give it credit.

3) Are the false religions too many, and do they already have too much power in the community? Are we too far behind now to be successful?

No doubt, this is a problem, but if this is one of the outlying areas we are evangelizing, we can judge when to start a congregation there by the number of members we get from repeated efforts.

4) Is it because our preachers are inadequately trained?

There is a great need for the scriptural training of preachers, in the field of “real evangelism”, not just the making of pulpiteers. I believe there is no better, more scriptural way, than doing personal work with someone that is experienced.

God Has a Plan for Congregational Growth

Congregational growth must be based upon the word of God. The Bible says to be careful how we build.

“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (I Corinthians 3:10, 11)

We must be careful in choosing methods of Church growth. The church was designed by God.

“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:” (Ephesians 3:10, 11)

He has a plan for Church growth. To fail to follow His plan, is to hinder that growth.

I. The Church must work for unity.

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love: Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:1 - 3)

Religious division in, or out of the church is a hindrance to growth.

Jesus prayed for unity. “that, the world might believe.”

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” (John 17:20, 21)

The teaching of the Holy Spirit when followed produces unity.

"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:3)

Unity is not an accident looking for a congregation where it can happen. Each person must share the responsibility for "keeping the unity of the Spirit.

Unity must be desired.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." (Psalms 133)

Unity results from a common belief, it cannot be legislated into existence. (such as dictatorship).

It is not an agreement to disagree, it is worked for, and founded on the teaching of the Bible.

Unity must be achieved on the congregational level. If we are really "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace", then there are somethings we should consider. We have heard warnings against being satisfied with a democracy, "majority rule", instead of working towards having elders, but we need to beware of "minority rule" also.

In his book on Church growth, "Balance", Ira North said:

"I want to mention one evil and vice in church work that can cause so much heartache and sorrow. I believe the policy is so inherently evil and wrong that it will guarantee the demise of any congregation and will make sure that growth is absolutely impossible. I am speaking of the Hitler and Stalin attitude of minority rule."

"... some congregations have adopted the policy that if one person objects to anything, any matter of expediency, the congregation will not do it. Can you imagine in your wildest dreams any successful American Corporation saying that anytime one stock holder disagreed on matters of judgment and expediency they would not go with the idea? This gives the brother who is born in the objective case and kickative mood a Stalin veto over every suggestion that is made."

"Let everybody have his say and nobody have his way all the time. In other words, when the dust settles, in matters of expediency the minority must give in to the majority, or else we have minority rule, and the Biblical principle of 'let every man esteem the other better than himself' is completely destroyed."

"Finding fault and criticizing, killing good ideas, and shooting down worthy programs is just a normal gait for some brethren." (Pages 119 - 121).

Truth must never be compromised, but the opinion of one or two should never be allowed to hinder the growth of the Church.

II. Each congregation must also receive a balanced diet at the worship services.

"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again; which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Hebrews 5:12 - 14)

The writer speaks of a "time ye ought to be teachers". there must also be a "time when ye ought not to be teachers".

Except for services that are planned to give the babe in Christ an opportunity to develop his speaking ability, the pulpit should never be given over to one who can not feed the flock.

The teachers and preachers must "speak the truth in love." (Ephesians 4:15)

This means we give the congregation what it needs, not necessarily what it wants; and that we do it with love.

Sometimes, this will mean we must reprove, and/or rebuke, but there will also be times that these types of sermons are not needed.

Not only do we need to show them the problems, but also the solutions: we need some "how to" sermons.

"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 longsuffering and 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 into fables." (II Timothy 4:1 - 4)

The church can not survive if it ceases to preach and teach God's word. The "social gospel" places the emphasis on the social aspects of Christianity, to the neglect of teaching God's truth.

A Church cannot be built on a foundation of "everything is relative --- there is no truth per se."

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believe on him. If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31, 32)

A congregation can never outgrow its preaching and teaching.

III The Church must be kept pure if it expects to grow.

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." (II Thessalonians 3:6)

The fornicator at Corinth could destroy the Church

"Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:" (I Corinthians 5:6, 7)

The one involved was to be "delivered to Satan".

"To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (1 Corinthians 5:5).

The purpose of the withdrawal are:

- 1) To save the soul of the one involved in sin by impressing him with the seriousness of the evil.
- 2) To preserve the purity of the Church.

"That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Ephesians 5:27)

The Church is like a ship —as long as the ship is in the sea (the world) and the sea out of the ship the port can be reached. But if the sea gets into the ship it will sink.

The Church may use every high pressure technique available, but this is no substitute for godliness.

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;" (Titus 2:11, 12)

God's people must be the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:12 - 16)

In order to become a Christian, obedience to Christ is necessary.

"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46)

In order to remain a faithful Christian, obedience is necessary.

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21)

Obedience to Christ is a proof of salvation.

"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." (1 John 2:3,4)

Obedience demands a belief of, and obedience to "all" of the Lord's commands.

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matthew 28:20)

However, the Lord's command to withdraw has been called "The Forgotten Commandment" because many times it has been ignored or rejected.

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." (II Thessalonians 3:6)

IV. Some congregations can not grow because they do not have the love they should for one another.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you have love one to another." (John 13:34, 35)

Christians are to love one another with a "pure heart fervently".

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:" (I Peter 1:22)

Some of the characteristics of love are found in I Corinthians 13.

- (1) Suffers long: "protracted endurance of wrong".
- (2) Kind: Good-natured, gentle.
- (3) Envieth not: not unhappy over the success of others.
- (4) Vaunteth not itself: does not make a show of itself.
- (5) Is not puffed up: does not have inflated opinion of itself.
- (6) Doth not behave unseemly: it prefers others.
- (7) Seeketh not her own: looks to make others happy.
- (8) Is not easily provoked: does not readily take offense.
- (9) Thinketh no evil: does not put wrong construction on other's action.
- (10) Rejoiceth not in iniquity: in wrong doing of others.
- (11) Rejoiceth in the truth: when truth prevails.
- (12) Beareth and endureth all things: patiently bears and suffers.
- (13) Believeth and hopeth all things: believes good and trusts for good.

The one who fails to have love does not know God.

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God: and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God: for God is love." (I John 4:7-8)

How many people have visited us and "heard" the truth, but failed to "see" the truth —true love between our members?

Recently, we were knocking doors in DeQueen, and William St. John and I were working in a fairly rich area. There were "Christmas" decorations on nearly every house, some had gone to quite a lot of trouble. One house that we knocked, had its share of the decorations, (supposedly a sign of the "Christmas" spirit) but the lady was very rude. As Christians, we wear a name that means love, but sometimes our actions speak differently.

Some good ways to gauge the love a congregation shares are:

- (1) The number of activities they do together outside the worship.
- (2) The willingness to help others in need.
- (3) The promptness in which they check on members that are absent from the services, whether sick physically, or spiritually.

I know there has been much said lately on the subject of love, but remember it was Jesus, Himself, that named it as an eternal identifying characteristic of the New Testament Church.

V. The atmosphere of the congregation can hinder its growth.

Is the best part of the worship service the beginning, or the ending?

Do our worship services invigorate us, or wear us down?

A congregation needs to have the type of atmosphere that:

- (1) Has a degree of excitement, but is not chaotic.
- (2) Shows reverence for God, but is not funeralistic.
- (3) Follows the Bible pattern of worship, but is not ritualistic.

The worship must be in spirit and truth (John 4:23,24). It must be from the heart (our minds must be set on our worship), and it must be according to the pattern.

SINGING—too many funeral songs are sung, and too often good hymns are drag. A congregation should always work at improving its singing.

Concerning this, Ira North said:

"One of the greatest assets to the worship service is good singing. Dull, dry singing is so discouraging. It throws cold water on the entire worship service, and creates an atmosphere more of gloom and doom than of joy and peace."

"It is hard to have an atmosphere of excitement and joy in a worship service when the singing is dead." (Balance, page 23,24)

PRAYER—Should not wear everyone out, but cover things needed to be mentioned in a worship prayer—some things can be mentioned in our personal prayers. It should be our "pouring our hearts out to God", instead of a recitation of the only prayer we know.

THE LORD'S SUPPER—Is not the time for another sermon, nor a refutation of all the disgressive arguments for individual cups, but enough should be said to help prepare the minds of the participants. The prayers, here too, should be to the point.

THE TEACHING—The message should be worth listening to, and the audience should show the greatest respect, not for the speaker, but for the word of God, that he is trying to deliver. Distractions should be minimal.

The worship service, in its entirety, should be uplifting, and edifying, then the visitors that we have will be interested in knowing more.

Concerning the worship services, Mr. North also said:

"Our worship services ought to be a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus, a celebration of great hope, a celebration of great love, a celebration of the providence and goodness of God."

"The world is starved for friendship and love."

"The growing congregation ought to be extremely anxious for everyone attending the services to feel wanted and appreciated. We, at Madison, have learned that a formal, ritualistic atmosphere does not bring growth."

"Each congregation can cultivate an atmosphere of warmth and love and enthusiasm that will attract people. The Gospel of Christ is a glorious, wonderful thing. It brings such happiness to the human heart and such glorious hope to the soul."

"If there is genuine love and concern, it will shine through. If there is hostility and negative feelings, it cannot be hidden with fine furniture or beautiful lighting or expensive drapes. On the other hand, if the friendliness and love are real, it cannot be dimmed with a plain, and humble house." (Balance, pages 22, 23, 25)

There are many possible reasons for a congregation not to grow. It may be that they are ignorant of their problems, and/or the solutions, or it may be apathy. Some congregations do not grow because they are guilty of the sin of indifference.

Some other things that should be considered as possible reasons are:

(1) Materialism

Materialism robs some members of all their time. It hinders door knocking, because many people are seldom home, or are too busy to study.

(2) A lack of commitment of the average member of the Church.

If you want to make a list of some reasons why the Church does not grow, you just list as many answers, as you have questions:

(1) Why do you not study as much as you should?

(2) Why do you not try some type of personal soul-winning?

When you are through you will have some reasons that the Church does not grow. That brings us to the last point:

WHAT CAN "I" DO

I can not solve all the problems in the Church, but what can I do?

(1) I can be dedicated to God and take my commitment to Him serious, He did.

(2) I can begin to study the Bible, and develop the confidence needed to tell others the Gospel.

(3) I can be a source of encouragement to other members, helping them to become involved in soul-winning too.

These things will definitely effect the growth of the Church.

In his book "Personal Soul-winning", Leonard Sanderson wrote:

"There is something about a soul-winner that is different. There is a radiance reflected and a consecrated Christ-likeness exemplified that makes him appear different.

"The most satisfying experience that a Christian can have is to help another person become a Christian. There is joy to the Christian in trying to lead the lost to the Saviour even if he fails.

"The soul-winning Christian is a growing Christian. Soul-winning Christians usually have a better knowledge of the Word of God. Using the Scriptures and talking with other people not only acquaints Christians with the teaching of the Bible, but also helps them to have keener concepts of its deeper meanings.

"The soul-winner lives a consecrated life not merely as a means of setting the proper example for those he is trying to win, but as he dedicates himself to helping others to become Christians, he finds himself more careful in his own personal living.

"There are those with limited formal education who after they become Christians prepare themselves for leadership because they give themselves to study to win others to the Saviour. No one is qualified to be a leader in his church unless he earnestly desires the salvation of the lost about him.

"Soul-winning is a normal Christian experience. It gives proper motivation to Christian living, helps the Christian to love people, and gives a sense of achievement which cannot be obtained in any other manner. The greatest need today is for more church members to be committed to personal soul-winning." (Pages 7 - 11)

Every member of the Church must be active.

From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." (Ephesians 4:16)

The preacher cannot do the work of the church for them. Think of the power lying dormant in most congregations today. God's people today have the intelligence and education to do His work. Christians have the financial resources to get the job done. Each member must be aroused to his personal responsibility to the church.

If I could do a great work, I would. "Cross the ocean, but not the street."

Jesus died to purchase a people who would be zealous of good works.

"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus 2:14)

The Church is made up of individuals, therefore Church growth begins with me!