

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

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

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

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

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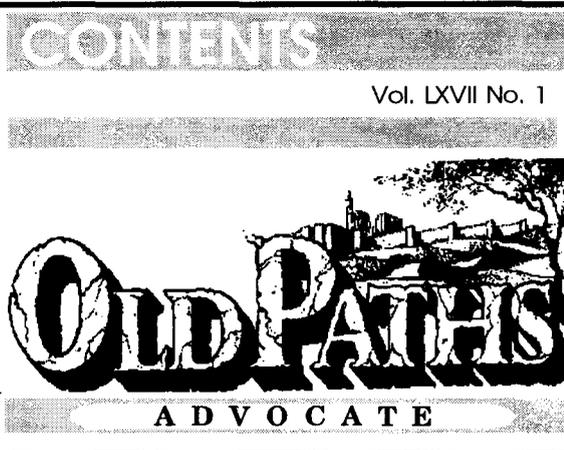
No. 1

LOOKING BACK TO THE FUTURE

By Ronny F. Wade

With this issue of **Old Paths Advocate** we return to a format that was familiar to our readers for nearly fifty years. In so doing, we hope to accomplish two things. First of all this format will allow us to include more material each month, and secondly we plan to address major issues that confront the church of today, in much the same way these same issues were addressed in years gone by. It is often the case that what goes round comes round. And in some ways we have come full circle when we consider current problems facing the church. This journal was started by Brother H.C. Harper in 1928. At that time the controversy over individual cups in the communion was still rather young. The introduction of the Sunday school was still a problem of great concern. Every month, the columns of this paper were filled with articles opposing these and all other innovations. Debates were common, and those guilty of fostering changes in the divine pattern were called into question time and again by various writers. Over time the sharpness of the controversy dulled. Division over these matters became an accepted fact, and even though debates happened every now and then, and writers addressed the issues from time to time, the intensity of the battle subsided. Some assumed that the issues had been laid to rest once and for all. Such, however was not the case. Today, some of those same issues are surfacing again, with renewed vigor. Those brethren who years ago chose to adopt the Sunday school and women teachers are today struggling to keep women preachers out of the pulpit. It is an undeniable fact that before long, many of them will have women preaching from the pulpit. (Some already do.) Instrumental music, the hallmark of distinction between the Christian Church and Churches of Christ, is being accepted more and more. Many among the liberal churches of Christ will admit to all but having lost the battle on this subject.

Sanitation was the primary thrust behind the introduction of individual cups in the communion. Today as society struggles with AIDS, there has been a rebirth of fear on the part of many about drinking after someone. What does this all mean to readers of **Old Paths Advocate**? Simply stated, It means that we are going to have to fight all over again the battles of the past. We must look back to the future. We must learn from the past how tragic it is to change the divine pattern, how susceptible we are to innovations, change, and division. We must learn the necessity of standing up for the truth, challenging error, and exposing false teachers. If we fail, we will pay dearly! **Old Paths Advocate** is dedicated to the defense of New Testament Christianity in its purity and simplicity. We stand opposed to all innovations threatening the work and worship of the church. Because there are ominous clouds on the horizon and strange sounds coming from some quarters, we feel it necessary to rededicate ourselves to the principles of revealed truth in opposing every departure from the Bible way. We call on brethren everywhere to stand up and be counted in the army of the Lord. We intend to use the columns of **Old Paths Advocate**, as in bygone days, for the purpose of fighting the same innovations that divided the church then. Women teachers are still unacceptable in church assemblies and public gatherings. (1 Cor. 14:34-35, 1 Tim. 2:11-12) Women are not to assume roles of leadership in the church. Instrumental music is still unauthorized. We are commanded to sing, not play. (Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:16) The use of more than one cup in the distribution of the fruit of the vine is without Biblical foundation. (Mt. 26:27:1 Cor. 11:23-28) Fear of drinking after someone does not change what the Bible teaches. Brethren, let us all learn from the past. If we don't, we are doomed to repeat the same mistakes. P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808.



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Should Women Teach In The Church?

By Johnny Elmore

We are living in times when every religious tradition is questioned, and that is good, of course. But, more and more people are asking why women should not occupy the roles of teacher and preacher in the church. I would point out that God has given five definite commandments for women to be silent, so far as public speaking in the church is concerned, and they are so plain that no man could begin to phrase them in clearer language. There are three commands in I Cor. 14:34-35:

1. Let your women keep silence in the churches.
2. For it is not permitted unto them to speak.
3. For it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

Two more commandments are found in I Tim. 2:11-12:
 4. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.
 5. But suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

Now with reference to these commands, we have been told that they do not apply. But, if not, I do not know how anything would apply that the New Testament teaches. We have also been told that they referred only to the wives of the prophets, but why would God command the wives of the prophets to be silent in the churches, and yet permit other women to speak? We have also heard the statement that this prohibition applied only to the Corinthian church, but we know that is a fallacy because the scripture states: "Let your women keep silence in the churches." J. B. Rotherham renders that. "In the assemblies let them keep silence" (p. 341, Emph. NT). Also, the book was addressed to "the church of God which is at Corinth . . . with all that in EVERY PLACE call upon the name of Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 1:2). (That includes you and me.) It has also been said that the command to "keep silence" does not apply in the Sunday school. If Sunday school is not an "assembly of the saints," what is it?

But command No. 4 says to let the woman learn (NOT TEACH) in silence, and certainly if she keeps silence, she will not teach anyone with all subjection. To whom should the subjection be? To the man, to whom God has delegated the responsibility of teaching.

Command No. 5 states: "But I suffer not a woman to teach." Some have said that when the elders permit a woman to teach in Sunday school, it is the elders teaching through the woman, not the woman. But they have never explained why anyone (including elders) should grant women a privilege that our Lord (speaking through Paul, 2 Cor. 13:3) says He would not permit!

"Nor to usurp authority over the man." Would a woman "usurp authority" over a man only when she teaches men in an assembly, or when she teaches anyone in an assembly? Remember, she was told to "learn in silence, with all subjection." When she teaches anyone in an assembly, therefore, she violates the command to "learn in silence," because she cannot teach and "learn in silence" at the same time. She then is not in subjection to the man, for she has usurped his authority, and that is just how Webster defines the word — "to seize an office, place, or power without right."

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: Since the homosexual life-style is so prevalent, how should this be handled if a church member were homosexual? (OK)

Answer: The Gay rights movement insists on making homosexuality legal and socially acceptable. One avenue used by these people is to parade homosexuality as an "alternate life-style." Anyone opposing their efforts is labeled as being biased and prejudiced. Those who advocate such ideas are either without knowledge of what the Bible teaches, or simply refuse to accept what God says about the matter. The Scriptures clearly view homosexuality as a violation of both natural and spiritual law, as the following passages indicate: "For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the women, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting...who, knowing the righteous judgment of God. That those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also approve (consent ASV) of those who practice them." This makes it clear that God views homosexuality as a sin. When Lot entertained the messengers of the Lord in Sodom, the men of the town demanded "Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally" Gen. 19:5. Lot responded by offering his virgin daughters, but they wanted the men v. 8-9. From the city of Sodom, we get the word sodomy which means "Unnatural sexual relations, especially between male persons or between a human being and an animal." (Reader's Digest Great Encyclopedia Dictionary). In Lev. 18:22-24 God spoke to Israel "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination. Nor shall you mate with any beast, to defile yourself with it. Nor shall any woman stand before a beast to mate with it. It is perversion. Do not defile yourselves with any of these things: for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you." Again in Lev. 20:13 "If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them." These verses all clearly reveal God's attitude toward homosexuality. Anyone who may feel that his attitude has changed, because of the promiscuous society in which we live, needs to re-read the passages and beware. There is no indication whatsoever that God has changed his mind about these things. They are as wrong now as ever. Hear Paul "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. 6:9-11) Two very important points emerge from this passage: (1) homosexuality is a sin

that will condemn those who practice it. (2) homosexuals can change. i. e. cease homosexual practices. Just as any sinner can stop that which is wrong. The thief must refrain from stealing. The drunkard must refrain from drinking. The immoral must refrain from fornication and adultery, and so the homosexual must refrain from his sin as well. The church should handle a practicing homosexual in the same way it handles a person, who commits heterosexual fornication: i.e. teaching, warning, and eventual withdrawal of fellowship if the practice of sin does not cease. God does not tolerate it, neither should we.

Should one have such tendencies, but refrains from practicing sin, then he/she should be treated as anyone else. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P. O. Box 10811 Springfield, Mo. 65808)

HOW DO I LOVE THEE

"Love the Lord with your heart, soul and mind,"
 Is a verse found in the Good Book.
 Recorded in Mark 12:30,
 It's one that deserves a second look.
 If we love the Lord,
 We are blessed from above;
 For if we give ourselves to Him,
 He returns to us His love.
 It means we place the Lord
 First above all else.
 It means we take up our cross
 And we deny ourself.
 It means those who will know you,
 Can't help but see your shining light;
 Because we do not just love the Lord,
 We love Him with all our might.
 It means our worship is not confined
 To the Sunday service where we meet,
 For we worship God with our lives
 Everyday throughout the week.
 With so much love in our hearts,
 There is no room for jealousy, envy or pride;
 We overcome evil with good,
 Love's strength will override.
 It means we love one another,
 And it is with love we do teach.
 We even love our enemies,
 Otherwise, heaven's home we'll never reach.
 Love is motivator,
 It brings us to repentance;
 With which we press toward the mark,
 It will determine our sentence.
 It means when we love the Lord,
 ALL His commandments we do keep.
 We can then look forward to heaven's glory,
 Because what we have sown we will reap.
 We love not the world,
 It's impossible to love both, you see;
 So let us examine ourselves,
 The Lord asks, "Lovest thou me?"

--Sandy Walling

BATTEY - THRASHER, DONAHUE DEBATE

On June 23,24, 1994 I was privileged to travel to the Atlanta area to moderate a debate between George Battey and Tommy Thrasher on the subject of Bible classes. This discussion took place on Thursday and Friday nights at the Church of Christ in Mableton, Georgia which had agreed to sponsor Bro. Thrasher and Bro. Donahue. On Saturday, June 25, two sessions at our building in Jonesboro (the Fielder Rd. Church of Christ), George debated Pat Donahue on the subject of individual cups. All of the debaters conducted themselves as Christians gentlemen and while the argumentation was intense the behavior of all three was exemplary. It was my first time to serve as a moderator in a debate and the first debate I have attended in quite a few years. George did a superior job in defense of the truth on both issues. The only major disappointment to me was that, as is usually the case, our people provided most of the crowd Thursday and Friday evenings. Our brethren slightly outnumbered the brethren from Mableton even though the debate was in their building. On Saturday there were very few of Bro. Donahue's fellows present to hear him. I do not suppose that this state of affairs was the fault of either Bro. Thrasher or Bro. Donahue, but I believe it is worthy of note with respect to the future. Despite the drawback, the debate will, I believe, have a lasting impact for the truth. The reason I am sure of that is that George in his preparation for the debate has written a book on each issue. Both books represent a worthy addition to the literature on these vital subjects.

Debate Notes; Bible Classes and Debate Notes Individual Cups can be ordered from George Battey for \$10.00 each. Both books contain an affirmative presentation of what the Bible teaches with respect to each issue. The heart of these books, however, is found in the documented catalog of arguments presented over the years by various digressive writers and debaters. George has presented each argument together with its major variants, in full and then the Bible answer. Also you will find a very enlightening list of questions and answers exchanged by the disputants. Since these issues are debated so seldomly these days I recommend that parents and church leaders order copies right away so that this critical part of the truth can be successfully passed on to future generations.

On Thursday night Bro. Thrasher affirmed that "when the church comes together for the purpose of teaching the Bible, it is scriptural to divide into classes for this teaching, some of which may be taught by women." He began by hanging his hat on the principle of generic authority and claiming that Bible classes represented a method of teaching. In his first reply George invited the audience to turn to page 78 in their copy of his book and there he led them through the Bible's answer to Thrasher's argument. With that he had them turn to page 76 to learn that classes are a method of grouping and not a method of teaching and so it went. George was ready with an answer to every quibble Thrasher offered.

Not surprisingly, Bro. Thrasher soon tired of his futile argument on the basis of generic authority and

made the next mistake of trying to pinpoint specific authority for Bible classes. Of course, once you have admitted that there is no specific authority for Bible classes it is fairly difficult to back up and convincingly present passages authorizing Bible classes. George simply referred to the appropriate pages in his book and continued to press Bro. Thrasher beyond his ability to answer.

Next Thrasher abandoned his specific authority argument to try one more run at generic authority. Besides all of that he decided to begin complaining about the wording of his own affirmative proposition which he voluntarily signed in his eagerness to persuade George to debate. Finally, he complained that George's tactic of providing a book containing answers to all of Thrasher's arguments and more to the audience was "unfair". It was "unfair" because George could refer people to several page numbers in a very few minutes and get on to pressing the heart of the matter. Consequently Bro. Thrasher's smoke screens disappeared in a wisp of vapor. George's negative the first night was more than successful. It was a resounding victory for truth over error.

On Friday evening George was in the affirmative and adroitly defended the proposition that "the scriptures teach that when the church comes together for the purpose of teaching the Bible, the people must be taught in an undivided assembly by men only. As the evening approached, we wondered what Bro. Thrasher might do having had 24 hours to study George's book. But he had not one objection to make against the book. In his last speech Bro. Thrasher warned the audience of "inconsistencies and assumptions" in the book, but we thought it was interesting the he did not trot one out for examination. Surely if he could have documented his warning he would have. Obviously the book on Bible classes was more than vindicated by Bro. Thrasher's inability to produce even one weakness. As an interesting note Thrasher did hand us a note on Saturday complaining of what he believed to be a misspelling of a transliterated Greek word on page 32. This was his only complaint. We accepted that as pretty good testimony to the truth presented in George's material.

Bro. Thrasher was completely unable to deal with George's affirmatives. He tried first to argue that classes were private, but he did not like the consequences of that (see pages 62-65) so he decided that they were public. However, he soon ran into problems from pages 21 to 30 and rules of assembly found in 1 Corinthians 14. Then he decided they were sort of public and sort of private and only Bro. Thrasher could tell which they were at a particular moment. However, a good indication as to which way he would decide at any given moment could be gleaned by listening to which argument George was pressing him with.

Actually Bro. Thrasher generally refused to answer George's affirmatives and spent almost half of his time in three speeches Friday night on his one showpiece argument. On the wall he had taped up a chart that asked: "Are the Bible classes the church come together INTO ONE PLACE?" George said "NO, Bro. Thrasher they are not; that is what is wrong with them." George then changes his wall chart to read, "Are the

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THE WADE-COBB DEBATE

On Nov. 18, in the meeting house at Napoleon, AL, Bro. Ronny Wade affirmed the proposition that a congregation must use one cup in the communion and Bro. Harry Cobb denied, then on Nov. 19, at Bro. Cobb's meeting house in Wedowee, AL, Bro. Cobb affirmed that a congregation may use more than one cup, and Bro. Ronny Wade denied.

I thought Ronny presented a strong affirmative for the first proposition. He spoke rapidly and showed clearly from the Scriptures with charts that only one cup was used when Jesus instituted the communion. He proved from lexical authorities that "the cup," in Matt. 26:27 is a literal cup, or drinking vessel. He showed that we "drink a cup" by drinking what a cup contains, a metonymical use of the term. He stressed that if a cup is literal, its contents are literal, and if figurative, its contents are figurative. He showed that only one cup is authorized by command, example and necessary inference, and gave syllogisms to prove that the cup of the Lord involves a literal cup.

Bro. Cobb was kind and gentle in his response, but he did not answer Ronny's affirmative speeches, in my estimation. He argued that a literal container was not under consideration in the accounts of the communion. He stated that it did not address the question, and does not apply. He said that Jesus used one cup, but not one container! Of course, his argument was that he was a one cup man, i.e., he thought the cup was the fruit of the vine and that is all he would use. In his first speech, he proved what nobody denied, reading from various authorities to show that "cup" can be used figuratively. In answer to questions, he stated that only one loaf is not required and that unleavened bread is not a stipulation for the Christian Age.

Bro. Cobb seemed to be replying to a speech that Ronny hadn't made, saying that "not one verse has been used to show that the cup is significant." Before Ronny had ever argued that "the cup is the New Testament," he spent about twenty minutes reading from various commentators and historians, trying to show that they taught that "the cup is the blood." We were astonished to hear him affirm that there were only two elements in the communion—the bread and the fruit of the vine, and use John 6:53 to prove it. Ronny showed convincingly that John 6:53 has no specific reference to the communion. He abandoned that argument and never brought it up again.

On the second night, Bro. Cobb continued the same line of thought, stating that they partake of one cup although it may be passed to the audience in more than one container. Although he was obligated to affirm that "the Scriptures teach" that a congregation may use more than one cup (drinking vessel) in the distribution of the fruit of the vine, he really never made a forceful affirmative argument. Ronny pointed out that if Bro. Cobb could pick up the New Testament and read that Jesus took cups and gave thanks and gave them to the disciples and said, drink ye all of them, he would undoubtedly have done so and ended the debate, but no such passage exists. Bro. Cobb brought out an apple and indicated that he would divide the cup the way he would divide the apple between four boys. When Ronny

complained about the lack of an affirmative argument, Bro. Cobb claimed a chart on Luke 22:17-20 as his affirmative. In answer to questions, he claimed that Jesus used more than one in the Lord's Supper, later arguing that Luke 22:17 could not be a passover cup, therefore the Savior's command to "take this, and divide it among yourselves" showed a division of the cup into cups. Ronny stated that we did not deny the cup of Luke 22:17 belonged to the Lord's Supper, but that "the dividing" took place, when "they all drank of (out of) it." Then he asked Bro. Cobb if he followed the order he claimed in his affirmative. i.e., do they take one cup, give thanks and then divide it, or is it already divided for them when they get to the church building? Of course, they do not.

The brethren at Napoleon are to be commended for supporting the defense of the truth, and both disputants are to be commended for standing up for what they believe. An amiable spirit prevailed and all present conducted themselves as separated brethren rather than enemies and this was due to the demeanor of the debaters themselves. I sincerely felt that Bro. Cobb failed to prove his proposition. His weakness was not due to his ability, but to his lack of biblical authority. We would like to see him give up his defense of that which is indefensible scripturally and take his stand with us for what we can read. I moderated for Ronny and Bro. Sam Dick of Kentucky moderated for Bro. Cobb.—*Johnny Elmore*

SHOULD WOMEN TEACH IN THE CHURCH?

Continued from page 2

After Paul had stated the commands and reasons found in I Tim. 2:11-14, he followed by saying that he wrote so that "thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God" (I Tim. 3:14,15). This is a generic command, applying to both sexes, even to the things the apostle had just written.

I am aware that Paul wrote Titus about teaching by women in Tit. 2:3-5, but surely we can agree that the things which aged women were to teach the young women were such as are taught in the home. Nowhere is it said she is to teach these things in an assembly. In fact, they are to "be in behavior as becometh holiness." What would holy behavior be except that which is acceptable to God? Surely a violation of the five commandments we have noticed would not be considered holy behavior!

Some have advanced the opinion that Sunday school or "Bible classes," as they are wont to call them, are not assemblies of the saints. Incidentally, the reason some of our brethren want to call them "Bible classes" when the rest of the religious world knows they are having Sunday school is because we can read in history (not in the Bible) where Robert Raikes founded it. But if Bible classes are not assemblies of the church, what are they? You name it and you can claim it.

When we stand before God in judgment, the basis of that judgment will be the Word of God. How will we fare if we have deliberately ignored his commandments?

AFRICAN NOTEBOOK: GOSPEL MEETINGS

By James D. Orten

Gospel meetings have been a part of the history of the Lord's church since its birth on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection. Peter seems to have been the main preacher on that occasion (Acts 2) and 3,000 persons responded to his sermon. Many older Christians, myself among them, can remember when public preaching was a major means of converting souls to Christ in the U.S. As a child, I attended a meeting in which 60 people responded to the gospel invitation. "Revivals" were community events in those days, and many non-believers attended, often from beginning to end. They heard enough of the truth to be convinced and frequently they obeyed.

Sadly, the situation is different now. Getting outsiders to attend gospel meetings at all is difficult, and only rarely do they come for more than one or two services. (This does not speak of the difficulty in getting the church members to attend! Perhaps if they came more diligently, unbelievers might also.) Some churches have concluded that such meetings are of little value, so they have few of them. That is a bad decision, because gospel preaching is needed for the church, and for church members' children, as well as for non-believers.

Thankfully, gospel meetings still are community events in Zambia and most parts of Africa. It is not uncommon, especially in "the bush," to have a crowd of 200 or more with half of those being outsiders. And one rarely holds a meeting here without people being converted.

THE FORMAT IS DIFFERENT

Local conditions and cultures make a difference in the conduct of a gospel meeting. The message of salvation is exactly the same, as are all matters on which the Scriptures speak. But a major difference is the format. It is typical for meetings to start on Friday afternoon or night and end on Sunday afternoon. Two sermons will likely be preached at each service, followed by questions and answers related to the topics of the sermons. This means that the services are long. Some time ago, I conducted a service that lasted till 11:00 PM. I was completely worn out, but one brother talked about carrying on till 1:00 AM! The service officially ended and I went to my tent and cot, but the Christians sat around a log fire and sang and talked until about 4:00 AM.

Soon after we arrived, Greg DeGough took me to a meeting at which one of the after-service activities was skits with a spiritual message. One especially humorous one depicted a drunkard who arrived unexpectedly at the judgment. When his name could not be found in the Book of Life, he begged them to check other volumes of the book, to recheck certain pages on which he thought it would be found, and so forth. Finally, he was dragged off kicking and screaming to hell. Saturdays during meetings will see two, or likely three, services during which multiple sermons are given. Thus, these "weekend" meetings, given the number and length of the sermons, may contain more preaching than a week's meeting in the U.S.

Members of surrounding churches are good to attend

a gospel meeting, seemingly considering it their meeting too. The interest and support are wonderful. (We have lost much of this type of support in the U.S. in the last several years.) But recently I discovered a "problem" related to it. I held a meeting at a church in the northern Part of the country, near the border of Zaire. The attendance was great, but I discovered that several churches in the area had canceled their Lord's Day services to come and support the meeting. I think several Christians had questioned the Practice. When a brother asked about it during a question and answer session and we discussed it, they agreed that from now on enough people will stay home to see that services are conducted.

BAPTISM MAY BE A DIFFICULT BURIAL

Christians here are fully convinced that baptism must be a burial, as Romans 6:4 and other Scriptures teach. But sometimes finding enough water in which to do the burial is not easy. During a meeting in the southern part of Zambia, a man stood up and asked, "If baptism is supposed to be a burial, what do you do when there is not enough water to bury a person?" I answered, as any faithful preacher would, that we do not decide to obey God's commands on the basis of whether they are easy or hard, but because they are His commands. I added that if people can find enough water for their personal use, they can find it to baptize. I believe that; but I did not know how soon my faith in my words would be tested. It was late September, well into the dry season, when most running water has dried up.

The next morning several people came to be baptized. Early that day I had spent several hours hauling water from a "well" that most Americans would consider a mud hole. It was a large walk-in hole dug in a dry river bed. There was water in it, but not nearly enough to baptize. The brethren discussed the matter, considering such possibilities as a four-hour drive to a larger river that might still have pools. Eventually, a brother remembered a large dugout canoe in the river bed only about 30 minutes drive away. He was certain he could dig a well near the canoe, transfer the water to the canoe, and use it as a baptistry. I was tremendously relieved to know I was not going to have to make that four-hour, one-way drive. Our pickup was the only vehicle within miles.

So we dug the well and filled the "baptistry." Dozens of people had loaded on the truck to go with us under the pretext of helping. But, in what seems a pattern everywhere, one young brother did most of the digging and one sister did most of the dipping. A woman candidate was rather large and it took three of us helping the preacher doing the baptism to see that all body parts were "under." It may not have been an elegant burial, but given their dedication to doing it scripturally, I feel sure God was pleased.

I have heard some preachers glorify underdeveloped cultures, extolling how they help people live Christian lives. But cultures are human creations and all have good features and bad ones. African cultures are not exceptions to this rule. For example, in some African tribes a woman finds it difficult to get a man to marry her until she has produced him a son. Our attitudes

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BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR UNDERSTANDING ROMANS 14

By Alan Bonifay

Martin Luther began his treatise, "On the Freedom of a Christian's Man:" with two striking statements:

A Christian man is a most free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian man is a most dutiful servant of all, subject to all.

One could hardly summarize more efficiently the Apostle's thought in Romans 14:1-15:13. Luther's first sentence adroitly captures the essence of the believer's freedom in Christ. In Romans 14:1-12 the relational ramifications of the believer's liberty in Christ are developed. Luther's second observation that the "free" Christian is by vocation a "dutiful servant" apprehends the gist of Romans 14:3 - 15:13. However, to master the intricacies of Paul's message concerning Christian liberty and restraint is more difficult. As you strive to apply these teachings to contemporary issues consider these key principles. Rightly understood these principles will greatly facilitate correct modern application of the Apostle's message.

What Is Meant By the Word, "Faith" (Romans 14:1)?

To successfully unravel the meaning of God's Word particular attention must be paid as to how the word faith is used in its context. Often the word faith is used objectively, and when it is it designates the thing to be believed—that body of truth deposited once for all time in the church. In such cases faith is equivalent to the truth, the gospel, the New Testament, the doctrine, or the Word of God (Ephesians 4:4; Jude 3; Romans 1:17—the first usage). At least once the word faith refers merely to mental acknowledgment without the action such an acknowledgment ordinarily demands. In James 2:19 the demons are said "to believe." Most often it is used to designate the faith by which men are justified (Romans 1:17 second usage; 5:1; Hebrews 11:6; Ephesians 2:8).

In Romans 14:1, however, the word faith refers to one's belief that he is doing the right thing. It is hardly distinguishable from one's conscience. This fact is established most clearly in verses 22 and 23:

Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Note particularly these phrases: "have it to thyself"; "condemeth not himself"; "which he alloweth". Note also the contrast between having faith and doubting.

This fact is further attested in verses two through five. If the word faith in verse one referred either objectively to the truth or subjectively to the Christian's own personal faith, then Paul could not by inspiration make the statements that he did. In verses two and three Paul says that some Christians believe that they may eat all things while others believe that only herbs may be eaten. Amazingly, both beliefs are acceptable. Brethren must not despise one another over these differing beliefs for God has received them both. Paul cannot say this under any other definition of faith than the belief of one's own conscience without contradicting a host of plain passages elsewhere in God's Word.

In verse four the scripture says that regardless of a Christian's decision about eating meat others must not judge or condemn him. Furthermore, he is God's servant and accountable to no one else. "God is able to make him stand" whether he eats meat or only herbs. This cannot be true if any other definition of the word faith is assumed than the belief of one's own conscience.

Finally, in verse five and concerning the esteeming of days Paul says: "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind". Verse six exonerates the Christian whether he decides to "esteem one day above another" or to refrain from doing so. Clearly, in verse one the word faith does not and cannot refer to one's faith in Jesus or God or God's word. It refers to his belief that he is doing the right thing. It is very closely allied to the conscience.

What Is Meant By "Weak" (14:1) and "Strong" (15:1)?

We make a grievous error in exegesis if we understand the word "weak" in the passage as an equivalent to poor Christian; bad Christian; backsliding Christian; weak Christian; less-committed Christian or any other similar criticism. The point is crucial to understand Paul's message. Again verses two through five sustain the fact that "weak" has reference to the believer's conscience and not to his personal faith in God or Jesus or God's Word.

In verse two the weak brother eats only herbs. However, weak does not describe at all his devotion to God; nor does it indicate his lack of submission to God's revealed will. One may eat only herbs and not meat from now until the Lord returns and if he has the right attitude about his weak conscience he will go to heaven (assuming all other things are equal). His weakness is in his conscience. Paul means to delineate the brother whose conscience is unnecessarily scrupulous. He could eat meat as far as the empirical evidence of right and wrong is concerned (1 Corinthians 8:8). However, to eat meat would make him feel guilty and thus, violate his conscience. In other words, his conscience is weak because it is overly sensitive. This brother either does not understand his liberties in Christ or cannot emotionally accept them.

On the other hand, when we encounter the word "strong" in 15:1 we must not read it as equivalent to good Christian, strong Christian; more devoted, righteous or holy Christian. This brother is neither more or less stalwart than the weak brother of 14:1. The word "strong" describes his conscience. He understands that he is at liberty to eat meat (2) and if he has the proper attitude about his liberty he may go to heaven right along with his weak constricted brother who never eats meat. The strong are scrupulous, but they also understand and allow themselves their liberties in Christ. The key is that the strong brother's conscience is not unduly or unnecessarily sensitive.

What Kinds of Issues Come Under This Heading?

It is absolutely essential that Christians everywhere, the strong and the weak, recognize that Romans chapters 14 and 15 is NOT discussing matters of law or doctrine. No command of God directed at Christians—not one—falls in the area of liberty or choice. The commands of God must be obeyed. No example of God which regulates the lives of believers, either individually or collectively, may be construed as a matter of

Continued on page eight

liberty. No necessary inference can be correctly understood as a matter of freedom to do or refrain from doing. No principle of the New Testament can be called a matter of opinion. All of these must be obeyed.

In Romans 14:3 Paul says: "To his own master he standeth or falleth, yea he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand." In verse five he says, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind". Paul could not rightly say these things about any New Testament law or doctrine. He is discussing, under the heading of liberty, matters about which the New Testament does not legislate. If New Testament legislation relative to any issue can be produced, then the Christian must submit to it in obedience of faith.

The problems in applying this section of scripture often arise because of two misunderstandings. Some brethren attempt to place issues about which the New Testament teaches definitively into the area of liberty as it is described in Romans 14 and 15. This cannot be allowed. Issues like a woman's long hair, a man's short hair, drinking of alcoholic beverages, or the mode of worship do not belong under the teaching of Romans 14 & 15 from any standpoint. Elsewhere the New Testament legislates on those matters. On the other hand, some brethren fail to recognize issues that do fall under the teachings about liberty. Instead they try to make laws where God has made none. Paul provides the examples of whether or not to eat meat and whether or not to esteem one day above another. To demand that all Christians believe and practice the same things relative to such issues is to sin by making law where God has made none. Does the New Testament speak to a matter—either to do it or to refrain from doing it? If it does, then the Christian must obey. If it does not, then he may choose according to the guidelines of Romans 14 and 15.

Potentially 4 Groups of Brethren Appear Under Paul's Purview

These teachings encompass four groups of brethren. Two are strong; two are weak; two are right and two are wrong. Among those strong in conscience are brethren who understand and accept their liberties, yet they ride roughshod over the weak conscientized brethren. These are the sort who demand their rights and determinedly impose their will on their fellows. It does not matter to them that in behaving so they wound their weak brother's consciences. Willfully they make their weak-conscientized brethren to stumble and sin; willfully they build traps to ensnare or offend those who are weaker; willfully they weaken even more those whose consciences are weak to begin with (21). In so doing they destroy him for whom Christ died (15). In so destroying the work of God (20) such strong brethren condemn themselves and shall one day give account of themselves to God (11).

However, not all strong conscientized brethren behave so. There are some who properly understand and accept their freedoms in Christ, but who exercise their liberties under restraint. These are those who do not use their liberty as a cloak of maliciousness (I Peter 2:16). These brethren engage in their liberties with restraint. They recognize themselves not as lords of all, but as dutiful servants to all. They support those whose consciences are weak.

Paul also envisions two groups of brethren whose consciences are unnecessarily scrupulous and conse-

quently weak and too easily violated. The division is similar to those who are strong. Sadly, there are those brethren whose consciences are weak, who demand that their overly sensitive and unnecessarily scrupulous consciences be observed by all. These treat the dictates of their weak consciences as though they were equal to God's divine law. Willfully they impose their will on others. Like their similarly headstrong and forward strong conscientized brethren, these brethren also run roughshod over others. Frequently these are the brethren who in the absence of God's authority hold the church hostage to their own weak conscience. In many churches the real offenders (in the Biblical sense of the word) are the self-willed weak conscientized brethren. They are often the ones who set stumbling blocks and cause others—even the strong—to sin and violate their consciences. These brethren will one day kneel before the judgment seat of Christ and receive judgment without mercy.

Thankfully, though, not all brethren with weak consciences are like this. Some brethren are mature enough to recognize that their consciences are weak. They consequently behave accordingly by restraining themselves from practicing their liberties. Nevertheless, they do graciously permit their brethren to exercise their liberties without censure. These also recognize themselves not as lords over God's servants, but as dutiful servants of God in subjection to all.

Attitude makes all the difference in matters that are truly issues under the purview of Romans 14 & 15. Whether or not one's conscience is weak or strong is not the most important issue. How one behaves towards both his own conscience and his own brethren is the paramount point. One may be weak or strong and be saved if his practice and attitude are right. He may be either weak or strong in conscience and be lost eternally if his practice and attitude are wrong. Therefore, it is important to recognize your own state of conscience (weak or strong) about issues belonging to the province of Romans 14 & 15. Contrary to popular thought two things are evident: Not everybody is the strong brother in a point of controversy and no one is strong conscientized in every matter. When you recognize that an issue belongs to the realm of liberty (this is always the first question), then determine how your conscience reacts to the issue and adopt accordingly the proper Christian attitude and behavior.

"Receive Ye But Not to Doubtful Disputations"

The last phrase of 14:1 is often forgotten when a matter of liberty is under consideration. When we ignore the phrase, we miss a critical point. The weak and the strong are commanded to receive one another without passing judgment on disputable matters. "Disputable matters" (NIV) are matters of liberty or choice. They are disputable precisely because they fall under the commands and principles of Romans 14 and 15. However, Christians are not to dispute about them and especially not to the point of casting judgment against either the weak or the strong. It is wrong and sinful to regard a brother in Christ as a "liberal" simply because he engages in a matter of liberty as defined by this chapter. Equally it is wrong and sinful to judge a brother in Christ as a "conservative" simply because he does not engage in a legitimate matter of liberty. Such judgments as these pertain properly to areas of law or

doctrine and not to liberties. This is precisely the point of verse one. Matters of liberty are not to be disputed.

Apply This Test

Whatever it is that you want to do—Does the New Testament legislate about the issue? If it does, then you must obey (John 14:15). The matter is not a matter of liberty. However, if the Scriptures do not legislate the next question arises—Does it violate my conscience? If it does then you must not do it (14:23). If upon serious consideration, it does not violate your conscience then you must discover if your participation in it will knowingly cast a stumblingblock in your brother's path or make him to offend or to be weak (14:21). If it does, then you must not do it. However, if your participation does not cause our brother to stumble or to be offended or made weak then the question becomes one of interest. Under the prevailing circumstances and in view of the previous investigation do you still wish to engage in the activity under consideration? If you do, then Paul says that it is fine to do it, but hush about it. Do not impose your decision on others (14:22). If you do not wish to proceed, then Paul says that also is okay. Do not do it, but hush about it. Do not impose your decision on others.

By now you will recognize that I have carefully avoided suggesting issues that truly fit into the realm of liberty. I have not done that because modern issues do not apply. There are many contemporary views that fit the parameters of Romans 14 and 15. However, we need to learn what the text says and how it should be interpreted first before we begin to apply specific issues. To proceed otherwise is to court error justified by our own desires. Hopefully the principles I have elicited will help you to make careful and scriptural decisions relative to matters of liberty. Equally we hope to foster the proper attitude after the decision is made. --OPA

BATTEY - THRASHER, DONAHUE DEBATE

Continued from page 4

Bible classes the church come together?" He asked Bro. Thrasher if he would answer Yes? George then reminded his opponent that that is what Thrasher promised and as much as he hated it, had voluntarily signed to affirm. Would he now do so. In his last speech one almost felt sorry for Bro. Thrasher. He was obviously totally and completely bankrupt for material. He spent some 18 agonizing minutes on his little wall chart and did not even attempt to counter George's arguments. As Billy Dickinson stated in his excellent review of the Bailey - Thrasher debate (December 93, OPA page 5):

Although Bro. Thrasher has engaged in over forty debates, his experience as a debater did little to help him on this occasion. His problem was not a lack of experience or ability, but a lack of truth.

On Saturday morning we began by distributing George's book on Debate Notes : Individual CUPS. George began in the affirmative eagerly defending "that the scriptures teach that an assembly of the church of Christ, for the communion, must use one cup (drinking vessel) in the distribution of the fruit of the vine." George's three affirmative speeches went perfectly. He

was able to powerfully present almost all of his affirmative material covering the first 40 pages of the book. His respondent, Pat Donahue, did not make even a token attempt to answer George's material. He began by redefining the word "cup" as all purveyors of false religions are wont to, and then he wanted to change the rules of the debate. "Why couldn't George just get up here and answer me?" he wanted to know. Why should George insist on following the rules of the debate and present affirmative material when he was supposed to? Well, Bro. Donahue never reached much higher all day. Pat Donahue hung his hat on the fact that the word "cup" is used metaphorically. While he was mistaken in thinking that it was used that way in every reference, he did prove to be an excellent authority on the meaning of the figure of speech called metonymy. It's all on pages 109 to 121. In question number 1 Donahue astutely noted that "in all likelihood he did use a container (sic)" in the institution of the Lord's supper. But when asked if the word "cup" was ever used in the scriptures to refer directly or indirectly to that drinking vessel Donahue replied, "I don't think so." Then, amazingly Bro. Donahue gave an excellent definition of metonymy. George asked:

Metonymy is defined as "a figure by which one name or noun is used instead of another to which it stands in a certain relation." Please answer the following questions about this sentence: "As often as you drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till he comes."

a. What object is being named when Paul wrote, "Drink this cup"?

Donahue replied, "a container".

b. What is being suggested?

Donahue replied, "fruit of the vine".

c. What relationship is sustained between the thing named and the thing suggested?

Donahue replied, "A cup may contain liquid".

Never mind the contradiction between the cup never being mentioned directly or indirectly with Donahue's definition of Cup in 1 Corinthians 11:26 as a container. Consider his excellent definition of metonymy. You will not find a better definition anywhere. Later in one of his charts Donahue admitted that in Matthew 26:27 the word "cup" was used literally.

As the afternoon wore on it became increasingly clear that, like Bro. Thrasher, Bro. Donahue also was in over his head. Interestingly neither Thrasher nor Donahue considered either subject important enough to even make the mildest of appeals for our people to change their position. On the other hand, George appealed repeatedly to those on the other side to be converted. He pointed out that the difference was one between right and wrong; obedience and sin; and Heaven and Hell. George's plea was for all to accept and obey the truth.

When the debate was ended, I believe it was clear to all that George had defended the truth in a most persuasive manner. In addition we had the comfort of being able to leave all of our argumentation, affirmative and negative, in the hands of all the people who were present. Don't forget to order from George a copy of his debate notes. They will serve you well in home studies, congregational teaching, debating or just in passing on the doctrine to your kids.--Alan Bonifay, 134 Ferrari Ct., Manteca, Ca. 95537

AFRICAN NOTEBOOK: GOSPEL MEETINGS

Continued from page 6

toward our own, or any, culture must be to support good traditions, leave alone neutral ones, and condemn those that are sinful. God, not culture, determines what is best for humans.

But one of the good things about most African societies is that the people are interested in religion, and public preaching is still effective. I believe, however, that the window of our opportunity in this regard is closing. Battery powered radios and television sets are now appearing deep in the bush, picking up the signals of booster stations that are beginning to dot the continent. People in mud houses with grass rooves are watching reruns of "Dallas," "Hill Street Blues," and the like. We know the effect of TV on morality in the U.S. All the more reason that we should "redeem the time" with preaching in places like this.--P.O. Box 37073, 10101 LUSAKA, Zambia, Africa

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BEGINNING OUR SIXTY-FOURTH YEAR

With this January issue we have completed 63 years of publication. We look toward a successful 64th. Last July, brethren Johnny Elmore, Ronny Wade and myself agreed to refocus the aim of the paper toward innovations and digression again. Ronny's article on page one reflects this very thing. I have noted with sadness that some are blissfully unaware of what the Bible says about our worship and the way we are to live daily. Since the paper began because of the sin of digression we feel it needs to remain unerringly opposed to it in the 1990s. Brethren, we need your articles along these lines. Let us never be content to be still where wrong may be corrected. Rather, let us still, and always, direct our attention to a clear understanding of truth where the work and worship of the church is at stake. May God bless us all.--Don L. King

MODESTO, CA

Beginning December 4, 1994, the Modesto congregation will begin meeting at 3 p.m. on Lord's Day afternoon. The other services will remain at 10:30 A.M. on Lord's Day and 7:30 P.M. on Wednesday evening.

FT. SMITH, ARKANSAS

The congregation that meets on Texas Road will begin meeting at 10:00 AM on Sunday mornings beginning January 1, 1995. Please make a note of this in your directories.

DEBATE TAPES

Audio tapes of the Cobb-Wade debate on individual cups are now ready for mailing. The four tapes cover the entire two night debate held at Wedowee, Al., Nov. 18-19. The cost is \$7, post paid. Send all orders to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT NEEDED

In November of 1993, the church in Western Oklahoma began a work at Watonga, OK. The initial support

came from the church at El Reno. Bro. Bob Orear, a faithful evangelist, has been working there for a year. The church has seen some growth in that period of time. A seventy year old woman was baptized, and has continued faithfully. A number of visitors have attended there, and there is potential there for a continued good work. The church at El Reno is only able to carry the financial yoke until March.

Brethren, this work is TOO YOUNG to let it die. In our modern age, we certainly cannot expect to "set the woods on fire" in just a year. It will take the patient labor of a full time evangelist, such as Bob, to keep the work alive. Bob is a capable preacher, who garners the respect and cooperation of each member at Watonga. If Bob does not receive support by the first of March, he will be forced to look for another place to work.

Brethren, we have the money! Question is, will we put it to good use in the Lord's vineyard? What a shame it would be to begin such a work and after only a year, let it die. If your congregation can be of assistance, please let Bob know by the first of February. If you have questions concerning the work, feel free to contact Bob Orear, myself, Bill Davis, or Miles King. His phone number is (405) 623-2245. Thank you brethren, and please pray for this effort.--Kevin Presley.

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

FENDER-HELWIG--On the evening of July 29, 1994, a large crowd of brethren, friends and family gathered in San Antonio, Texas, to witness the uniting of Dale Howard Fender and Trina Kay Helwig in holy matrimony. The setting was beautiful and the occasion was joyous to see two Christians pledge their lives to each other for as long as they both shall live. The singing was beautifully done. Dale sang as Trina walked down the aisle to meet him. Dale and Trina will make their home in San Antonio, Texas. We wish them the very best in all their endeavors and may they always be strong in the Lord. I was honored to be asked to perform the ceremony.--*Murl R. Helwig*

OUR DEPARTED

ALLINGTON--Tom C. Allington, a longtime resident of Cheyenne County, Nebraska, died on September 9, 1994 in Tucson, Arizona at the age of 93. He was born on August 19, 1901 in a sod house located on the north side of the North Platte River near the present town of Lisco, Nebraska. He was one of two members in the first graduating class at Sunol High School in 1920. He also attended Grand Island Business College and one year at Chadron State Normal College. During that year, influenced by association with one of this college professors, he was converted and baptized into the Church of Christ. From that time, his life was faithfully devoted to the Lord and His Church. He married Margaret R. Cunningham on November 25, 1938. They engaged in farming and ranching until their retirement in the 1970's, and moved to Tucson in 1985. Bro. Allington is survived by his wife, Margaret, of Tucson; two sons; one daughter; and four grandchildren. Memorial services were held at the Church of Christ in Tucson, Arizona, with Brother Arthur Lynch of Glendale officiating.

BYRD--Marion Denny Byrd was born September 26, 1922 at Graham, OK. He died on Nov. 12, 1994 while

hospitalized at Paris, TX, where he has resided for some time. He was married to Mary Marie (Dowling) February 21, 1948. Beside her loss the children whom he loved and left are: Sons, Tim and Ewell; daughters, Regina Humphrey, Gail Robinson, Avis Dilday, and Denise St. John; brothers, Lonnie and Ollie. There are 17 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. What can be said to tell of this man's goodness and influence? Many of the things he did in life will require eternity to reveal, yet some cannot be overlooked or discontinued now. Brother Byrd never sought praise, was a quiet and unpretentious man, an example to those around him at all times. He loved deeply the church and his children and their children. He rejoiced when those who were dearest to him were faithful to Christ and his greatest hurt came from their failing to devote themselves to Christ. He confessed himself ready to "depart and be with Christ." Brother Johnny Elmore led us in congregational praises. Words of comfort and encouragement were spoken to the filled meeting house at Paris by the writer. Marion Byrd was a friend, confidant, and one who shall be missed more than words can say. God Bless his wife and loved ones.--*Barney Owens.*

SCHERB--Henry Scherb, RR. #11, Box 486, Brazil, IN, died November 22, 1994 after a very brave fight with cancer. Being in his mid-thirties he leaves behind his wife, Susan; a daughter, Heather, 12 years old; and two sons, Alan, 17 and Justin, 8. He was the son-in-law of Joe and Hazel Loughmiller, who have carried a great load in this time of sickness. Henry was a dedicated member of the church. Working to help whenever he could. The word was put into action in his life. He helped neighbors, friends and brethren when there was a need. He was also a volunteer fireman. His values to the Church as well as the community was apparent by the large crowd of brethren and friends present at the visitation as well as the funeral service. Henry's attitude toward his life and his sickness is worth our imitating. Upon finding out about his serious illness he said, "This is why I have been living for the Lord. If I had waited till I got sick to start, I would be afraid I was doing it for the wrong reason." The writer tried to speak words of warning to those outside the Lord and words of comfort to the family and brethren.--*Walter Hunter.*

LEONARD--James "Jim" N. Leonard was born July 20, 1936, in Huntington, WV, the son of the late Raymond G. Leonard and Alice Annabelle Hall Grote. He departed this life Saturday, December 10, 1994 in Tuskegee, Al. due to a heart attack while on a hunting trip. He leaves behind his wife, Janice Malcolm Leonard, and two sons, Bart and Jamie, plus many others in his family. Jim's death came very unexpectedly. He was admired and respected by all who knew him. His love for the Cause of Jesus Christ was apparent in his words and deeds. He successfully raised two young men, who will continue the tradition that he set of holding high the Banner of Christ. His labors will be missed greatly among churches in West Virginia, but his influence will continue to live on. Funeral services were conducted at the Spring Valley meeting house. A large number of mourners were present. The singing was beautiful. David Smith and I were honored to speak words of comfort to those gathered.--*Richard Bunner*



Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, Dec. 8—I was at Hillcrest, near Brookhaven, MS Nov. 20th, as I returned from the Wade-Cobb debate. I spoke twice and we had one baptism. We enjoyed the fourth Sunday singing at Healdton, Nov. 27th, a tradition of long standing in southern Oklahoma. We invite all to spend the day with us for the next one in Ardmore Jan. 22nd. I look forward to the study in Oklahoma City and the New Year meeting. I plan to be at Garland, TX Jan. 29-Feb. 5 for preaching and singing instruction through the week.

Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808, Dec. 2—Nov. 14 we were privileged to be with the church in Columbia, MO for two services. Nov. 17 we preached at Chapel Grove, TN on our way to the debate in AL with Harry Cobb. It was good to see our many friends in that part of the brotherhood. The debate was well attended with several of our preachers being present. Bro. Johnny Elmore moderated for me. We pray that good was done. Sunday the 21st I was at Napoleon for two services. My thanks to this fine congregation for hosting the debate. They did a good job in every way. Nov. 24-28 we were in a meeting at Burkhardt near Joplin, MO for a meeting. We had large crowds and good interest. We look forward, Lord willing to the study in OK in Dec. and the annual new year meeting at Norman. The Lord bless his children everywhere.

Paul Asplin, 6902 N.W. 57th St., Bethany, OK 73008-2018 (405)787-4286, Nov. 26—Bros. Ron Courter, Jerry Cutter, and myself returned from a very profitable trip to Europe. While we did not convert any congregations out of digression, I think it is just a matter of time. We had a very good response in Germany. Most of the people in this congregation would rather commune to one cup. We also had discussions in Switzerland, which may prove fruitful, and also Austria. I am planning a return trip next summer, so please pray for the work. I stay in contact with the people in Europe, so if anyone is planning a trip there, please feel free to call me.

Tony Melton A.P. 20026 Comayagueta, D.C.; Honduras, Central America, Telephone 001-504-21-8905, November 22, 1994—Next month we will have completed our sixth year in the work here in Honduras. The congregations here continue to grow in strength and number. This work has been a blessing for us, because since we first arrived, we have seen the power of the gospel change the lives of many. Many have heard the words of Christ and have been baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. For the last ten months, the government has been rationing the electricity all over Honduras. We have been cut off on the average of about 70 hours per week. This has been some of the most trying times for us. We are thankful that the brethren from the 85th and Euclid congregation in Kansas have purchased a generator for us. The generator is an expensive and noisy way of producing electricity, but at least we have it when we need it. We have had two meetings

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within the last two months. We spent the days knocking doors and holding studies from house to house. We were able to preach to many, and the meetings closed with nine baptisms. In August we made a trip into El Salvador. The country seemed to be enjoying a time of peace after finally bringing an end to the 12 year war. We had several studies with the kinfolk of a member who lives here in Honduras. We also studied with some leaders of two digressive churches. They have several congregations there. We are hopeful to be able to get something started there in the near future. Lord willing, my family and I will be moving back to the United States to live in June of 1995. We are looking forward to our return and being with our families and brethren. Thank you very much for your many prayers on our behalf.

Kevin W. Presley, P.O. Box 2398, Ada, OK 74820, (405) 436-1331—Old man winter has finally begun to settle in here at Ada, bringing a slow down to our travels. I am looking forward to spending time at home this winter. As I reflect on the past year, I do so with mixed emotions. 1994 was a year in which we were saddened by the passing of so many brethren and friends. However, our preaching endeavors were quite fruitful. We were privileged to see several added to the kingdom last year, not only in meetings, but here at home as well. We thank God for his blessings upon us and the church. In November, I held a meeting a Cable Ridge, MO. The meeting was well attended, especially by the congregation itself. I enjoyed the hospitality of the Bentsch family. I love and appreciate them and others who invited me for meetings this past year. Next Lord's Day I will begin a meeting in Watonga, OK (see announcement). Lastly, I will go to Walnut Grove, KY to conduct their New Year's meeting, Lord willing. My schedule so far for 1995 is shaping up as follows: Sharonville, OH...April 26-30; Tulsa, OK...May; Seneca, MO...June 7-11; White Bluff, TN...June 18-25; Bloomfield, IA...spring/summer; Ada, OK...Sept. 29-Oct. 8; Beattyville, KY...fall; and Brodhead, KY...fall. I still have time available. Pray for the Lord's work!

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539—Dec. 12—On December 4, we closed a very enjoyable meeting at the Covina, CA congregation. I had not been there since 1989 and it was good to be with the brethren there again. Cooperation from other congregations was exceptionally good, and appreciated. We enjoyed a good visit with Don and Wanda McCord and indeed, enjoyed the hospitality of all. I don't know how we could have been better treated. There was one confession of wrong. Last Lord's day, we were glad to be with the Atwater group for two services. They seem to be growing and at peace. By the time you read this we will likely be in the Philippines preaching among the churches there. Those brethren are growing both in spirituality and in number. We will worship with as many places as time permits

endeavoring to encourage them in their work. As always, we ask your prayers for success and safety. Since I will be away for a time, please send your material for publication to Ronny Wade until after February 15. Then, resume sending to me as always. Your subscriptions and renewals can continue to come to my address since Pat will be home and working on the computer. We believe we have the computer problems solved now. However, if you are not getting the paper or if there is a mistake with your subscription in any way, please let us know right away. We have no way to know of the mistake unless and until you tell us. Thank you all of your patience and loyalty.

Billy D. Dickinson, 215 Forest Hills Dr., West Monroe, LA. 71291, Nov. 29—As we approach the end of another year, I can't help but be in a reflective mood because 1994 was a memorable year in so many ways. A highlight of the year was back in February when a small group of us took a trip to Israel. What a wonderful and emotional journey it was as we visited many of the Biblical sites we are all so familiar with. Taking a boat across the Sea of Galilee to ancient Capernaum, traveling up the Jericho road, and walking through the streets of old Jerusalem were experiences I will never forget. Toward the end of the year, I finished my meeting schedule by conducting a revival at Bunner Ridge, WV in September. One of our brethren from West Monroe, Jeff Pruett, accompanied me on the trip. I believe his presence added to the enjoyment and success of the meeting. Jeff and I stayed in the home of Richard Bunner. Although I've known Richard for many years, this was our first opportunity to spend some time together and to really get to know each other. I have great respect for Richard because of his knowledge in the Scriptures and his zeal in the Lord's work both at home and abroad. I want to thank the brethren at Bunner Ridge for their hospitality and I look forward to being with them again. I recently attended a debate between Ronny Wade and Harry Cobb in Alabama at Napoleon and Wedowee. With all due respect to Bro. Cobb, I found him weak in argument and presentation, while Bro. Ronny did a splendid job in upholding the truth against individual communion cups. One could not help but be impressed with the way Ronny conducted himself. He is a seasoned debater and I thank God for his ability and the experience he has gained. May the Lord raise up more like him in our midst! I'm looking forward now to the new year. While 1994 was a wonderful year, I believe the best is yet to come. One of the events we are looking forward to is hosting a debate here at West Monroe that will take place April 13-15. Allen Bailey will debate Pat Donahue on the number of containers to be used in the communion, while I will debate Thomas Thrasher on the issue of Bible classes with women teachers. The discussion will be held in our building. Why don't you plan to come and be with us? Please pray for us that the Lord will bless us in this and other efforts.

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

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

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

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

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No. 2

THE BATTLE FOR THE BIBLE

By Carl M. Johnson

In each great epoch of church history, the church has been forced to grapple with one facet of Christianity that has had a real bearing on the future direction of the church. One crucial battle that is being waged in the religious world today concerns the reliability of Scripture.

Of all the doctrines connected with the Christian faith, none is more important than the one that has to do with the basis of our religious knowledge. For anyone who professes the Christian faith, the root question is: "From where do I get my knowledge on which my faith is based?" The answers to this question are varied, of course, but for the Christian at least, it always comes full circle to the Bible. When all has been said and done, the only true and dependable source for Christianity lies in the book we call the Bible.

Since Christianity is inextricably related to and rooted in the Bible, another question automatically follows. This is, simply stated, "Is the Bible a reliable guide to religious knowledge?" "Is the Bible trustworthy?"

For almost two thousand years, those who claim to be Christian have agreed that the Bible is completely trustworthy; it is infallible, or inerrant. But, in recent years there has been a marked departure from that point of view to the one that, "The Bible contains some truth and some error." In other words, the Bible is neither completely trustworthy, nor completely false.

In a recent survey by the Barna Research Group of Glendale, CA, only 38% of Americans said that they "strongly agree that the Bible is totally accurate in its teaching." That is a drop from 47% in 1991.

The precursor to this controversy over the reliability of the Bible is a literary research methodology which was initiated by German scholars 300 years ago called Higher Criticism. Higher Criticism is a complex system of literary research which includes the examination of form, method, subject, or arguments of the different books; the nature and connection of the context; the relation of passages to each other; the known circumstances of the writer, and those of the persons for whose immediate use they wrote.

The questions of the Higher Criticism are questions of integrity, authenticity, credibility and literary forms of the various writings that make up the Bible.

The major flaw in the Higher Critical approach to Bible study is that critics are forced to approach the Bible just as they would any other book. Consequently, they reject the divine inspiration of the text, any reference to miracles in the Bible narratives, and the supernatural in general. This is necessary they say, because they are looking at the Bible from a historian's point of view and not from that of a theologian.

Led by such men as Julius Wellhausen, Martin Dibelius, and Rudolf Bultmann, some of the conclusions of Higher Critics include: that Paul did not write the book of Ephesians or the Pastoral Epistles and that Peter did not write 2 Peter. In all of these cases, the books in question claim to have been written by Paul or Peter, as the case may be.

Others say the Book of Jonah is fiction, not fact, although the words of Jesus show that He considered it to be factual. Others say that Isaiah 40-66 was not written by the prophet Isaiah, although John's Gospel asserts that the second half of the book is Isaianic. Some claim that the book of Daniel was written after the events (around 167 B.C.), instead of before the events prophesied (around 600 B.C.) which the book itself makes clear.

Many scholars accept Wellhausen's hypothesis that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses (even though Jesus named Moses as the author), but that it was written by a multiplicity of authors 1000 years after Moses was dead.

It is also widely accepted today that Matthew and Luke relied heavily upon Mark and another lost document identified as "Q," in order to write their accounts of the Gospel.

At the heart of the Higher Critical method is the assumption that there is something that stands above Scripture, that can pass judgment on Scripture; and whatever that is, it is superior to the Bible as the source of religious knowledge. This simply cannot be. Furthermore, because the Bible claims to be an inspired book, if you arbitrarily refuse to consider the contribution that the Holy Spirit made to Scripture, the whole process is invalid.

Nevertheless, the conclusions of these critics gave birth to the movement over one hundred years ago that

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"SOLDIERS OF CHRIST, ARISE"

By Billy D. Dickinson

The trumpet is a musical instrument that is mentioned numerous times in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament. Down through the ages, because of the clear and distinctive sound it makes, the trumpet has been used by man for a variety of purposes. One of those purposes was to summon men to fight and to sound forth the battle cry. According to 1 Sam. 13:3, King Saul called the people to arms by having the trumpet blown throughout all the land. When the people heard the trumpet's call, they knew that it was time to make ready for battle! Also, Paul was referring to the 'war-trumpet' in 1 Cor. 14:8, when he wrote, "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

The gospel of Jesus Christ is compared to a trumpet in 1 Thess. 1:8. When Paul said the Thessalonians had "sounded out" the word of the Lord, one of the definitions that W.E. Vine gives for the Greek word that is translated "sounded out" is "to sound forth as a trumpet." In other words, it refers to a loud, unmistakable proclamation. The Thessalonians had sounded out the word of God like a trumpet and it had been heard far and wide. Indeed, one of the purposes of the gospel is to summon us to enlist for life in the army of the Lord. The gospel calls us to come out of the world and to take our place on the Lord's side; it is our call to arms in the spiritual warfare that is taking place between truth and error.

I believe it is time once more for all the brethren to view the church as an army— an army that is composed of Christian soldiers who are commanded to "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12). Do we really view ourselves in that light or have we lost sight of our heavenly mission and the very purpose of our existence as the church? Do we understand that we are to engage in a warfare, wherein each believer must put on the Christian armor and learn how to successfully wield the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:11-17)?

I am persuaded that in some places a "truce" has been called between the soldiers of Christ and the forces of satan. If that is true where you live, who called that truce? I can tell you who didn't call it— rest assured that it was not called by King Jesus, our commander in chief!

Could it be that in the church of our Lord we have some spiritual— and I did say spiritual— conscientious objectors? In other words, do we have some in the kingdom of Christ who really don't believe in engaging in spiritual warfare? Although it saddens me to say so, I believe that is the case. We have some among us who seem to be opposed to contending for the faith, even though Jude exhorts us to do that in verse 3 of his short epistle, and they are offended by the actions of those who find it necessary to refute error. Perhaps some have forgotten what the purpose of an army is. Brethren, the purpose of an army is to wage warfare and to fight the enemy when necessary. Also, do you know

Continued on page eight

The Querist Column

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: In I Peter 3:18-20 who did the preaching? To whom did he preach? What was the message? When was the preaching done? (CA)

Answer: The verses in question read as follows: "Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, that aforetime were disobedient, when the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing..." There are a number of significant points that need to be made as we address the above questions regarding these verses. First of all the teaching by Peter affirms that Christ suffered concerning our sins once, in order that he might bring us to God. Secondly, we learn that in his suffering he was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit. The meaning is that the sphere of death for our Lord was in the flesh; and the sphere in which he was made alive was the spirit, i.e. death only touched him in the flesh and not in the spirit. But, what spirit? In the Bible flesh and spirit are often opposed to each other i.e. "Manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit" (1 Tim. 3:16); "judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." (1 Pet. 4:6). The "spirit alluded to in this passage must refer to the inner principle of man which stands in contrast to the flesh. What then is the meaning of the phrase "he was made alive in the spirit?" It seems to me that Peter is telling us that even though Christ suffered death this did not terminate his existence, but freed him from the restraints necessarily associated with the flesh, allowing him to pass into a new sphere of existence. In that state, it is affirmed that he was alive. Thirdly, it was in spirit that he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, i.e. this inner principle not subject to death. The spirits to whom he preached are so identified because at the time of Peter's writing they were under restraint (in prison in the spirit world). It is important to note that Peter does not affirm that the preaching was done to disembodied spirits, only that at the time of his writing they were "spirits" in prison. Fourthly, the passage affirms that the preaching was done "when the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing." During the time that Noah prepared the ark, he preached and warned the people of impending doom. It was Christ, through Noah i.e. (through his agency), who accomplished this. What one does through an authorized agent, one does himself. (1 John 4:1) Thus Christ preached "in spirit" to the "spirits in prison" through Noah his servant. The message was one of impending judgment to the people of that day who were refusing to obey God. Some have claimed that Christ himself, during the interval between his death and resurrection, actually went and preached to the disembodied spirits who lived in Noah's day. Such a contention brings with it insurmountable problems, in this writer's opinion. For example: why would Christ limit

his preaching to the wicked who lived before the flood? What would he preach? If he offered salvation, what of the passages that clearly teach the impossibility of changing ones state after death? If the preaching did not offer salvation, what then did it offer? We believe that the concept of Christ preaching through Noah, is one that is in harmony with the general tenor of the Scriptures. For example 1 Pet. 1:11 affirms that the Holy Spirit preached through the prophets. They were the Spirit's agent. In Eph. 2:17 we learn that "Christ came and preached peace to you that were afar off (Gentiles), and to them that were nigh (Jews)." However, Christ never, following his resurrection, preached to the Gentiles in person. All such preaching was done through the apostles. If Christ could preach to the Gentiles through Paul, he could also go and preach to the people who lived before the flood through Noah. For those who desire a more detailed study, of these passages, I suggest the Commentary on the Epistles of Peter, John and Jude by Guy N. Woods published by the Gospel Advocate Co. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808)

Preparing For Storms

By Rick Martin

We are very fortunate today that with the aid of our civil defense tactics, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and other similar disasters do not cause as much loss of lives as they once did. We have satellites and radar which provide us with information so we can prepare for these storms.

The early Church often faced storms. The early writers often warned of false teachers and doctrines. They faced the storms of paganism and idolatry along with many others. Finally, false ideas on church government caused tremendous damage to the Church and a great apostasy took place. Since the Restoration period, the Church has continued to face storms concerning missionary societies, instrumental music, Sunday School, women teachers, the number of drinking vessels used in the Communion, and a variety of other things.

The history of the Church shows us that storms have hit the Church and, in some instances, have ripped it apart. We must not get the idea that the Church of today will not also have its storms. In the coming days, the Church may face many storms and we must be prepared, so the damage will be minimal. Are there any storms that we are facing? Are there any dark, ominous clouds looming on the horizons? There are some (more than can be mentioned in this article), particularly the storms of materialism and immorality.

We are living in a day and age in which we have more material things than perhaps ever before. People are so concerned with things. Materialism has taken the place of spirituality. People may have more material things, but the spiritual welfare of people is sorely lacking. Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto

you" (Matthew 6:33). We need people today who put first things first.

Unfortunately, many people have their priorities in the wrong place. They climb the company ladder of success, looking for more money, finer clothes, a better car, and a more expensive home. By men's standards, they seem to be a great success. But, by God's standards, where do they stand? It is a good thing for us to be a success on our jobs. The problem arises when we neglect things that are more valuable. We cannot neglect our families and the Church. We cannot let the desire for material things stand in our way of serving God. This is a message that needs to be reemphasized in our congregations today. Instead of focusing on material things, we need to focus on spiritual things. Spiritual things need to be first and foremost in our mind. Remember the words of Jesus (Matthew 6:19-21), "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Materialism is a storm the Church is facing—as people become more concerned with the material, the welfare of the Church becomes less important to them.

Another storm that the Church is facing is immorality. You may think this to be a bit strange, after all, how many immoral people do you know in the Church? In our world today we see widespread marital infidelity, dysfunctional families and the widening acceptance of what has been called an "alternate lifestyle." The sin of a man and woman living together without the benefits of the marriage vows now seems to be the "in thing" to do. Celebrities talk candidly about having a baby out of wedlock and others admit and even brag about participating in the sin of homosexuality. We are living in a day and age when morals are severely lacking. I am reminded of the last verse in the book of Judges which says "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." There seems to be no standards for judging what is moral and immoral. There is a standard—people must return to God's standard and get their lives in order.

How does all of this affect the Church? The more we are bombarded with all of this, the greater likelihood it will have an effect upon the Church. The problem of divorce and remarriage has reared its ugly head in the Church. We must get a grip on this problem because it is a storm that has the potential for causing great damage to the Church. We must not be guilty of failing to teach God's laws concerning marriage. God's way is unlike today's society where people evidently get married with the idea that if they have problems they can always get a divorce. God intended for a man and woman to remain married for a lifetime: (Genesis 2:24) "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Jesus reinforced God's law concerning marriage (Matthew 19:4-6) "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female. And said, For

this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder." It is quite apparent that marriage was designed to be a lifetime commitment. People need to know that they cannot just divorce and remarry for any cause.

Going back to what Jesus said in Matthew 19:4, "Have ye not read, that he which made them in the beginning made them male and female." We have in our society today a vocal minority who are trying to gain acceptance for an aberrant, abominable, sinful lifestyle. Jesus says a man leaves father and mother and cleaves to his wife, not to a "significant other." This is a lifestyle that is condemned by God's word in (I Cor. 6:9) "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind." God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of this sin. The more people are inundated with such behavior, the more acceptable it will become. You say it will never be accepted in the Church and that is true; but this militant group sees as its major adversary the religious community. They have a plan to overcome what they consider to be bigoted, hatred, and uncompassionate attitudes. They seek to prohibit condemnation of their sinful lifestyles, even from the Church pulpit. Unfortunately the Church must prepare for the storm and continue to stand firmly against all sinful lifestyles.

Surely there are other storms that the Church will face in the future. Brethren, think on these things—the Church needs to prepare for the storms.—3400 Shaw Road, Marietta, GA 30066

Serving at the Lord's Table

By Randall Tidmore

According to the phraseology that the Holy Spirit guided Luke to employ in Acts 20:7, one would understand that the Lord's supper was a very important part of the Lord's day worship service. Accepting this, one should also realize the responsibility of directing the supper in a proper way. To minimize the importance of "how" the brother serves at the table, minimizes the importance of the Lord's supper itself. The Scriptures indicate an expectancy of the maturing of Christians (Hebrews 5:12-14). Every brother should desire to do his best when assuming a leadership role in the worship services of the Lord's church. One should consider it a highly esteemed privilege to serve at the Lord's table, and this should be apparent in his conscientious effort to do his very best. When one appreciates the privilege of serving, he will avoid the following (or a similar) statement: "Well, we all know what this is about, so let's give thanks for the bread." Neither should one use the opportunity to make all the arguments against corruption or innovations that some practice. Proper teaching

(or training) is important to spiritual growth, especially with regard to leading the congregation in worship. However, too often the only teaching, or leadership training available to brethren in many congregations is the example of other brethren from the same congregation. Unfortunately, these brethren probably just began leading (including serving at the table) at the suggestion of other brethren, without receiving adequate training as well. In spite of these circumstances, many brethren have developed themselves quite well for serving at the Lord's table. Others, however, are uncomfortable and unsure of what they should do and say. It is with them in mind that I make the following suggestions.

An appropriate transition

After a sermon and invitation song (as is the traditional order of our services), an appropriate transitional statement is needed. Although occasionally there will be exceptions, (as when the sermon addresses the Lord's supper), generally it is necessary to soften the abrupt change of thought from the sermon (and possibly confessions of sins), to the proper thoughts involved with participating in the Lord's supper. Though every Christian has the personal responsibility of preparing his own mind for communing, the one who serves well at the Lord's table will help the congregation to prepare mentally and thereby avoid the condemnation that results from eating and drinking in an unworthy manner (1 Corinthians 11:27-29). Ideally, the transitional statement will tie the sermon to the supper. One should use caution to avoid "re-preaching" the sermon or appearing to try "improving" it. The transition should be short, but not appear hurried. No matter how long the sermon may have been, the Lord's supper merits its due time and consideration.

Read a text

One who is just learning to serve at the Lord's table, after making a simple transitional statement, should read one appropriate text. This will help alleviate unnecessary nervousness. Reading one of the accounts of the Lord instituting the supper will reinforce in one's mind what he is to do, and reduce the chances of making a mistake.

The prayers

Immediately after reading the text, (not hurriedly, but without commenting on the text), one should take the bread in his hands, saying, "Let's give thanks for the bread." The prayer should be simple, but scriptural. Among our brethren there are several preferences and habits, some better than others. However, some phrases offend some brethren. For example, some brethren object to the word "represents." Although I believe the figure of speech that the Lord used means "represents or symbolizes," this is an opportunity to demonstrate the love of Christ with weaker brethren and abstain from using the word. The Scriptures do not tell us exactly how we must word the prayers, but the terminology employed in 1 Corinthians 10:16,17 is preferred by many, and as far as I know, is not objectionable to any brother. As a simple suggestion, one could say, "...thank-you for this bread, which is our communion with the body of Christ..." Likewise with the cup, taking it in his hands, he could say, "... thank-you for this cup of blessing (or thanksgiving, as the word actually means),

which is our communion with the blood of Christ. . . " These statements can hardly be offensive to anyone or considered controversial. Choosing non-controversial terminology will help all think on the Lord's death rather than fretting over one's prayers.

Open or closed communion

When passing the bread and the cup, should non-members be allowed to partake? The key words in this question are "be allowed." Should the Lord's supper be "offered" to non-members? Should non-members be "invited" to partake? The Scriptures do not deal explicitly with these questions. Caution should be exercised to avoid converting personal preferences or opinions into law. In my mind, the difficulty arises from not knowing all the visitors in our services. When I bring a visitor, who is not a member, to the services, I explain to them in private that the supper is for members. This avoids a possible embarrassment for them, and a possible "door-closing" offense by me.

However, the Lord's supper is neither "closed" nor "open." When I serve at the Lord's table, I neither invite to participate, nor refuse participation to anyone. The Scriptures say, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup" (1 Corinthians 11:28). If a visitor, who is unknown to me, partakes, it is between him and God. If he is a member, I did not refuse someone their right to partake. If he is not a member, he cannot contaminate the supper for me, although he does not receive any blessing or benefit from partaking. I remember a family of very close friends to my family and other members of the church, who visited our first Sunday morning service at Valliant. Though I had little experience, I was chosen to pass the bread and the cup that morning. In my mind, I was certain that they were not members, and therefore I passed them by with the bread and the cup. Later I learned that they were members of the "cups and classes" congregation. They were offended and never returned on a Sunday, morning. I have asked God's forgiveness, praying that my mistake would not be directly responsible for their not accepting the truth, leaving them to be lost. As far as I am able to know, I will not repeat that mistake. As one passes the communion, he need not "stick it under their nose and urge them to eat and drink," nor to "slap their hands back and fight them off." The Lord's supper is neither "closed" nor "open." I hope these suggestions will give someone the confidence to serve at the Lord's table for his first time, promote unity among brethren who maybe do not share the same opinions as to how to best word the prayers, and will be received as humble suggestions—not law.

I Admit It - I Am A Legalist

By Jerry Dickinson

If someone refers to you as a legalist they are not giving you a compliment. To most people the term legalist denotes a person who excessively emphasizes the letter of the law. The legalist holds that the scriptures are to be literally interpreted and scrupulously adhered to if a man is to please God. To most people this

is an improper view of the scriptures. The Lord is little concerned about literal interpretations and specific details. As long as you have the proper spirit and make an overall attempt to follow the Bible you will be all right.

Having said all the above, I now want to admit to being a legalist. I am not a legalist in the sense that I believe a person can be saved by merely keeping the letter of the law. No, indeed! It is Jesus who saves! Only by the grace of God as revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ can we obtain salvation. But, dear reader, I do believe that salvation and a right-standing with God can only be achieved if we strictly and scrupulously obey the commandments of the Lord. I admit it - I am a legalist.

Is not a legalist one who believes in following the legal and lawful requirements of the Lord? Can we please the Lord illegally? Can I win a crown of life without running the spiritual race lawfully? Listen to Paul in II Timothy 2:5. "And if a man also strive for masteries, yet he is not crowned, except he strive lawfully." No one, avers Paul, is crowned the winner of an athletic event except he strives and works for that crown legally, i.e., according to the rules. So it is in striving for a crown of life in heaven. We will only be crowned up there if we strive and work in harmony with God's law down here.

In Matthew 7:21-23 Jesus tell about some who will argue at the judgment that they did many wonderful works in the name of Jesus, only to hear Jesus reply, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." The word "iniquity" here is translated from the Greek word "anomia" Which literally means "to disregard the law". What sin had these people in Matthew 7 committed? They had worked hard for the Lord. Where did they miss the mark? Their iniquity, dear reader, was in ignoring God's Word. It is a dangerous and precarious thing to try to serve the Lord illegally. It is folly to think you can please God, and at the same time disregard and ignore His commands.

Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my father in heaven." (Matthew 7:21) Was Jesus a legalist because he used the word "doeth"? Can we be too strict in "doing" the will of God? Can a person ignore what the Bible says about baptism for the remission of sins or observing the Lord's Supper each Lord's Day and still somehow please the Lord?

It is more than a little interesting that those who stand for a "thus saith the Lord" in all religious matters, and earnestly contend for the faith precisely as it has been transmitted to us through the written word have always been deprecated by name calling. A generation ago we were called Campbellites. More recently some have labeled us Pharisees, but today the pejorative term "legalist" is most often used to excite prejudice and fear in those who would investigate the churches of Christ.

No one wants to be called a legalist! Nevertheless, if we are being called legalists because we believe and preach (as Jesus declared) that only those who do the will of God will enter the kingdom of heaven, then so be it. If I am a legalist because I teach people to be strict in obeying God's word I am in good company. Paul must have been a legalist too because he told brethren to "keep the ordinances, as I have delivered them to you" (I Corinthians 11:2), walk according to the "command-

ments we gave you by the Lord Jesus" (I Thessalonians 4:1,2), and "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do." (Phillipians 4:9) If using words like keep, walk, and do make a person a legalist then Paul was a legalist, and I may as well admit that I am too.

I admit it - I am a legalist. If a legalist is someone who believes in a literal and strict interpretation of the scriptures then I am one. If a legalist maintains that people must carefully and even scrupulously follow the scriptures then I am indeed one of them. I see no reason to deny it. After all, it is precisely what Jesus taught. And, if Jesus was a legalist, then I want to be one too!
--13803 Crosshaven, Houston, Texas 77015

Having Houses Joined Hard By Randy Cantrell

In Acts 18:7 we are introduced to a man who lived near the synagogue. "And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshiped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue." The sense is Justus' house was physically close to the place of worship. Consider the importance of having our own houses "joined hard" to the Church.

Our houses are indicative of who we are and what we are about. Step into a house that looks like a clothes bomb went off and it says something about the occupants. Step into a house that looks like you could eat off the floor and that too, is a statement about the family who lives there. Our houses are important places where so much of our life happens! How vital is the Church to your home?

Early disciples experienced a closeness between the Church and home. The scriptures point out important activities took place in private houses. Acts 20:20 "And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house." Teaching the gospel took place in homes. The message of Jesus went from house to house. It wasn't limited to the temple. Acts 2:46 "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." Early saints entertained one another, worshiped and served God in their homes.

The growth of the early Church was very dependent on the disciples having their houses close to the gospel. Life in homes and in the Church mirrored one another. I wonder, "Do our houses properly mirror the Church?" At Pentecost we're shown the importance each house felt toward the saints of the newly established Church. Scriptures say the disciples had all things common. Are our homes that close to the Church? If not, may they become so.

What does it mean to have our houses joined hard to the Church? Literally, in Justus' house it meant to have a house that adjoined or was very close to the place of worship. Spiritually it means having our homes so closely aligned or adjoined to the Church there is absolutely no question about what's important in our homes! God is number one! The proximity of our house

to the Church shows that God means everything to us.

Homes have always been important places to God. Houses have been blessed and cursed by Him. Prophets were put up in houses where God was worshiped. God has seen rebellious houses and obedient houses. The Passover revolved around proper things being done at home. Heads of houses decided to follow God and entire families obeyed. The Philippian jailer (Acts 16:34) and Cornelius (Acts 10) are good examples.

In Luke 10:38 Jesus visited the house of Mary and Martha to find rest. While Martha busied herself with the meal, Jesus taught Mary. This house was important to Jesus. He loved the occupants, just as He loves the occupants of all Christian houses! Jesus needs to find rest in our homes. Like Mary, we need to let Christ be the master teacher in our homes, too.

How can our houses be joined hard to the Church? The first step is in deciding to serve God. Not all houses make that decision. Make up your mind that your house will be a place where God is served! Determine that you'll be involved in the Church. The most private, important physical place in your life (your house) should be joined to the most important spiritual place in your life (the Church)! When houses aren't joined hard to the Church it's unprofitable for both the Church and the home. The strength of the Church is directly reflected in our houses. Strong Christian homes bring about strong congregations. It starts with a decision to serve God at home!

Our houses are joined hard when we're willing to sacrifice. In 2 Sam. 24:24 David makes a wonderful statement, "neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing." What is your house willing to sacrifice? God demands that we give as we've been prospered. That'll cost you money. Raising your children to know other Christians will involve traveling to some gospel meetings. That'll cost you money, time and effort.

Being involved in Church will cost you. Are you willing to sacrifice so you can make the Church important in your life? What about sacrificing entertainment? In this country of abundance and wealth, motion pictures are our number 2 export. It seems quite obvious when you read the scriptures that the houses of the 1st century Church were far more interested in serving God than in being entertained. Is it that obvious at our home? Sacrificing is one way our houses are joined hard to the Church. Give God your best. Give Him your home.

Devoted houses are joined hard to the Church. The devoted house of a Christian family sees ways and opportunities to spend time with God's word. Devotion to study is important for all Christians. 2 Timothy 2:15 and Acts 17:11 instruct us to learn and study. We gain our knowledge through study. Our homes must be places of study. Ignorant houses can't be joined hard to the Church. Studious houses can be! Take time to teach and learn the gospel in your own home. Don't make the worship service your only spiritual "feeding" place.

Our houses must be devoted to prayer. Countless references are given in the scriptures about how Christians are to pray. Houses must join in prayer to be joined hard to the Church. Our homes should be places where

we can pray alone and with our family. Make prayer an understood habit in your home. If you want your house joined hard, pray.

Serious thought about serving God takes place in the houses that are joined hard. It's called meditation. Christ showed us the way. Often He stole away from the crowd to think and ponder. We must do the same. We are commanded to "think" on things that are from God. This old life will take all our time, money and energy if we allow it. Stress and strain are part of our everyday lives. We need relief from this, just as Christ did. Meditation is one way we reach a place of peace. It's a way to clear our head of the crud that interferes with devotion to God. Meditation, coupled with fasting, needs to be a greater part of our lives. Both serve to bring us closer to God.

Houses that are joined hard to the Church are also houses that are devoted to the brotherhood. Do you feel you're in touch with the greater body of believers outside your local congregation? You should be in tune with the brotherhood. We are commanded to love the brotherhood. It helps to know the brotherhood we are commanded to love. Devote yourself to the universal body of believers. Get to know other saints! Realize that many like minded saints exist through out the world. Make new friends among the saints.

Houses joined hard understand that salvation begins at home. We must be devoted to our own salvation. Our commitment to salvation is shown by how close our houses are to the Church. In Texas, when describing someone who talks a big game, but doesn't back it up, we say, "He's all hat and no cattle." We want to make sure we aren't just talking about being saved. The price you are willing to pay for salvation is apparent to everyone who knows you. How much devotion are you showing? Do our kids see the devotion? Do other members of the Church? Does the world see it? Make it genuine and folks won't be able to miss it. Be devoted and your house will be joined hard to the Church.

There are benefits to having your house joined hard to the Church. You'll be happier. Involvement is always a positive experience. The most involved are happiest. Join your house hard to the Church and determine to find the real happiness in serving God.

Talents are honed when we join hard to the Church. The house that isn't joined hard not only deprives God of proper service, but deprives itself of the benefits that come from giving service. Great rewards are found in giving to God. Be thankful for your talents by rendering them in service to the King.

Our influence will be greater if we get closer to the Church. Look at the story of Daniel. Here was a young man totally devoted to serving Jehovah. Nothing would deter him. He determined to eat only what God commanded. By refusing the meat from the king's table, the Hebrew boys appeared more fair than all the others. Even the heathens around them grew to recognize Jehovah as God. It began with a great influence they had. They had that influence because they were joined hard to God. These young men determined they'd make a difference! And they did.

Our kids will be saved if our houses are joined hard

to the Church. Our kids will most likely turn out like us. Scary, isn't it? If your house is joined hard to the Church your kids have a tremendous advantage. They learn that the Church permeates every aspect of life. Nothing outside the bounds of God's word is considered. We take into account God and the Church in everything we do. Kids also learn that God's people are different in so many ways. They witness the Godly differences. They recognize God's standards. Raise your kids in a house that is always messy and take them to a house that is kept neat. They don't recognize neatness as a standard. Conversely, take a child raised in neatness and show him a messy house and he'll wonder what the deal is. To him the standard is neatness. So it goes spiritually. Don't wait until it's too late. Set the standard for your kids now. Teach them the value of Christian friends and association. Teach them to marry for life, only in the Lord. Teach them that salvation is only in the Church. Establish a legacy through your kids so they'll grow up and have their own houses joined hard to the Church.

Salvation for our houses is a priority. Hebrews 11:7 tells us about the salvation Noah and his family found by serving God. Our goal is to save our families. That can only be done by being joined hard to the Church. Noah's house couldn't be saved outside the ark. They had to be joined hard to the ark. What type of commitment was that? How much time was spent? How much sacrifice? How involved was Noah and his house? You get the point. Compare your house to Noah's house. The Church is the ark. The house of Noah represents the saved. We should seek to follow their example.

All houses are joined hard to something. The quest for wealth, entertainment, education? What takes priority in your house? May God bless our Christian homes so we'll have homes joined hard to His Church.--2412 Oak Brook, Bedford, TX

The Battle For The Bible

Continued from page 1

became known as Modernism or liberalism. The earliest modernists seemed concerned primarily with religious unity, and the findings of the Higher Critics became very convenient for them. If the Scriptures were unreliable anyway, they were willing to downplay doctrine for the sake of unity. They viewed doctrine as a secondary issue. Doctrine, they believed, should be fluid and adaptable — certainly not something worth fighting for.

Liberalism's influence spread like wildfire into pulpits, literature, schools, and seminaries of denominations. Within one generation, liberalism was in control of most denominational schools, publishing houses, and organizations.

A good case study is the United Presbyterian Church. The General Assembly of what was then the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. adopted the famous "five points" in 1910. By this adoption the church committed itself to these beliefs in an official sense. The first of these points was a "belief in the inspiration and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures."

rancy of the Holy Scriptures."

In the 1920s the denomination was faced with a revolt against this sort of teaching, led by Presbyterian professors and preachers who had studied under the German Higher critics. As a result, The Auburn Affirmation was put together and signed in 1924, which stated that prospective Presbyterian preachers no longer had to assent to these five points. Thus the denial of biblical infallibility opened the door wide to a denial of other basic doctrines of the faith and to further defection from the truth.

According to Harold Lindsell, editor of *Christianity Today*, there is not a single theological seminary in the Presbyterian denomination today that is committed in principle and practice to the view of biblical inerrancy. There are a few members of the faculties of these institutions who believe in the infallibility of Scripture, but their number is small and their ultimate influence minuscule.

In November of 1993, the Presbyterian Church supported the ecumenical women's conference, titled "Re-Imaging," with \$66,000 and 400 participants. *Presbyterian Laymen*, a church journal, reported that "among other things, participants celebrated homosexuality, worshipped goddess 'Sohpia,' and rejected Christ's atonement" (*Christian Century* 1185). This is a graphic illustration that it is impossible to stop theological deterioration once inerrancy is abandoned.

This same theological evolution has been repeated in virtually every major denomination in America. The last holdout has been the Southern Baptist Association. But, there is at present a palpable division in that denomination over the issue of biblical inerrancy, which is the source of a major battle.

Until recently, churches of Christ have been virtually untouched by the ravages of modernism, probably because few, if any, of our preachers have attended denominational seminaries. But, just as virtually every movement in society will eventually be felt in the church, we are being confronted with some genuinely modernistic trends in the church today.

Our "cups and classes" brethren are in the throes of an all-out slugfest in their religious journals over a "new hermeneutic." Hermeneutics is the philosophy of biblical interpretation. The "new hermeneutic," in essence, de-emphasizes the importance of doctrine, and clears the way for modern religious unity. Sound familiar? So the battle for the Bible continues. This is admittedly, a brief account of a complex and difficult matter, of which many people are either unaware or unconcerned. But we should make a serious effort to understand these issues, because they are at the heart of the persistent attacks waged against the infallible Word of God.--1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820

Soldiers Of Christ, Arise

Continued from page 2

where the soldier proves his worth as a soldier? He proves it on the battlefield by his willingness to stand against the enemy and to engage in hand-to-hand

combat, when called upon to do so.

One of the most important factors in warfare is the morale of the troops. Field-Marshal Montgomery once said, "The morale of the soldier is the greatest single factor in war." Numbers or strength alone do not always bring victory, but whichever army goes into battle stronger in heart and purpose, their enemies generally cannot withstand them. How is the morale of the troops in the Lord's army today? Do we truly believe in the strength and rightness of our cause (the Lord's cause) so much that we are ready to press on to victory under the marching orders of King Jesus? Let us remember that God has promised us the victory if we will only persevere unto the end.

If some congregations were to be asked how the work is going in their community, they would probably answer with glee, "Well, we're holding our own. We haven't lost any ground." Certainly that would be a good answer to that extent, but... Have we gained any new territory for the Lord lately? Brethren, Christ has not called us into His army for us to go into retreat or to simply occupy what has already been gained. No, as the soldiers of Christ, we must arise and go on the offensive at times and claim some new territory, as we seek the Lord's help and blessings.

Let the word go forth this day unto the ends of the earth that as the army of Christ we will not surrender one principle of truth or give ground to satan in any way! Let it be known, now and forever, that we will uphold Christ's honor at any price, defend the truth at any cost, and we will spread the gospel in its purity and simplicity at whatever sacrifice necessary. In all of this we will preach the truth in love, because we realize that our objective is not to destroy souls, but to see souls saved by rescuing them from sin and error. It is precisely the love that we have for God, His word, and the souls of men that motivates us to contend for the faith and to lead people to the truth that sets men free (John 8:32).

To the denominational world we say: We will not compromise one condition of salvation that our Lord has given. We will continue to emphasize that obedience to all the commands of the gospel is necessary to salvation (Matt. 7:21). The Lord, for example, gave baptism, along with faith, as a condition of salvation from past sins (Mark 16:16). Peter declared that baptism is "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Those who teach to the contrary will find that we are ready to challenge their assertions with "a thus saith the Lord." While denominational preachers appeal to the creeds and dogmas of men, we will continue to tell people what the Lord has said one must do to be saved and how obedience to His gospel makes one a member of the New Testament church (Acts 2:47).

To our digressive brethren we say: We will continue to oppose all of your unscriptural innovations, as we have in the past. We will not sit idly by while innovators make fallacious arguments and twist scriptures to justify their unscriptural practices. We will tell all who will listen how innovations like instrumental music, Bible classes with women teachers, and individual communion cups are of human origin, and how they were pushed into congregations over the protests, con-

sciences, and convictions of sincere and faithful brethren. We will continue to plead with these brethren to come back to the Bible, for only then can we have the unity that existed before those unscriptural practices were introduced into the church.

To the world at large we say: While the world seems to be drifting farther away from God and deeper into secular Humanism, we are committed to upholding the principles of godliness and morality as found in God's word. Politicians may be swayed by public opinion on such issues as abortion, homosexuality, and euthanasia, but we will continue to stand where God stands on these and other issues. After all, as the army of Christ, we can do no less!

Those of us who are members of Christ's church are soldiers in His army. Let us accept the challenge of that great, old gospel hymn and live accordingly: "Soldiers of Christ, arise, and put your armor on. Strong in the strength which God supplies through His beloved Son!" -215 Forest Hills Dr., West Monroe, LA. 71291

"RELIGIOUS AND NOT HONEST"

One can be religious and not be honest, but one cannot be a Christian without being honest.

It is my observation that the men we meet in debate today from the sectarian ranks are not men of outstanding ability; they are not the men who are regarded as the strongest men in the church in which they hold membership. The outstanding men in sectarian churches - men who are regarded as "leaders" in sectarian churches - cannot be induced to engage in a debate. I conclude that they have such a high reward for their scholarship that they cannot persuade themselves to engage in a contest where it will become necessary for them to declare themselves on questions where their scholarship will be tested; and rather than be untrue to their religious creed they refuse to engage in a discussion in which they would, by reason of scholarship, be forced to take a position contrary to the doctrine of the church they defend. C.R. Nichols in Gospel Advocate, Aug. 16, 1934.

Reply: And since "Like causes produce like effects," we plainly see why such "leaders" as C. R. Nichols refuse to defend the "practices" of the churches with which they affiliate. The truth is: "They have such a high regard for their scholarship that they cannot persuade themselves to engage in a contest where it will become necessary for them to declare themselves on questions where their scholarship will be tested; and rather than give up the "practices" of the churches with which they affiliate they refuse to defend the churches because they would be forced by scholarship to take a position contrary to the **practices** of the church they were called on to defend. They are not cowards. They simply deem "discretion" the better part of valor "under the circumstances." The truth is the churches have drifted into practices that can not be defended by an open Bible and scholarship. And they follow the churches "for the

loaves and fishes," "making merchandise" (2 Pet. 2:3) of them. Verily, "They have their reward," the "reward of unrighteousness," 2 Pet. 2:13--H.C. Harper.

NOTE: The above piece was written by Bro. Harper in August of 1939. It's amazing, but true: "the more things change, the more they stay the same."--Ronny F. Wade.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The American Indian Work

Dear Fellow Christians,

I have good news to announce! The Lord now has a place in New Mexico near I-40 to worship Christ in. It is Thoreau about half way between Grant and Gallup. The Church location is in the old Community Building at 06, Third Ave., Thoreau, NM. Service time is at 10:30 AM and 6:00 PM Midweek service have yet to be set, call me and see when Services are if perhaps there is a service. Anyway stop and rest, stay over night if you so choose to. I can provide bed for two adults and two children, everyone is welcome. My phone number is 505-862-8416.

Brethren I have additional information that you might want to hear. I have bought a gasoline powered generator for tent meetings. I also am making arrangements to see a circus tent with the intention of buying it for use on the Reservation. Others are doing that in many places here in Mexico. My grandson and I drove perhaps a 100 miles on the Reservation and saw several revivals, as they call them. My grandson, Rick 16, is now in Arkansas. He is thinking about coming back and going to school here. With the right encouragement he might one day serve Christ in the Gospel.

Brethren, now let us get down to the important work of the ministry, bringing souls into Christ's Kingdom. I still need your financial help which will be used to further the cause of Christ in the Southwest, to all the lost here. I intend to do work in the white community also. I have already talked with some. I believe we can do well here if we use our knowledge with God's wisdom.

We must buy land for this work here in the Southwest NM and Arizona. Brethren, there are two acres here in Thoreau area for \$14,500 we must think positive and secure land, build or put a trailer on it for church building as many have done. "YES" we can do it for Christ! I met a young man today that has the circus tent which I must buy for this evangelizing of the Reservation. He has a trailer to carry the tent on, he wants \$800. which our budget cannot afford at this time. Brethren this is your opportunity to do something constructive and lasting in the Kingdom of Christ. Stand with me in this long neglected mission to the Lost American Indians. Also those of you that have encouraged me in this work, and especially the small congregations that could not afford to give but for Christ did any way, you are the joy of my heart, and the light of Christ, Matt. 5:16. Please consider this work and pray for it. If you have any

questions call or write me. Yours always in Christ.--Ken Millard, P.O. Box 939, Thoreau, NM 87323

THE 1995 CHURCH DIRECTORY NOW READY

The new 1995 Church Directory is now ready for mailing. There are hundreds of changes in this year's directory due to an unusual amount of address changes, etc. New churches in Canada and Hawaii are also listed. The price of the directory is the same \$2.00 each. However, due to postal increases, we can no longer afford to absorb the postage on orders of fewer than five (5) directories. So we encourage you to order several directories and share them with others in your congregation. For orders of five (5) or less add one dollar per directory for postage. For five (5) or more I will pay the postage. Send all orders to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808.

NEW CHURCH

Wichita Falls, TX, 1006 Holiday St. Sunday 10:00 AM and 4 PM; Wednesday 7:30 PM. Contact: Charles Goodgion, 4162 Meadowbrook St., Wichita Falls, TX 76308. (817) 692-0281.

DIRECTORY CHANGES

Sanger, Ca.: Change Sunday Evening to 5:00 PM. Rande Vig address is Reedley, CA 93654. Not Sanger. (Street address the same.)

HERNANDO, FL: Church has moved to Dunnellon, FL, in the home of Ronald Hays, 25172, S.W. Chickadee Blvd., Dunnellon, FL 34431. (904) 489-2520.

OUR WORK IN SARANSK, RUSSIA

I am ever thankful to God for the work and labor with Bro. Alton Baker, Doug and Lori Hawkins and others in Saransk. I believe the truth is firmly established in that city and with Doug's continued stay there to teach and strengthen them and with the support and assistance of his beloved wife they will continue to grow with God's blessings.

I would also like to express my appreciation to all the brothers and sisters both individually and congregationally across our land who have participated in any way in the work in Russia. Whether it be to those who have gone personally, or remain there or to those who have contributed financially, and to all who have offered up prayers on behalf of us all we say "thank you" and may God bless you.

I give a special thanks to Bro. Miles King (my fellow worker on two previous trips to Saransk) and the congregations who through him provided support for me to go. I consider it a great honor to be a laborer together with you all and to share in the building of God's great temple of truth to which is fruit produced to your account. Please continue to pray for the work there.--Gene Grant

DEBATE SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 13-15

A debate, Lord willing, will take place in West Monroe, LA on the dates of April 13-15. The entire

discussion will be held in our building, which is located at 727 Wallace Dean Road.

Allen Bailey of Irving, TX will affirm on Thursday evening, (April 13): "The Scriptures teach that an assembly of the church of Christ, for the communion, must use one cup (drinking vessel) in the distribution of the fruit of the vine." Pat Donahue of Harvest, AL will deny.

On Friday evening, (April 14), Pat Donahue will affirm: "The Scriptures teach that an assembly of the church of Christ, for the communion, may use individual cups (drinking vessels) in the distribution of the fruit of the vine." Allen Bailey will deny. The sessions on Thursday and Friday nights will begin at 7:00 PM.

Then on Saturday morning, (April 15), at 10:00 AM Tommy Thrasher of Decatur, AL will affirm: "When the church comes together for the purpose of teaching the Bible, it is scriptural to divide into classes for this teaching, some of which may be taught by women." Billy Dickinson of West Monroe, LA will deny.

The final session will be at 2:00 PM. Billy Dickinson will affirm: "The Scriptures teach that when the church comes together for the purpose of teaching the Bible, the people must be taught in an undivided assembly by men only." Tommy Thrasher will deny.

Brethren Donahue and Thrasher will be representing the Southside Church of Christ which meets in Monroe. We are looking forward to a good discussion. Why don't you come and be with us? --*Billy Dickinson*

OUR DEPARTED

CALDWELL--Brother Delbert O. Caldwell was born January 27, 1907 and departed this life Nov. 12, 1994, being at the time of his passing eighty-seven years of age. He was baptized into Christ in 1978 and at the time of his passing was a member of the Leawood Village Church in Joplin, MO. In March of 1933 he was married to Fern Ramsey who survives. He is also survived by one son and two daughters. Delbert was faithful in his service to Christ and will be missed by both family and friends. Services were conducted Nov. 14, 1994 at the Parker Chapel with burial in the Saginaw Cemetery. The writer with Bro. Ron Lankford conducted the service.--*Jimmy M. Stockam*



B.B. Cayson, 6120 Kevin, Bartlett, TN 38135--It has been some time since I have written to the OPA. The Lord continues to bless the work in this area. In the past three weeks, there have been three baptisms which makes a total of nine since the new work began at 1914 Frayser Bl. The church has a nice building in which to meet. We thank God our sister congregations and individuals for prayers and who financially made this

possible. We shall ever be grateful. Note our new phone number: 1 (901) 388-3506.

Jerry Dickinson, 13803 Crosshaven, Houston, TX 77015--Since last reporting, I have held meetings at McGregor, Fossil Creek, (Ft. Worth), and Athens, Texas. Always I enjoy being with the brethren in McGregor. Twenty-five years ago (it can't be that long!) while I was doing my C.O. work in Temple, Texas, Judy and I made McGregor our home congregation. Wayne McKamie was a great aid to me as I tried to develop into a preacher, and has been an encourager to me ever since. I had a great time during the short meeting there. The meeting at Fossil Creek was grand as well. The brethren there love gospel preaching and what a joy it is to preach to such folks. I have stayed in the home of Phil and Kay Bray many times and I was the beneficiary of the graciousness again. I appreciate their love for the church and for preachers. Lastly, I was with the new congregation in Athens. What a refreshing meeting! Everyone in the work there is excited and the members brought a number of visitors out to the services. They are blessed with an abundance of younger folks and what a challenge that affords the leadership of the church. I stayed again with Glenn and Rebecca Ballard and enjoyed their marvelous hospitality as always. Glenn is working with the new church in Athens and has already experienced success and is excited about the future of the work. It was also good to see Terry Baze and Randy Ballard during the meeting. Glenn and Randy were several years younger than my brother Billy and I when we were all growing up in Houston, and I think that Glenn and Randy looked up to Billy and I. I trust you understand, then, when I say how proud of them and the work they have done (and do) for the church. Lately in Houston the leaders of the churches in the area met and discussed how we could all work better together in the future. We plan on coordinating meetings having regularly scheduled singings at respective churches, and meeting using local teachers presenting assigned topics. Everyone sees the need to work together and concert our efforts if we want to see the churches in Houston survive and grow. May the Lord bless us - and may He bless the church throughout the world!

Bennie T. Cryer, 2340 Sanguinetti, Ln., #93, Stockton, CA 95205, January 6, 1995--It was with regret we heard of the passing of Bro. Tom Allington. He was a good man and helped the brotherhood to think more about scriptural church government. Joann and I stopped by Tucson a few weeks before his death and were blessed by a short visit with him and his wife, Margaret. We pray God's richest blessings to rest upon her. The work here in Stockton continues at a good pace. We have several studies going, some of them with outsiders that are considering obeying the gospel. Lodi hosted the New Year's meeting in this area. Attendance was good. The preaching, singing, praying, and fellowship was excellent. Soon after the meeting, Bro. Max Butler and his wife, Peggy, left for Russia to live there for ten months. Then, Don King and Duane Permenter left for their

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work in the Philippines. We sent them all off with our prayers. I have had the privilege of speaking in Yuba City, Turlock, and Lodi in addition to being here in Stockton. March 2-5 Alan Bonifay and I will help Bro. Duane Permenter and the Oakdale congregation in a meeting concerning church government. March 16-19 I will be working with the Chapel Grove congregation in Tennessee in a meeting and then go to Jacksonville, Fl. March 22-26. Pray for us and the work of the Lord.

*Clovis T. Cook--HCR 16, Box 475, Lebanon, MO 65536, Jan. 9--*I am thankful to report that I am still making progress health-wise. I attended the New Year's Meeting hosted this time by the Norman, Oklahoma Church of Christ. It was another great meeting. I spent four days with my family in Wichita Falls, Texas, and preached three times to the Garden's Edge congregation. A young man, with whom David Tate had been studying, made the confession and fulfilling his desire, was baptized by David, it being his first. He did a very good job. We were glad to have two elders and their families from Midland, Texas, with us on Sunday morning, friends and brethren of long standing. I baptized one and restored one yesterday at Mtn. Grove, Mo. We were all so happy about that. We had three services yesterday, which made it a wonderful Lord's Day. They will, all of those whom we have mentioned, be great help at both places. We are at home now, and plan to be around here until spring. It is a real joy to be back with my old home church where I spent so many years in the past. I will be working with second and third generation people; mostly; with some of the people I met in 1934 still around. They are some of the finest people on earth.

*Miles King, Rt. 1, Box 115, Scotland, AR 72141--*This past fall I enjoyed weekend meetings at Amarillo, TX and Baton Rouge, LA. The series of studies during December at 21st Street in Oklahoma City were some of the best. I was sure glad to be there and see all the preachers and brethren from different parts of the country. I was so glad to have all my family in Oklahoma City for the New Year's meeting. Thanks so much to the Norman congregation and Bro. Lynwood Smith for their part in helping to make this meeting so good. Meetings like this are so encouraging for our young people and of course the fellowship, good singing, prayers, and sermons are very uplifting to all of us. This year I will be working some with the church at Lamar, AR. They have now been meeting for one year and have doubled in attendance. Our goal is to double again and to build a new church building. Please pray for us in this effort. The church at Lamar is near Clarksville, Ar., just off Interstate Highway 40. Our gratitude goes to Bro.

Ronny Wade for his efforts in publishing a very good 1995 church directory. During December, while in Oklahoma I enjoyed visiting and preaching at Council Hill, Sulphur and Norman.

*Barney Owens, 8782 Meadowview Ln., W. Chester, OH 45069--*It has been my pleasure to be in a short meeting with the church at Blue Springs, KY. Crowds were good with several attending from other congregations. The brethren at Breeze Hill, IN have recently moved their meeting place to just south of Mitchell, IN. They have constructed a very lovely building which affords comfort in worship and good access to those whom they wish to attend and learn the truth. Being invited to hold a short meeting recently was a joy. The weather was terrible, yet people came to the meetings. It has been some time since I have preached to a near full house and most of them non-members of the church. The work they did for the meeting was easily seen. The future looks bright for them. Also, I have been to one service with the brethren at Bedford, In. We at Sharonville were privileged to have Wayne McKamie in our October Meeting. He was a grand help to our work with fine sermons and encouraging words when not in the pulpit. Thanks for your prayers.

*Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820--*We enjoyed the Preachers' Study and the Oklahoma New Year Meeting very much. 1994 was a good year for our family and for the church here in Ada. Two more have been baptized recently. We are looking forward to the new year. My schedule for the next few months includes: Tulsa, OK (Jan. 21-22); Nashville, TN (Mar. 15-19); Washington, OK (Mar. 26-Apr. 2); Abilene, TX (Apr. 9-16); Lodi, CA (Apr. 21-30); Arlington, TX (May 5-14); Irving, TX (May 24-27 Commentary Study); Orange, CA (May 28-June 4); Corsicana, TX (June 11-18); Okla. City, 21st St. (June 23-25); Marietta, GA (July 8-16); Aurora, MO (July 21-30); Napoleon, AL (Aug. 6-13); Odom, MO (Aug. 20-27). We always solicit your prayers.

*Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808, Jan. 15--*After enjoying the preachers study and New Year meeting in Oklahoma City, we are now at home preaching on weekends at area churches. The Lord willing we leave in a few days for California for meetings at Covina, Feb. 1-5 and El Cajon, Feb. 8-12. We look forward to our visit out west. In March we are scheduled to be at Arpellar, near McAlester, OK, March 3-5; Hoyt, TX, March 12-19; White Bluff, TN, April 2-9; and Birmingham, AL, April 12-16. The Lord bless His people everywhere.

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

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

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

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

VOL. LXVII

LEBANON, MISSOURI, MARCH, 1995

NO. 3

POST-FIXED DIVORCES

Submitted By Jimmie C. Smith

In grammar a **postfix** (or **suffix**) is "a sound, syllable, or syllables added at the end of a word or word base to change its meaning, give it grammatical function, or form a new word." (Webster's New World Dictionary Of The American Language p. 1457)

It occurs to me that postfixing (to fix after) is what many are doing to accounts for their divorces. Often there is the account given at the time of the divorce and then the postfixed one given at the time of remarriage. The story is now fixed, after the fact, to include scriptural grounds for divorce. Why? Because the scriptural reason for divorce is now far more important than it was at the time of the divorce.

A person is in a difficult marriage. Things have gotten so bad that divorce seems to be the only way out. The person is so disgusted and hurt by this marriage that he or she just wants out. To find another mate? Never! He has had it with this marriage. He has had it with marriage—period! The quicker he can end this misery the better. So he gets the divorce, using the easiest provable grounds he can find that the state will accept (which is almost any reason or no reason 'no fault') to get the divorce over with. He is fed up with this intolerable situation.

Had the person's spouse committed fornication? He says he (or she) really doesn't know and moreover it really doesn't matter—because he is going to get the divorce anyway. But, what if he should change his mind later and decide to remarry? He assures us that this is not going to happen. But it does!

Years ago, I was riding a bus to a meeting in Georgetown, Kentucky. A young lady with two small children boarded the bus at Louisville and took a seat directly behind me. Just outside of Louisville a man boarded and sat down, just across the angle from the young lady. She was in a talkative mood. She began telling the story of her life. She had just gotten a divorce and was on the way back to her parents. She was disgusted with

men in general. If she would just make it to her parents, she would make it, just fine, without ever looking at a man as long, as she lived. This kind of talk went on for several minutes. Finally, the man across the aisle began talking with her. He did not have a wife and needed one. By the time we stopped in Frankfort, the young lady had been talked into getting off the bus there with her new friend with the view of giving further consideration to their possible marriage. How quickly the mind changes.

While the young lady's case may be an extreme example, it illustrates how easily minds are sometimes changed. We know of several cases where divorced people have adamantly affirmed that they would never want another spouse, but have changed their minds with the passing of time—some within a few weeks, some within a few months, and others within a few years. They meet the new love of their lives and would like for their new marriage to be scriptural and accepted by faithful brethren. So, now the "postfixing" begins.

Maybe they did have scriptural ground for divorce after all. So, they begin the quest for evidence by recalling things that happened before their divorce that seems now to point to the unfaithfulness of the ex-spouse. Why did they not bring these things up before? Could it be that they were so bent on getting out of the marriage they simply overlooked them? Or, could it be that they are now more concerned about the divorce's being scriptural than they were at the time? Or, could it be that, with the passing of time and the increased desire to have the right to another spouse, the facts (?) that were fuzzy at the time have become clearer as the desire to remarry has become stronger? At any rate, they are now convinced that they did have scriptural grounds after all, but because of the pressure at the time of the divorce they did not use it. They can now marry their new love convinced that they are alright and that good breth-

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DRIFTING

By Don L. King

It really is pretty scary to realize we have drifted away from some old time moorings. It is even more so to realize some are not afraid! The present day situation reminds us of a ship which has slipped from her anchoring and is slowly drifting away from shore toward dangerous shoals while her crew are blissfully unaware and unafraid. It isn't that we are predicting doom for all. We have no doubt that when the Lord comes He will find some still faithful. However, that doesn't change the fact that some are drifting away from safety.

Some of us have drifted in our preaching. We neither preach for nor against the things we once did. Very little preaching is done (by some) on fundamental truths now. Think about it. Do you hear preaching about the church? How long ago was it that you heard someone "lay it on the line" and prove that there is just one church and salvation can be found in no other? What about the issues which have divided the Lord's people; the Lord's Supper, Bible classes, instrumental music in worship, the missionary society, etc. Folks, the same problem is going to face us again if we deceive ourselves into thinking the battle is won. It is obvious the scriptural principles are missing in the minds of some or they wouldn't make the lame arguments we often hear. Many do not understand why women should not teach the Bible subjects in a public manner as long as it is not a "church service." Why is this? It has to be because it isn't taught as it once was. That is just one example of several.

Some have drifted in Christian living. Why is this? One reason is probably that worldliness is seldom condemned now. Ask around and see how many of your brethren have a conscience against a picture show. Recently, a brother said, "you mean you wouldn't go to the movies and see Bambi?" He was incredulous when I answered that I would not. Come on, folks, our people aren't interested in seeing "Bambi." That would be much too tame. God's people are going to see movies rated much harsher than that. But you know what? That is where it started, perhaps. We seem to begin with the seemingly innocent and gradually move on to that which is undoubtedly wrong. Little by little, we become less outraged and soon can be entertained by that from which we are supposed to flee. Paul said: "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may

Continued on page ten

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: Please explain James 2:1-4. Who is at fault here? What sin, if any, does the poor man commit? What should our attitude be toward those who are guilty of showing partiality?-- CA

Answer: The verses in question read as follows: "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place, and say to the poor, stand thou there, or sit here under by footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?" James begins by addressing "my brethren." This term of endearment, though genuine, is not used to cover up his intention to severely rebuke them for their violations of the law of love. Holding the faith of Christ with respect of persons is forbidden. "The faith" is a phrase referring to the whole of the religion of Christ, i.e. what Christians believe or that for which they stand. The message is plain and straight forward: "Don't hold to the Christian faith and at the same time show partiality to men who are considered famous or deemed rich by the world." Such would be hypocrisy in its boldest form. Favoritism does not become the Christian. For brethren to favor anyone, on the basis of external reasons, is foreign to the spirit of Christianity. The phrase "hold not the faith..." literally means "quit having the habit of holding the faith" with respect of persons. Authorities point out that showing respect of persons has reference to "showing regard for the external circumstances of another, to exhibit favoritism on the grounds of rank, wealth, social position, worldly attainment or fame. The Scriptures plainly teach that God does not show respect of persons, and neither should we. "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him." Acts 10:34. Since we are all equal before God, and all in Christ are entitled to the same privileges (Gal. 3:26-29), it ill behooves any of us to look down upon anyone in the church because of such things as money, color of skin, social standing in the community, etc. There is absolutely no place in the Christian religion for worldly acclaim. In verse 2, our writer discusses what might happen when men of different economic background visit our assembly. One is rich. He has gold on his fingers. His clothes are "fine" i.e. bright colored. The other is poor. His clothing is vile i.e. cheap or dirty. He is nothing more than a beggar. Quite a contrast between the two. If because of this difference we look upon the rich man with favor and have regard for him because of his possessions, if we say to him "sit here" giving him a

place of honor and prestige, James declares that we are guilty of showing "respect of persons." On the other hand if we say to the poor man "you stand here" not offering him a seat, and show no regard whatsoever for his comfort, we have committed a grievous sin. It is not a sin to be poor. One does not have to dress in "fine" clothing to be accepted by God. The sin here countenanced is not committed by the poor man, but rather by the church. What a lesson for all of us. How can we make a difference between people based on dress, money, color of skin, social standing in the community, fame, etc., etc. and claim to be the people of God? The truth is, we cannot. It would seem to this writer that the correct interpretation of verse four is as Guy N. Woods states "When you show partiality, on the basis of economic standing or other material and worldly considerations, are you not exhibiting doubt (disbelief) in the teaching of our Lord, who straitly forbade all such in his teaching?" They became judges with evil thoughts by their exhibition of favoritism toward the rich. These people knew that what they were doing was not in harmony with the teaching of Jesus. Such actions are displeasing to God.

Brethren why would anyone want to honor the rich and reject the poor? Why would anyone turn his back on someone who has little of this world's goods, in preference for someone who is rich and powerful? The answer seems evident. The motive must be one of selfishness. There is surely the idea that the rich man might one day be able to help us in some way. Why bother with the poor? What could he do for us anyway? What a tragedy. What a mistake. May the God who loved us all, help us to see that in His sight we are all equal in privilege and promise, and that one soul is as precious and valuable as another. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808)

1995 CHURCH DIRECTORY

The new 1995 Church directory is now ready for mailing. Send all orders to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808. One to four copies are three dollars each. Five or more directories are \$2 each and I pay the postage.

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AFRICAN NOTEBOOK: MISSION-FIELD PROBLEMS

By James D. Orten

A national authority on leadership recently said that one measure of a leader's effectiveness is the problems he encounters and the opposition he faces. His assumption is that an organization that does not function well, has forces within it that are preventing growth. An effective leader will have to confront these persons and institutions and that will arouse opposition. I do not know whether his assumption is true in all cases, but I do know that good things are rarely accomplished without problems. Mature persons know this and are not discouraged when difficulties arise.

The preceding principle has been true throughout the history of the Lord's church. Soon after Pentecost, Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit and were struck dead (Acts 5:1-10); the Grecian Christians felt neglected and "murmured" (Acts 6:1-6); and the controversy over circumcision arose in Acts 15. Later Paul was opposed so fiercely at Ephesus that he labelled it "fighting with the beasts" (I Corinthians 15:32) and on and on.

I am not writing about problems on the mission field (our particular field is Zambia) because I think they are more numerous here than at home. Nor do I believe them to be more difficult than those faced by our spiritual forefathers. Rather, I believe the churches in the U.S. will better be able to guide mission work if they have a realistic picture of it. When we were preparing to come to Africa, a brother at our home church, said that all reports of mission work sound like 'press releases,' almost totally positive and problems that are mentioned are made to seem like advantages. He is an intelligent man and he knows that is not the 'real world.'

This article, and later ones, will describe problems in mission fields that arise from three sources: economic conditions, culture, and individual personalities.

Spiritual Problems from Economic Sources

Mission work usually is done by persons from wealthy societies and in poor countries. Most missionaries came from Britain in the 18th and 19th centuries, when the U.K. was in its days of glory. The influence of The London Missionary Society, is written large in the history of Africa. But a significant financial disparity between senders and receivers of the gospel creates problems, if evangelists do not handle the matter skillfully.

An evangelist's relative wealth, makes it easy for Christians and prospective converts to be interested in something other than the gospel. The term 'Rice Christian' was coined in China many years

ago. The Zambians themselves tell us that some people come to the church hoping to get something out of it. We should not be surprised. Jesus said some of the people sought Him not because they saw the miracles and believed, but because they ate the loaves and were filled. (John 6:26)

In addition to tempting people with wrong motives for becoming Christians, this situation can easily create dependence on the missionary. Recently I went to a new church on the outskirts of Lusaka. They have no building; they meet in a grass enclosure with no top. After the Lord's Day service, we were informally discussing the church and I mentioned their need for a building with a roof. One sister shot back, "Yes, what are you going to do about it?" I responded, "The question is not what am I going to do about it, but what are you going to do about it?" This got her attention and the brethren's, so I went on to say that I did not consider it my place to build them a church building, but if they showed me they were willing to do all they can for themselves, I would help.

When we support local preachers in underdeveloped countries, we have difficulty doing it appropriately. If we support them above their brethren, we will likely hinder their effectiveness with those brethren and those they wish to convert. And we can create ever-growing expectations based on fantasies of an endless money supply. Twice this year, I have been asked by preachers in different countries to advance them money to build houses!

I have begun to question the propriety of going into a country and supporting citizen-Christians to preach to their own neighbors and countrymen. I know of no such example in the Bible. Instead the apostles and evangelists went into new fields, preached the gospel, strengthened the converts as much as possible, and taught them that their salvation obligated them to help save others.

My thoughts on this issue were aroused when a Zambian preacher wrote me about working with us. He is not 'one of us' even though he supposedly conducts the worship as we do. His letter made it clear that he expects to be supported and given certain equipment, such as a motorcycle, typewriter, and other things. He referred me to I Corinthians 9:7 ('Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof...?') and Romans 15:27 (if one has ministered 'spiritual things' his receivers should minister to him 'carnal things.'). I thought about the man's request and his supporting arguments. There is no doubt that these Scriptures teach, that a spiritual workman is worthy of his wages. But they also seem to say something about the source of those wages. You see, this man has planted a vineyard, a church of nearly 200 members so he says; and he ministers spiritual things. Yet, he is not looking to eat of the vineyard he planted nor to be ministered earthly things

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from those to whom he gives spiritual ones. If his brethren shared with him just one percent of their living, he would fare well above the average of them. They could not, however, supply him with the equipment he wants and support him in the style to which he apparently aspires.

Financial Dependency and Spiritual Autonomy

Financial dependency can easily hinder spiritual autonomy. For example, when the work was first begun here, it was impossible to purchase locally grape juice for communion. So we imported it in large lots and sold it at subsidized prices. It is available now, but churches resist buying it from the market shelves. They see no reason to pay twice the price to a merchant for something they have always gotten from the missionary.

Perhaps the most serious result of dependency is that it can make brotherhood-wide splits easy. If two evangelists struggled for power among mature churches, church leaders would probably rebuke them, pressure them to behave, and if this were not successful, call a plague on both of them. That is as it should be. But churches that are financially and spiritually dependent on the missionaries and their host churches often lack the confidence to do what needs to be done in such cases.

There are probably just as many spiritual problems created by a high standard of living, like the one in the U.S. and other industrialized nations. For example, it is easy for churches that are "rich and increased with goods," like Laodecia (Revelation 3:17) to become "lukewarm" about their Christianity. Solomon prayed, "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." (Proverbs 30:8-9)

Moses warned the Israelites about going into the good land, Canaan, that God gave them. "Beware... lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein, and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God." (Deuteronomy 8:11-14). We Americans would do well to remember such warnings.

My purpose in discussing these problems is not to "put down" Christians in poor countries nor to promote either guilt or self-righteousness in American disciples. And I am certainly not suggesting that we stop doing mission work. My intention is rather to say, "These are problems we face; let us work out solutions in peace and goodwill." We have just begun to talk openly about promoting autonomy in churches we establish in mission works; we still have a lot to learn. We should put the best minds of all good brethren to work on the matter. -P.O. Box 37073, Lusaka 10101, Zambia

THE SHAME IS IN THE SIN

By Reggie Kinser

The preacher had preached boldly that morning as he sought to convince those who were involved in worldly practices to give them up. As services were dismissed I held tightly to my father's hand. He exchanged greetings and shook hands with various brethren as we made our way toward the back of the church building. Finally, we paused for a moment as he stood face to face with the man who had preached the sermon that day with such authority. "You stepped on my toes today, preacher," he said, as he reached out to shake hands. "I've never heard those things expressed the way you did it today; you've given me a lot to think about and I appreciate it." With that, we made our way to the car and headed home. I remember listening from a child's perspective as I sat in the rear seat of our 62' Oldsmobile, while my parents further discussed the merits of the sermon.

If childhood memories can be considered sufficient evidence to judge in such matters I believe my parents were genuinely appreciative of sermons which were pertinent to their own personal lives. My remembrance of such discussions between my parents is that they never showed an attitude of rebellion or resentment toward the preaching of the gospel. A good sermon was always appreciated, even if it was done in a manner which found them personally reprov'd. As a result, I grew up believing the BEST SERMONS were the ones that convicted us of error and taught the necessary correction.

When I reflect on such incidents as the one mentioned above I can't help but notice how preaching, as well as our attitude toward it, has changed. Surely, those who are long time members of the Lord's church can recall similar incidents from their past, when the message that was preached demanded correction. Perhaps you remember a sermon that so convicted you of sin that you cried out for forgiveness and changed your manner of life from that time forward. When you compare your experiences from the past with those of the present, you will likely notice a contrast.

There is obviously a change of attitude both from the pulpit and among the hearers toward certain Bible subjects like: worldly conduct (James. 4:4), modest apparel (1Tim.2:9-10), and length of hair (1Cor.11:1-16). This brings us to the words of the apostle Paul in 2 Tim. 4:2-3, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts they shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears."

I am fully aware that today's society deplores

the thought of criticism, especially in matters of religion. Most religious people today seem to think reproof and rebuke are spiritually incorrect. Criticism, they say, can only be harmful. But we know the word of God teaches otherwise. Surely, the idea that reproof and rebuke are outdated is just a subtle way of compromising the word of God and allowing things that ought to be corrected to go unchallenged. It is not difficult to see where such reasoning will lead the church in the future.

It is tragic indeed that the very things Paul described in verse three are prevalent throughout the present religious world. But certainly a much greater tragedy would be for such conditions to prevail in the Lord's church. In light of this we need to be mindful of Paul's command to the young evangelist Timothy concerning his method of preaching the gospel. God, who knows the heart of man better than we know it ourselves, tells us how to most effectively present his Word to those who refuse sound teaching, desiring to have their ears tickled.

REPROVE AND REBUKE

The words "reprove" and "rebuke" (v. 2), are undeniably strong words. They are words which invoke an image some Christians would like to delete from the Scripture. Please notice their meanings. "Reprove" means to call to account, show one his faults, to demand explanation (Thayer 202-2). 'Rebuke' is an even stronger word which is defined, to censure severely, or charge one wrong (Thayer 245-1). Contextually, this pertains to the manner in which the evangelist is instructed to preach the word with this in mind I ask you to consider two questions.

1. When was the last time you heard, in a gospel meeting or otherwise, a preacher reprove, rebuke and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine, those who persist in sin?

2. What would your attitude be if YOU or YOURS were found in error and justifiably rebuked by the preaching of the Scriptures?

SHAME ON US

If we answer these questions honestly, we will likely be forced to admit that denominational people are not the only ones who have a problem with itching ears. Nor are they the only ones who have a problem with the message that comes out of the pulpit. The truth of the matter is we have some brethren in our ranks who don't like first century gospel preaching on CERTAIN SUBJECTS any better than the denominationalists do. To make matters worse there are some who occupy the pulpit who have so little conviction they are ready and willing to give these worldly minded brethren whatever they want. Shame on us when we claim to love the gospel, but refuse to live by it! Double shame on those of us who claim to be preachers of it when we worry more about our meeting schedule than we do about our responsibility to the Lord!!

There was a time when reproof and rebuke were recognized as valuable tools by members of the Lord's church. Preachers would often stand in the pulpit and speak in such a manner as to bring those who were guilty of sin face to face with the teaching of God's word. Often times this was done with great authority as the preacher would "smite his hands and stamp his feet" (Eze. 6:11), as he illustrated the attitude of God toward the sins of his people.

In those days, men and women of the Lord's church seemed to be hungry for the truth. They were eager to learn more about the will of God so they could make needed change in their lives. I even recall times when God fearing people would encourage the preacher to "lay it on us" if he saw sin in their lives. But somehow in recent years it seems that we have become too educated, too sophisticated, and perhaps in most cases too proud and self-willed to appreciate the kind of preaching that is required by the divinely inspired words of Paul. Shame on us when we lose our love and appreciation for the truth.

TRANSPOSING THE SHAME

The Word of God teaches us that there are certain kinds of conduct which bring shame on those who participate in it. For instance, it is a shame for women to speak in the church (1 Cor. 14:35). It is a shame to reveal one's nakedness (Isaiah 47:3). It is a shame for women to cut their hair, or for men to let their hair grow (1 Cor. 11:6,14). The Bible is plain about the fact that these things are shameful. It also tells us that 'shame comes to those who refuse instruction, but he who regards reproof will be honored' (Prov. 13:18). Anyone with minimal knowledge of the Bible ought to know that one who continues in sin is a shame and a disgrace in the sight of God. Somehow, today, we seem to have gotten things all turned and twisted around. Today, the Bible concept of reproof and rebuke in the spirit of love is sometimes looked upon with indignation by the hearers. There are occasions when even those who occupy positions of leadership in a congregation take exception to the kind of preaching Paul prescribed in his letter to Timothy. They forget that the people in our pews are desperately in need of the truth. They fail to recognize that some of them are stunted due to a steady diet of watered down teachings. Then, when a preacher or teacher attempts to follow Paul's action they act like HE ought to be ashamed for preaching the truth in such a plain manner. Brethren, who ought to know better, put the shame on the preacher instead of on the sin and the sinner.

Paul warned us that there would be times when such preaching would not be popular. He also acknowledged that preaching by the Book would bring affliction upon the preacher. Still, his instruction did not change. He said, "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an

evangelist make full proof of thy ministry," (2 Tim. 4:5).

PREACH WITHOUT FAVOR

Please notice, Timothy was going to suffer affliction. No doubt, this would be due in part to his straight forward approach of preaching the gospel. There would not only be hardship from without, but some of the greatest opposition he would face would come from within. Nevertheless, his work as an evangelist had to continue. Paul said, do it, fulfill your ministry regardless of the opposition.

Paul not only instructed others about preaching the doctrine of Christ in its fullness, he lived by the same rule. Had he failed to do so he could not have spoken those touching words to the elders of the church at Ephesus, "...I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and taught you publicly, and from house to house..." "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God," (Acts 20:20, 27).

I hope that all who hear the word of God, as well as those who preach it today will remember that every preacher has a responsibility to preach the words boldly, and without favor to any man. "Ear tickling sermons" may be pleasant to the hearer and even make the preacher popular, but they cannot be pleasing to the Lord. To engage in such folly is to deceive oneself before God.

IT IS TIME

It is time for those who are members of the church of Christ to take a stand against worldliness. It is time for congregations leaders to awaken to the fact that we are living in an evil society and that they will be held accountable for the souls of the flock if they allow the truth to be compromised in any way. It is time to acknowledge that many of our people are already worldly. Too many of them already talk, act, and dress like the world. These precious souls don't need church leaders who pat them on the back and tell them how good they're doing, nor do they need to sit through another gospel meeting while the preacher preaches on every subject except the one which pertains to their situation. If there was ever a time or a society when preaching against worldliness was more relevant, I can't imagine when or where it was. The church today needs plain, strong, pointed preaching about the dangers of following the world. Those who commit sin need instruction. Those who refuse to listen and respond need to be reproofed and if necessary rebuke with all lingering and doctrine.

I am sincerely thankful that I had Christian parents who knew and appreciated the value of plain, straight forward preaching with a love for the souls of men and women. I am thankful I was taught early in life to appreciate the value of reproof and rebuke. Therefore, as an evangelist of the Church of Christ I will continue to remind myself of the charge given by the apostle Paul to "preach the word in season and out of season!" I

will remember the example of Peter (Acts 8:20-23), Stephen (Acts 7:51-60) and Paul (Acts 24:25).

Furthermore, no matter how unpopular it may become to preach to the needs of the people I hope and pray that I will never loose the zeal, courage, and love necessary to do so. May we as a church continually remember that reproof and rebuke in the spirit of love play an important part in our battle against sin. Let us open our hearts to reproof when reproof is needed. Let us humble ourselves and accept rebuke when rebuke is in order. Let us respect, commend and encourage the true gospel preacher who lives up to the responsibility God has placed upon him.

Finally, when we invite a preacher to come and preach in our pulpit, let us have the courage to invite one who will address our needs instead of our wants. And should he, during the course of his preaching, find it needful to rebuke those who are in sin, let us not shame the preacher. Rather let us remember what the Bible teaches- the shame is NOT in the rebuke; the shame is in the sin, no matter what the sin may be! —9212 Ketcham Rd., Bloomington, IN 4740

IS THE BIBLE THE WORD OF GOD OR JUST A PRINTED PAGE?

By Brian Burns

In recent year there have been several alarming statements made by some of our preachers concerning the Word of God. These have been made in private, from the pulpit, recorded publicly, printed in papers, and contested in each form as well. God's word has been called "the printed page" and in one recorded sermon was referred to as just "a book." What is wrong with such statements? As one sister said, "It sounds to me like they are saying you don't have to study anymore." This is the exact thought that is being received from many preachers today. Whether this is the intent or not, the message that is that the word of God in written form is not alluded to sustain and guide a Christian in his life on earth. But, what does the Word say about itself? Does the word of God indicate that there is a deficiency within and that it is just a book of printed pages? Notice what Peter said about the written word of God when he wrote about Paul's writings (1 Peter 3:15-16). He identified these words as scriptures and said that destruction awaits those who twist and abuse the words. In what form do you think those people had those words? No doubt they were written, since they

were in the form of an epistle, v.16, and the people had access to them. They were not minimized in importance just because they were written. However, care was to be used because they are scripture, and we know that "all scripture is given by the inspiration of God..." (2 Tim. 3:16). Paul did not belittle his words because they were printed or exalt them because they came from himself. Rather, he encouraged others to read them because they would then be able to understand his knowledge in the mystery of Christ which had been revealed to him by Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:14). Why did Peter and Paul emphasize the importance and authority of the written Word of God when centuries later men would inform us that it is only a "printed page" or just a "book"? Some seem to be saying that if you want to study and be guided by The Book you are slighting yourself. If that is the case, what are we missing? Peter certainly did not indicate that the scriptures, recorded by Paul, lost any authority or power after they had been written down. What did Paul write to the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 14:37)? "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are we commandments of the Lord." So being written down did not keep these words from being the teachings of the Lord with his authority behind them. The Bible is much more than just a "printed page." Notice what God's Word, reserved in printed form, says of itself. Dear brethren, please look up and read each of the following references:

- A. The Word of God
 1. Introduces God - Gen. 1:1
 2. Saves - Acts 13:26, James 1:21
 3. Produces the new birth- 1 Pet.1:23, James 1:18
 4. Builds up - Acts 20:32
 5. Comforts- 1 Thes. 4:18
 6. Is living and powerful - Heb. 4:12
 7. Is scripture - 2 Pet.3:16
 8. Is inspired - 2 Tim. 3:16
 9. Collects, instructs, supplies - 2 Tim. 3:16, James 1:22-25
 10. Judges - John 12:48
 11. Is life and spirit - John 6:63
 12. Truth- John17:17
 13. Indwells us -John 2:14, Col. 3:16
 14. Sanctifies -1Tim 4:5
 15. Cleanses - John 15:3
 16. May be rejected - Acts 13:46
 17. May be received-Acts13:48-49, 17:11
 18. Provides Faith - Rom 10:17, John 20:30-31
 19. Reconciles - 2 Cor. 5:19
 20. Is the sword of the Spirit - Eph. 6:17
 21. Gives hope - Col. 1:15
 22. Works in us -I Thes. 2:13
 23. Gives confidence that our prayers are heard - 1 John 3:22, 5:14
 24. Calls - 2 Thes. 2:14-15
 25. Gives freedom John 8:31-32

These attributes of the Word of God have been true in every form in which God has prided it to man. To believe and teach these things does no injustice at all to the work of the Holy Spirit, confidence in prayer, the providence of God or any other topic that the revealed Word of God teaches us today. Even Jesus battled and defeated Satan with an emphatic "It is written..." while being battled in the wilderness. There is danger in belittling the word of God in written form by calling it "the printed page" or just "a book." This is giving the people a false hope of something God never offered and causing them to trust their "feelings" rather than a "thus saith the Lord."-- Brian and Sharon Burns, Apartado Postal 20026, Comayaguela, D.C., Honduras, Central America

POST-FIXED DIVORCES

Continued from page 1

ren will accept the facts (?) as they are now being presented.

But alas, the scripture still reads, "But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery." (Matt. 5:32 NKJV). "And I say to you whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another commits adultery...." (Matt. 19:9 NKJV).

My friend, sexual immorality has to be the reason for the divorce—not an afterthought to justify another marriage.

The person who has "postfixed" his divorce story might or might not have found the scriptural reason for divorce had he or she investigated enough at the time. But he did not. He was only interested in getting out of an undesirable marriage. The fact is: he divorced his spouse for reason(s) other than fornication (sexual immorality). Whether or not the divorced partner was guilty of fornication at the time or prior to the divorce is not really germane to the question at this late date. The fact remains the spouse was not divorced for that reason. The spouse was divorced for a reason other than fornication. Fornication, among other things, may have even been suspected at the time—but it was not the reason for the divorce action.

It is dangerous to re-write a divorce story to fit the present need and desire for a scriptural marriage. Like necessity, desire is the mother of inventions. A desire to remarry that was not present at the time of divorce can easily cause one to rearrange the facts (?) to justify the present situation.

One may come to believe his revised version. The brethren may accept it. But, remember the Lord knows the real facts. He will not be mocked. His memory does not become fuzzy with time nor biased by desire.

Again, if you are divorced and want to remarry. The only way that you can do it within the bounds of scriptural authority is for fornication (sexual immorality) to have been the reason (at the time) that you divorced your former spouse—assuming that the one you want to marry now has a scriptural right to marry. —Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.-- In the Reflection

EDITORIAL DRIFTING

Continued from page 2

be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you."(Titus 2:7,8) The word "pattern" in the Greek indicates something which may be imitated. Hence, we are all to become a "pattern" which others can imitate. If only we would keep this in mind it would make life's decisions much less complicated.

How far downstream must we drift before we become alarmed? It alarms me to hear members of the church try to argue for social drinking, dancing and even recreational gambling without blinking an eye. It alarms me to hear of loose teaching about the qualifications for an elder. It is high time that we face the facts. We just may be having a hard time finding qualified men because their numbers are few. If that is the case, (as we suspect) then let us work on it. Teach the truth, let the chips fall where they may as we hew to the line. Then, someday, we may see men who are qualified to serve in much greater numbers. God forbid that we begin trying to fit the qualifications to the man. It must be the other way around. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God;..."(1 Peter 4:11)

It is also alarming to see the almost casual approach taken by a few to unscriptural marriages. We are truly thankful that this problem is, at this point, rare. Nonetheless, it should be a warning signal to us. We dare not tolerate what God will not. Teaching is desperately needed to reinforce the Bible doctrine that marriage is for life. How very careful we must be as to whom we choose for a mate. Parents need to teach this from the very beginning at home. Preachers need to be asked to preach on the sanctity of marriage and the home. Too, it is helpful when leaders back that kind of preaching.

Let us be careful! We are drifting. DLK

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THANK YOU

The family of Henry Scherb would like to thank everyone for the cards, flowers, calls and support during the illness and death of Henry. We especially appreciate all the prayers on his behalf. The love and support of our brothers and sisters in Christ certainly helps during times of troubles. Brother Walter Hunter gave a wonderful sermon at his funeral. For all of this, we say thank you so

much. -- Susan Scherb and Children, Joe and Hazel Loughmiller.

ANNOUNCEMENT

We are happy to announce the establishment of a new church in the Dallas area.

Address: 7728 So. Loop 12, Dallas, TX, Suite 2
Worship service: Sunday morning, 10:30 A.M.,
Evening 6:00 P.M. Mid-week: Thursday Evening,
7:30 P.M.

You may contact the following brethren: Bro. Fred Johnson, 122 Carol Lane, Red Oak, Texas, 214-617-6727. Bro. Joe Gatson, 413 Cannady Dr., Cedar Hill, TX, 214-291-6940. Bro. Joseph King, P.O. Box 540673, Grand Prairie, TX, 214-296-7224.

We would like to express our thanks to the following churches: Hickory Drive Church of Christ, Farmersville, LA; Cleburne Church of Christ, Cleburn, Texas; Robin Road Church of Christ, Garland, Texas; Fossil Creek Church of Christ, Fort Worth, Texas. For your prayers, financial support, encouragement and your blessings, we thank you.

NOTICE

Sunday, March 5, 1995 will be the last meeting time for the Ash Grove, Missouri congregation. The brethren there have decided to disband and attend one of the many surrounding congregations in adjoining communities. Please make this note in your congregational directory.--Randy Meents

1995 MISSOURI LABOR DAY MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The 1995 Missouri Labor Day Meeting will be hosted by the West Hwy. 60 congregation here in Neosho, MO. The theme for this year's meeting is "The Supremacy of God" with the following preachers speaking: Jimmy Smith, Don Pruitt, Reggie Kinser, Richard Reed, Bruce Roebuck, Paul Nichols, Johnny Elmore, Jerry Dickinson, Irvin Barnes, and Ronny Wade. As we look forward to this meeting it is our prayer that many will be able to attend. We will send out letters at a later date with all the details and information needed to prepare for the meeting. Yours in Christ, Roger L. Owens, for the West 60 congregation.

SPRING MEETING BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

The annual Spring Meeting in Birmingham, Crescent Ridge congregation, will be April 12th thru April 16th, conducted by Ronny F. Wade. For more information, contact Lowell Hill, 3509 Cypress Cove, Birmingham, Alabama 35210, phone 205-951-3351.

POEMS OF FAITH

Keith Wells has written and published a book of

poems titled, "Poems Of Faith." There are 611 poems, all religious, all scripturally parallel, and all original. The book has 125 pages. The cost is \$7.50 plus \$1.50 shipping and handling. A select group of people have reviewed the book and give totally positive responses.

Mail orders to Keith Wells, 1152 S.W. 106th Street, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73170.

OUR DEPARTED

TAYLOR--Marvin F. Taylor was born August 7, 1912 in Hartsferry, Louisiana and passed away November 25, 1994 in Houston, Texas at the age of eighty-two. He is survived by his wife Ineva Taylor; son and daughter-in-law, Frank and Barbara Taylor; daughters, Betty Ballard and Judy Cornelius; brother, Earl Taylor and several grandchildren and great grandchildren. Marvin and Ineva were married fifty-eight years, a marvelous accomplishment in these times. Marvin and Ineva lived many years ago in Oklahoma City and were early members of the Capitol Hill congregaion. A little later they moved the Rogers, Arkansas and were charter members of that congregation as well. They have lived for many years in Houston and were members of the Northshore congregation. May the Lord bless Ineva and the family. This writer spoke words of exhortation from God's word.-Jerry Dickinson

McGOWEN--Jess Ray McGowen was born Feb. 14, 1898 near Bendavis, MO and passed away in Houston, MO on Jan. 17, 1995 following a long illness. Brother McGowen was baptized into Christ May 27, 1917 and was a faithful member of the Bendavis Church of Christ for over seventy-seven years. He was an able song leader and teacher of the scriptures. Brother McGowen was a long-time leader in the congregation, although in recent years his health did not permit him to attend services. Brother McGowen is survived by two sons, Wayne McGowen of Riverside, CA; Robert McGowen of Newton, IA; a daugther, Beatrice Rhodes of Bendavis, MO; and a brother Eb McGowen of Mtn. Grove, MO. Memorial services were held in Houston, MO with members of the Houston congregation providing beautiful singing. The writer was honored to speak words of comfort to the bereaved assisted by brother Don Pruitt of the Houston, MO congregation.--Edward Williamson

BURNS--Donald Berry Burns was born July 23, 1917 at Johnstown, MO to Lola and Joseph Burns and passed away November 26, 1994 at Muskogee, OK at the age of 77 years. The greatest thing that can be said of Don is that he was a Christian. He obeyed the gospel the afternoon of October 30, 1994 at Chouteau, OK only to become extremely ill the same evening. He entered the hospital the next day. It was discovered through

tests that he had gallstones and cancer of the liver, in addition to a known condition of ulcerated stomach and hemophilia. Don grew up in Locust Grove, OK. After being in the United States Air Force for several years he retired and moved back to Locust Grove where he was living when he passed away. He was a Christian for less than a month when death overtook him. He leaves to mourn his passing one son, Donald Waymon and his wife, Glenda; three grandsons, Jason, Justin and Joe Doyle, Jr., all of North Little Rock, AR; a sister, Mary Garrison of Locust Grove, OK, and other relatives and friends. The funeral was at Pryor, OK and interment was near Locust Grove. The singing was beautifully rendered by brothers and sisters in Christ.

DANIELS: Carl Daniels was born May 9, 1955 and died December 31, 1994. Carl is survived by his wife, Paula Patnow, three children, John, Richard, and Matthew; by his parents, Ken and Ruby Daniels, by two sisters, Paula Thompson and Charlotte Cooper; by his grandmother, Mary Daniels, of Kenai, Alaska, where her son, Keith, is a pillar in the church. Carl obeyed the gospel several months ago. His faith seemed so strong and so steadfast, even reaching to eternity. He often said, "Whatever the Lord has in mind for my life, I know it's best." He spoke of Christ to this friends, nurses, family members, anyone who would listen. The last words I heard him say, barely audibly, were "let's pray." He prayed the Lord's prayer from memory. His aunt from a distance had been visiting him and she was to leave for home on Saturday, the 31st. Carl asked her to stay one more day. She stayed. That was the day of his departure. Oh, the beauty of that bedside scene. As this babe in Christ was breathing his last, his mother caressed him, saying, "It's all right, Carl, just let go, Jesus is waiting." What more can I say? Friends, brethren, and sisters filled the church building for the memorial service. Brethren Fed Lay, Duane Phares, Chris Allen, and the writer spoke encouraging words to the family. This was an easy task to do. Singing was beautiful. Carl had requested "Amazing Grace," the new version. As the group began to sing the last song, "Amazing Grace," the audience began to sing with them. On the last verse, Ruby, Carl's mother, began to sing. Her countenance was a joy to behold. 'Tis truly, Amazing Grace.--Marvin E. Fisher, 3003 Luna Avenue, San Diego, California 92117.



From The Fields

Bennie T. Cryer, 2340 Sanguinetti Ln. #93, Stockton, CA 95205, Feb. 10--The Lord's work here in Stockton continues on in a good way. There have been six baptisms since the first of the year. We have various studies going that we hope will produce a good harvest. The congregation with her elders and deacons have a mind to work. In addition to speaking here in Stockton I have spoken at Yuba City and Olivehurst. I am looking forward to meetings in Oakdale, CA along with Bro. Alan Bonifay, and then Chapel Grove, TN, and Jacksonville, Florida. God bless all of you.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS 66012--Please note our permanent address above. We finally got moved into our house in November after several months' delay and have been getting settled. The work with the congregation at 79th and Kansas Ave., Kansas City, KS seems to be going well. It is a joy to work with such pleasant brethren and sisters in Christ. We had another confession of faults last Lord's day, which is one of several. The new family we gained is doing well. We have four teachers in the congregation besides myself, who are all very cooperative and willing to do their part. And they are improving their skills in teaching. Our weekly home studies are proving worthwhile and we are seeing the results. May the Lord bless the work everywhere.

Bill Harmon, 411 Willow Drive, Wichita Falls TX 76305-3911, Feb. 7--I have been preaching at Bridgeport and Graham Texas, Duncan and Frederick, OK. My home congregation is Gardens Edge Church of Christ, Wichita Falls TX. November 6, 1994 at the Walnut Street Church of Christ, Duncan, OK, from the audience of 35 people, four precious young adults came forward to be baptized: Renea Ely, Shannon Chapman, K.C. Alred, and Jacob Ashley. Each of them confessed Christ, the Son of God were immersed, and added to the church. However our Lord continued to bless us, at the evening service, Michele Myers came forward to be baptized. Her husband Kevin Myers confessed his faults. For all these blessings we give God the glory, and credit to those who contributed to each of them becoming Christians. New Year's day, which was also Lord's Day, K.C. Alred, and Jacob Ashley both led songs in the worship service at Duncan. Kevin Myers has begun teaching and has shared three lessons at Duncan since his confession. December 7, 1994 was a special day for me. I preached at Lee's Summit Church of Christ. It was the second time for me to preach at Lee's Summit, the first being in the spring of 1944. The service was well attended. For me it brought memories of many who have gone on to their reward.

Joe Hisle, Rt. 4, Box 188, Ada OK 74820--It has really been good to be with the "home folks" for most of the winter. We have had some very good results here at home with two being baptized in the last few months. Now it is about time to "hit the road" for another season of gospel meetings. I am looking forward to my schedule for this year. Following is a listing of where I am scheduled to be. If you are in these areas, I would certainly appreciate your support. Corsicana, TX Mar. 8-12; Bakersfield (Brundage), CA., April 30-May 7; Jacksonville, FL., May 24-28;

Blue Springs, KY., June 4-11; Bedford, IN., June 14-21; Duncanville, TX., July 9-16; Lone Rock, Ark., July 19-23; West Plains, MO., July 30-Aug 6; Bunner Ridge, W. VA., Aug 13-20; Neosho, MO., Oct. 1-8; Cable Ridge, MO., Oct 15-22. As always, I request your continuing prayers for me and my family. May God bless the faithful everywhere.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, Feb 13--Brother Duane Permenter and I spent most of the month of January in the Philippines. We visited the various congregations, preaching and encouraging the brethren as opportunity permitted. We found them at peace and working. There were 70 baptisms and reportedly several more after we left. The work is not finished yet. We need your prayers and continued financial help to see it through. We are beginning another radio program now in a new area. This makes three at the present time and allows us to cover nearly all of Luzon every week. If you can help in the work, let me know. I'll be happy to give you preacher's names, etc. so you can send direct to them. It is good to be at home now, and I have preached twice at Fremont since returning. We look forward to a meeting at Escalon, CA Feb. 22-26. God bless all of you.

P. Duane Permenter, P.O. Box 1223, Riverbank, CA 95367, Feb. 7--Our trip to the Philippines this year was again a very enjoyable work. It was a pleasure to see the growth of the churches and to visit many friends that I have been able to meet the last four years. It was good to see that the brethren continue to labor for the Lord in that distant field. It was a pleasure to travel with brother Don King and Virgilio Danao once again. It was exciting to see 70 respond to the gospel during our trip. It has recently been my privilege to preach at Oakdale and 64th St. in Sacramento. Since last June, I have been laboring with both the churches in Oakdale and Sacramento. My family and I have now moved into the Sacramento area for an extended period of time. The work has made some progress and we are grateful to the Lord. One of the brethren recently baptized a man he had been studying with for some time, and the others seem to have been strengthened. The work in Oakdale continues to prosper as well. Feb. 6th, a young woman was restored that had been away from the Lord for sometime. Both congregations are at peace and working. Brethren, please continue to pray for us. You may want to note our new phone number (916) 391-3390. May the Lord bless you in His service, is my prayer.

Richard DeGough, 1907 Tully Rd. Hughson, CA, Feb. 8--The Lord willing, by the time brethren read this I will be in Australia to begin work with the brethren there for two months. We look forward to assisting brother Keith Thompson and others in preaching the gospel. I have been privileged to preach from the north to the south in California, to hold some meetings, conduct home studies, and make some new contacts, some which proved to be fruitful and some which did not. The church here at home is at peace, and the brethren have a mind to work. We had a good meeting last Memorial Day Weekend with Mike Fox, and there was in excess of three hundred people attended. The young men's teaching was very enjoyable and I commend them all. We look forward to having this meeting every year, with Johnny Elmore preaching this year. Brethren, why not plan to come and be with us the 19th through the 28th of May this year at Turlock and you will be blessed. Lynwood Smith held our summer meeting, with large crowds and good preaching. The church was edified and comforted. I preached at Fremont recently, enjoying the association of those brethren, also at Modesto and Atwater

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regularly. These brethren all stand by me and encourage me for which I am thankful. I thank the churches in Turlock, Modesto, Atwater, Woodlake and Planz Road in Bakersfield for making it possible for me to work in Australia. Brother Bob Morrow will assist in the work also. For many of us the day is about gone and the night draws near, so we have to stay busy. We are thankful to God for every blessing, and for his goodness. We have lost some, and gained some. Our prayer is for brethren who have suffered loss, and for brethren everywehre who hold forth the word of life. May the Lord bless you all. Remember us when you pray.

Reggie Kinser, 9212 Ketcham Rd. Bloomington, IN 47403, Jan. 2, 1995--It was my privilege during the summer of 1994 to hold meetings at the following places: Goshen OH; Strong, AR; Harrisonville, MO and Springfield, MO, (Mission Hills). I must say that each meeting was unique and enjoyable in its own special way. I was impressed with the kindness and hospitality of my brethren during our visit at each congregation. I was also pleased with the efforts that were made to encourage and invite people to hear the preaching of the gospel. Thanks to the hard work of concerned brethren, we were privileged to preach the Word of God to people from a variety of religious backgrounds. During the course of our work this summer, there were more than a dozen confessions, one restoration, and three baptisms. For this we are thankful and continually give the glory to our Father. More recently, we just returned from the New Year's meeting at Spring Valley, WV, which was conducted by brother Bill Ferguson. Even though it was our first time to attend in that area, we were made to feel very much at home. We were blessed with the opportunity to become acquainted with brethren we had never met, as well as to strengthen our bonds with some we have known for years. Bill, as expected, did an excellent job in preaching the word. I pray that God will give us more men like him. May God bless the brethren for their efforts in the Huntington area. The work here at Spencer seems to be getting back on track. After the announcement of our plans to move to West Plains, MO, this coming summer, it seems that some of the brethren temporarily lost focus of the things that are important. It has been a struggle to convince some of our people that God will do his part, if only they will trust him and do their part. Presently, we appear to have the majority of those problems behind us. In spite of the aforementioned stress within the congregation, we are still able to rejoice in the recent conversion of Tom Blanton, as well as the restoration of two couples who had fallen away. It is times like these that I am constantly aware of Paul's words in Gal. 6:9-10. Please pray for the Spencer congregation.

Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 10811 Springfield, MO. 65808 Feb 20--The meeting at Covina, CA was a good one. The presence of Don McCord, who is highly respected in that area, and visitors from a number of other congregations all combined to make our efforts successful. Next we were at El Cajon, near San Diego. Crowds were large and attentive. It was good to be back in this area again after an absence of several years. We trust that much good was done. We were also privileged to preach at Montebello

while in the Los Angeles area. Our next meeting, Lord willing, is at Arperla near McAlester, OK, Mar. 3-5, then to Hoyt, TX. Mar. 12-19; White Bluff, TN April 2-9, Birmingham, AL Apr. 12-16, and Harrisonville, MO, Apr. 23-30. Please remember us when you pray.

Bruce Roebuck, P.O. Box 184, Wynnewood, OK 73098, Feb. 2--1994 was another good year for us. We enjoyed conducting several gospel meetings across the brotherhood, making new friends and renewing old acquaintances. We were refreshed again by the New Year's Meeting and look forward to '95 with high hopes. We begin this year in a new place. For two years we made our home in Golden, OK, but our work has ended there. During our tenure there, we gained three teachers, conversed with several digressive brethren, conducted a mission effort in a nearby community, engaged in several home Bible studies, and dealt with some grievous matters that too often affect the church. This was my first work and I am indebted to those brethren for their confidence and patience with me. We've moved to Wynnewood, OK to work among these brethren. They are long time friends, and we expect good things to come. Lord willing we will be in Seneca, MO, March 8-12. If you are in the area we would love to have you. Remember us in your prayers.

Barney Owens, 8782 Meadowview Ln., W. Chester, OH 45069--Of all things which can bless us in this world is that "brethren can dwell together in unity." Since last reporting through the paper, I have been for a weekend meeting with the church at Harrodsburg, IN. As has been true for a good part of the winter, the weather was a hindrance. Yet, it did not damper the spirit of the meeting and I enjoy being with them again. We look forward to our Spring Meeting here April 26-30. We are always in need of your prayers.

Roger Owens, Joplin, MO, Feb. 10--The fields are white unto harvest, do we not have a cause to go? To all the faithful in Christ Jesus our Lord; from the Neosho, Mo. congregation local area we report. The past year was one of much growth in our area as far as the numerical increase of the kingdom is concerned. Between Neosho, Seneca, Burkhart, and Anderson we have experienced an average of one baptism per month and we give God all the glory and praise. We are blessed with a great host of young people and for that matter people of all age groups. Death has called on us often this past year and seems all have been touched in some way. Brother Don McCord will be with us in April (8-16). We look forward to that meeting and pray for it. I continue to labor at home and with other areas as I have opportunity and the means to do so. I have moved in the past 18 months so here is my new address: Roger L. Owens, Rt. 4 Box 251 Joplin MO 64804. Tele: 1-417-623-3253. We continue to labor with John Anderson from month to month on the radio program station 1420 Neosho. We have much to do this year and many souls to restore and others to win. My people, please, I ask that you remember us in your prayers. It is so important to the work here and world-wide. May we count our many blessings as we earnestly contend for the faith and look forward to his call to take us home.

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

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

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

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

VOL. LXVII

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NO. 4

NOTHING BUT CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED

By Jerry Dickinson

"For I am determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (I Cor. 2:2) I heard a preacher the other day quote this statement made by the Apostle Paul in order to justify the fact that he (the preacher) was not obligated to preach about certain controversial doctrinal subjects. "In this church," he declared defiantly, "I do not intend to waste time preaching about whether a person ought to be immersed or sprinkled when he is baptized, or whether it is right or wrong to use an organ in the church. How is preaching on that kind of stuff going to help anybody? I'm just going to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified. That's what the Apostle Paul did!"

Really? When Paul told the Corinthians that he determined to know nothing except Jesus and him crucified did he really mean that he would not mention anything in his preaching and teaching except the fact that Jesus had been crucified on the cross? Did Paul mean that he was never, ever going to say anything about baptism? Well, dear reader, obviously not. In I Cor. 2:2 Paul makes his statement about knowing nothing save Jesus and him crucified, but in the same letter (I Cor. 12:13) Paul wrote: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body..."

But again, when Paul said he knew nothing except Christ and him crucified did he mean he would never, ever teach anything about the proper observance of the Lord's Supper? Surely not, because in the same letter (I Cor. 11:20-34) Paul gives detailed instructions about keeping that memorial service just as it was delivered from the Lord. Does preaching Jesus and him crucified mean never teaching about spiritual headship and the fact that a woman's long hair is a sign of her respect for that headship. No again, because Paul teaches on this very subject - in the same letter, by the way (I Cor. 11:1-16). Did Paul mean that he would never teach about such "controversial subjects" as church discipline or marriage. Well, he taught about them in the same letter (I Cor. 5 and 7). But what about specific sins? Did he mean he would not name specific sins because he wanted to preach nothing but the crucified Christ. Well, in the same letter where he said he knew nothing save Christ crucified he named and taught against specific sins. Read

I Cor. 6: 9-11.

Obviously then, dear reader, when Paul said he had determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified he did not mean what the previously mentioned preacher claimed. Paul did preach on so called controversial doctrinal subjects - in fact, he taught on them in the very same letter where he made the oft quoted statement. What did Paul mean, then, when he talked about knowing nothing except Christ crucified? As always, looking at the context helps us understand Paul's declaration. In verses one and four Paul affirms that when he came to Corinth he came not with "excellency of speech," nor did he use "enticing words" of man's wisdom. I preached nothing, Paul asserts, Except the plain, unadulterated gospel of Jesus Christ.

Corinth was a center of Greek learning, culture, and philosophy. Paul was familiar with their philosophies and religions and he could have mixed the teaching of their philosophies in with his presentation of the good news about Jesus if he had so desired. This would certainly have made Christianity more palatable and acceptable to a great many of them. But Paul's desire was, in his own words, "that your faith should stand not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (I Cor. 2: 5) Paul established the church at Corinth. It was under his preaching that they had obeyed the gospel. In his letter to them he simply reminds them that when he first came he determined not to adulterate the gospel with philosophy, logic, or human rhetoric, but to preach the "pure" message as revealed to him from the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the simple meaning of his statement about, "Jesus Christ and him crucified." To preach Christ, then, means several things. Please note:

PREACH ALL CHRIST COMMANDED

In Acts 20: 25-27 Paul reminds the elders of the church that he had not shunned to declare all the counsel of God while among them. Furthermore, he averred that he had kept back nothing that was profitable unto them - in other words, he had preached everything that the Lord had commanded him to teach them. Jesus, in the great commission, enjoined the apostles to teach the disciples all things he had commanded them. Some

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ELDERS

By Don L. King

Elders are the topic of the day, it seems. We see articles written, sermons preached and studies held. We hear of some who seem to feel that virtually no one can qualify while others appear to believe that almost anyone can. The qualifications are explained both stringently and loosely depending upon what "book" one chooses to read, etc. There are many on the market, including the Bible. We propose to treat the qualifications in a series of essays over the next several months, as space and time allow. We realize some may agree while others disagree. We ask only that our writings be considered. Your comments, either pro or con, are welcome.

In 1 Timothy 3:2 we find, "A bishop then must be blameless,..." Also in Titus 1:6, "If any be blameless..." What does this mean? Is it possible that this qualification is unobtainable? If one has ever sinned can he then be "blameless?"

Blameless means, put very simply: that an elder must be free of all just or genuine accusations. This cannot mean that he is, or has been, perfect. According to 1 Peter 5:1-5, Peter was evidently an elder. Yet he had earlier in life denied the Lord. He preached the first gospel sermon before thousands of Jews less than two months later. Three thousand were baptized that day, the day of Pentecost. Still later Peter acted in a hypocritical manner regarding eating with the gentiles. This caused problems in the church and the Apostle Paul rebuked Peter. Paul wrote that he, "...withstood him to the face because he was to be blamed." (Galatians 2:11)

Obviously then, an elder must be a real and genuine Christian. However, this does not indicate that he has lived his entire life without mistake or sin.

The term "blameless" is found in both 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6. However, two different Greek words are used in the passages both of which are translated blameless in the KJV. The word: "ANTILEGO" (blameless) is found in 1 Timothy 3:2. Thayer, Robinson, Strong's, etc. define it to mean, "to dispute, refuse: answer again, contradict, deny, gainsay, speak against...literally that cannot be laid hold of? Hence not open to censure, unapproachable... not be apprehended: metaphorically irreprehensible, unblamable..." etc.

In Titus 1:6, the Greek word "ANEGKLETOS" is found. This too, is translated "blameless" in the KJV. The lexicographers variously define this word to mean: "unaccused, i.e. (by implication) irreproachable: blameless, ... that cannot be called to account, unprovable, unaccused, blameless, ... nothing laid to one's charge (as a result of public investigation);...spoken of one who is not liable to be

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: Is 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12 limited to the context, or does "walking disorderly" include other matters? (AR)

Answer: "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 they received of us." "Withdraw" carries the idea shrinking away from a person or thing. Leon Morris says "It signifies the withdrawing into one's self, holding oneself aloof from the offender in question. This is not to be done in a spirit of superiority. The appeal to brotherliness shows that it is part of a man's duty to the brotherhood that he should not condone the deeds of any who, while claiming the name of a brother, nevertheless denies by his actions what the brotherhood stands for." Such withdrawal does not mean that we seek to affect him by injuring his name or standing as a man. Nor do we follow him about with the spirit of revenge. We simply cease to recognize him as a Christian brother. The word "disorderly" is used to describe the conduct of the individual from whom we withdraw. Its primary meaning is "one who is not keeping rank, or one who is out of step with others." In the passage under discussion the disorderly were (1) those who rejected tradition v.6, (2) those who were idle v.11, (3) those who were busybodies v. 11, (4) and those who were disobedient v. 14. Barnes says the disorderly walk "denotes conduct that is in anyway contrary to the rules of Christ...the word would include any violation of the rules of Christ on any subject." It seems to this writer that it would be, not only foolish, but inconsistent as well for Paul to identify those in this context who were rejecting the rules of Christ for their life and demand withdrawal, then allow others who were breaking other rules of Christ to go unpunished. Is it possible to walk "out of rank" in ways other than those specified in these verses? Surely so. What about those who teach the resurrection is already past? (2 Tim. 2:17-18) or those who are liberal, vain talkers, and

deceivers? (Tit. 1:11) Or men who cause division? (Rom. 16:17) I think we can readily see that to limit the "disorderly" solely to the specific sins mentioned in the context of 2 Thess. 3 would do a great disservice to the Scriptures at large. We should not leave the discussion, however, until we notice the standard by which such decisions are made. Note carefully the phrase "not after the tradition which he received of us." In Chapter 2 and verse 15 Paul had said "So then, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye were taught, whether by word, or by epistle of ours." Vine defines "tradition" as "a handing down or on, to hand over deliver..." In this context the word refers to the traditions or commandments taught by the apostles. sacred traditions or writings of inspiration. Thus we cannot use our opinions, ideas, etc. as a basis for disciplinary action, only the inspired teachings of the Scripture. From this point forward in the text Paul addresses the problem of those who would not work. He pointed out that he had not behaved himself disorderly among them. He had worked and earned his keep so to speak. While worthy of support from the church, he had chosen not to accept it, supporting himself. The statement that if one did not work, neither should he eat, means that the church should not support or help such individuals. This is a lesson that our government should learn. Able bodied men and women should work. If they refuse we should be under no obligation to support them. Finally, Paul points out an accompanying sin of idleness. "For we hear of some that walk among you disorderly, that work not at all but are busybodies." These people were "working at no business, but being busybodies." What a sad state of affairs. When individuals so employ themselves, trouble follows. And when churches fail to take the scriptural steps of disciplining such individuals they are in violation of divine teaching.

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

AFRICAN NOTEBOOK - MISSION-FIELD PROBLEMS

by James D. Orten

In the last installment of "African Notebook," we discussed problems in mission fields (our particular field is Zambia) that arise from a large economic disparity between the evangelist and those to whom he preaches. Presently, we shall turn our attention to problems that arise from cultural practices. James Michener, in his great historical novel on southern Africa, *The Covenant*, traced some of today's political problems to tribal traditions of long ago. An insightful person can do the same for some of the prob-

lems we face in the church.

Before you read further, be assured that I am not complaining against African cultures. I stated in an earlier issue, that all cultures are human, and they all have good and bad features as far as Christianity is concerned. This is certainly true of our own culture. Christians from every society should be aware of cultural pressures (such as materialism in the U.S.) and learn to resist them. A missionary's attitude toward culture should be to support good traditions, leave

alone neutral ones, and teach against those that cause Christians to sin. God, not culture, determines what is good for humans.

WITCHCRAFT

Witchcraft is not confined to Africa. Historically, America had its share of those who practiced it, and clear signs point to a resurgence. At this point, it is still done mainly in secret and hopefully no Christian has anything to do with it. In days gone by, witchdoctors held the power of life and death in African communities. If they labeled one as the cause of a plague or other trouble, he surely would be banished or killed. That is no longer true, but their services are still sought, especially in rural areas. If a child is sick and traditional remedies do not work, someone in the extended family likely will urge the parents to consult a witchdoctor for a "diagnosis." This practice is so common that it is referred to as the "African X-Ray."

In Israel, various forms of idolatry, including witchcraft, were practiced along with worship of Jehovah. Samuel told King Saul that his rebellion was like witchcraft, both were forms of idolatry (I Sam. 15:23). True enough, Saul went on the point that he actually consulted a witch (I Chron. 10:13-14, see also Deut. 18:9-13 and II Kings 9:22). These people did not fully reject God, they just seemed to want to "hedge their bets" by holding onto their idols with one hand and to God with the other. Some kings actually set up images in the temple, giving equal status to Jehovah and the idols (II Chron. 33:1-6).

Witchcraft usually takes this ancillary role among the African Christians who practice it. Rarely do they leave the church to place all their faith in the witchdoctor. They consult him when nothing else seems to work, or with a child, they may place an amulet around his neck, just for added protection. Unfortunately, in a few cases, we have heard of church leaders encouraging the practice. Humans have had difficulty throughout the ages in placing their faith exclusively in God. Isaiah (47:13) said, "Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee."

RESPECT FOR AGE

The highest compliment one can be given here is to be called an "old man." I am still sometimes taken aback by being referred to as "the Old Man" of the church. Women are similarly honored being called "mother," and June is not quite used to having adult men address her as "mommy." Sociologists explain the great respect for age in traditional societies by the fact that living conditions change very slowly, thus, useful wisdom continues to accumulate with years. In communities where livelihood was precarious, it was important that the decisions of the elders not be questioned. In modern societies, by contrast, the things the children are learning probably were unknown to their parents.

Of course, respect for age is good, not bad, in itself. Moses said, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man..." (Lev. 19:32). Elihu, the fourth man who came to comfort Job said, "I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion. I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom" (Job 32:7-8). We could do with a bit more respect for age in the U.S., but the problem comes when old men can not be challenged even when they are wrong.

I know of two churches in which knowledgeable younger leaders know what the Bible teaches on communion, but old and stubborn leaders are preventing the churches from practicing the Scriptural pattern. I know of other churches in which old leaders are behaving sinfully and younger, more devout Christians are having difficulty confronting them. In such cases we must remember that the real "Ancient of Days" is God and His word is above all.

A PENCHANT FOR POSITIONS AND TITLES

The African affinity for positions and titles probably did not come from their own culture; it was likely imposed on them by Colonialism. But everyone who does business in Africa experiences it. The proliferation of positions in government bureaucracies almost paralyzes business. I recently registered a vehicle which required three weeks. I do not know the number of offices the forms passed through but I counted 43 official stamps on one set of documents.

How does this habit affect the church work, other than to frustrate Western missionaries? Here is an example. Although involved at the start of our brotherhood's participation in the Lord's work in a West African nation, I returned, with my brother in 1992 after several years absence. We found the work organized in a layered system of authority with local evangelists reporting to regional evangelists, who reported to a national evangelist, who reported to the sponsoring church. This is not the only country where such an organization has been used. We told the brethren that we knew about the office of an evangelist (Eph. 4:11) and the work of an evangelist (II Tim. 4:5) but we knew nothing of regional or national evangelists or their work.

Recently, a preacher here asked me to give him a room in my house to use for his "office." I told him no, (our office is the "highways and byways" from which we invite people to the Lord's supper) but had I given it to him, his status would have risen in his own eyes and those of his fellow preachers. Over the years the same result has been accomplished in a variety of ways: making one local preacher the exclusive translator for the missionaries, making preachers clerks in the church "office," paying preachers through one preacher's bank account, and on and on.

Every time we have elevated one preacher above his fellows, wittingly or unwittingly, it has caused

trouble. This is not to speak to the more important question of whether it is Scriptural. An evangelist's job is to preach the gospel; other than this, he has no right to be supported by the church. If we can create offices like "regional evangelist" or "clerk," why can we not create a "presiding elder" or even "pope" as the church did in its apostasy? We would not allow such offices in U.S. churches. Are they somehow more Scriptural in a foreign country?

I would like to close this discussion by reemphasizing an earlier point. My discussion of mission-field problems does not suggest there are more of them here than at home. And it does not say that I am, discouraged with mission work. My purpose is to alert brethren and churches so that they can help find solutions, and to prick the hearts of those of us who do the work so that we will not hinder the Lord's cause by making the same mistakes over and over.

SINGING IN WORSHIP

By William L. St. John

The earliest record of music in the Scriptures is found in Job 38:4-7, where it is recorded that the morning stars sang together when God laid the foundations of the earth. The earliest record of man-made music is found in Genesis 4:21, where it is recorded that Jubal, one of Cain's descendants, was the "father of all such as handle the harp and organ." The descendants of Seth "called upon the name of the Lord (Genesis 4:26) but those who had descended from Cain did not. In Genesis 6:2, the Scriptures tell us that the sons of God (the descendants of Seth who were calling upon the name of God) married daughters of men (Cain's ungodly descendants). God's reply to this was, "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years" (Gen. 6:3). As prophesied, this strife between God and man brought about the great flood 120 years later.

We have before us, two types of music: vocal, music produced by the voice, and mechanical, music produced by mechanical instruments (piano, organ, etc.). The fact that mechanical instruments of music were the inventions of men, and ungodly men at that, does not in and of itself indicate that instrumental music in worship is unacceptable before God. However, it does give us reason to pause and give careful consideration to these inventions of man.

The issue of whether or not mechanical instruments of music may be played in worship to God has been the source of much controversy. The apostle Peter wrote, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11). If we will but "speak as the oracles of God" this controversy can be settled. According to 2 Timothy 3:16, we are instructed that the Scriptures are able to "thoroughly furnish us to every good work." If the use of instrumental music in worship is acceptable unto God, we should certainly expect to find it within the word of God. Peter also declared that God "hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). Since everything that pertains to life and godliness has been given, we should expect to find the answer to this question within the pages of God's word. The apostle Paul instructed the Corinthians to "all speak the same

thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). The only way that this or any matter will be settled will be when we turn to the word of God accepting it alone as our standard of judgment in religious matters. Forsaking it leaves us adrift on an ocean of endless, subjective ideologies. Thus we must go as the prophet Isaiah said, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

How is it that God's will is made known to man? From Romans 10:17, we learn that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God, James instructs us to "receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21). The psalmist declares that God's word is a "lamp to my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). God told the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah that he would make a new covenant with his people and that he would put his law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts (Jer. 31:31-33). According to Romans 10:10, man is to believe with his heart unto righteousness, But how was this belief or faith to come? The apostle John tells us, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30-31). The apostle Paul tells us that faith comes from hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). The writer of Hebrews states that "without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). These verses again emphasize the importance of going to God's word for the answer.

In light of the foregoing Scriptures, please consider the case of Cain and Abel and their worship of God. In Genesis 4:1-8, the birth of Abel and Cain, their worship, and the murder of Abel are all recorded. Please notice that both men believed in God, that both men believed that God should be worshiped, that both men worshiped God, and that both men sacrificed unto

God. Why then is the worship of Abel accepted and the worship of Cain rejected? From Hebrews 11:4, we learn that, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." Abel's offering was made "by faith," Since faith comes by hearing the word of God, we must conclude that Abel's offering was according to the word of God, Would God be unfair and not tell Cain what was acceptable, that is, not tell him what to offer? Certainly not! Cain killed his brother because "his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous (1 John 3:12). Abel faithfully followed the instructions that God gave them, Cain chose to follow his own way. Abel was accepted, Cain was rejected.

Dear friends, is there not a lesson in this for us today? Can we not see the application? When God tells us to do something, any deviation from what we are told is unacceptable. Did God tell Cain NOT to offer the fruit of the ground? No. Instead, God told them what to offer and Cain chose to offer something else. How often man has chosen to follow what he considers to be an improvement (?) upon God's way. The Great Flood of Noah's day was brought upon the earth because man had "corrupted his way upon the earth" (Gen 6:12). Let us now apply these principles that we have learned to music in the church.

Just as we have noted that Abel and Cain went in two different ways; even so, man has gone in two different ways when it comes to music in worship. Some have chosen to use only vocal music (singing) in the worship and others have chosen to use both vocal music and musical instruments as well, Who is right? How can we determine what is acceptable unto God? If we use the word of God as our standard, determining the mind or will of God in this matter can be accomplished by "searching the scriptures" (John 5:39). What does the word of God have to say on this subject? What kind of music do the Scriptures authorize? What is the will of God on this subject?

After Jesus taught his disciples how the Lord's supper was to be observed, the Bible records, "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Matthew 26:30, Mark 14:26). When Paul and Silas were imprisoned at Philippi, the Scriptures record, "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and

sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them" (Acts 16:25). When Paul instructed the Corinthians concerning order in the assemblies, he wrote, "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also" (1 Cor. 14:15). The brethren at Rome were told, "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name" (Romans 15:9). In reference to Jesus, the writer of Hebrews wrote, "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Heb. 2:12). James the brother of Jesus taught, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms" (James 5:13). The apostle Paul instructed the church at Colosse to, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16). To the church at Ephesus, Paul gave the command, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). This is what the New Testament has to say on the subject of music. Please notice again that it is ...sung ...sang ...sing ...sing ...sing ...sing ...sing ...singing ...singing...!

Dare we follow in the footsteps of Cain and deviate from the word of God? What do the Scriptures teach concerning music in the church? It is always singing. Please note too that there were musical instruments available when the church was established, but there is not one single example of the church coming together to worship and using a mechanical instrument of music.

What may we conclude from this? The only authorized or scriptural music in the worship of the church is vocal - that which is produced by the human voice. The term "a cappella," which means "as is done in the church," is often used to describe vocal music, music that is without the accompaniment of instruments. According to Hebrews 13:15, we to "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving praise to his name." Sing, dear brother, don't play, just sing.

BETTER MANNERS THAN THE NEW TESTAMENT

By Bobby Pepper

Sometimes preachers and papers are criticized for being too negative. We grant that such is possible and perhaps many of us have been guilty. But how does one make a positive response to statements toward which he holds a negative position? Where is the philosophy of always take the positive approach advo-

cated in the Bible? Paul told Timothy to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort" (2 Tim. 4:2). That is two-thirds negative. Neither Jesus nor Paul felt that it was wrong to take a negative approach when they sustained a negative relationship to an idea or practice. Nor did they think it was wrong to make a direct response to

that with which they disagreed. There was no "beating around the bush" (Matt. 15:1-20; 1 Cor. 11:17-34; Gal. 2:11-14). Since then, many great men have signed to take the negative regarding a particular proposition because they believed the affirmative to be in error.

It is seldom, if ever, pleasant to face error. However, love for the truth, responsibility as a Christian and the certainty of an eternal judgment must forever push us past the point of attempting to be comfortable in exposing the false teacher in his error. (Acts 13:9,10; 2 Tim. 4:1ff.; Tit. 1:10-13).

Cutting through the attractive veneer and looking below the surface of his doctrine the advocate of error is not an iconoclast but a destroyer of those who hold true "faith in a pure conscience" (2 Tim. 1:5,19). Subversion, distortion and crying "martyrdom" are but a few of the arsenals which he employs to snare the innocent and the unsuspecting. The lofty heights of intellectualism, the ivory tower of human wisdom and the grandeur of something better and more pure are but the baits or his "damnable heresy" (2 Pet. 2:1ff.). It takes good men to oppose this and to see it for what it really is without regard to personage (Gal. 2:11-14).

When good men oppose error they can expect to receive ill-treatment and bear the brunt of the bitter and invective spirit of those in error, who claim their only crime is in questioning the traditional concepts of brethren. If it were only a matter of questioning for the sake of proving the practice is authorized that is a noble thing (Acts 17:11). However, if it is a matter of questioning for the sake of undermining and overthrowing that which is authorized, then we are talking about an entirely different matter. The apostle Paul called them "false brethren...who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus..." (Gal. 2:4). That being the case, then good men who

oppose error will follow the example of the apostle Paul, who reported concerning false brethren, "...to whom we gave place in the way of subjection, NO, NOT FOR AN HOUR, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Gal. 2:5).

Had you been a member of the Church in Jerusalem, what would you have done when you had heard that the Apostles had been arrested, beaten, and cast into prison? Or when you had heard that Stephen had been stoned to death? Would you have invited your neighbors to attend? Would you have attended Stephen's funeral or would you have stayed away and criticized Stephen for disputing with the libertines? (Acts 7:51-60; 8:1-4). The answers to these questions depend on whether you are a person of strong, deep convictions, or a person of weak convictions, who would be embarrassed to discuss with others his beliefs. The people with strong, well grounded convictions are stable and settled. The size and social status of the Church are of no significance in relation to their convictions. Their only question is "which group has the truth? Don't allow prejudice, tradition, emotions, crowds or 'church doctrine' to blind you. Let us, with one accord, hold tight the hand of good men, who oppose error. And, in like manner, let us turn away from those who drink from the fountain of bitterness and manufacture error though claiming they have only been misunderstood (2 Tim. 3:1-5; Heb. 12:14-17). Error is deceitfully twisted and truth is plainly revealed. No sincere person would claim he is misunderstood without first admitting that he himself is misunderstood and therefore was wrong. "This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate there in day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein for them thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 2:8). 16870 Huntsville Brownsferry Road, Athens, Al. 35611.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

By Jeff Thompson

The importance of spiritual leadership is something that many Christians don't fully appreciate. I'm sure that most Christians would agree that we do need spiritual leadership, but I'm afraid few Christians realize the impact that leadership has on their own soul salvation. There are, however, some Bible instances that reveal to us how important spiritual leadership is to God.

As long as man has existed, God has seen fit to ordain leadership to oversee his spiritual well-being. Further more, God has always chosen leaders who were themselves mortal men i.e. Moses and the Prophets. Even when he sent his son to earth to save mankind, he fashioned him as a man (Phil 2:8). It should

be noted, however, that God didn't use man because he needed man's help to accomplish a task, but because it was in the best interest of man for him to do so. Never has God relied on man to do anything for him that he could not do by other means. For example: in the case of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, couldn't God have used angels to deliver his people and destroy the Egyptians as he did in the case of Lot (Gen 19:1)? But instead he chose a man to lead them out, and to manifest his power through. This gave the people someone to relate to. Someone who is like them, yet who knows God well enough to teach them how to please him. By choosing Moses, God also gave the people something to attain to, i.e. God is with this

man, if I follow his example, perhaps God will be with me as well. This pattern of human leadership continued in the New Testament among the first century church and is still used today by congregations of the Church of Christ. Today, instead of kings, prophets, or apostles, God uses elders, deacons, evangelists, and preachers to guide his people (Eph 4:11-12).

In the Bible, leaders who pleased God have all shared at least three common qualities. **FIRST**, like any of God's people, they did what was right in the sight of God. Many stumbled, some even fell; but all who pleased God, walked in his ways. The Apostle Paul, a great leader of the first century Church of Christ, said, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." (1 Cor. 11:1), setting an example for all Christian leaders. While this quality is the most fundamental, it is certainly one we cannot afford to take for granted. Just because someone is in a position of leadership, that does not mean they are following Christ. (Acts 20:30, Mt. 7:20).

SECOND, God's leaders taught men how to be righteous. Some were preachers of righteousness, others taught only by example, but all did it (Matt. 5:19). Preaching is a very serious undertaking; after all, it's done for the purpose of saving souls, (1 Cor. 1:20). Too many sermons are general and are not aimed at every day life. If you're just going to tell me a story, or spin me a yarn, and hope I learn something, don't bother. But if you can teach me how to please God, and if you can point out my sins, and show me how to overcome the problems in my life, do it. A lesson is not worth much if it does not include some practical application. Jesus taught people in parables that they could see themselves in. Paul used examples from Old Testament scriptures and applied them to the people he taught rather than talking about the people who weren't there to get the benefit of his speech.

It would be a mistake, however, to reduce the responsibility of teaching God's people to only public preaching. There are many leaders, of many congregations across the brotherhood, who do not occupy the pulpits, but are very important to the function and progress of their respective congregations. The best lessons are the ones taught by example. The teaching function of leadership includes not only introducing new people to the ways of God, but also correcting erring Christians. Anyone who cannot fulfill this function is ill suited to be a leader of God's people regardless of title or responsibilities.

The **THIRD**, and possibly most important quality of a leader of God's people, is that he must act in the best interest of the people rather than his own. Looking back at Moses, it can hardly be said that he acted in his own interest when he asked to be included in any punishment that God would inflict on the rebellious people of Israel (Ex. 32:32). Jesus didn't act in his own interest when he gave his life for his friends (John 15:13-15). A true leader who fits the pattern

revealed in God's word is one who sacrifices himself not only to God (Rom. 12:1), but also to his fellow man (Mark 9:35). This quality has historically been possessed by only a very small percentage of the population. It makes one wonder if some aren't more interested in being the boss than the leader.

Knowing the qualities that God's chosen leaders have always shared, it is easy to see the benefits of that kind of leadership today. But how can the absence of such leadership, be detrimental to my soul? For an answer, look at the example found in Ex. 32:1-8. Here we find an occasion when Moses left the Israelites to go up on Mount Sinai to commune with the LORD, (it was at this time that he received the Ten Commandments). During his brief absence, the people forgot God, selected a leader of their own choosing rather than God's, (Aaron), and made and worshiped an idol god.

Aaron served well in his role as High Priest along side Moses; but he demonstrated here that he lacked Moses' leadership abilities (1. doing what is right in God's sight, 2. correcting the errors of the people, and 3. acting in their best interest by refusing their request) and that he was not capable of assuming the duties of Israel's leader.

This also teaches us that someone does not inherit leadership abilities just because of their close association with a great leader. Any time we assume that association or namesake qualifies someone to be a leader of the Church, we may be setting ourselves up for the same kind of destruction that these Israelites encountered. I believe that God is as capable today of choosing his own leaders as he ever was. It is our responsibility to listen to what he says in His Holy Word and select leaders accordingly.

As was evidenced by Aaron's example, poor leadership is worse than no leadership at all. It is worse because bad leaders may not only fail to lead in the right direction, but they may actually lead in the wrong direction. In the book of Jeremiah God says, "My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray..." (Jer. 50:6).

Knowing the importance God places on leadership, and the dynamic impact it has on our eternal souls, we cannot afford to be unconcerned with the leadership of the Church. We cannot just let any-ole-body take a role of leadership in the congregations of the Church of Christ just because "somebody's got to do it." We cannot decide to chose our own leaders rather than letting God chose them through his word. Nor can we treat leadership roles in the Church like political thrones to be passed down from one generation to the next. Leadership was so important in the first century that Paul saw a need for elders in every congregation (Titus 1:5). It is my opinion that the need is just as great today.

Jeff Thompson, 314 Hickory, Terrace LaGrange, GA 30240

NOTHING BUT CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED

Continued from page 1

have insisted that the gospel consists of no more than the facts about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. This is all we are under obligation to preach and these facts are the only things that affect a person's salvation. As proof of this they appeal to Paul's words in I Cor. 15: 1-4 where he states that the gospel consists of the facts about the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord. But, dear reader, that is not what Paul says. Please note the words "first of all" in verse three. The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus is not all Paul taught or preached to them. After first teaching them about the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord, he went on to teach them all those things that were profitable to them in order to serve God and be saved. No man who deliberately leaves off a portion of God's Word he considers controversial or unimportant is preaching Christ and him crucified.

PREACH BAPTISM

To preach Christ certainly means to teach people that they need to be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins. In Acts eight we are informed that Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian Nobleman as they were riding in the chariot. What did he preach to the man? Jesus! Ah, someone sighs, there at last is what I believe. Philip wasn't preaching some controversial doctrine such as the necessity of water baptism for the remission of sins. That's what it means to preach Jesus and him crucified. Be careful, my friend. Read Acts eight a little closer. It does say Philip preached Jesus to the Eunuch, but the very next verse states that when they came to a certain water the Eunuch asked Philip if he could be baptized. Now, dear reader, how in the world did the Eunuch know he needed to be baptized. This was the first gospel sermon he had ever heard. There is only one inescapable conclusion - Philip, in preaching Jesus to this man, must have included baptism. There is no other way the man could have known anything about it! Ah, preaching Jesus means you teach all Jesus commanded, including baptism.

PREACH THE CHURCH

In Acts 8: 5 we are told that Philip went to Samaria and preached Christ unto them. They believed what he preached and there was great joy in that city. Now, someone interjects, finally we have what I believe. Joy comes not from preaching about baptism or about which church is the right church, but from just preaching Christ and him crucified. You need to read a line further my friend. In verse eighteen of Acts eight we read: "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Oh, preaching Christ includes teaching people about the kingdom of God (the church) and baptism. Dear reader, anytime you hear a preacher preach and he never, ever says anything about the

church you know that man is not preaching Jesus Christ - not the way Philip did!

CONCLUSION

The preacher I referred to at the beginning of this article was a denominational preacher, however, every now and again I meet folks who are members of the Lord's church who are of the opinion that preachers ought not to preach so much about such things as the communion, the work and organization of the church, the kind of music used in our worship, or the role of women in the public work of the church. Nor should preachers, some opine, spend time condemning (and certainly not naming) specific sins from the pulpit. Just preach Jesus and him crucified and everything else will turn out all right. But, my brethren, if I am going to preach Jesus and him crucified just like Paul and all the other apostolic preachers then I am going to include the very things mentioned above. Moreover, I will keep back nothing that is profitable to my hearers, but I will declare all the counsel of God. Only then will I be preaching nothing save Jesus and him crucified.

Jerry Dickinson 13803 Crosshaven Houston, TX 77015

EDITORIAL

Continued from page 2

arraigned; hence unblamable, irreprehensible,..." etc.

As I perused some twelve different translations, I noticed that all them used such logical terms as "unimpeachable, a man of blameless life, a man of unimpeachable character, unquestioned integrity, not open to accusation, never caught doing wrong," etc., I was made to conclude that this qualification should be in the possession of almost any Christian who is spiritually mature.

In fact, the same two Greek terms are used in other passages describing a godly type of living. See, for example, 1 Timothy 3:10, 5:7 and 1 Corinthians 1:8.

It is pretty evident that some misunderstanding of this particular qualification has caused some needless concern in the minds of some. A few would tend to disqualify almost everyone because of their view of "blameless." We may need to be reminded that even Jesus was not viewed favorably by His enemies. The Pharisees and others tried to portray the Savior as a complete fake. We know He was, in fact, blameless because he was perfect.

Please, brethren, be careful how you use this word against a brother who desires the office of an elder. Just because you may know of a sin in his early life which is long since forgiven does not necessarily indicate he is not blameless now.

We will consider more about this next month. Lord willing. Let us be careful to ordain men who are unquestionably qualified for the office and work of an elder. I can't imagine standing before the Lord in judgment and trying to explain why we set aside His standards regarding government in the church.

ANNOUNCEMENTS DO YOU NEED PEWS?

We recently received a phone call from Gary Barrett advising us that the congregation in Wichita, KS has 136 seats they are willing to give away. If you are interested, contact Mike Whitworth, 1454 Hornecker Drive., Wichita, KS 67235, Ph. (316) 722-0894.

CHURCH DIRECTORY CHANGES

ESCALON, CA -- The evening services at Escalon, CA are 5:00 PM not 6:30 PM as stated in the directory. Please make the change in your directory.

HOUSTON, TX -- (Harris County), Sunset Heights, correct address for Harvey Hammonds in 98 Isaacs Rd. #708, Humble, TX 77338-8068. (713) 540-7785.

SERMONS ON TAPE

I have a list of more than 130 audio cassettes of sermons in my personal library that I would like to make available to others in the brotherhood. I will mail copies of these tapes for \$1.50 each, postage included. Please send a large addressed, stamped envelope for a complete list. The following is a sample of some of the sermons on this list:

Sowing and Reaping - Wayne McKamie
The State of the Church - Terry Baze
The Lamb of God/When Jesus Comes Again - Doug Hawkins

Let No Man Despise Thy Youth - Doug Hawkins

Anyone who has good quality tapes of sermons that they would like to share in this endeavor can contact me at the above address. Any help you can give will be greatly appreciated.--Bobby Wright, 15549 Quinn Road, Athens, AL 35611, (205) 233-0106.

CAN YOU HELP THIS CHURCH?

The church in Phoenix, a suburb of Durban, South Africa, needs help and you will enjoy knowing about them. They have been Christians for some time, associated with and worshipping like our digressive brethren. A few years ago, a brother from Cape Town, about 800 miles away, gave them a single copy of Ronny Wade's little tract on the communion. That brother read it and decided it is the truth. He passed the booklet on to other leaders in the church and it made the rounds in one week. The following Lord's Day, the leaders discussed the matter with the church and, with the full agreement of the body, placed a cup and a loaf of bread on the Lord's table.

June and I had the privilege of worshipping with them on January 15 of this year and found their service both Scriptural and inspiring. They are zealous and so happy to be Christians that just to be around them is inspiring. Since they made the change they have become something of outcasts among the other churches of Christ in that area. These brethren are Indians (whose descendants were from India, not native Americans), and I am sure they are proud of their heritage, but there is not a trace of bigotry among them. They are eager to be associated

with brethren from and churches in the U.S.

These brethren need help to build a meeting house. They are meeting in a school room, have outgrown the small one they were first given, and are filling the larger one. The Sunday we were there about 50 persons attended the worship. They are helping themselves, and will continue to do so, but it is difficult. South Africa has a new democratic government, but wages still have not equalized between "whites" and those the old government called "colored." They need a few thousand dollars immediately to secure a plot for which the City Council is considering them. If you can help, send an ordinary check made to the Church of Christ to:

Moses Ramsamy
4 Earl Park Place
Shastri Park
Phoenix 4068
South Africa

It is a good idea to register the letter. If you prefer, you can send the check to me, and I will see that they get it.--James Orten, P.O. Box 37073, Lusaka 10101, Zambia, Africa.

OPPOSED TO CARNAL WAR AND MILITARY SERVICE

Periodically, we publish a list a Christians who are opposed, for Scriptural reasons, to all forms of carnal warfare and every form of military involvement. This is done so that they may have documented proof that they have publically stated their opposition for anyone to see and read. The following have asked that their names be so listed:

1. Landon Lay, 10170 Marcella Ct., Santee, CA 92071
2. Brian Osburn, 8824 Duncanson Dr., Bakersfield, CA 93311
3. Scott Parker, P.O. Box 704, Mustang, OK 73064
4. Aaron Parker, P.O. Box 704, Mustang, OK 73064
5. Phillip Bailey, P.O. Box 170295, Arlington, TX 76003
6. Kimberly S. French, 11886 Hardpan Ln, Redding, CA 96003
7. Kevin S. French, 11886 Hardpan Ln, Redding, CA 96003
8. Paul M. Melton (address not included.)
9. Jack R. Jones, Box 174, Christoval, TX 76935
10. David Claef, P.O. Box 1527, Lakeside, CA 92040

Please report any errors to us promptly. Please print your name and address clearly when you send information to us.

OUR DEPARTED

OWEN--Brother Alan Owen departed this life on January 9, 1995 at 39 years, 10 months, and five days. His life was taken in an automobile accident. He was driving home from work to spend the evening with his wife, Debbie and sons, Justin and Andrew. Alan is also survived by his mother, Betty Owen, and sisters, Donna

Gamble and Sue Tucker.

Alan spent his childhood days in Lodi, California, where his parents were active members of the Lord's church. He later married and moved to Pinole where he became an essential part of the Lord's work in San Pablo. Recently, the building in San Pablo was sold and the congregation began meeting in Brother Owen's home while they looked for a suitable building.

Brother Owen was a loved and respected member of his community, which was demonstrated by the more than 400 attendees at his funeral. Brother Owen's talent as a song leader, teacher, and brother in Christ will be missed. I met Brother Owen along with his parents and sisters in 1982. They are family to me. I consider it an honor to have been asked to officiate at his service.-- Rich Lechner

NOTE: It is with sadness that we announce Alan's passing. If I recall correctly, I baptized Alan when he was just a teenager in Lodi. We have considered the Owen family dear friends for over 30 years. May God bless the family. Our sincere condolences to Debbie and the boys.--DLK.

ASPLIN--Ray Asplin was born March 2, 1915 near Advance, Arkansas, the only child of Larkin and Ethel Mae Mead Asplin. His great-grandfather, McDonald Mead was a pioneer Church of Christ preacher in Kentucky, Arkansas and Texas. His family moved to Seymour, Missouri in 1926 where he obeyed the gospel in 1931. In 1943 he married Fern Lenore Park and to this union were born Paul Ray, Mary Sue, and Elizabeth Ann. Fern passed away in 1969 and in 1970 he was married to Arlie Mae Everett. Brother Ray passed away in Houston, Texas, January 26, 1995 at the age of seventy-nine. He is survived by his wife, Arlie Mae; daughters, Mary Lambert, Elizabeth Tindall and Arlene Shores; and sons, Paul Asplin, Daniel Everett, Jimmy Everett, Donald Everett. Brother Ray had twenty grandchildren and seventeen great-grandchildren. In 1946 Ray suggested the first Church Directory to Homer Gay and Homer King and he published the first Church Directory among us in 1948. Ray told my dad one time that publishing the Directory was something he could do for the church. He found something he could do and he did it well. As Ronny Wade stated at the last New Year Meeting, the brotherhood owes Ray Asplin a great debt of gratitude for the great work which he began. Without doubt, the Church Directory is the greatest memorial to the good life of this brother. I visited several times in recent years with Brother Ray in his home near Lone Rock and Advance, Arkansas, and always enjoyed the warm hospitality of he and Arlie. He loved to talk and tell stories and always began one of his stories with the phrase, "Well, I'll tell ya'..." and would then tell a story about Homer King or Homer Gay or some other great preacher from yesterday. I somehow think that wherever he is right now he is talking to somebody and beginning one of his stories with his quaint flair, "Well, I'll tell 'ya..." This writer conducted a service here in Houston, after which the body was taken to Oklahoma City for another service.--Jerry Dickinson



Barney Owens, 8782 Meadowview Ln., W. Chester, OH 45069 -- Sickness has been prevalent among many of the members this winter at Sharonville, but with the promise of Spring we hope to accomplish some better things for the Lord. Our Spring Meeting will be as usual the last of this month, April 26-30, with Kevin Presley preaching. I look forward to being with the Hartwell Congregation near Huntsville, AR, April 15-23. Come and join with us if you are near there. Pray for mine and me.

Luther Rose, Bear Track Congregation, Beattyville, KY 41311 -- It has been some time since I have written to OPA. I would like to thank all the congregations that helped me during my time of need. I especially want to thank you for your prayers for us here at Bear Track Church. It is good to know we have some brethren that will help in the time of need. We are looking forward to Brother Kevin Presley in the fall.

Glenn Arnett, 1445 S.E.M. St., Grants Pass, Oregon 97526, March 2--There will be no more services at Cave Junction or Brookings, Oregon. The church will now be meeting at 1027 S.E.M.St., in Grants Pass, Oregon. For now, services will be at 2:00 P.M. Lord's Day beginning March 5th. I am looking forward to the work here and consider it an opportunity and a challenge to build a strong and faithful congregation here. We begin this work with a nucleus of six members, but we have 100,000 or more people to draw from in a 30 mile radius and we are optimistic that there are many who have not heard the truth of the gospel and will respond, in obedience. If there is anyone in this area that you would like us to visit, send me their name and address. We were glad to have Gayland Osburn visit and preach for us recently and enjoyed the fellowship of him and Rhoetta very much. He will be visiting us from time to time and has offered to help us anyway he can and we are grateful for his help. As soon as we can do some ground work and can agree on a time, Bennie Cryer is coming to hold a meeting which we will announce. We hope to have Don King and other preachers and evangelists here for meetings when it is feasible and arrangements can be made. If you are in this area we would enjoy your fellowship with us. We ask your prayers for the work here and wherever His work is being done.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, March 13--We recently closed an enjoyable meeting at the Escalon, CA congregation. Crowds and cooperation from other places were outstanding. The house was nearly full several times. It was good to be with them again. The first meeting I ever held was there about 1966 or 67 and we have enjoyed many good times together through the years. We hope good was accomplished as always. One recently confessed wrongs at the home church and this past Lord's day we enjoyed preaching at the Yuba City church to a nearly full house. The Feb. issue of the

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE (USPS 407-560)

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Send all subscriptions to 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, Cal. 94539.

paper was pretty late. We are sorry about this. The printer tells us that the problem was caused by a computer virus which wiped out their systems for a few days. We hope things are corrected now. Also, we still hear of a few who are experiencing problems receiving their paper. Please report this to us promptly. Lately we have checked our own files and have been pleased to see that our records are correct. We believe we are nearing the time when the computer problems will be solved. The paper is well and going into places we never dreamed a few years ago. Pray for us.

P. Duane Permenter, P.O. Box 1223, Riverbank, CA 95367, March 8--The study at Oakdale is now history. The brethren did a great service to the church in that area by hosting this study of scriptural leadership in the kingdom. I am glad to have been able to attend and assist in the services as moderator. Bennie Cryer and Alan Bonifay did a good job and gave brethren plenty of truth to consider and apply. It is certainly past time for such studies as these in our part of the country. The church at 64th Street, in Sacramento continues to move forward. The crowds have continued to increase from week to week. Also, some have made confessions of fault. Many have expressed feelings of triumph and strength. The church in Oakdale also continues to prosper. Brother George DePonte has recently baptized two, and other teachers have been successful to encourage some to make confessions of fault where it was needed. My schedule for the next few months will include Hillcrest, MS, April 11-16; Ada, OK, April 21-30. Also, June 18-25 I will be meeting in Athens, TX. If you can attend any of these meetings, you would certainly be welcome. God bless the faithful. Pray for me and mine.

Felipe Bayani, 94-730 Kuhaulua Pl, Waipahu, Hawaii, 96797, March 6, 1995--It's been a long time since my last report to OPA. We thank God for His continued help and guidance to us in the work of Christ in Hawaii. Although there are trials and many oppositions from the denominations, we are not discouraged for we know the truth is in us. As we continue to preach and teach the truth, there were those who accepted it, but later on some of them left the Fold, their reason is, "we do not have a permanent place of worship" (and they do not want to get involved in buying one.) Though there are those who left, new faces are coming in as we continue to make contact and give a Bible to those whom we contacted. The last two Sundays, there were two men who attended our worship services. We are praying that the members of their family will be joining them soon. We still have our assembly in a room at Waipahu High School, but on temporary basis, (no written permit or contract for its use, like before.) Although the condition is like this, we hope and pray that they will let us continue meeting in this place. For those who are coming to visit Hawaii, this is the address of the place of worship: Waipahu High School, 94-1221

Farrington Highway, Waipahu, HI, 96797. Our phone number has been changed. This is our new number: 678-9158. Call me at this number so I can give you directions. If I am not at home, just leave a message or phone number and I will call you back. Brethren, pray for us. Thank you so much for your continued support, spiritually and financially.

Brett Hickey, 1718 Fuller St., Mtn. Home, Ar 72653, (501) 424-2523--The Lord has blessed the work at Mountain Home. In the last twelve months 25 men and women were rescued from the kingdom of darkness. Six confessed worshipping errors. Five were restored after lengthy stays in the far country. Fourteen were washed in the blood of the lamb. Of this number, two have moved out of state and five are struggling. The other 18 are stable, reliable members of the Wade & Cross St. congregation. Upon our arrival, the complete teaching load rested on one or two. Now three are capable teachers and three others are steadily developing. We have been training the young and unexperienced men with *Teaching The Word* by Michael Fox and *Speaking For The Master* by Batsell Barrett Baxter. The support and encouragement of the Leawood Village church in Joplin has been critical to the work. Oscar Morris and Mark Kemp continue to provide great assistance behind the scenes. We are also indebted to Jim Hickey, Wayne McKamie and Jimmie Smith for providing valuable insight. Strengthening meetings from Doug Hawkins and Smith Bibens spurred us to new spiritual and evangelistic heights during the past year. We are excited about a follow-up meeting with Doug this May. Several continue to reach out to the lost. Ten people are involved at this point and more are expected. We are using Bill Lowry's material on *Personal Evangelism*, as well as recent articles from the *Christian Expositor* to equip them. Bill Lowry's workbook combines material from Ivan Stewart, Clayton Pepper and Julie Miller. We intend to alternate study and fieldwork. Initially, beginners will place doorhangers from house to house, offering a free correspondence course. Members will be confident and capable of setting up and conducting home studies. Our weekly newspaper article has been very successful. Many in the community say they read it. At least three have visited because of it. A Baptist college student and her mother came and said they regularly read the article. We also recently began a 5-minute radio program. We enjoyed preaching at West Plains, Mo.; Houston, Mo.; Broken Arrow, Ok.; and Harrison, Ar. in recent months. We were also in a meeting at Scotland, Ar. Preachers Miles King and Tom Acton gave unwavering support throughout the meeting. Miles and Johnette were hospitable and a joy to be around. We were impressed with their unpretentious Christianity and the aid of area brethren. More importantly, we had a number of visitors from the community. We anxiously anticipate our meeting with Aurora, Mo. (May 5-7). We will be free to hold a few meetings in the summer and fall. Pray for the harvest!

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

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

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

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

VOL. LXVII

LEBANON, MISSOURI, MAY, 1995

NO. 5

DOES GAMBLING STILL VIOLATE GOD'S WILL?

By Bennie T. Cryer

Will Rogers reputedly said, "There is a wide gambling streak in nearly every American man and woman, a fat streak, fat as a prize hog's bacon." When he made this statement he was simply recognizing a tendency of the flesh resident in each citizen. Gambling used to be wrong. It was strongly condemned by gospel preachers and church leaders. Parents zealously guarded their children from the evils of gambling. In most cases state government condemned it. Where gambling was legal attending such establishments was frowned on by most citizens. The criminal elements were generally behind such activities. A criminal began the practice in Las Vegas, NV. If you knew a gambler you knew somebody that had evil attached to them. However, as the editorial in the March issue of this journal suggested, "We are drifting." Members of the Lord's church gamble and think nothing of it. Children of church members pick up the habit, not from an "evil gambler," but from their church going parents. Has gambling changed to make it "right" now or have we changed?

REAPING WHAT WE HAVE SOWN

Playing cards were not in the homes of godly church leaders and parents when I was a boy. As we "drifted" we could not understand why there was such a stern sanction against them. Now, you can learn how to play many card games from preachers and church leaders. Even though cards have always been in the upper strata of gambling since their introduction in 1120 A.D., it has become difficult for us to see this close connection to an evil and pernicious business like our forefathers could. So, as one man said, "If we sow cards we shall reap gamblers." In our pursuit of more spiritual homes it would seem wise for all of us to take a look at some of our gaming at home lest we reap an out of control whirlwind.

FALSE TEACHERS COMPARED TO GAMBLING

In Ephesians 4:14 Paul used the term "by the

sleight of men" in revealing the dangers of false teachers in the church. In **Barnes' Notes On The New Testament**, p. 994, the following comment occurs. "The cunning, skill, trickery, of men. The word used here—kubēia—is from a word (kubos) meaning a cube, a die, and properly means a game at dice. Hence, it means game, gambling; and then anything that turns out by mere chance or haphazard—as a game of dice does." "By the sleight of men" is therefore the Holy Spirit's revelation as to what God thought about gambling and gamblers at the time the New Testament was written. Gambling and false teachers are comparable to each other in the mind of God. If gambling is alright, then false teachers are all right. If false teachers are condemned in this passage, so is gambling. Do you have the mind of God about this?

IS LIFE A GAMBLE?

"Driving to work and back home is a gamble, therefore gambling is alright for a Christian to engage in." Such statements are false. Gambling is a self-created risk. You do not create the risks that are involved in driving a car to and from work. If you see a car coming at a high rate of speed and you voluntarily create a risk by thinking you can pull out in front of it and beat it, that decision is gambling in its truest form. The game is called "chicken" and you are betting your health, safety, and life. There are different forms of this game and are wrong for Christians to engage in.

THE STOCK MARKET

"If you invest your money in the stock market or commodities, etc., you are gambling. If I can invest in the stock market I can bet on ball games, card games, or whatever as a Christian." The conclusion is not warranted. If you make a bona fide investment in a bona fide company you then own a share of that company that produces and distributes goods and has a reasonable prospect for success. You do not create the risks that might cause the company to fail. In gambling you create an

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Editorial

ELDERS #2

By Don L. King

Last month we began a series dealing with the qualifications of elders. If there is any altering to be done it must be with us. We have no authority to diminish the standard God has set. Neither do we have the right to make it stronger than God has. We sin if we do either.

"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife..."(1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6).

There are a number of views regarding this inspired statement by the Apostle Paul. Some believe Paul did not mean that an elder must be a married man at all, but only if he happened to be, he could not have more than one wife. Others say an elder must be a married man, but married only one time. That is, he must not have been divorced and remarried for any reason. Still others say that an elder must indeed be a married man and he must not have been married more than once even in the case of the death of a former wife.

First, let us say that the scriptures plainly teach a bishop, or elder, MUST be a married man in order for his ordination or appointment to be approved of God. It appears plain, to this writer, that the scripture forbids an elder to have less than ONE wife just as emphatically as it forbids his having more than one! J.W. McGarvey says, "If it be said that a man owns but one farm, it is just as clearly implied that he owns one as that he owns no more than one." Of course, Paul proceeds in both 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, to state how the elder or overseer must govern his household and especially his children. This certainly implies, to say the least, that he is a man of family. He obviously would be a poor influence to others with children out of wedlock.

The word "one" in both passages is from the Greek "MIA" meaning "one" and is used in many ways in the New Testament. Thayer says it is "A cardinal numeral, one. Used 1, universally. A. in opposition to many; and added to nouns after the manner of an adjective." It appears that the word "one" is used in just such a way in our texts.

The Greek-English Lexicon in the back of **Berry's Interlinear New Testament** says of the word "MIA" "A cardinal numeral, ONE; used distributively, as Matt. 20:21; by way of emphasis,

Continued on page nine

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: A brother becomes a widower, he marries one outside the church, in so doing does he violate 1 Cor. 7:39? Should he divorce the non-believer? If so can he marry a Christian? (Ca)

Answer: There are many interpretations of this passage. Some have argued that the phrase "only in the Lord" should not be applied to the man the widow is marrying, but that it rather modifies "to be married" in which case it would be adverbial in force rather than adjectival. To make it adverbial is to do an injustice to the text, they claim. Others believe that "only in the Lord" refers to the "sphere in which the action takes place", and not to the fact that the man she marries must be a Christian. Such passages as Col.3:8 "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord" and Eph. 6:1 "Children obey your parents in the Lord..." are cited to show "in the Lord" does not mean that the husbands and parents are themselves in the Lord, but that the conduct of wives and children is what is in the Lord; that is submission and obedience. As far back as 1831 someone writing in the *Millennial Harbinger* thought that the passage should be re-punctuated so that it would read "If her husband be dead she is at liberty to be married to whom she pleases. Only in the Lord she is indeed happier if she so abides according to my opinion." A. Campbell agreed that the text would bear the change in punctuation, but he himself would not rely upon it. He did however state that he felt that the thrust of the passage was not dealing with whom one married, but rather with the expediency of marriage itself. Then there is the view that the Christian widow must marry a Christian if she remarries. It is the belief of this writer that the last interpretation is the correct one. Note carefully the verse in question: "A wife is bound for so long as her husband liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is free to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." First of all Paul states the general law of marriage i.e. that marriage is for life. This bond can only be broken by death or unfaithfulness on the part of one of the parties. (Mt 19:9) When one of the parties dies, the other one is released from the relationship. In such a situation Paul states that this surviving person is free to marry whom she will. If we were to stop here, we would assume that this individual can marry anyone in or out of the church, who is also free to remarry. Paul, however, gives a qualifying clause... "only in the Lord." Stated in plain language Paul is saying (1

a Christian woman whose companion is dead may marry again, (2) she may marry whom she will, (3) but her choice must be from among those "in the Lord." But what does the phrase "in the Lord" mean. To help us here we cite, first of all, Arndt and Gingrich, in their Greek-English Lexicon. They define the phrase "en kurioo, in the Lord" "esp. in Paul or John usage, to designate a close personal relation...be or abide in Christ. gameetheenai en kurioo marry in the Lord—marry a Christian, 1 Cor. 7:39" J.H. Thayer defines the phrase "...that in which any person or thing is inherently fixed, implanted, or with which it is intimately connected...So used in the writings of Paul and of John particularly of intimate relationship with God or with Christ, and for the most part involving contextually the idea of power and blessing resulting from that union. Of frequent use by Paul are the phrases "in Christ," "in Christ Jesus," "in the Lord" ingrafted as it were in Christ, in fellowship and union with Christ, with the Lord...the expression is equivalent in meaning to "by virtue of spiritual fellowship or union with Christ..." Finally it serves as a periphrasis for 'Christian'..." Thus, in the view of this lexicographer, to marry "in the Lord," is simply to marry a Christian. But what about Eph.6:1? Is there a valid point here i.e. that "in the Lord" does not designate a Christian but only means that the action of the verb "obey" is in the sphere of the Lord's teaching? We think not. First of all to imply that these children were not old enough to be Christians is to assume something we cannot prove. Many writers believe that these children were in fact Christians. B. W. Johnson said "This passage has been thought to imply that all children of Christians are baptized in infancy into the church, but the children addressed are surely not babes, but old enough to hear and obey the apostolic command, and hence old enough to have heard and obeyed Christ." (Vol. 2 page 204 Peoples New Testament with Notes) If on the other hand, we were to concede that in this verse "in the Lord" refers to the action of the verb "obey" rather than designating Christians, would this justify the same interpretation of 1 Cor. 7:39? Certainly not. What about such plain passages as Rev. 14:13 "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow them," do we have any doubt about the meaning of "in the Lord" in this verse? Of course not. Nor do we have problems

with "die in the Lord" or "Be strong in the Lord" Eph. 6:10. We need to always use clear and obvious passages to interpret those that are obscure rather than the reverse. The consensus of scholarship regarding the meaning of this passage is truly amazing. We could spend literally pages and pages quoting their writings. Only a few will suffice: F. W. Farrar (**Pulpit Commentary**) "The second marriage of the Christian widow must be a holy and Christian marriage." Albert Barnes "That is, only to one who is a Christian." (**Comm. on First Corinthians**) J. W. McGarvey "monon en Kurioo only in the lord, not apart from Christ as the specifically determining element of the new union; only in a Christian way, i.e., only to a Christian let her be married." (**Comm. First Corinthians**) But what about one who disregards

the Apostles' teaching and marries an unbeliever? Where does this leave them, and what should they do? The scriptures do not address this. We are merely told by Paul that Christian widows are to marry Christians.

To demand a divorce, in order for the widow to then marry a Christian is something the Bible says nothing about. Neither can I. It is the belief of this writer that a Christian should marry a Christian the first time. However, when one fails to do so and marries an unbeliever, there is no indication in the Bible that a divorce is demanded or in order. In those areas where clear instruction is absent, we should be careful and reluctant to impose our own interpretation or feelings in the matter. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808)

A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

By Alan Bonifay

Reprinted from October 1988 OPA

Soon after Saul became king of Israel, he assembled his army to attack the Philistines. Foolishly, his son Jonathan prematurely attacked the enemy outpost at Geba. The enraged Philistines immediately countered by assembling a force so superior to Saul's that terror reigned in the hearts of Saul's men. As Saul waited for Samuel to come offer a burnt offering, his men were quaking with fear. The time appointed by Samuel passed without his arrival, and as the army began to scatter, Saul felt compelled to offer the sacrifice himself.

Just as Saul finished, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him. Dismayed by the king's disobedience, Samuel said, "Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God... now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee" (I Sam. 13:13,14)

WHO WAS THIS MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART?

More importantly, what characteristics made him a man after God's own heart? If we can answer these questions perhaps we can develop the same characteristics in our lives and appropriate to ourselves the same acclamation.

The former question is the easier to answer. We know that historically when the throne was taken from Saul it was given to David. In Acts 13:22 in his

address at Antioch in Pisidia, Paul said God gave testimony to David saying, "I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will."

What made David the man after God's own heart? In answer to this let us note first what is clearly not involved in God's supreme compliment. It does not mean that God approved of all of David's actions. Like the rest of us, David was a man subject to sin: The terrible death of Uzzah as David allowed the ark of the covenant to be moved in an unscriptural way (II Sam. 6); the adultery with Bathsheba and the subsequent murder of her husband (II Sam. 11); and the sinful numbering of Israel (II Sam. 24). Undoubtedly there were other sins in David's life.

The fact that sinless perfection was not required in order to be the man after God's own heart gives us hope. Not because sin is permissible to God's people in small doses (I Jn. 2:1,2; 1:8-10; 3:9). But because, though sinless perfection is beyond the grasp of our frail humanity (Rom. 8:3), it is possible for repentant sinners to still be men after God's own heart. David was always willing to repent of his sins.

Being a man after God's own heart does not mean God's choice was based on physical appearance. The Bible says David was very handsome (I Sam. 1:12,18). But God was interested in more than looks. In explanation of Eliab's rejection as the anointed among Jesse's boys, Samuel said, "For the Lord seeth not as man seeth for man

looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart," (I Sam. 16:7). Saul, also, was handsome, as was Absalom, but neither was said to be a man after God's own heart (I Sam. 9:2; 11 Sam. 14:25).

HUMILITY

First of all, David was possessed of humility. When he was anointed by Samuel to be king he was but a mere herdboyc, yet he did not become haughty, proud, or arrogant. Later, when Jesus sent him to see his brothers who were in Saul's army, David was still herding sheep. For years David served faithfully under Saul, accepting the role of a palace servant. Even after Saul virtually lost his mind David made no effort to overthrow him.

Humility is characterized by submission; by a willingness to serve both God and one's fellows. Jesus speaks of this quality in Luke 22:26, "He that is greatest among you let him be as the younger; and he that is chief as he that doth serve." Peter said, "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (I Pet. 5:5).

TRUST IN GOD

Secondly, David placed his full trust and confidence in God. When David visited his brothers at the encampment, he found the Israelites paralyzed with fear because of Goliath. It never entered David's mind that he might be mercilessly quashed by the giant. Physically, David was powerless against Goliath. But trusting in God, David fearlessly threw himself into the breach and triumphed mightily over the giant and the Philistines.

Later, when he was being relentlessly pursued by a crazy Saul, David was willing to wait for God's purpose. Though presented with numerous opportunities David refused to kill Saul (I Sam. 24:1-22; 26:6-11). David trusted in God to provide a way.

We also must have this kind of trust in the Lord. Paul said, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17). To have the faith David had we must treasure up the word of God in our hearts. In Galatians 5:6 Paul said that in Christ the thing that avails is a "faith which worketh by love." The beloved apostle said, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I Jn. 5:4).

A FORGIVING SPIRIT

Thirdly, David had a forgiving spirit. Though Saul tried to kill him numerous times, David refused to use the spear to kill Saul. To David, Saul

was "God's anointed", and he continued to fight for king's enemies long after Saul declared his hatred for David. David declined to marry the king's daughter to further his own cause. (I Sam. 18:17-19,23). His closest friend was Saul's own son, Jonathon.

This attitude of a forgiving David wept and slew the man who had killed God's anointed (11 Sam. 1:16,17). When asking David was cursed by Shemei, he refused to retaliate (2 Sam. 16:5-12). Even when Absalom died David wept—in spite of all the evil Absalom had done to his father (2 Sam. 18:33).

Likewise, this attitude of forgiveness is central to a Christian spirit. On the cross Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Lk. 23:34). Stephen in his dying prayed, "Lord lay not this sin to their charge," (Acts 7:60). Paul counseled us to "be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you," (Eph. 4:32). Consider Matthew 8:21-35 and Mark 11:25,26.

OBEDIENCE

Finally, David's attitude was characterized by obedience. David was willing to accept and abide by God's restrictions (2 Sam. 7:1,2; I Kings 8:18,19). In the case of Bathsheba David's loyalty was sorely tested (2 Sam 12:1-14) but he passed the test. As he bequeathed the kingdom to his son, Soloman, he commanded him, "Keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself" (I Kings 2:3). To be sure, David's obedience was not perfect. He did sin. But when he sinned he was willing to repent and to accept the consequences of his sin. In spite of his failures, however, David's life was generally characterized by obedience.

These are the qualities which made David the man after God's own heart: Humility, the willingness to serve God and one's fellows; faith, the supreme confidence and trust in God which comes from the word of God and leads us fearlessly into battle against the forces of evil; a forgiving spirit like that of Jesus, who prayed for the forgiveness of his tormentors; obedience, the determination to do what is right and according to God's will. These we must possess if we would be men and women after God's own heart. And when we fall in any of these areas, like David did, we must repent and reform our lives. A godly attitude is of supreme importance in being pleasing to God. Let us learn to lean on God and his word as David did.—OPA

BY WHAT AUTHORITY PART 2

By Kevin W. Presley

In our last writing (By What Authority, Part I) we noticed the scriptural mandate for Bible authority in all matters of religion (Matthew 21:23-27). An appeal for Bible based authority is looked upon in our modern time as old fashioned and simply outdated. However, our Lord and his apostles were not of this mind set. Paul declared in Colossians 3:17, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus...." "In the name of" simply means "by the authority of." Doing Bible things in Bible ways is a battle cry that nearly all churches of Christ heralded for a while, but some have since left it behind to take up the uncertain sounds of the denominational world. It used to be that individual cups in the communion service, and the Sunday School arrangement of teaching were the two issues around which controversy centered between the Lord's church and digressive churches of Christ. However, today, where does one begin in addressing issues that have divided the church? One can presently look out among a number of churches of Christ and find every gimmick, thrill, frill, and unscriptural arrangement imaginable. But that doesn't surprise the people of God. We've long believed and have been taught, that when we stop asking "BY WHAT AUTHORITY" in regard to one thing, we might as well stop asking in regard to anything. That's precisely what has happened and is happening among liberal churches today. Some seem to be more concerned about what "Dr. Somebody" and "Bro. So and So" have to say about it rather than what the apostles of our Lord had to say about the matter.

To begin, let me remind us of the fact that the apostles spoke by the authority of Christ. Jesus said "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matthew 28:18). We learn from the writings of Paul, that the apostles comprise that office in the church through and only through which Christ speaks and gives instruction to his body. He said in reference to those who held that office, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ" (II Corinthians 5:20). Paul wrote concerning the origin and design of the church in Ephesians 2:20 by saying the household of God is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone." What authority is there for true religion other than the inspired writings of Christ and his apostles? ABSOLUTELY NONE! Therefore a study of how to

determine whether or not a practice is authorized by the Bible is certainly in order. Paul said in II Timothy 2:15, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH."

ESTABLISHING BIBLE AUTHORITY

First of all, divine law is established by one or more of the following; precept or command, approved example, or necessary inference. By command we mean that something has been DIRECTLY stated or positively COMMANDED. For example, Jesus said in the institution of the communion "This do in remembrance of me." (I Corinthians 11:25) This is a positive command that says, when we observe the Lord's Supper we are to do it in remembrance of the Lord. To do it without remembering the body and blood of the Lord, would be to break God's divine law.

An approved example, is something that was done by or under the direction of an inspired man. In Acts 20:7 we read of a congregation of the church observing the Lord's supper as commanded. The text says, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them..." The church at Troas, obviously with the approval of Paul, came together on Sunday to "break bread." That is an approved example of when the church observed the communion.

We then learn HOW OFTEN to commune by necessary inference. Necessary inference is when the language and context implies NECESSARILY that which otherwise was not directly stated or shown. In Exodus 20:8 God commanded the children of Israel to "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy." Now God didn't have to tell them to remember EVERY Sabbath, because that was implied. In the absence of other information, they were to assume that since every week had a Sabbath, they were to observe it every week. The same holds true in Acts 20:7. "When the disciples came together to break bread," shows a continuation of action. It is necessarily implied that they came together EVERY first day of the week. This is what we mean by necessary inference. Keep in mind that NECESSARY is the key word. My assumption doesn't make it law. However, if the writer NECESSARILY implied it, meaning no other conclusion can be drawn by the inference; THEN IT IS A MATTER OF FAITH! So, in order

for something to be divinely authorized, it must be taught by command, approved example, or by necessary inference.

Next, we must determine whether our practice is **GENERALLY AUTHORIZED** or **SPECIFICALLY AUTHORIZED**. If something is generally authorized, that means that any method, arrangement, or system could be used to execute a command **AS LONG AS** it violates no scripture or the command itself. When something is specifically authorized, then God has specifically taught us **HOW** to carry out the command. General authority includes, whereas specific authority excludes! In Matthew 28:19 Jesus said, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." First of all Jesus commands us to "Go." Now I can either walk, drive, fly, or ride and I have not only carried out the command, but have violated no command, example, or necessary inference in doing so. All of those modes of transportation are **GENERALLY AUTHORIZED**. Jesus also said to "teach all nations." Now I can do that by means of personal work, or by preaching in a public assembly. Now if I choose to preach in a public assembly, my preaching must fall under the rules 1 Corinthians 14 and II Timothy 2:12. If my method violates those or any other passage, then my practice is not scriptural. It's as simple as that! If I choose to use a blackboard to aid me in my preaching, that would be **GENERALLY** authorized, because I would be carrying out the command to preach, and would not be violating any Bible principle in doing so. However, if we decide to call the church together to teach them, and we classify them, and divide them into different groups, and have women do some of the teaching, and so on and so forth, we may be teaching, but we have departed from the Bible pattern in doing so. Thus; that method of teaching is **UNAUTHORIZED!** Jesus told us also to baptize them that were taught. We learn from this and other passages what constitutes a scriptural baptism. First, there must water (Acts 8:39). The candidate must be buried in water (Romans 6:4, Colossians 2:12). It must be for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Finally, it must be by the authority of Jesus, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38, Matthew 28:18). Now any baptism that is performed using any other substance than water, any mode other than burial or immersion, and for any reason other than the remission of sins, simply **IS NOT A SCRIPTURAL BAPTISM**. However, I can choose to do the baptizing in a lake, river, pond, baptistry, or even a cattle trough, as long as in doing so I violate no scriptural mandate. That is

what is meant by general and specific authority.

WHAT ABOUT ONE CUP?

Is not the use of one cup in the distribution of the fruit of the vine authorized and furthermore taught by all of these principles? In I Corinthians 11:28 Paul said, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." Paul commanded that they drink the contents of the cup which was given to them. In the command to drink, Paul made mention of one drinking vessel. We learn by example that the drink element was served in one container when Jesus instituted the communion. Mark 14:23 says, "And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and **THEY ALL DRANK OF IT.**" Now, what did Jesus take, give thanks for, hand to them, and what did they drink of? The answer is **SO** simple friends! **A DRINKING VESSEL CONTAINING GRAPE JUICE!** He did not hand them an empty cup as some allege that we believe. **WE BELIEVE NO SUCH THING, BY THE WAY!** Neither did Jesus hand them fruit of the vine without a container. He handed them **A CUP** of grape juice. How much plainer of an example does one have to have? That's so simple, it takes a preacher to mess it up! The fact that what Jesus took was referred to as "a cup", necessarily infers that **A Cup** was present and not more than one. What unbiased man or woman can read "And he took the cup" and draw the conclusion that Jesus took more than one container. How absurd it would be for the Lord to take **MORE**. than one container of grape juice and refer to **THEM** as the cup. The fact of the matter is the Lord knew what he had in his hand when he said in Luke 22:20, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you", and so do we. How reprehensible for supposed preachers of the gospel to stand and deceive people by saying "we just don't know what Jesus took." Why it's so easy to comprehend the example of Jesus that a child could understand and imitate it. The fact of the matter is when we finish wading through all the muddy water and clear away all of the smoke screens, we will find that the practice of using one cup is authorized (Matthew 26-27, Mark 14:23, Luke 22:17,20, I Corinthians 11:25), whereas the use of individual containers (?????????) is not! The limits of space in this journal don't permit us to even touch the hem of the garment. Let it suffice to say that the Lord Jesus desires that honest men with courage and conviction examine what they believe and practice in light of the question, "By what authority doest thou these things?"--P. O. Box 2398, Ada, Oklahoma 74820.

BYPATHS

By C.A. Smith

If you have ever worked with individuals, attempting to show them the way of salvation, as revealed in God's Word, you have had experiences such as is mentioned in this article. Just about the time you think you have convinced them that they need to meet the conditions laid down in the Bible, and be saved, the enemy comes in with his reasonings and suggestions, pointing out many other ways which he says are more easily traveled and will take him where he desires to go. For example, along comes one who points out the Universalist road; that is, that everyone will be saved, and none lost, and that there is no place of future punishment. Oh, this doctrine has soothed the hearts of multitudes and caused them "to believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth" (2 Thess. 2:12). Another misleading path which the enemy points out, and by which many are deceived, is that of morality. He says: "Do the best you can and you will come out all right." That is the trouble with the religious world of our day; they are professing salvation, but do not have it. It takes more than just profession. It takes the grace of God, and meeting the conditions of his word. Then, there are those who lay aside the word of truth, and follow after false doctrines. These, remind me of the fellow who one dark night had been carrying a light to light his pathway, but, looked out across the swamps and saw the false light of the swamp, a gaseous substance which has the appearance of a clear, bright, shining light, so,

he lays aside his light to follow these lights, which of course lead him away from the true path, into greater darkness, until when too late to return he finds himself sinking in the mire. So it is with those who lay down their Bibles when they come in contact with false doctrines. As the true way is forsaken, the false doctrines appear to shine more brightly and seem more plausible than the real truths of the Bible; but the deceptive doctrines lead on into greater darkness until, when too late, they are awakened to their alarming condition, and discover the deceptions of Satan as they sink into the pitfalls of perdition through the delusions of the enemy of souls. How sad! This is why it is imperative that we do our dead-level-best to point out to wayfaring souls, the necessity of "Seeking the Old Paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, if they would find rest for their souls" (Jer. 6:16). If the sinner will follow the directions of the word of God, and allow it to be his guide, it will light his pathway unto eternal life and true happiness. The Bible tells US: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 4:5). Despite what men say to the contrary, the blessed command of Jesus, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16) is still applicable today. Let us boldly, continue to tell men; "Only the Bible way is the safe way to follow; all bypaths lead astray.--810 N.W. 6th. St., Andrews, TX. 79714

DOES GAMBLING STILL VIOLATE GOD'S WILL

Continued from page 1

artificial risk with no reasonable prospect for goods being produced (except more gambling). If you are making such rationalizations to justify gambling by a Christian you had better reexamine the motives behind your desire to justify it.

LET THE HOLY SPIRIT REVEAL THESE MOTIVES AND DANGERS TO YOU

The motives and dangers are found in 1 Timothy 6:9-10. "But they that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

1. "They that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare..."

Gambling casino and state run lotteries well understand this weakness of the flesh. "We are selling a dream," they say. They love to appeal to the desire to become rich easily and quickly. They make you believe it is the only way to get out of the rut filled and dreary job you have. It's an attempt of Satan to seduce you into his fold. This base desire is so ingrained in us and recognized by the gambling industry that they love to have million dollar plus winners because they know it will be advertised and bring them in millions of more dollars. What they do not tell is the stories about people's heartaches because of losses, of their having to beg for money to get home on. Christians should never help the devil spread the news about big winners. They should spread the word about men who degrade themselves in every way, who

have robbed even their children's piggy banks, and who have become like crazed animals.

2. This inordinate desire to be rich is a bottomless lake that "drown men in destruction and perdition." It is a powerful weapon of Satan that he places in unsuspecting hands and they have "pierced themselves through with many sorrows." It is a snare Satan has dug deeply to secure its practitioners. It is estimated that 90% of compulsive gamblers desiring to quit return to their old habits. Gambling is truly a snare and one can gradually become addicted to it just as surely as he can to alcohol and drugs. Special rehabilitation programs have been set up to try to cure the "gamblerholics."

Mark Twain was in Virginia City, NV and observed, "The best throw at dice is to throw them away." I believe those who are truly interested in a growing and eternal relationship with God will say the same thing for gambling still truly violates God's will.

EDITORIAL

Continued from page 2

as Mk. 2:7; and indefinitely, as Matt. 8:19; Mk. 12:42. As an ordinal THE FIRST." Ordinal means only that the word "one" can apply to a number in a series.

Some have, we believe, misunderstood this usage as meaning that an elder must be married to his "first" wife. If she died, and he remarried after her death, they reason that he does not qualify to be an elder. However, Robinson's Greek Lexicon says of this ordinal meaning, "spoken of the days (days of the weekDLK), and construed as an ordinal, the first. Matt. 28:1; Mk. 16:2; Jno. 20:19; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2;..." The point seems to be that the usage connoting "the first" points only toward the days of the week, i.e. the first day of the week, etc. It is used in this way as an ordinal. However, it does not appear to be used this way with reference to the eldership.

Hence, we conclude that Paul means for an elder to be a married man before he may be appointed or ordained and that reference is made only to more than one LIVING wife. If my wife is dead, I am not now her husband. If this is kept in mind, one may arrive at a safe conclusion in any situation. -DLK

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DALLAS, TX GOSPEL MEETING

June 16 - 18, 1995 the congregation at 7728 S. E. Loop 12 will host a weekend meeting with Brother Richard Reed from Cedar Rapids, Iowa doing the

speaking. For more information contact Fred Johnson 122, Carol Lane, Red Oak, TX 75154.

OLD FASHIONED GOSPEL TENT MEETING

May 14 - 21, 1995 in Watonga, OK preaching brethren Doug Hawkins, Kevin Presley and Bruce Roebuck will conduct a gospel tent meeting. On both Sundays May 14 and 21, services will be held in the Church of Christ on Main St. next to Homeland Grocery Store. On Monday-Saturday, we will assemble in the big tent located 3/4 mile west of "Four Corners" along Highway 33. For more information contact Bob O'Rear, (405) 623-2245.

SULPHUR, OK. ANNUAL CAMP MEETING

It will soon be Camp Meeting Time in Oklahoma again! The Evangelists conducting the meeting this year will be Brethren Terry Baze and Tony Melton. The meeting will start on June 26th and continue through noon, July 4th. The Sulphur Congregation will be in charge as usual. We have looked forward to this meeting each year for over 60 years, with zeal and enthusiasm, We invite each of you to attend this spiritual feast where Christian fellowship is enjoyed by young and old. The meeting is unique, as it is still a "Tabernacle Camp Meeting." In the 1940's, people would camp in the park and walk to services. Through the years new eating places have been added. There are motels, RV parks and a bed'n breakfast in Sulphur, also good motels between Davis and the Turner Falls Area, Pauls Valley, Ada and Ardmore. These towns are within 30 miles of the Tabernacle. The largest RV park is on the western edge of Sulphur (Hwy 7) - "The Arbuckle Resort" 1-405-622-2424. Sulphur is being historically restored while the resort area continues to grow. Make plans to attend this great meeting. Good preaching, praying and singing will be enjoyed by all who attend. For further information: Bob Shepherd 1-405-622-3950; Don Stehr 1-405-622-5556; George Hill 1-405-622-2779.--*The Sulphur Brethren*

THE WORK IN BAJA, CALIFORNIA

The brethren of Mexicali, Mexico send their greetings to all the brethren in the U.S. Brother Russell Townsend and I are preaching the Gospel in Baja, California, Mexico this week. We are making our home with Sister Josefina Lopez, the widow of Brother Meliton Lopez. Brother Lopez died a few years ago; and without his leadership, the congregation has steadily declined in spite of significant efforts by the brethren of the San Diego area.

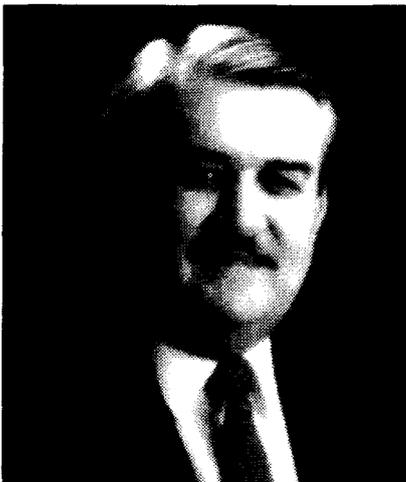
I am writing this letter on behalf of the Mexicali

brethren to ask congregations to assist us in finding a faithful Spanish-speaking preacher to work with the church for an extended period of time. Please write and let us know if your congregation is willing to help support a worker for one month, one year, or longer. For more information about the work and our needs, you may write us at the address given below. Remember us in your prayers. (I can attest to the worthiness of this appeal since I helped establish the congregation in Mexicali 20 years ago.)--*James Hickey, 7700 S. Maple, Broken Arrow, OK 74011*

OUR DEPARTED

LANKFORD--Charles Franklin Lankford was born Dec. 12, 1921 at Seneca, MO and departed this life Feb. 18, 1995 at his home in Ardmore, OK. He was married to the former May King in 1941, who preceded him in death in 1974. He was married to the former Obie McDaniel in 1975, and they moved to Ardmore upon his retirement. About ten years ago, Charles was restored to duty here in Ardmore and worshipped with us. In addition to his wife, Obie, he is survived by four sons: Jerry, Weatherford, OK; Charles, Burleson, TX; Tony and Ronald, Arlington, TX; one daughter, Vickie, Alvarado, TX; two brothers, G.E. Lankford, Seneca, MO; Dutch Lankford, Pilot Rock, OR; three sisters, Margie Green, Seneca, MO; Etta Mae Crumbliss, Pendleton, OR; and Wanda Edmondson, Seneca; 9 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren. Brother Lankford endured a long, painful illness and was ever patient, humble and thankful to the end. I am better for having known him. The writer conducted services at the chapel here Feb. 20, and burial was in Arlington, Tx.--*Johnny Elmore*

WORD--Stanley Bruce Word was born Nov. 12, 1946 in Freeport, TX to the late John and Patty Foster Word, and departed this life Feb. 15, 1995 in Ardmore, OK. He was married to the former



Linda Crouch Oct. 6, 1967 in Ft. Worth, TX. Survivors include his wife, Linda, of Wheat Ridge, CO; a son, Scott Word, Wheat Ridge; two daughters, Paige, Okla. City, and Leslie, Wheat Ridge, a foster son, Greg Bognar, San Diego; two broth-

ers, Carl Word, Mineral Wells, TX and Jack Word, Bowie, TX; five sisters, Norma Kendle, Amarillo, TX, Patsy Chambers, Ardmore, Sally Elmore, Ardmore, June Pope, Pauls Valley, OK, and Sandra Sims, Ardmore. It is with great sadness that we chronicle Bruce's death. He did evangelistic work for many years and was in Australia for three years, using his considerable talents for the Lord's cause. He had spent the last six months here in Ardmore and we miss him very much. Services were conducted from Griffin-Kennedy Watts funeral chapel in Ardmore Feb. 18, 1995 with Wayne McKamie and the writer speaking.--*Johnny Elmore*

PARSLEY--Coy Parsley was born Oct. 21, 1918 at Emboden, AR and departed this life March 13, 1995 in Okla. City, OK. He was married to the former Thelma McClintock Oct. 12, 1940 at Abilene, TX, and they had lived at Lindsay, Kiowa and Chickasha, OK before moving to our area two years ago. Survivors include his wife, of the home; two sons, Barry, Durant, and Coy C., Mannsville, OK; a daughter, Janie Riley, Cambridge, MA; a sister, Edith Stanford, Lindsay; and five grandchildren. Brother Parsley was acquainted at McAlester and Ada, where they had worshipped and was much loved and respected in the congregation here at Ardmore. Services were conducted from Griffin-Watts-Kennedy funeral chapel in Ardmore March 16, 1995 with Joe Hisle and the writer speaking. --*Johnny Elmore*

BOMAN--Sandra Ann Bowman was born March 25, 1941, in Palacios, Tx., to Everett Houston Sallee and Lula Delphine Bangs Sallee. She entered into rest on March 20, 1995, at her home in Goodman, Mo. following an illness of two years at the age of 53 years, 11 months and 23 days. Sandy was married to Delbert E. Boman on June 1, 1958. Sandy is survived by her mother, Delphine Sallee; her husband, Delbert; four daughters; Teresa Boatwright of Sacramento, Ca., Sara Ayers of Loomis, Ca., Gina Costa of Salida, Ca. and Shelly Moore of Wichita, Ks.; one son; Travis Boman of Seattle, Wa.; three brothers; Lee Sallee of Friendswood, TX., Olen Sallee of Ceres, Ca. and Frank Sallee of Lithia Springs, Ga.; four grandchildren, Thad, Candace, Regan and Nathanael Ayers of Loomis, Ca. Sandy had been a member of the church for 37 years. Delbert and Sandy had been close friends since we moved to Neosho in 1960 and it seems that we had grown up spiritually together. They have had a positive influence on the church at Neosho, Wichita and in the Seattle area. Sandy had a great attitude during her illness and I never heard her complain. She knew the end was near and had made the necessary plans.

Sandy was a good friend to many and will be missed by family, friends and the church. May God bless Delbert and the children in the forthcoming days. Dr. Ronald Lankford and the writer were honored to offer words of comfort.--*Ron Alexander*

EVITT--Lula Maude Evitt of Fort Worth, Tx, was born March 10, 1895 at De Leon, Tx. She passed from this life March 13, 1995, in Fort Worth, Tx, just three days after her one hundredth birthday. Sister Evitt was a member of the Lord's church for almost seventy seven years. She married Ester Oliver Evitt Aug. 18, 1918. Brother Evitt preceded her in death in 1975. The Evitts were very active in the church all of their married lives. Their home was one known for Christian hospitality. They often kept the preachers who came to their area, as well as many others. Sister Evitt is survived by two sons, Milton Evitt of Corpus Christi and Truman Lee Evitt of Fort Worth; five grandchildren, eleven great-grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren. Church members, relatives and friends gathered at the Nowlin Funeral Home in De Leon to honor the memory of this lovely Christian lady. She was laid to rest next to her husband of almost seventy-seven years in the De Leon cemetery. The writer considered it an honor to assist Brother Wayne McKamie in this memorial service.--*Melvin Blalock*

From The Fields

Barney Owens, 8782 Meadowview Dr., W. Chester, OH 45069 --Since last report it has been my privilege to be with the congregation at Garrett's Creek, meeting near Wayne, WV. Although the spirit was dampened by the unexpected death of a member of the Bloss family, it was good to see and be with these again. Also, I enjoyed the opportunity to be in the audience of Cecil Smith's preaching. We at Sharonville have been graced by having Brother Jamie Leonard with us numerous times this winter while he attends school in the city. My next meetings will be with Pleasant View, IN (formerly Breeze Hill) just south of Mitchell, IN, May 19-21. Then, Harrodsburg, IN June 3-11. We will be looking forward to seeing all of these areas. Pray for us.

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, April 4, 1995--It was my good pleasure to be in Garland, TX Jan. 29-Feb. 5 preaching and teaching singing. I appreciate the warmth, zeal and love which they manifest. Here in Ardmore, we have lost three brethren to death lately. They were all much loved and needed. This has been a real shock to the congregation, but we are carrying on the best we can. The fourth Sunday singing here last month was well attended and I enjoyed it greatly. The Lord willing, we are to be at Sanger, CA,

April 26-30; Fremont, CA, May 7-14, and Turlock, CA, May 21-28 for the Memorial Day meeting.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr, Fremont, CA 94539, April 10--We recently had the privilege of being with the Atwater congregation over a Sunday and later a Wednesday eve. We are making ready for Johnny Elmore's meeting at Fremont which begins May 7. We look forward to a good meeting and invite you all to come and be with us. Lord willing, we are to be in Jonesboro, GA April 30-May 7 for a series of meetings and, of course, we look forward to that. We continue to experience problems with certain of our readers receiving their papers. We are at a loss to explain. Our records have been correct in every instance we have checked and the printer recently sent us a printout of their records which appears to be the same as ours. The only thing we can imagine is the mail service. At any rate, please let us know when you or anyone you know has a problem. We want to make it right if at all possible.

Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808, March 28--The meeting at Arpelar near McAlester, Ok. closed with one baptism and one confession. Our next was at the Hoyte congregation near Cameron, TX We had a wonderful meeting here. Visitors from many places encouraged us and helped out in various ways. Preaching brethren Wm. St. John, Melvin Blalock, and Jerry Dickinson were present one or more times. The Baker family treated us with kindness and outstanding hospitality. They are truly an inspiration. Our meeting schedule in the near term is as follows: Apr. 2-9, White Bluff, Tn.; Apr. 12-15, Birmingham, Al.(Crescent Ridge); Apr. 23-30, Harrisonville, Mo.; May 5-7, Kansas City, Mo. (38th and Agnes); May 14-21, Lovejoy, Pa.; June 2-4, Tulsa, Ok. (Eleventh St.); June 7-11, Cleburne, TX, and June 18-25, San Angelo, TX. Why not make plans to drop by any of these meetings and help us out as we try to proclaim the truth. The Lord bless all His people everywhere.

Bennie T. Cryer, 2340 Sanguinetti Ln., #93, Stockton, CA 95205, April 2--The work in Stockton continues to do well. Two more were baptized last Sunday evening making eight new members since the first of the year. March 22-26 I worked with the Jacksonville, FL, congregation in a meeting. It was a pleasure to stay in the home of Gordon and Flora Prince. Bro. Prince celebrated his 75th birthday while I was there. This congregation is growing and is currently working with Todd Long in a special effort to bring the church new growth from the outside as well as from the inside. Brothers and Sisters in the Lord drove from South Carolina, Tennessee, and various places in Florida and Georgia to attend this meeting. They helped so very much. I had the pleasure of working with Alan Bonifay in a meeting on church government at the Oakdale, CA, congregation March 2-5. Leaders from various congregations attended and asked many questions about this subject. Duane Permenter helped put this study together and did a good job in overseeing the meetings. I am thankful for the interest the Oakdale congregation has shown in this type of study. God bless all.

P. Duane Permenter, P. O. Box 1223, Riverbank, CA

ADVOCATE (USPS 407-560)

Send your name and address for your subscription expires with this issue. Please renew promptly. DLK subscriptions to 41931 Chadmont, Cal. 94539.

95367, Apr. 7--March 24th. through the 26th the brethren here at 64th Street in Sacramento hosted a meeting with emphasis on youth. The young men who taught did an excellent job in presenting the gospel. It was a great privilege to be able to attend such a spiritual feast. Thirteen young men taught in five different services. The singing was outstanding and crowds were very good. During the course of the weekend two young people made confessions of faults and one was baptized into Christ. We recently had two young men: John Modgling from Yuba City, CA and Todd Tucker from Placerville, CA move into the area and begin attending the church at 64th. They will be a good asset to the work. We continue to have good crowds at all of the services. The church in Oakdale continues to progress as well. A young woman that had been away from the Lord for a long time was restored a few weeks ago. Please continue to pray for us in Sacramento. May the Lord bless you is my prayer.

Steve Holt, 12615 C-Bar Circle, Santa Fe, Tx., 77510, March 7-- It has been some time since my last report. The work continues here in LaMarque. Of the 10 new members who have met with us over the last 2 months, three have remained faithful. Our people continue to bring visitors to our services and this is encouraging. In the last two months, I was asked to defend the truth in regard to cups/classes before a group of preachers who represent all the large churches of Christ in Galveston County. At the end of my speech, I answered questions. At a second meeting, I handed them a written outline of my oral presentation, along with all the Scriptures showing why we believe and practice as we do. I asked them to prayerfully study this and give me their Scriptural response. As of this date, I have had no response. Our weekly Bible study continues with the members. On 6-1-96 my three year commitment to the Deer Park congregation for the LaMarque work will most probably end. Therefore, any congregation may contact me now for full-time evangelistic work. Please write: Steve Holt, 12615 C-Bar Circle, Santa Fe, Tx. 77510 or call (409) 925-8163. Continue to keep us and the work in your prayers. May God bless His children everywhere.

Kevin W. Presley P.O. Box 2398 Ada, Oklahoma 74820 (405) 436-1331 - March 12, 1995--Our meeting in Watonga, OK, back in December was a success. It was their first week long effort. We had several visitors from the community. Two even came from as far as Oklahoma City. Lord willing, Doug Hawkins, Bruce Roebuck, and myself will conduct a week long tent meeting there this spring. We hope to generate some new leads for that work. Also, I was privileged to hold the New Year's meeting at Walnut Grove, KY. Southern Kentucky is a wonderful place to hold a gospel meeting. I always look forward to going there. We had good crowds throughout and on Saturday night I was privileged to hear several local teachers and preachers. I appreciate

all of those who had me for meetings in '94. The Lord blessed our combined efforts for the year with fifteen baptisms, over two dozen confessions and some restorations. We give God all the praise for these things. Now as for 95', our 19th annual young preacher's meeting was a success here at Ada last weekend. Over 300 people filled our building to hear several young preachers expound upon the "Decisive Teachings of Christ." They all did a good job. I appreciate the home folk for asking me to conduct the meeting this year. Having enjoyed the past few months of rest here at home, I am getting anxious for "meeting season". My schedule so far this year is as follows: Tulsa, OK, March 17-19; Sharonville, OH, April 26-30; Bloomfield, IA, May 1-7; Watonga, OK, May 14-21; Seneca, MO, June 7- 11; White Bluff, TN, June 18-25; Galey, OK, July 23-30; Beattyville, KY, August 23-27; Bandy, KY, September 10-17; Ada, OK Sept. 29-Oct. 8. Pray for us in the Lord's work.--*Received too late for April issue, our apologies--DLK*

Virgilio O. Danao, Sr., Roxas, Isabela, Philippines; March 6, 1995--Greetings to all faithful brethren everywhere! This is to inform you of my activities in the Lord's work in my area. Here in Roxas, I suggested a plan, and the leadership of the Church is agreeable, which divides the whole town and suburbs of Roxas into five divisions. Each division is led by three leaders. The primary work of every group is to locate and contact prospects in its respective area, and schedules Bible studies with them once a week. Each group then is allotted one day or a night and this makes us busy for five days during the days of the week. We started this project last month, February, and a couple were baptized On February 26, as fruits of this endeavor. We do pray and hope we will continue to reap more fruits as we progress on this project this year. Aside from my work with the Roxas Church, Bro. Conrado Libertine and I made arrangement and schedules with the local congregation in Sandiat to conduct meetings every Wednesday evening there. All members are encouraged to bring prospects to the meeting. We are looking forward for souls won to Christ through this effort. Also every Sunday, starting three Sundays ago, we -- Bro. C. Libertine, some of the elders and members of the Churches in Roxas and Mallig, and I help in conducting Sunday worship services in Villa Corazon. This congregation ceased to exist several years ago when the members were dispersed there because of an unstable peace and order situation. Now they are back, and we are helping them revive the congregation there. One baptism was also made there on February 26, as a result of our going there. Not to mention anymore how many brethren are strengthened in the faith because of our efforts stated above, and the number of brethren encouraged to participate in the promulgation of the gospel of salvation. The total baptisms made in the month of February is three (3). Please mention me and my family, particularly the Lord's work everywhere in your prayers.

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

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

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

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

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LEBANON, MISSOURI, JUNE, 1995

NO. 6

VERBAL CONFESSION OF CHRIST - PART 1

by George Battey

Until recently most of our brethren agreed that a verbal confession of faith in Christ was a necessary step of salvation. Also, until just very recently, the kind of confession that should be made was widely agreed upon. But times are changing and even the most fundamental doctrines of salvation, like verbal confession, have been questioned and attacked.

Two vital questions have been posed and they are valid questions that deserve answers: (1) Does the Bible require a verbal confession of faith in Christ in order for the alien sinner to be saved and, if so, (2) What does that confession consist of?

The scriptures commonly used in times past to prove the necessity of verbal confession are one by one being attacked and eliminated. For example, Matthew 10:32-33 has commonly been used to prove the necessity of verbal confession, but this passage cannot be used to prove the point, we are told, because that passage encompasses more than a one time verbal confession; rather it envisions a confession lasting throughout one's entire Christian life. Acts 8:37 has also in times past been used to prove the necessity of verbal confession, but this too is now rejected as being a spurious text that does not even belong in the Bible. The NIV, NRSV, RSV, and ASV relegate the verse to a mere footnote although acknowledging that some manuscripts include the verse.

If we can ever agree that verbal confession is even necessary, the next question is: What shall the confession consist of? Commonly our brethren would appeal to the confession made by the eunuch, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37), but as mentioned above, that passage has been eliminated from the discussion. In place of this standard confession comes a relatively new confession based on the NIV rendering of Romans 10:9, "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Thus, some are now taking confessions which consist of, "I believe that Jesus is Lord." The difference between these two confessions is significant because confessing that Jesus is Lord is not the same thing as confessing that He is the Son of God.

IS A VERBAL CONFESSION NECESSARY?

Beginning, then, with the first question at hand: Is a verbal confession of faith in Christ a necessary step in the conversion process for the alien sinner? The Scriptures indicate yes. Jesus taught repeatedly that faith in Him was necessary for salvation.¹ Moreover, before one can be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), he must believe first. Jesus plainly said in Mark 16:16, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved." It is sinful to baptize someone who does not believe in Jesus.

But the next most logical question is: What is it about Jesus that must be believed? Concerning John the baptizer, Jesus taught that men should believe that he was "more than a prophet" (Mt. 11:9-11). If Jesus said this about John, how much more could it be said about Jesus Himself? Jesus is "more than a prophet" and men must believe this to be saved. But how much more than a prophet was He and how much more must be believed about Him before one can be baptized and be saved? To the Jews Jesus said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM" (Jn. 8:58). The name "I AM" was the name of God Himself (Ex. 3:14) and when Jesus said this it was obvious that He was claiming equality with God. The Jews understood exactly what He meant and immediately took up stones to kill Him (Jn. 8:59). The point is, Jesus required that men believe in His deity. Very pointedly Jesus said to the Jews, "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (Jn. 8:24). The word 'He' in this passage has been added. Literally, the Greek NT reads, "If you do not believe that I AM, you shall die in the sins of you." In other words, men must believe that Jesus is the divine Son of God and unless they believe this they are not fit candidates for baptism and salvation. Thus, the thing which must be believed is the deity of Christ.

Continued on page eight

¹ To list a few instances, consider the following passages: Lk. 8:12; Jn. 1:12; 3:15-18, 36; 5:24; 6:29,35,40,47; 7:38; 8:24; 11:25-26,46; 12:36,46; 14:1,11; 16:9; 20:31.

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ELDERS #3

by Don L. King

We have been writing concerning the qualifications of elders. A brother wrote that he would like to see some writing about the "work" of elders also. We will try to do that when the qualifications are complete.

"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober,..." (1 Timothy 3:2.) Paul also mentioned "sober" in Titus 1:8. Let us notice "vigilant" and "sober."

The term "vigilant" is from a word in the Greek meaning to be circumspect or sober. The Greek word from which vigilant is translated also seems to be a derivative of another word in the Greek meaning to abstain from wine and hence, be discreet, sober and watchful. This definition is pretty well unanimous among the well-known lexicographers. Robinson's Greek-English Lexicon says, "Sober, temperate, abstinent in respect to wine, etc. In the New Testament, used metaphorically to mean vigilant, circumspect, prudent. 1 Tim. 3:2;..." He then later explains the metaphorical usage to mean one who does not act as though he were intoxicated or drunk. This, then, is an obvious reason why it is often translated as "vigilant" or "watchful." Bagster also concurs that the term is used metaphorically. This means that the term normally used to indicate the literal abstinence from wine resulting in the normal function of the mind and senses, is here used to indicate a man who is exceedingly serious and watchful because of his responsibilities toward the church.

Macknight, in his commentary says, "Because the word...comes from...to be sober, in opposition to one's being drunk, Estius thinks it should, in this passage, be translated sober. But as sobriety is mentioned in verse 3 and as...(Greek word) signifies also to watch, its derivative...(Greek word) may properly be translated vigilant or attentive. For certainly it is a chief quality in a bishop, to be attentive to all the duties of his office, and to his flock."

The point should be well taken, now, that an individual who either is an elder or wishes to become one (along with others) must be attentive to the needs of the congregation over which he, and others, are given the oversight. In other words, he cannot be a figure-head. He is not to merely wear the name and look important. He is to take his work seriously and with great dedication look after the members just as a shepherd his flock. A habit of watchfulness is enjoined by the apostle. Elders who are not watchful, or vigilant may easily allow problems, sins, etc. to destroy the church. They must be on top of things. If a mem-

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: What constitutes a confession of fault from one who has been worshipping in error? (TX.)

Answer: The word confess, when used with reference to committing sin, carries the general meaning of "confess or admit". (Arndt Gingrich p. 276) W.E. Vine defines (*exomologeō*) "to confess forth i.e. freely, openly is used (a) of a public acknowledgement or confession of sins, Mt. 3:6; Mk. 1:5; Acts 19:18; Jas. 5:16" From these two dictionaries we conclude that when one confesses a public sin, any sin, they do so openly, freely, and in so doing admit their guilt or involvement in wrong doing. An individual who has been worshipping in error, therefore, needs to admit that what they have been doing was wrong, sinful, against the will of God, hence they are sorry and want the forgiveness of God and the prayers of brethren. In Mt. 15:9 Jesus points out that "vain worship" is the result of the doctrines and commandments of men. John 4:24 demands that we worship God in spirit and truth. When one has not been worshipping "in truth" a confession to God is in order. It has been the observation of this writer that people who refuse to make an open, clean, confession, when one is in order, are usually trying to hide something and often become a source of trouble "down the road." People who say "if I have sinned" actually confess nothing at all. Those who wrangle about the details and logistics of the confession itself leave much to be desired about "coming clean" regarding their sins. When a brother or sister gets drunk and comes before the brethren and says "I have sinned, I got drunk, I'm sorry please pray for me and with me about this," there is no doubt about what happened and what is being done. Why should anyone, then, who has worshipped in error be reluctant to confess such error and pray to God for forgiveness?

Question: Is it a transgression for a man to allow his wife to have dominion over him and rule the house? (CA)

Answer: I believe the Bible teaches it not only is a sin for the man, but for the woman as well. The Scriptures are very plain: 1 Tim. 2:12 "But I suffer not a woman to teach nor usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Two things are forbidden here (1) women are not to be public teachers of the scripture, (2) women are not to have dominion over the man. Paul gives two reasons why: (1) Adam was first formed then Eve, (2) Eve was first in the transgression. "Wives submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the church; and he is the Savior of the body." (Eph. 5:22-23) Women are to love their husbands, and be obedient toward them. (Tit. 2:4-5) Women who fail to obey the above passages are guilty of sin. In such situations the marriage relationship and family life are disrupted. The whole scheme of things, as planned by God, is upset when women seek to seize power and control not belonging to them. The tragedy of a domineering wife at home sometimes extends itself into the church. Church leaders are manipulated into making decisions by women at home. The result could eventually be a church run by women, using their husbands as "representatives". How terribly unscriptural. It is easy to point the finger at a woman when addressing this problem. But it must be remembered that the husband is as much at fault as the woman. **Random House Dictionary** defines "henpecked" as "browbeaten, bullied, or intimidated by one's wife." (The Bible defines it as sin.) Men who lose control of their family permit it to happen. When the husband fails to take and exercise his proper leadership role, the woman will often take control herself. Men who allow their wives to dictate what they do in respect to decisions that affect the work of the church, are not worthy to be leaders in the church.

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

BAILEY-DONAHUE DEBATE

by Billy D. Dickinson

On the nights of April 13 and 14 a discussion took place in West Monroe, LA. between Allen Bailey of Irving, TX. and Pat Donahue of Harvest, AL. The issue discussed had to do with the number of containers to be used in the Lord's supper. We were pleased with the conduct and demeanor of both disputants. Both men conducted themselves as Christian gentlemen, although they pressed the issue at times and made their arguments as strongly as they knew how. We were also pleased with the attendance, for we had brethren from far and near on both sides of the issue. It seemed that people in our area were ready to hear

an old-fashioned debate on Bible truths. In fact, we had to put out extra chairs in order to accommodate the crowds for both sessions.

Allen did a masterful job in his affirmative speeches, as he proved that Christ took only one cup when He instituted the communion, and he showed how each of the disciples were commanded to drink out of it (Matt. 26:27). Then it was demonstrated how the disciples obeyed the command by each drinking of the one container (Mark 14:23). Allen also emphasized how Christ gave the cup spiritual significance, when He said in 1 Cor. 11:25, "This cup is the new

testament in my blood.”

When the discussion ended with Allen's final speech, Bro. Donahue's position had been totally defeated from every important standpoint: (1) The Scriptures— it was obvious that individual cups violate what is specified in the word of God and there is no authority for their use, (2) the authorities— it was certain that Donahue's position is an unscholarly one. Thayer places cup in Matt. 26:27 under literal usage and all lexicographers define potation as a drinking vessel in that passage, and (3) history— Allen drove the point home that individual cups are of recent origin. Their use can be traced back to a doctor (a Presbyterian preacher), not the Lord, and it was shown how the church was divided over the introduction of this unscriptural innovation. In the final minutes of his last speech, the last speech of the debate, Allen was at his best as he gave an emotional appeal to the audience to come back to the Bible.

In regard to Donahue's performance, I think Allen was right on target when he said that Pat Donahue is a man who wants to debate every “one cup preacher” on the face of the earth (at his table Donahue shook his head in agreement to that point) and yet he doesn't even know what he really believes on the subject! Donahue's position, as reflected by his speeches, is one of total confusion and bewilderment. Would you believe that by filling in the blanks to some items Allen had written on the board, he actually indicated that he thought the cup of blessing (1 Cor. 10:16) means “cup

of cup” or “fruit of the vine of the fruit of the vine”? Allen rejected that explanation, of course, and showed that Thayer says on page 533, “with a genitive of the thing with which the cup is filled.”

Donahue could not overthrow our Lord's statement in 1 Cor. 11:25 that the cup is the new testament. In fact, he took four different and contradictory positions: (1) He said that nothing in the communion represents the new testament, (2) he said that perhaps 1 Cor. 11:25 teaches that what we “drink” (contents only) represents the new testament, but he doubted that is the case, (3) he said that in whatever sense the cup is the new testament, it is the fruit of the vine and not the container, and (4) he finally said the cup cannot represent the new testament because the statement in 1 Cor. 11:25 is a metonymy of the cause for the effect, although he admitted that he was not “one hundred percent sure” that was the case.

All of Donahue's speeches were designed to prove that cup doesn't mean cup in Matt. 26:27 and that a drinking vessel is never under consideration in any communion passages. He engaged in all kinds of fallacious reasoning, from confusing metonymy with species and English idioms and mixing up all kinds of figures of speech.

The Bailey-Donahue debate is history now. “Truth crushed to earth will rise again, and from the many battles truth emerges the victor in its scintillating brilliancy!”

AFRICAN NOTEBOOK: CHURCH BUILDINGS

by James D. Orten

The real House of God is made of living stones, the souls of men and women who have surrendered themselves to the Lord (1 Peter 2:5). Under the direction of inspired apostles, these converts to Christ assembled on Lord's Days to worship Him (Acts 20:7). From early days of the church till the present, finding appropriate places for Christians to meet for worship has been a challenge.

Paul faced the problem with the new church at Ephesus (Acts 19). At first he taught in the synagogue. Soon, however, unbelievers created confusion and Paul, not wanting the disciples to be discouraged, pulled them out and met in the school of Tyrannus (verse 9). A similar situation is suggested in Acts 2:46. The disciples met in the temple to preach the gospel, but this unsheltered and often raucous atmosphere was no place to celebrate the solemn feast. So they “broke bread from house to house.” Historically, homes probably have been the most common places for churches to meet. But over the years, our brethren have assembled in almost every conceivable type of place. Historians say that in early times of persecution, the disciples observed the Lord's Supper in caves. This is probably true; Hebrews 11:38

indicates the Christians lived in such places.

In societies that are religiously free and affluent, meeting halls are not a real problem. We may not be able to get the type of houses we want, but that may be a problem of our own making, having nothing to do with true worship of God. It took the poor people of Paris 200 years to build Notre Dame Cathedral. But they were not constructing a simple house of prayer. They were competing with their peers at Amiens, 60 miles to the north, each apparently believing that the biggest church building in France would somehow endear them to God. Conversely, the poorer a society is the more the problem is compounded. In Zambia where I live, the annual gross national product was recently estimated at \$240 per head. One of the most common requests I get is for help with church buildings.

COUNTRY AND CITY CHURCHES

In the next several paragraphs, I will discuss Zambian church buildings and the different problems presented for rural and city churches. In the “bush,” churches are built much as they were hundreds of years ago. The most common way is to drive stakes in the ground, connect them with bamboo to form the shape

of the building, and then work mud up and around these supports to make the walls. A long-stemmed grass is layered and tied down on top. It actually makes a good "thatched" roof, which gives excellent shelter from the heat of the sun and from rain as well. Mother earth serves as the floor. Seats are often made by building up rows of mud to about 12 or 14 inches in height. When this hardens, it provides a rudimentary bench—not a padded pew, but better than sitting on the ground. Sometimes benches are made by driving pieces of forked limbs into the ground and laying small logs across them. Believe me, mud seats are better!

While this type of construction is basic, there is room for individual congregations to do it lovingly or slovenly with attractive or ugly results. Not long ago, I sat with a few brothers in a church waiting for the congregation to gather. It was raining and, because the grass roof had been neglected, we were slowly getting wet. I said, "The condition of this building suggests that there is a problem in this church." A conversation ensued that eventually revealed a serious problem with the leadership. On the other hand, many bush churches are strong and vibrant forces in their communities.

These buildings give considerable shelter from the elements, but there are gaps in the protection they offer. Last week I was holding a leaders' study at a congregation deep in the bush. The building was just an arbor; both ends were completely open. I sat on a small log bench facing about 15 brethren. As we discussed a problem in the congregation, someone shouted, "Njoka! Njoka!" I know enough Chewa to recognize the word for snake, so I turned and saw a shiny black reptile gliding straight toward the open end of the building. A young man jumped up and hurled the log he was sitting on, which hit the snake and disabled him. It was a spitting cobra. I got up for a closer look and the brethren yelled, "No, No; he can still spit!" The young man pummeled him a few more times and then I got a look. When it was all over, I asked the brethren if they thought the snake might have felt welcome, thinking one of his friends was already in the church? It was probably too sensitive; none of them thought it was funny.

DIFFERENT PROBLEMS IN THE CITIES

For several reasons, bush-type church buildings won't work in the cities. Some city councils will not allow them, but even if permitted, the materials for daub and wattle construction are not readily available. The best clay for mud comes from huge ant hills, that are regular features of rural landscapes but not of cities. The grass for roofs is also hard to find in heavily populated areas.

Materials that are used in city churches—concrete for floors, cement blocks for walls, and asbestos sheets for roofs—are not expensive by American standards. On average, \$6,000 to \$8,000 will provide the mate-

rials and the brethren generally do the work. But that amount of money is out of reach of most congregations. There are other problems too. Theft is so high that a building must be guarded while it is being built and afterward. Two of our churches have had roofing sheets stolen right off the tops of the buildings.

Some problems are unique to the culture. As discussed in an earlier article, funerals drain church resources that could go to better causes, i.e. buildings. Instead of the bereaved family being supported by the community, they are expected to feed the guests who come to give "comfort," and to provide transportation to the burial. Dozens, sometimes hundreds, of people come because funerals are social events. This necessitates large quantities of food, fire wood (for outside bonfires), and hired trucks for transportation. Many families are seriously burdened. Brethren mostly understand scriptural uses of the Lord's money; they just interpret this as a "need." One congregation recently gave a brother the equivalent of a month's contribution for his child's burial.

Then some problems are of the brethren's own making. When church leaders think they will get help from abroad, the size of meeting house they need grows enormously. At more than one location in Africa, we have cut building plans in half only to find the excised portion grew back when we left town. At a recent meeting, brothers from several churches were emphasizing their need for buildings, and I mentioned this problem which they sheepishly acknowledged. I told them that this discourages brethren in America from helping at all, because we do not erect those types of buildings for ourselves.

After some candid discussion, they asked what type of buildings would be appropriate? I had a wonderful illustration close at hand. The shelter we were sitting in is more like a cow shed than a church house. About 16 feet long and 22 feet wide, it consists of poles driven into the ground with sawmill slabs nailed to them. The roof is a makeshift affair of canvas and grass. I pointed to the structure and said, "You brethren have been meeting in this building for several years. Would not a well-built one twice this size be quite sufficient? Yet, you have drawn up plans for a house 95 feet long and 55 feet wide." There were embarrassed smiles and nods of agreement. They had shown me their plans the day before, hoping I would raise money for them.

I do not mean to leave the impression that these brethren are bad men; they are not. Most of us are quite willing to take what we can get, if it is free. But they do need to grow. The ideal situation would be for leaders from a spiritually mature congregation to serve as mentors, helping and supporting, but also teaching as they go. Sounds like I am describing the Jerusalem church and the new Gentile congregation at Antioch (Acts 15), doesn't it?--

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THE KINGDOM OF GOD

In Daniel chapter 2 the prophet reveals and interprets a dream that king Nebuchadnezzar was given by God. I don't believe that this king was aware of the importance of this dream at the time that he had it. But he knew only that it was a terrible dream and that he had forgotten it. This dream God would use to prophesy of a time when His kingdom would be brought into existence where all nations of the earth would flow into it. When we think of a kingdom we are to understand that it is a specific type of government. There is a king who rules and subjects who submit to his will.

Daniel, as he brings to the king a remembrance of the dream, claims no special wisdom, but gives God the glory for the interpretation. The Bible says that king Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed of a giant figure made of precious and semiprecious metals and clay. He gives a description of the four parts of this figure as follows: 1) Head of gold. 2) Breast and arms of silver. 3) Belly and thighs of brass. 4) Legs and feet of iron mixed with clay. In verses 36-45 Daniel proclaims to the king what each part represented. Each was a kingdom in itself. The head of gold was king Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom of Babylon (Daniel 2:37). After him would arise another kingdom represented by the breast and arms of silver. This was the Medo-Persian empire ruled by Darius and Cyrus as we read from the Bible in book of Daniel. A third kingdom represented by the belly and thighs of brass would arise after the Medo-Persian empire to rule. We see from secular history that the Grecian empire arose and was ruled by Alexander the Great. And finally a fourth kingdom was to arise represented by the legs and feet of iron and miry clay. We see in this time span where the Romans came into power after the Grecian empire. These are the governments depicted by God as represented by this terrible image that this Chaldean king had dreamed. King Nebuchadnezzar was given insight into God's plan of setting up His own kingdom. Daniel says in verse 44, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." God's people had been brought under captivity by the Chaldeans and were subject to this earthly kingdom for failure to subject to God's will (II Kings 21:8-9). However, this was not to last forever. There was going to be a time where God was going to establish a kingdom and only those who yielded to the king's will would have opportunity to be made subjects of that kingdom. God's kingdom was to surpass all other governments in that it would have a righteous king and willing subjects.

In the Gospel we read of wise men coming to Jerusa-

lem seeking a king who was to be born in Bethlehem of Judaea. They said they were in search of the babe who was to be born king of the Jews (Matt. 2:2). Mary the mother of our King knew of his kingship by the revelation of God through the angel Gabriel (Luke 1:32-33). The Elijah like prophet John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness saying, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 3:2) The King himself began to preach the kingdom at hand (Matt. 4:17). He then ordained 12 apostles to preach the gospel of the kingdom (Matt 10:7). He then ordained the seventy to go and preach the gospel of the kingdom (Luke 10:1,9,11). The King spoke of things pertaining to the kingdom in parables to His people (Matt 13:3,11). He was condemned by the high priest and the Sanhedren because He affirmed that he was the Christ- the son of God. And because of the Lord's affirmation he was charged with blasphemy. So the counsel arose and led him to the governor Pontius Pilate to be condemned to death. Notice in Luke 23:2 what these ruthless leaders accused Jesus of, "And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King [KJV]." They falsely accused Him of perverting the nation and lied to Pilate concerning the paying of Roman taxes (Matt. 17:27,22:21) because He said He was king. The only truth to the accusations was that He was King. The accusation prompted Pontius Pilate to ask Jesus, "Art thou king of the Jews?" And He answered, "Thou sayest it (Luke 23:3)." The Gospel continues to say that Pilate questioned Jesus concerning His kingship. And Jesus proclaimed that His kingdom was not of this world meaning that it is a spiritual kingdom. Then Pilate would ask Jesus again, "Art thou king then?" Notice the answer that Jesus gives, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice (John 18:37)." Pilate upon washing his hands of the matter, turned Jesus over to his soldiers where they took Him to the hall of Pretorium and mocked Him as a king and brought Him back to be displayed by Pilate before the Jews. Pilate at this time brought Jesus and stood Him before the people beaten, crowned with a crown of thorns and clothed in a purple robe (Luke 19:5). Later as Jesus was suspended between heaven and earth by the cruel cross He would be mocked as king by the chief priests and scribes (Mark 15:32). After His death and before His burial Joseph of Arimathea would beg Pilate for the body of his king and the Bible says that he waited for the kingdom of God (Luke 23:51). In Acts 1:6 the apostles still anticipated the kingdom to be restored to Israel. They still thought the kingdom was going to be an earthly

kingdom restored to Israel. In Acts chapter 2 the Holy Spirit came and with him the power as promised in the first chapter. The apostle Peter would affirm in his message that King David is dead and buried in the grave and that being a prophet the prophecy concerning the King had been fulfilled in this man called Jesus that they had rejected and slain. Because David wasn't raised from the dead and ascended into heaven, but that it was Christ who had been raised up to sit on the throne and Peter says, "this Jesus hath God raised up

whereof we all are witnesses (Acts 2:32)." We see here that the kingdom was established in the "days of these kings" the Roman empire. Can't we say like Daniel of old that "the dream is certain and the interpretation thereof sure (Dan.2:45)." Amen.

Note: The name of the author for this article was not attached and we received the piece "second hand." If you will let us know who you are, we'll be happy to announce it next month. DLK.

WHY CALLEST THOU ME GOOD?

by Jimmy Vannoy

On one occasion, a rich young ruler of the Jews came to Jesus to ask the most critical question that can possibly be asked: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 18:18) Very few will ask this question, and fewer still will accept the answer.

Jesus sensed the sincerity of this man and immediately loved him. Not only was he sincere, he had also been obedient to the Law of Moses. When he said he had kept the commands of the Old Testament from his youth, Jesus did not disagree. This young ruler was indeed an unusual man. Unfortunately, his riches meant more to him than obtaining eternal life, because he refused to obey when Jesus told him to give up his riches and follow Him.

When the ruler came to Jesus to ask about eternal life, he called Him "Good Master". The response of Jesus was "...Why callest thou me good? None is good, save one, that is God..."(Luke 18:18,19)

It seems that Jesus was rebuking the man for an incorrect statement. Jesus indicates that in the absolute sense, no one is good but God. But is Jesus saying that *He* did not deserve the title "good"? Was He saying that the ruler was wrong to apply that title to Him?

The answer to these questions lies in understanding the position of Jesus in the eyes of God. Several scriptures are applicable to understanding this matter. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God." (John 1:1) This verse states that Jesus was with God in the be-

ginning and that *He was God*. Many scriptures indicate that the Father and the Son are two separate beings, but when this verse says that Jesus was God, it means that as the Father is Deity, so Jesus is Deity. Jesus is Deity to the extent that it was through Him that all things were created. (John 1:3)

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John 1:18) Jesus fully declared God to the earth. The life of Jesus fully expressed to the earth who God is, in His character, wisdom, knowledge and power. Jesus was able to do so because He is Deity. Philip once asked Jesus to show the other disciples and him the father. Jesus responded, "...He that hath seen me hath seen the father..."(John 14:9) Jesus expresses the fullness of who God is to the extent that while He was on the earth, to see and experience Him was to see and experience God.

"For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form." (Col. 2:8 NIV) Jesus is not Deity, He is the full expression of the Deity of God.

Did Jesus deserve the title "good" given to him by the rich young ruler? Certainly He did. Was the ruler correct in calling Jesus "Good Master"? Yes he was. Why then did Jesus say, "Why callest thou me good?" He did so to help the young man to realize that He was more than just a man and more than a prophet. He was the Son of God, and that to address Jesus as "Good Master" meant that he was recognizing Jesus as Deity.

VERBAL CONFESSION OF CHRIST-PART 1

Continued from page 1

But how shall we know if sinners believe in the deity of Christ in order that we might then baptize them for the remission of sins? It is impossible to read their minds for "what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?" (1 Cor. 2:11). The answer to this rhetorical question is

obviously, "No one"; no one is able to know what a man is thinking within his spirit. First Corinthians chapter 2 uses this to teach a point about divine revelation. We cannot know either what a man is thinking or what God is thinking unless it is revealed to us. A revelation is needed, in either case, to know what someone is thinking. Therefore, in regards to salvation,⁴ the alien sinner must reveal to us that he believes in the deity of Christ before we may baptize him into Christ.

The revealing process, wherein an alien sinner makes known his faith in Jesus' deity, is called "confession" and as pointed out above, it is a necessary prerequisite to baptism. "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 10:32-33). Despite all efforts to remove this passage from the discussion, this scripture remains in the discussion. Whether at the beginning, middle, or end of one's spiritual life, he must be willing to verbally confess his faith in Christ as the Son of God and if at any time one refuses to do so, his salvation is forfeited. While this passage may envision a lifetime of confession, it at least embraces the initial confession made before baptism. Again, the apostles wrote concerning verbal confession.² Most notable is the passage written by John, "Whosoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God" (1 Jn. 4:15). In keeping with what Jesus said in Mark 16:16, that belief was necessary before baptism could occur, we read the confession of the eunuch, "Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, 'See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?' Then Philip said, 'If you Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Tim. 6:12-13.- believe with all your heart, you may.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God'" (Acts 8:36-37).³

So, in answer to the first major question, is verbal confession of faith in Christ a necessary step in the conversion process for the alien sinner?, the answer is yes, a verbal confession is absolutely necessary.

WHAT SHOULD THE CONFESSION CONSIST OF?

The next question revolves around exactly what the verbal confession of an alien sinner should consist of. Commonly our brethren have required that sinners confess their faith in Christ as the Son of God, but a new generation of preachers has arisen to take issue with this. Because of the rise in popularity of the NIV translation among our brethren, some among us now argue that the verbal confession should consist of, "Jesus is Lord," based on the NIV's translation of Romans 10:9. This translation is different and at odds with the KJV and NKJV which render the passage, "Confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus." There is a significant difference between these two translations. The NIV rendition is saying that men should confess that.³

The NIV is not alone in rendering ROM. 10:9 in this way. Other translations which follow suit include the RSV, NRSV, ASV, and the NASV.

Jesus is "Master" and He should be submitted to in obedience. The KJV rendition is saying that men should confess the deity of Jesus and this is not the same as confessing that Jesus is "Master." Sarah confessed that her husband Abraham was "lord," implying that she should submit to and obey him (1 Pet. 3:6), but she was not confessing that Abraham was divine. The sons of Jacob confessed that Joseph was "lord of the land" (Gen. 42:30), but they were not confessing he was divine. The apostle Paul called slave owners 'masters'⁵ (Eph. 6:9; Col. 4:1), but he was not implying they were divine. To the man born blind Jesus asked, "Do you believe in the Son of God? He answered and said, 'Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?'" And Jesus said to him, 'You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with yours (Jn. 9:35-37). Notice carefully that the blind man confessed Jesus as "Lord," but this was not enough. Jesus required that he also confess Him as the "Son of God." You will find the same thing in the case of Martha. In John 11:21 she confessed freely that Jesus was "Lord." But, as in the case with the blind man, this was not enough to satisfy Jesus. She must also confess that He is the 'Son of God.' Therefore Jesus said to her, "Whosoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to Him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are⁵ 'Masters' in this passage is from the same Greek word *kurios* which is translated in other passages as 'Lord.'- the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.' (Jn. 11:26-27).

While it is true that men must confess Jesus as being Lord of all (Phil. 2:11), this is not the same as confessing Jesus as the Son of God. To confess Jesus as the divine Son of God is a greater confession than to say He is Lord. If men confess that Jesus is Lord, they are making a worthy admission that He deserves to be submitted to and obeyed, but if nothing more is confessed, they are saying no more than Sarah said about Abraham. In contrast, to confess Jesus as the divine Son of God is to admit that He is divine, equal with God, and therefore is Lord and should be submitted to and obeyed. In other words, to confess that Jesus is the Son of God encompasses the idea that He is Lord, but this does not work the other way around. To simply confess He is Lord does not necessarily imply that one believes Him to be divine. A "Jehovah's Witness" would be willing to confess, "Jesus is Lord," and therefore should be obeyed. But they would not be willing to confess that Jesus is the divine Son of God, equal with God, and therefore Lord. Jesus is Lord because He is first the divine Son of God (cf. Heb. 1).

² Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Tim. 6:12-13.

³ More on this passage later.

⁴ The NIV is not alone in rendering Rom. 10:9 in this way. Other translations which follow suit include the RSV, NRSV, ASV, and the NASV.

⁵ "Masters" in this passage is from the same Greek word *kurios* which is translated in others passages as "Lord."

EDITORIAL*continued from page 2*

ber misses a service we would naturally expect elders, who are watchful, to want to know why. If they are not watchful they may very well be the last to know what is going on among the members spiritually speaking. This is especially true if elders are too busy at secular jobs to devote the proper time to their spiritual work.

It is also an impossibility for anyone to oversee or shepherd a congregation which is too far away, geographically, from his place of residence. Just as the shepherd must be near the flock of sheep in order to see to their needs, elders need to be near the members of the church in order to see to their needs. Otherwise, how can he watch for them? This also creates problems for one who wishes to travel as an evange-

list while shepherding or overseeing the home church as part of a functioning eldership. It is awfully difficult to wear two hats at one time. It is very hard to be in two places at one time. The very nature of the work of elders requires them to be home most of the time. How can one oversee, shepherd, pilot, steer or pastor a congregation from which he is absent more than he is present? Remember, brethren, elders are the only scriptural "pastors" found in the Word of God. All others, though they may act in that capacity, do so without divine authority. Let us do things in Bible ways and call things by Bible names!

The word "vigilant" is an adjective, and an adjective is used to limit or qualify a noun or other substantive. So says Webster. The point is that a failure to be vigilant in the true sense will render a man unqualified. This is just as important as any other qualification. Think on these things. DLK

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OUR DEPARTED

COURTER--Ray A Courter was born May 23, 1915 in Porter Township, Clinton County, Pa. and passed away March 23, 1995 at his home in Salona, Pa. at the age of 89. He is survived by his wife, Christine Courter; son and daughter-in-law, Ron and Barbara Courter; 3 brothers; 3 sisters; and 3 grandchildren. Ray and Tina have been constant friends to many who have traveled through central Pennsylvania. Their generous hospitality and graciousness has been a pleasant experience throughout the years. Ray will be missed by those who have had the pleasure of knowing him. A large company of people gathered to pay their respects to the family. Floyd Harris, Jr. sang at the memorial service and this writer spoke words of comfort and exhortation from God's Word. -- Richard Bunner

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

Harris-Helwig--On April 12, 1995, Jeffery Lynn Harris and Matilde Kay Helwig were united in matrimony in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. It was a very happy occasion attended by many friends. The singing was done by Brian and Sharon Burns, accompanied by Paul Melton. It was my pleasure to read verses from the Bible and speak words of encouragement for these two children of God. Matilde and Jeff are planning to make their home in Seminole, Oklahoma. -- Tony Melton



Mark Robbins, 1002 NE 23rd Dr., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33305, (305)630-9021 -- The church in Fort Lauderdale, FL continues to be steadfast in the word and are at peace. We are looking for a modest, suitable, permanent meeting facility to enable us to have gospel meetings. We are interested in having a gospel preacher to live here to evangelize the area. There is tremendous opportunity. If you have interest in this, please contact myself or Brother James Nelson, 1400 NW 110th Ave, No. 416, Plantation, FL 33322 (305) 472-5653. If you know of friends living in S. Florida, who might be interested in the church, please let us know.

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, Aug. 8 --Sally and I have been in California since April 26, when we began at Sanger in a very enjoyable meeting. It was nice to see all the Christians there again. At this writing, we are in Fremont, where we expect to close next Sunday, May 14. So far, the crowds have been good. In this and the last meeting, we have visited with Richard DeGough, Buddy Brumley, Bennie Cryer and Don King. We go next to Turlock May 21-28 and then home. We expect to be at Ft. Smith, AR June 7-11. Please visit the meeting if you can.

Jeff Thompson, 105 B Street, Apt. A, Saint Albans, WV 25177--Since moving to Saint Albans in November of last year, the work here has been going well. The members of the congregation as well as neighboring congregations are really interested in the growth of the Church here. Thus far, we have had one to obey the Gospel. There are others we are attempting to study with in hopes that they will do the same. We at Saint Albans are also look-

ing forward to a meeting with brother Dennis Smith coming up June 7-11. All who are able, please come and be with us. I just completed a meeting in Liberty, KY the week of April 2-9. We had a good meeting and were encouraged by excellent crowds and visitors at almost every service. One night, the building was filled to near capacity. I am also happy to report that two obeyed the Gospel during this meeting, which is always encouraging to see. Truly there are still some with "ears to hear" and who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Lord willing, I will be in a Gospel meeting May 5-7 at the Bunners Ridge congregation here in West Virginia. I have never been there before and I look forward to meeting those brethren. God bless his children everywhere.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne, Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, May 9 -- We just returned from Jonesboro, GA. The meeting closed with no visible results, but we hope and pray good was done. It was a pleasure to be with George Battey who has been working among them for some time. Southern hospitality was the order of the day at the Jonesboro congregation and I enjoyed it. We made our home with Don and Josie Snow, old friends. It was a great visit and I couldn't have been better treated. Visitors came from many places and several states. Crowds were very good throughout. It was nice to see Lynwood Smith who came by on his way to the annual meeting at Napoleon, AL. While there, I enjoyed a good visit with Ricky and Jane Martin of the Marietta congregation. Ricky took me to visit with his aged grandfather, Noah Langley whom I have known as long as I can recall. I stayed in the Langley home with my parents as a child when my father preached at Napoleon and also several times as I held meetings there. Such visits now are both sad, but sweet. Johnny Elmore is in a good meeting at Fremont now and what a treat to hear his preaching. Lord bless the faithful.

P. Duane Permenter, P. O. Box 1223, Riverbank, CA, 95367--It was a pleasure to preach at Ardmore, OK between the meetings in Hillcrest and Ada. Johnny and Sally Elmore opened up their home to me, and it was a pleasure to visit with them. It was indeed an honor to hear two young people during the meeting at Hillcrest make the good confession and submit to the Lord in obedience. Since last reporting I was able to hear Lynwood Smith, Don Pruit, Rich Lechner and Greg Branch in meetings. The church in Oakdale continues to grow; recently, three young men were baptized by one of the brethren. The work here at 64th Street continues to plug along. Brother Earl Helvey is recovering well from the stroke he had a few months ago. Though he is not teaching yet, he is leading prayers, songs and making announcements. Brethren, please continue to pray for us. Looking forward to my next meeting in Athens, Texas June 18-26, and hope to see many of you at the Sulphur meeting this year. May God bless the faithful.

Brett Hickey, 1718 Fuller St., Mtn.Home, AR 72653 (501) 424-2523 May 9, 1992--Several members still work diligently with friends and family. Over the past three months, four souls have been added to the local body. Three were baptized and one took his stand with us from the cups group. We are anxiously preparing for our meeting with Doug Hawkins from May 21-28. We recently returned from a meeting in Aurora,

MO. We enjoyed the hospitality of the Criswell's. Our stay was short, but we gleaned what wisdom we could from their many years of service in this country and abroad. Their patient perseverance at Aurora has resulted in impressive fruit. Numerous area congregations and preachers supported the effort. Several visited from the community. Saturday, there were over 40 visitors in all. We look forward to meetings in Pocahontas, AR -- July 13-16 and Pottsville, AR -- Sept. 6-10. We appreciate the zeal of brother Paul Cantrell of Pottsville. He has asked us to come a few days before the meeting to give him experience in knocking doors and setting up studies. Locally, we appreciate the zeal of several in preparing to do evangelism. One brother has given several hours on Saturdays to assist in door knocking. These efforts have produced studies and leads.

Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808 May 4--The meeting at White Bluff, Tn. closed with three baptisms and one confession of fault. We certainly enjoyed our stay here. The church is alive and working under the able leadership of M. R. Kimbro and others. From White Bluff we went to Chapel Grove for Sunday night service and were able to spend three days in the home of Leo and Bernice Burns. They are dear people to us and thoroughly enjoyed our visit. The meeting at Crescent Ridge in Birmingham, Al. was enjoyable and well attended. While there we had a meeting between the two churches and resolved the differences between them. We thank God for this. Brethren Richard Nichols and William St. John were excellent helpers in this venture. Our next meeting was at Harrisonville, Mo. This new church has a wonderful building in a good location and a mind to work. The group is motivated and working together for the cause of Christ. Bro. Wyn Baker has just moved into the area and will be assisting them in their outreach. We look for great things from this congregation. The meeting resulted in one baptism. Our next, Lord willing, is Lovejoy, Pa. May 14-21, then Tulsa, Ok. (Eleventh St.) June 2-4; Cleburne, Tx. June 7-11; and San Angelo, Tx. June 18-25. Pray for us in the work.

Barney Owens 8782 Meadowview Ln., W. Chester, OH 45069--A meeting with the Hartwell Church near Huntsville, AR was a real joy for me. Evidence of work and preparation for the meeting was clear. Nearly two dozen from the outside attended, some for the first time. Visitors came from other churches as well. John Scott came every night that services were not held in his community. Brother Clyde Lamkins with his wife were able to be with us the last weekend which was quite a surprise due to his recent illness. He has been doing good work with the church there. We also had preachers Jimmy Smith, Roger Owens and John Anderson. We have entered a meeting here at home with Kevin Presley preaching. We have a good start and expect things to get better. By the time you read this, I'll be looking to begin with the congregation at Sentinel, OK, July 7-16. Be with us if you can. Requesting your prayers always.

Doug Hawkins--Lori and I just returned home from our seven month stay in Russia on April 25. It's good to be home. We are glad to report that overall the work in Saransk, Russia was a success. Throughout our seven month stay, we witnessed seven additions to the body of Christ, and we saw the congregation grow in several areas. It was my privilege to be a part of the work and I thank the congregation at Springfield, Mo. for offering us the opportunity. If you are interested

in the work in Russia and would like to read the report on the work in Saransk, contact me and I'll be glad to send you a copy. At present, we are in a weekend meeting at Springfield, Mo. We are enjoying our stay with Virgil and Frances Hogland. Lori and I love them dearly. It was good to see brethren Jimmy Smith, Ron Alexander, and David Griffith at the meeting. I always appreciate when the preachers take time from their busy schedules to support the meetings. Recently, we were able to hear Todd Long at Chapel Grove, Tn. He is a mighty fine preacher and did an excellent job proclaiming the need to "Bear fruit that will last." We really enjoyed being with him. Also, we were able to be with Lynwood Smith at Cassville, Mo. on the final Sunday afternoon service. He preached "Unconditional Surrender." Like many others, I love to hear him preach. We are anxiously looking forward to our schedule of meetings in 95. Lord Willing, we will be in Broken Bow, Ok. May 7-14; Watonga, Ok. May 15-20; Mt. Home, Ark. May 21-28; and Hillcrest, Ms. June 11-18 during the next two months. We hope, if you are able, that you will come by and be with us in any of these meetings. At present, we tentatively plan to work in Warrenton, Mo. for three months during July - September. May God bless all of our preachers this year in their work and travels. And may God richly bless all the faithful wherever they assemble. Pray for us.

Richard DeGough, 1907 Tully Rd., Hughson, California, 95326--Since my last report we have been to Australia for a period of seven weeks. Brother Bob Morrow accompanied me there for the purpose of helping and encouraging the church. The Australian brethren are the most isolated in terms of miles than any I can think of. I was asked to come by the Church. The church at Turlock has been interested in that work for several years, by way of helping to support brother Keith Thomson. The brethren are doing their best to reach the lost, which is difficult. So many there, like America are not concerned with their soul's destiny. We held three short meetings besides visiting individuals and couples to invite them to the meeting and on occasion talking with them about the church. It was encouraging to have several people come to the meetings. I pray that the seed sown will produce fruit in the future for the Lord. The Australian brethren have a special affection for the brethren that have worked there from America, namely; brother Jerry Cutter, Bruce Word, Glenn Osborn, David Stands. They are good people, these Australian brethren, and holding the line against digression, while standing for the true way in everything they know to be right. I hope I can see them again, and my prayers are for them. We continue to work in the area of home, preaching in near places. I was glad to preach at Fremont recently, also Atwater, Planz Rd. in Bakersfield, and of course at Turlock my home. We look forward to the meeting here with Johnny Elmore who will conduct the Memorial Day annual meeting at Turlock. Last year we had over three hundred attend, and look forward to more this year from all over the state. If you can come we will consider it a privilege to have you.

Jimmie C. Smlth—Rt. 6, Box 199A, Harrison, Ark. 72601-
- The work continues here with considerable local interest. Recently I completed a series of sermons on the Lord's Supper on our fifteen minute weekly radio program to the tune of nineteen sermons. After the seventeenth program a couple started attending with us because of the teaching. For those

who are concerned about our "harping" on such subjects, maybe we quit too soon. In Feb. we had a most uplifting week-end meeting at Council Hill, Ok. with record crowds and I enjoyed the attendance of preaching brethren, Jim Hickey, Bruce Roebuck, Kevin Presley, Jack Lee, and Larry Combs. In April, we were with the brethren in Wichita Falls, Tx. (1006 Holiday St), for a wonderful weekend. Brethren came from McGregor, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Ardmore, Ok. City, and Garden's Edge. Preaching brethren in attendance were Johnny Elmore, Leo Cook, and Don Jackson. We also had local outside visitors. Visiting brethren marveled as they beheld their love for one another, their hospitality and joyous spirit. Having lived in that city for almost five years more than twenty years ago my family received a "homecoming welcome." Bro. Bob Orear spoke for us both services last Lord's Day and did a good job. By the time you read this I will be concluding a meeting in Columbus, Ga., and we welcome any enroute to the Lebanon, Mo. meeting to stop by and attend our meeting with Jerry Dickinson June 17-25. May God bless his servants!

Billy D. Dickinson, 215 Forest Hills Dr., West Monroe, LA. 71291. -- In March I held a meeting at McGregor, TX. It had been many years since I had worshiped with this congregation. When I first started giving lessons in the church, some of my first efforts were in the old building where the brethren met in years gone by. To a great extent, this was a nostalgic experience for me. We had good crowds from the beginning with brethren, especially a lot of young people, coming from various places in Texas and Oklahoma. This, of course, is the home of Wayne McKamie. What a blessing it was to spend some time with this seasoned preacher of the Gospel! It also added to my enjoyment to get to stay with my sister Marilyn and her family, who are members of the McGregor congregation. The debate which took place here at West Monroe April 13-15 on the issues of cups and classes is now history. We hosted the entire discussion in our building and we were so pleased with the attendance. We had a number of digressives each session from far and near, causing us to put out extra chairs for the first two nights. Allen Bailey debated Pat Donahue on the cup question and I engaged Tommy Thrasher on the Bible class issue. Allen did a masterful job and we are rejoicing over the fact that error was exposed and the truth was vindicated. It's encouraging to know that so many digressives wanted to attend the debate and that we had the opportunity to send them home with reading material on the issues. To all our brethren and the many preachers who came, thank you so much for your support. I want to express a special word of thanks to Wesley Cockrum, who printed my charts for me. I know Wesley put a lot of time and effort into this and I was proud to use them in the discussion. I'm looking forward now to the following meetings: April 28-30 at Frisco, TX., May 6-14 at Fieldstone, MO., June 4-11 at West Plains, MO., July 16-23 at Yakima, WA. Pray for the faithful everywhere!

Kevin Presley, PO Box 2398, Ada, OK 74821, (405) 436-1331, --I certainly enjoyed attending the debate in West Monroe, LA last month. Once again, Pat Donahue and Tommy Thrasher bit off more than they could obviously chew. Allen Bailey and Billy Dickinson both did a superb job in their defense of the truth concerning the necessity of one cup on the Lord's table and an undivided assembly for the teaching of

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DURING

the Bible. Also, a good number of those present were from the digressive churches in the area. My first meeting of the year was last week with the folks at Blue Springs, KY. I always enjoy going there to preach. The crowds were excellent with several non-members in attendance. At the closing service, four were baptized and one confessed faults. I enjoyed the hospitality of Zade and Rekel McClure. From there I went to Sharonville, OH to conduct their spring meeting. Crowds were good with the surrounding congregations lending their support. Some even came from as faraway as St. Albans, W VA; Marengo, IN; and Blue Springs, KY. It was a real treat to stay with Barney and Bea Owens. I have always enjoyed and admired Barney's preaching, and so it was a real pleasure to get to know him better. Presently, I am in Bloomfield, IA. The church here is rather small and isolated, plus it has been several years since they have had a meeting. However, everyone seems to be enjoying the meeting; and we hope to accomplish some good while here. I am looking forward to my schedule throughout the summer months. Pray for us, and may God bless all the faithful.

Alton B. Bailey, 909 Truitt Ave., LaGrange, Ga. 30240.-- It has been some time since I sent in a field report. It is not my intent to be slothful, but it seems the older I get the more involved in my work I become. I appreciate the opportunity of conducting gospel meetings when asked throughout the brotherhood. I consider it a privilege and an honor to be asked. 1994 was one of those good years seeing a number baptized and some restored to the faith along with other favorable results. My meetings this year began in Arpelar, Ok. Jan. 11-15 at the new congregation near McAlester, have never seen love and the true spirit of Christ manifested more anywhere. These brethren are reaching out every way they can to broaden the cause of the Lord, and work for unity among brethren. With the attitude they manifest they can do nothing, but grow. Bro Joe Norton held us a good meeting here in LaGrange, Feb. 15-19, which resulted in one baptism and other favorable results. The last part of February, I was with the church in Donnellon, Fl. This is the same congregation that was meeting in Hernando, Fl. until a short time back. They are growing in strength and faith. March 15-19 I was with the church in Baton Rouge, La. and from there we went to Texarkana, Tx. March 22-26. Both were enjoyable. Lord willing I plan to attend part of the debate in West Monroe, La. where Allen Bailey and Billy Dickinson will defend the truth regarding the cup and Sunday School questions. I also plan to attend one or more services of the Spring Meeting in Birmingham, Al. April 22-26 we are to be with the church at Lone Rock, Ar. Bro. Allen Bailey will hold our summer meeting here in LaGrange June 3-11. I look forward to working with Bro. Smith Bibens in conducting the Fourth Of July meeting in Lebanon, Mo. June 26 through July 3rd. This meeting will begin with the Monday evening service and the closing service will be at 4:00 P.M. July 3rd due to the building being used by others beginning the night of the 3rd. July 16-23 we

are scheduled to be in McGregor, Tx. We solicit interest in your prayers.

James C. Franklin, Jr. P.O. Box 573 Blantyre, Malawi Africa April 8, 1995 MALAWI REPORT-- We here in Malawi send our greetings to all of you who support and pray for the work. It is through you God blesses us with the means to carry on His work in this country.

The Gospel is still accomplishing its purpose here in Malawi. Growth continues. The brotherhood is at peace. As much as it is possible, we live peaceably with all including those who count us as enemies. In recent weeks, nine more congregations in the Central Region and three in the Southern Region decided that they need to renew the fellowship with this brotherhood which they enjoyed in past years. Truth, patience, and time are ingredients for which there are no substitutes when it comes to healing wounds of division. Sure, there are scars. But, scars serve as reminders for us to not let the same thing happen again.

We are especially pleased with the progress taking place in the Central Region. Brother Austin Katona is currently working with 26 congregations and looking for opportunities to start more. He never complains of the tremendous responsibility resting upon him, or feels sorry for himself because of his load. He just presses on.

Brother Fisher Magona informs us that progress continues in the Northern Region. This region is large, but not as densely populated as the Southern and Central regions. Because of this, we do not expect to have as large a number of converts or congregations in this area. However, our desire is to see a faithful congregation established in every village. Fisher's is a difficult task, but he is giving a good account of himself.

I have just recently returned from my first visit to the States after arriving in Malawi in May of 1991. When I returned, I was immediately confronted with the problem of brethren suffering hunger here in the Southern Region. I sent a special report along with an appeal, to Little Rock concerning this problem so I'll not burden you with the details in this report. Having to deal with this problem of hunger, in addition to other problems waiting for my return, has caused me to have to put on hold some plans for the work for the moment. Hopefully, things will improve so we can get back into full swing in the near future. I ask for your patience, please.

I would like for all of you who support this work to know that you are appreciated, and I mean it with a capital APPRECIATED. You are to this work what blood is to the body. Without you, it dies. Your confidence in us is precious and will never intentionally be betrayed.

Keep mentioning us in your prayers. We need His blessings. We shall continue to thank the Lord for brethren like you who do more than say, "God bless!" You are God's blessing to us. May He look upon you with the tenderest of love and favor.

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

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

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

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

VOL. LXVIII

LEBANON, MISSOURI, JULY, 1995

NO. 7

"CHANGES THAT WILL AFFECT US"

By Richard DeGough

We were writing concerning this subject in the O.P.A. of October, 94. (please re-read)

PREACHING AND TEACHING THE WORD.

We need to ask the question: "Should preaching the Word be stereotyped and categorized as a certain "type" of preaching that ought to be done? This can only be answered by the word of God, if it is answered at all. Two categories of preaching are advanced in this modern day for our consideration, and they are: "Positive Preaching," and "Negative Preaching." Of course we must take into account that they have been "coined" by man. I am not saying that there is anything wrong with such phrases in themselves, but I am very alarmed oftentimes with the connotations put on these phrases. The idea that people often suggest to us as preachers and teachers about positive and negative preaching is in direct conflict with the truth, God's word. For example, let us consider some of the things many consider to be:

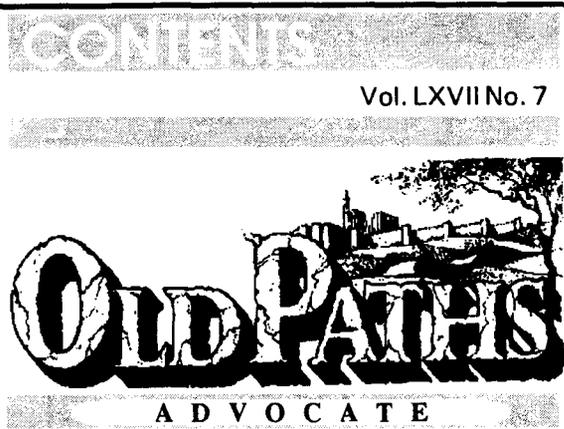
"POSITIVE THINKING PREACHING"

This kind of preaching does not "offend," stir up, rouse up, shake up anyone from their comfortable, complacent, unconcerned position that they occupy in life, because if you preach about certain Bible subjects that are considered to be very "touchy" you are being negative and not positive. Can we preach the Cross, Christ and him crucified, without mentioning what brought about the cross, the suffering of Jesus? Can we preach the Living word and leave off the written word? Can we preach the "man" and never talk of his "plan"? Is it possible to preach Christ and not the Church? (Eph.5:32) Can we preach the love, mercy, grace and long-suffering of God is the very reason why these things were extended to man?

Can we leave out of our preaching, teaching, the very thing an alien sinner needs to know and obey in order for him to be saved? Would we withhold the necessary information, the truth,

God's plan to restore a lost child of God, because someone said it would offend them? Is it possible to "preach the gospel and leave others alone"? Such phrases have been advanced by brethren who seem to be weary of hearing the old Word in a modern world of religious "hype" and false progression. I submit that it is an impossibility for any preacher or teacher who loves the truth and the souls of men to be free of offense if they genuinely preach the word of God as it ought to be preached. For example, if you preach the God of heaven as the "true and living God," you will offend the atheist. (I Thess. 1:9) When we preach Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ the son of God, you offend the orthodox Jew. If we preach God's plan to save mankind, such as men submitting to faith, repentance, confession, and baptism for the remission, forgiveness, of sins, you will offend the denominations. If you preach about the Church being "one" you are certainly offending a multitude of people connected with the Sects. When we preach about, and against involving ourselves as Christian in the things of this world you will offend the worldly-minded, and often stir them up to such a frenzy that borders on violence, and threats. It is not uncommon for such to say about a preacher: "We will not have him back again!" (brethren, he is the man I want) I realize that such people are few, and thankfully so. When brethren object to any thing that will help them to live acceptable lives before the Lord, they are hurting themselves spiritually and setting a poor example for others to follow. These usually are not content to stay to themselves, but do their utmost to negate sound preaching against sin, and discredit the preacher. Sadly, and far too often they take the lead in the church, reducing it in the community to powerless entity, ineffective to influence souls to be saved, and in time the church house doors are closed. They then move on to join themselves with another congregation that is trying to be as strong as possible, to per-

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ELDERS #4

By Don L. King

We are dealing with qualifications of elders. It is amazing how many ideas one encounters in reading various commentaries and books written through the years. Several seem to explain away the qualifications. This may explain why some brethren attempt to do the same. Let us be careful that we accept the Scriptures for what they say and mean. We must not weaken nor strengthen the Spirit's meaning. It becomes tempting, apparently, to weaken the qualifications so that men may be appointed sooner than otherwise might be possible. Sadly, we must admit that in a few cases men were appointed by evangelists who did not possess scriptural qualifications. This is a sad, sad state of affairs indeed. God will surely ask for answers on Judgment Day. Let us proceed carefully, studiously and prayerfully.

In 1 Timothy 3:2: "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior,..." Let us consider "good behavior."

This qualification probably has not received the attention it really deserves because of the many opinions about what actually constitutes behavior. In our modern, wicked world in which the church must exist "good behavior" may tend to be weakened by someone who seeks the position of elder but is not willing to behave himself. Brethren, this qualification cannot be overlooked. A man whose behavior has included nearly every worldly vice imaginable (drinking, dancing, gambling, use of bad language, dishonest business dealings, immodesty of dress) which has resulted in the church suffering hurt and his influence destroyed, is not a man of "good behavior." To appoint such a man as an elder would be to crucify the Lord afresh. God forbid!

The Greek word for "behavior" in our text appears to be "kosmios." Thayer renders this word, "Well arranged, seemly, modest... of a man living with decorum, a well-ordered life." (Pg. 356) It is interesting that the very same word is translated "modest" in 1 Timothy 2:9 where Paul commands that women adorn themselves in "modest" (kosmios) apparel, etc. The term chosen by the Spirit designating the manner of dress for women is here used to indicate the manner of behavior for an elder. In both cases it is to be that which is decent, well ordered, etc. This obviously will not allow a flagrant lifestyle or behavior in either case!

The type of man described in 1 Timothy 3:2 (of good behavior) is a well-arranged, dignified, courteous and chaste man in the whole manner of his life.

Continued on page eight

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: If a congregation splits on unfriendly terms, yet both groups continue to worship scripturally, is it wrong to worship with the congregation that chose to leave if it has not made things right with the original group? Would both groups be wrong, since the situation has not been resolved? (TX)

Question: Is it wrong to worship with a congregation that has unscripturally split from an existing church? (TX)

Answer: In the scriptures the word "division" is generally used to describe an unscriptural situation within a congregation. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you..." (1 Cor. 1:10) It is evident, from the text, that in Corinth they were divided over personalities (preachers), yet they all continued to worship in the same congregation. Hence, division can exist in a church even though all still remain in the same location. Such division is sinful. "...I hear there be divisions among you..." (1 Cor. 11:18) The division identified in (1:10) continued and manifested itself in their observance of the Lord's Supper. Here again, they continued in one group, but were charged by Paul with being guilty of division. Even though the situation had not deteriorated to a point resulting in two separate congregations, it was headed in that direction. In verse 19 Paul envisions that possibility when he writes "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." McGarvey comments: "The word division used in the verse above (18) was a milder term than "factions" found here. The former represented parties separated by present or at least very recent dissensions, while the latter described matured separations and looked toward permanent organizations." Then he adds "But factions did not thus mature in Paul's time, nor does Clement's epistle written forty years later indicate that they had matured in his time" (Commentary on First Corinthians p.115) We all know, however, that they have matured in increasing numbers today. The sad reality is that the growth in the number of congregations among us, in many instances, is not the result of evangelistic efforts, but of division. In alarming numbers brethren are choosing division in order to have "their own church" (really their own way). The most frivolous of reasons are given as to why the church divided. We should hang our heads in shame at such behavior. E. G. Sewell took the position that "There is no authority for a congregation of Christians to divide. Wicked men should be separated if they cannot be reclaimed, but never array Christians against Christians. Purify the body, but do not divide it" (Questions Answered p. 184) Much of what Sewell said needs to be seriously considered by churches today.

Many problems resulting in division could be avoided if they were addressed in a scriptural and judicious manner. Instead of dealing with the problems many find it easier to divide. But, is it ever scriptural to start another congregation? Do circumstances arise that justify or demand such action? First of all, it is in perfect harmony with scripture for a church to establish other churches as part of its evangelistic outreach. Such work is both commanded and desirable. Secondly, situations can arise that leave no other option available. Years ago many brethren were driven from buildings they had built themselves when innovations were brought in against their will, by those digressing from the truth. Brethren were forced out in order to maintain scriptural worship. Note carefully Paul's wording in 1 Cor. 11:20 "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." The teaching here is that the carnal spirit tends toward division. This divisive spirit manifests, by contrast, the loving united spirit of the obedient, which is approved. The conjunction "that" does not denote cause, but effect. In other words the wicked, unruly members, who compose these "sects" or "schisms" by their behavior identify their true condition and as a result the children of God are made manifest. What should happen to these "divisive" people? Is it to the advantage of the church for them to get out of the way or be withdrawn from (Rom. 16:17) that the purity of the church may be maintained. Thus under some circumstances, in order to maintain purity of worship, it may be necessary for brethren to move elsewhere and worship. But even in this situation the guilty should be withdrawn from and what might be considered the "new group" is in reality the true church, continuing without the schismatic, in a new location. Thirdly, what about a situation in a church where a false doctrine is being taught? The obvious response would be to silence or withdraw from the false teacher. But, what if a significant number of the membership supports the false teacher? Here again biblical principles must be followed. The one creating the problem and those supporting him must be dealt with according to their behavior so that the true children of God may be manifest. Merely moving off to another location won't get the job done scripturally. Fourthly, may brethren agree to start another congregation because of personality conflicts, disagreements over matters that appear inconsequential to many, so long as they work together and have fellowship with each other? I know of no scripture that is violated when such happens. However, in all honesty, I believe such a way of dealing with church problems betrays a lack of spiritual maturity on the part of those involved. Now specifically to the questions: The querist does not specify what is meant by "unfriendly

terms". I assume it is not a situation like that considered in numbers two and three above, but is rather some other matter. Any congregation that so splits, needs first of all to correct whatever caused the "unfriendly terms." Since both sides are involved, both sides need to actively seek resolution to the problems. Such separations are usually the product of "pride," "a quest for power" "preacher problems" etc. etc. Both groups are in error to the extent that they fostered and failed to prevent the division. Since Paul did not advise anyone that it was wrong to worship in Corinth even though they were badly divided, I would have to know more about the specifics of the situation before I could do so. Question number two assumes, by implication, that there is such a thing as a scriptural division. In the opinion of this writer all division is unscriptural. In all cases of division it must be determined which group represents the "approved of God", and which group is guilty of the schism. When this is done, we may then know which group is scriptural and which one is unscriptural. The division itself,

however, which is fostered by schismatics is always wrong. I could not worship with a group that falls into the category of those described by Paul in I Cor. 11:20. It has been the observation of this writer that after a church splits into two groups there is a period of time in which both groups actively seek to justify their actions. This is followed by a period of crystallization in attitude. Once this state is reached people begin to feel comfortable with the division and things settle into a so called state of normalcy. May I plead with those in every place where division has occurred to actively seek its resolution. Don't get comfortable. Don't become satisfied. Wrong has been committed and needs to be corrected. Get things worked out before it's too late. Even though you are confident that you are right and that the other side is wrong, think about their souls; don't you want them saved? Surely you do. May God help us to eliminate this horrible sin from our ranks. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808)

VERBAL CONFESSON OF CHRIST - PART 2

By George Battey

THE NIV RENDITION OF ROMANS 10:9

Is the NIV rendition of Romans 10:9 valid? Is its manuscript basis the most reliable available? To answer this authoritatively would require someone more trained in ancient manuscripts than myself, but with the information available to me, and provided I am interpreting this information correctly, it does not appear that the text used by the NIV in this passage is the best available.

The NIV OT is based upon the standard Masoretic Hebrew text, but the NT is built upon an eclectic text - a fluid text taking what the translation committees thought to be the best parts of all available manuscripts. In the case of Romans 10:9 there were two major variant readings to choose from. The United Bible Society (UBS) 3rd edition opted for the first variant which agrees with the Received Text and is translated, "confess with the mouth of you (the) Lord Jesus." This is based upon rather impressive textual authority including the Sinaiticus, the Bezae, and other manuscripts ranging from the third century all the way to the year 1561. In total, twenty-six Greek manuscripts, fourteen Greek and Latin lectionaries, and the writings of six "early church fathers" are cited in the footnotes to support this reading. Three more manuscripts add the word "Christ" after the name "Lord Jesus." However, the NIV did not choose to use this reading. Instead, the translation committee chose the second variation which, when translated is rendered, "Confess with the mouth of you, 'Jesus (is) Lord.'" This is supported by only one manuscript dated in the year 1044, one Greek lectionary dated from the fourth to seventh centuries, and three "early

church fathers." A variation, "Confess the word with the mouth of you 'Jesus (is) Lord,'" is found in one ancient manuscript (the prestigious Vaticanus of the fourth century), one Greek lectionary, and three "early church fathers" all ranging from the third to the fifth centuries.

It would appear, then, if the footnotes of the UBS 3rd edition are accurate and up-to-date, and if I am interpreting the data correctly, the most well founded text was rejected by the NIV committee and the weaker, more feeble text was adopted. Interestingly, there is more textual support and just as impressive support⁶ for including Acts 8:37 than for the NIV rendering of Romans 10:9! In other words, the NIV rejected Acts 8:37 because the textual basis seemed weak to the translation committee, but in Romans 10:9 they chose to include a variant reading founded on a weaker basis. To make matters worse, the NIV does not even footnote the fact that the larger majority and oldest manuscripts have, "confess the Lord Jesus." This is not an NIV bashing campaign, but it is truly a weakness in an otherwise and overall good modern translation.

In the case of Romans 10:9 it would seem that the Greek text and translation of the KJV and NKJV is superior to the NIV and other modern translations. Again, let me emphasize that I am not bashing the overall integrity of the NIV, nor am I implying the KJV and NKJV have no textual or translation problems of their own for they certainly do. I am merely saying, that if the data I am looking at is correct and current, and if I am interpreting that data accurately,

⁶Excepting the Vaticanus codex.

the KJV and NKJV have the upper hand in transmitting and translating Romans 10:9. The scriptures, in this case, are undoubtedly teaching men that they must confess the Lord Jesus Christ. That is, Romans 10:9 is not giving a verbatim confession that must be repeated, but rather the passage is identifying the One who must be confessed - the Lord Jesus Christ.

WHAT MUST BE CONFESSED?

This brings us back to our original question, What must the confession of Christ consist of? Romans 10:9 identifies the One who must be confessed, but what must be confessed about Him?

During the ministry of Jesus, on several occasions, demons would "confess" Him before men, but He would promptly rebuke them and not allow them to continue confessing Him. One example will suffice to illustrate: "And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, 'You are the Son of God.' But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known" (Mk. 3:11-12). Jesus did not tolerate such a confession from the demons because (1) it would not alter their destiny, and (2) he did not want anyone to conclude He was in league with demons.

Over and over again men confessed the deity of Jesus by confessing He was the Son of God. By making such a confession they were at the same time acknowledging Him as a Lord or Master who was worthy of ruling over their lives. The disciples said, "Truly You are the Son of God" (Mt. 14:33). Nathaniel confessed, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" (Jn. 1:49). Caiaphas and the other Jewish leaders were not interested if some viewed Jesus as a master, or lord, but they would not tolerate anyone confessing Him as the Son of God because that implied deity (Mt. 26:63-64; Jn. 12:42). Neither would they allow men to confess Him as the "Christ" (Greek for Messiah), because the Messiah was admittedly the Son of God (Ps. 2:27). In response to this, Peter boldly preached Jesus as both Lord and Christ, that is, enthroned deity (Acts 2:36).

When God sent John the baptizer to prepare the way for Jesus, John made two confessions. First, "He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, 'I am not the Christ'" (Jn. 1:20). And second, "'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'" And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God" (Jn. 1:32-34).

This was not enough to satisfy our heavenly Father. He must Himself confess His own son, First, at the baptism of the Savior, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mt. 3:17). And again on the Mount of Transfiguration, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" (Mt. 17:5). This made a lasting impression upon the three

disciples who witnessed this great event. Years later Peter wrote of it, "For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (2 Pet. 1:17).

Jesus confessed Himself on numerous occasions. During debate with unbelieving Jews He said, "'I and My Father are one.'" Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.

Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?" The Jews answered Him, saying, 'For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.' Jesus answered them, 'Is it not written in your law, "I said, 'You are gods?'" If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, "You are blaspheming," because I said, "I am the Son of God?" If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him'" (Jn. 10:30-38). Again, when on trial before Caiaphas, "The high priest answered and said to Him, 'I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God' Jesus said to him, 'It is as you said'" (Mt. 26:63-64).

Over and over we read of men either confessing that Jesus is the Son of God, or else remembering that He confessed this about Himself. Mocking Jews at the cross remembered that Jesus confessed of Himself that He was the Son of God (Mt. 26:43). The soldier standing at the foot of the cross when Jesus died said, "Truly this Man was the Son of God!" (Mk. 15:39). Some might argue that this soldier was merely saying Jesus was "the son of a god" rather than "the Son of God." But the objection is invalid because whatever the soldier meant, he certainly meant Jesus was deity. The very purpose for writing the gospel accounts was so that, "You may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (Jn. 20:30-31). The first thing Paul preached after his conversion was "the Christ . . . that He is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20). To the Romans Paul wrote "concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord . . . declared to be the Son of God with power" (Rom. 1:3-4). In other words, Jesus was proven to be more than just "Lord" by His resurrection; He was proven to be the Son of God! To Timothy Paul counseled, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses" (1 Tim. 6:12). The "good confession" which Timothy made was that which Jesus Himself made before Pilate (1 Tim. 6:13). That confession concerned the identity of Jesus as the Son of God (Jn. 19:8-11) and the fact that He was a heavenly (divine) King rather than an earthly king (Jn. 18:33-37). The Hebrew writer wrote

of the Christian's confession when he exhorted, "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession" (Heb. 4:14). John adds to the testimony when writing his epistle, "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God" (1 Jn. 4:15).

The strongest evidence available that confession is both necessary and should concern Jesus' Sonship toward God, not merely His Lordship toward believers, comes in Peter's confession. Jesus was concerned as to what men were thinking of Him: "When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, 'Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?' So they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?'" (Mat. 16:13-15). Jesus was not satisfied for men to view Him as a prophet, or lord only. Elijah, John the Baptist, and other prophets were also "masters" or "lords" with disciples that followed them. Jesus expected more in the confessions of men than this. The confession made by Peter satisfied Jesus because it embraced His deity as well as His Lordship. Peter confessed: "'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'" Jesus answered and said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church'" (Mt. 16:16-18). Two plausible explanations have been offered for this confession and Jesus' response to Peter. The most common and widely known explanation among our brethren is that Jesus would build or found the church upon the fact which Peter just confessed - that He is the Son of God. Another reasonable explanation is that Peter is typical of any believer who would come to Christ and upon such confessors the Lord would build or base His church.⁷ In either case, the church

would be founded upon the confession of His divine Sonship powerful and convincing proof that anyone wishing to enter His church and be saved from sin must confess with their mouth the Lord Jesus as being the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10).

SUMMARY

While it is true enough that we must confess Jesus' Lordship (Phil. 2:11), no one can successfully deny that when men confess His divine Sonship, they are at the same time declaring and professing His Lordship. But this is not always the case the other way around as we have seen in the case of "Jehovah's Witnesses" who are willing to confess the Lordship of Jesus, but not His divine Sonship.

For salvation men must believe that Jesus is the great "I AM" (Jn. 8:24) equal with His father (Jn. 1:1; 10:30). On this the church is founded (Mt. 16:16-18). And without revealing this to the preacher the sinner has no right to be baptized for the remission of sins (Mk. 16:16; Acts 8:36-37; 1 Cor. 2:11; Rom. 10:9-10). Confession is therefore both (1) necessary and (2) must contain a declaration concerning Jesus' divine Sonship.

Consider again all who confessed the Lord's Sonship and all the occasions it was spoken on: demons, the disciples, Nathaniel, Martha, John the baptizer, God the Father, Jesus Himself, the four gospel writers, the apostle Paul in his very first sermon, the young preacher Timothy, the soldier at the foot of the cross, the Hebrews, and Peter. Every one of these confessions were in regards to Jesus' Sonship. Can we possibly conclude that any confession less than this will suffice? It is called the "good confession" and it encompasses both Jesus' Lordship and deity.

My conclusion is therefore that confession is both (1) necessary and (2) must contain a declaration concerning Jesus' divine Sonship.

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⁷ cf. Milton Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, Zondervan, 1974, pp. 228-229. This explanation, while reasonable, at the same time rejects the false theory of the Catholic church that Jesus was declared Peter to be the first Pope and head of the church.

NOAH'S ARK HAD A DOOR

By Randy Cantrell

Genesis 6:6 "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." The sadness God felt at the rebellion of mankind, prior to the flood, cannot be overstated. Great wickedness on the earth burdened Jehovah. Noah alone stood out as the hope for all the physical world. Noah's determination to live for God was evidently the only glimmer of hope God saw.

Instructed by God, Noah began to build the ark in preparation for an event that would change the world. So monumental an event would this be that God himself would place a sign in the sky, the rainbow, as His promise that He would never destroy the world again by water. Water would not be viewed as a destructive

power to God's people. Rather, it would from this day forth be the vehicle to save man from the world.

One element of the ark, according to verse 16 (Gen. 6) was a door to be set in the side. It would be this door, a door of exclusion, coupled with the almighty hand of God, that would provide salvation for Noah and his family.

The apostle Paul, centuries later, would be proclaiming the same fundamental truth in 2 Cor. 6:17. "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord..." From Noah's day until now, God has demanded a difference between His people and the world. The door of the ark provided the means of drawing the distinction between the eight souls saved

and the world that was lost.

The door of the ark allowed Noah and his family to enter into safety. Without some means of entrance, they too would have perished along with the world. But consider...they would have perished if an opening, not a door, had been provided. God asked for a door because by its very nature a door can be opened and closed:

Our houses have doors with locks. Why is that? Normally, it is because we don't want anybody entering into our houses uninvited. We own keys to our doors that enable us to enter at will. The uninvited aren't able to enter our doors. That's their purpose.

The unity among diversity movement has, at its godless foundation, a secular message of love, peace and acceptance. Tremendous evils spring forth from this false doctrine. This movement challenges anyone's scriptural right to judge another based on the gospel. It condemns all who seek to exclude those failing to conform to God's commands. It misinterprets the scriptural meaning of "love covers a multitude of sins" by advocating that we must accept people who do not live according to the dictates of the gospel. It applies gross misinterpretation of Romans 14 and teaches a doctrine of liberty and acceptance, even in the face of issues where God has laid down a law that all must obey. It is damaging to our brotherhood in broad, sweeping fashion and will continue to do so until we stop it!

The scriptural variety of peace and unity are highly prized by God and His true followers. Never, however, are they regarded more highly than the truth. Too many among us are attempting to tear the door off the ark. It's too exclusionary for some. The door, properly used, must be closed as the scriptures dictate. Yet there are elements among us seeking to wield it wide open where it can never be closed. In so doing, they are risking salvation for all who are in the ark. Those who do not contest their false doctrines and their looseness with God's word contribute to the effects.

Genesis 7:16 "...and the Lord shut him (Noah and his family) in." Noah wasn't responsible for closing the door. The door wasn't his to close. The Lord did the opening and the closing. The ark and the door attached belonged to the Lord. God's purpose in having the door was twofold: inclusion of the saved and exclusion of the rebellious. The world and the flood waters had to be kept out of the ark if Noah and his family were going to be saved.

Brethren, the time has long passed for us to recognize God's power to exclude. Through his word we have authorization to make exclusions. When we choose not to fight the battles for truth, we jeopardize the safety of the ark today, the church.

Question: Are we the same people today we were 20 years ago? Ask that question of any gospel preacher

and you'll get a unanimous answer back, "no." I fear it is so because we have been infiltrated by the world and the influences of the world. The door has been left so wide open on issues that we need to face, until the truth has often become diluted and powerless. In too many cases there is little distinction between opinion and true doctrine. We've become a brotherhood made up of conservatives, who believe in strict adherence to God's commands and liberals, who believe strictness is restrictive.

Unity, peace and love are the buzzwords of the liberals among us. These words conjure up notions no one would disagree with. Therein lies the danger of their improper usage. The fact that there is scriptural unity, peace and love as opposed to unscriptural is too often ignored. This lax dealing with God's truth is killing us...perhaps more rapidly than we realize.

Brethren, lines must be drawn between false and true doctrine. Battles have to be waged daily. Soldiers of Christ must rise and fight. Preservation of the truth, our heritage, is at stake too many have sacrificed truth for fear of "running folks off" and eventually found themselves in congregations with people who know nothing of the gospel tradition.

Where people understand that conformity to God's will must be maintained, there is strength and safety. Where people believe that any notion they choose to adopt will be tolerated, there is weakness and danger!

Tolerance of beliefs and doctrines not found in the scriptures has already weakened our brotherhood and God's cause. The ship of Zion, the Church, is weakened only by our lack of courage and determination to hold the line, or close the door, by relying on a "thus saith the Lord." Recent memories of hell fire and brimstone preaching were brought to my mind when I realized my children now in their early teens, have no vivid memory of such preaching. I admit that with shame as a Christian in the one cup, no class brotherhood.

Noah's ark had a door. Noah was unable to ignore it. It was a constant reminder during his days on the water that there were those who could have entered, but due to rebellion against God, did not. It was a reminder that outside the door lay devastation and destruction while inside lay true peace, unity, love and safety.

God miraculously used the door Noah had been commanded to install. Noah couldn't prevent God from using it, even if he had wanted to. After the deluge, it was a door that Noah and his family used to exit the ark and step on to dry land. Today in the Church, let us never prevent God, through His gospel, from using the door. If we do, we risk our own safety, peace, unity and love and that of future generations. If we do, we risk failure to reach the dry land of heaven's shore.

--Randy Cantrell, 2412 Oak Brook Drive, Bedford, TX 76021.

TENT MEETING IN WATONGA, OKLAHOMA

It was my pleasure, along with Doug Hawkins and Bruce Roebuck to conduct a week long tent meeting in the small town of Watonga, OK this past May. Regular readers of the paper may remember us writing about this new work in months past. The work there was begun in the fall of 1993 by the congregation at El Reno and Bro. Bob O'Rear was sent there to work with that congregation. Brother Bob has done a good work in that place. In the fall of 1994 the congregation at El Reno decided to discontinue their support of the work there. The brethren at Watonga, along with several preachers who had a hand in helping the work, felt it a little too premature to abandon the work in Watonga. Brother Bill Davis, Jerry Cutter, Miles King, and myself sent out a letter asking for support for Bob. Some was received, but not nearly enough to keep Bob there any substantial amount of time. (By the way, we appreciate brethren who did send their support). Others indicated they might be interested if the work truly showed some potential. So in December the brethren began planning to have a tent meeting in May. Tent meetings are an excellent medium through which to better affect the community. We would encourage brethren to give some thought to having more of them. When plans were finalized, the brethren immediately began working to publicize the meeting. A flyer was sent to every home in the vicinity, a flashing sign was placed beside the highway and countless personal invitations were extended. Although we were quite disappointed in the lack of response from some of the congregations and people who promised to come, we were thoroughly pleased with the community's response. Two different families simply stopped as a result of seeing the sign. Both were from

denominational backgrounds. We had the opportunity to study in the home of one of those families. There were some present who were out of duty who showed a great amount of interest. Also, many who were invited personally did indeed come. The preaching was simple and oriented toward first principles during the meeting. The meeting produced one baptism, one restoration, and two took their stand with the faithful out of digression. Both men that made confessions will be competent helpers in carrying out the services, not to speak of being an asset to the work in general. We are greatly encouraged by what we saw there and we strongly feel that "our fruit will remain." Bro. O'Rear is needed there now more than ever. There are "new-born babes" in Christ who need instruction and edification that only a seasoned teacher or preacher can provide. However, Bro. Bob only has enough support to keep him there until the end of the summer. Would your congregation be willing to help in this worthy endeavor? We would hope that there would be several congregations who could and would be willing to support some each month for at least a year's commitment. Bob will be faithful, as he has been in the past, to send monthly reports on the work and answer any questions the brethren might have. If you would be willing to help, please contact Bob as soon as reasonably possible. If you have questions concerning the work there, you can either call Bob at (405) 623-2245 or any of the following brethren: Bruce Roebuck, (405) 665-5420; Bill Davis, (405) 236-2240; or myself at (405) 436-1331. Brethren, we ask you to seriously consider this and may God bless the work at Watonga or wherever it may be. Kevin W. Presley.

EDITORIAL

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This is so very important for a man who is to lead, shepherd, pilot, guide and rule the Lord's people. Folks will naturally follow such a man because they respect and honor him. A man of good behavior will not cheat his employer by stealing his time. Neither would he cheat his employees of their time. He will be fair, honest and dignified in all his dealings with everyone. The same is true with whom he must deal in the church. By the way, if this term (kosmos) "modest" tells the woman how she should dress would it not also have a bearing on the way an elder dresses? Should he not infer from this that he should always be clean, modest and dignified in his appearance? Surely "good behavior" would include this! Every part of his life must be according to good behavior. Certainly his language needs to be clean and not from the gutter. Jesus said that the language portrays the condition of the heart (Matthew 12:34-37). This applies, of course, to any-

one living the Christian life.

The effectiveness of the church to save sinners depends largely upon the impression she can make on the world, and there are no greater representatives of the church than her elders. How excellent the church could appear to the world in general if her elders (and all the members) were those of good behavior. Only God knows the extent of damage the Lord's church has suffered at the hands of members whose lives have been sinful, worldly and hypocritical before the world. I recall hearing Homer Gay remark that likely it would not be difficult to convert those of the world to Christianity if they could see any difference between themselves and us. How very sad. What a powerful tool Satan has against the truth in the lives of worldly church members. How sad, too, that so little preaching is heard against worldliness (the opposite of good behavior). It is later than we think. As we read Isaiah 21:11: ... "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" DLK

"Changes That Will Affect Us." (II)

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vert it with their perverted, weak doctrine and worldly lives.

PREACHING LIKE PAUL

There is no indication in the word of Paul or any apostle categorizing their preaching as negative or positive. I am sure they preached both as the world classifies it. Paul, received his gospel from the Lord, to "testify the gospel of the grace of God." He said to the Ephesian elders: "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." He said: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." (Gal. 1:12, Acts 20:24,27,32) If today, we preach the same gospel, with the same disposition as Paul, can we go wrong? In writing the epistles and preaching the gospel Paul met the needs of the people. It was not always pleasing to the people, but to please them was not Paul's con-

cern. "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." "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. For neither at anytime used we flattering words, as ye know..." (Gal. 1:10, I Thess. 2:4-5) As to what we are to preach, Paul's instructions were to "Preach the word;..." Yes, we are limited to the word of God for our preaching, just as Jonah of old was. God said to him: "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." (Jonah 3:2) Everything else must be secondary. Scripture quoting may be out of vogue with many, but surely not our brotherhood, is it? We were once known as a Bible believing, scripture quoting, godly living people. We must never lose that identity. Neither we or the world can afford it. The needs of the lost and the saved must be met, so, call it what you will, negative or positive, the truth in all of its fullness and purity must be taught, to convert the lost and to strengthen the church.

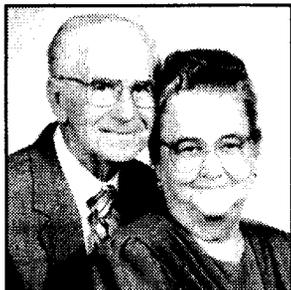
ANNOUNCEMENTS

"PASSING IT ON"

The caption above is the name of a new book of sermons honoring brother Lynwood Smith's fifty-two years in the preaching field. This will be a beautiful book, blue with gold stamping and with fifteen full-length classic sermons, all vintage Lynwood. Pictures are included, some of which are priceless (as I see it), and a short biography of his life. We are expecting the book to be out by July 4, in time for the meetings at Lebanon and Sulphur. The projected price is \$19.95 for the book, plus \$2.05 for postage and handling, if mailed (check or money order). (Oklahoma residents add \$1.40 for sales tax). You may look for it at either of the meetings or order it directly from me at this address: Pathway Books and Bibles, P.O. Box 1183 Ardmore, OK 73402--Johnny Elmore.

50 YEARS TOGETHER

B. B and Annie Lou Cayson will celebrate their 50th Wedding anniversary on Saturday, July 8. Their children will host a reception in their honor from 2-4:30 in the afternoon at the Holiday Inn at 6101 Shelby Oaks Drive, Memphis, TN. If anyone is passing through we would love to have you join us. Remember them as they celebrate this joyous occa-



sion. No gifts please, just a card to let them know you are thinking of them.

CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATE

Glendale, AZ is still meeting in the same location. However Bro. Art Lynch has moved to 7740 W. Michigan, Glendale, AZ 85308.

New phone number (602) 938-7506 home, (602) 435-4219 work, Time of Service 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

Tuscon, AZ: Change area code for both churches to 520. The church meeting at 2920 North Los Altos Ave. No longer meet on Wed. night.

Cedaredge, CO: No longer meeting.

Seminole, OK: Change time of meeting to 2 p.m. Sun, and 6:30 p.m. Wed.

Jeff, KY: no longer meeting.

PREACHER WANTED

The churches at Brazil and Pleasant Grove, IN. are looking for a preacher to move to that area and work among them. If you are interested or know of anyone who might be, you may contact the following brethren: Vaughn Butt, Rt. 14, Brazil, IN 47834 (812) 864-2404 or Darrell Butt, Rt. 1, Brazil, IN 47834 (812) 864-2276.

1995 EASTERN LABOR DAY MEETING NORTH CANTON, OH AUGUST 30-SEPTEMBER 3

We are pleased to announce that the 1995 Eastern Labor Day Meeting will be hosted by the Church of Christ - Mt. Pleasant located in North Canton, OH.

Bro. Ron Alexander of Niangua will hold the meeting. The theme for the meeting will be "Keys to Successful Domestic Evangelism." Gospel meetings will be conducted nightly at 7:30 p.m., Wednesday through Saturday evening with services Wednesday-Friday at the church building and Saturday evening and Lord's Day at Springfield High School. Lord's Day services will be held at 9:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. We encourage everyone to make plans now to attend and to make their hotel reservations soon. The congregation here is looking forward with great anticipation to a tremendous spiritual feast and an encouraging experience to be shared by brethren from far and near. For more information about the meeting or special hotel rates or accommodations contact Floyd Harris, Jr. at 216-499-1540 or Denver Ratliff at 216-699-9044.

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

Michelle Bloss and Wyn Baker--On the morning of Jan. 2, 1995, I was privileged to perform the wedding ceremony of Michelle Bloss and Wyn Baker. Each of these young people have enjoyed the many benefits of having been raised in a Christian home. Michelle is the daughter of Tommy and Judy Bloss of Wayne, W. Va. Wyn is the son of Ervin and Mary Baker of Houston, Mo.. This ceremony took us back to simpler and maybe even better days when the beauty was furnished by the occasion and not the surroundings. This Christian couple stood before an antique fireplace in a preacher's home and exchanged the ancient vows of love and commitment before members of their immediate families. The simple elegance of this wedding could not have been more beautiful or more meaningful had it been performed in some expensive sanctuary with all its garnishings. The bride was brought to the groom by her father and was attended by her mother as the maid of honor. The best man standing beside the groom was his father, an elder in the congregation where he grew up. All of us were moved when Wyn sang a quiet love song to his lady. This couple make their new home in Harrisonville, Mo., where they work with the church. May the Lord richly bless their lives together is our prayer.-- Don R. Pruitt.

Becky Smith and Jeremy Humphers were united in holy matrimony on Saturday afternoon, May 20th. The beautiful candlelight ceremony took place in Ada, OK before a large crowd of family members and friends. Jeremy and Becky are both senior, honor-roll students at East Central University and faithful members of the Lord's church at Galey, OK. We have been long-time friends of Becky's parents, Ron and Darlene Smith, and have known Becky since she was born, so I was honored to be asked to officiate the ceremony. We wish them God's richest blessings as they keep the vows of lifelong love and loyalty they exchanged on that day.--Carl M. Johnson.

OUR DEPARTED

*IN MEMORY OF TYLER BRANCATO,
DECEMBER 29, 1994 - APRIL 19, 1995*

TYLER

He was a perfect creation, Dad's bright little bundle of joy, But somehow a dark day arrived to steal his little boy.

Medicine isn't perfect every day. And with doctor late to deliver, baby slipped quietly away.

But God is always perfect. He is perfect in every way. And his mother's heart was breaking, Tyler went gently away.

He would be no longer mortal, the angels care for him today. As his little eyes opened, and while milk and honey bathed his face,

I'm sure he must have said, this is sure a beautiful place!

-Lance King

Tompkins--Irven Tompkins was born to Thurston and Mamie (Jones) Tompkins, Feb. 8th, 1914 in McClain County, OK. He died April 28th, 1995. He was married to Leora Mae Rollins Dec. 24th, 1935. To this union came two children Charles and Arlene (Cloud). In addition to these he left four grandchildren, a sister and two brothers. Preceding him in death were his parents. Irven obeyed the gospel under the preaching of Brother Homer L. King in Aug. 1939. He was a farmer and worked for the University of OK until retirement in 1967. Irven worshiped with the church in Lexington since 1956. An overflowing crowd gathered to pay their last respect to a man who was deserving. His grandchildren and nieces and nephews had gathered earlier to record singing for his memorial service. Any who had the pleasure of knowing Irv loved him. The words of Solomon depict his way of life toward his fellowman "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly; and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Leora and the children stood by him rendering care in the last months which he likely remained unaware. It is hard to think of our world without him, yet we know his influence like our love for him will not pass away. Words of comfort and warning were spoken by this writer on such a fitting occasion.--Barney Owens.

Jones, Jewel: Born Sept. 19, 1900. Died May 4, 1995. Sister Jones' name almost automatically came to mind when anyone thought of the San Diego church. She, and her husband, Walter, were part of a small band that first assembled in 1941 to worship God together. That congregation continues to worship, and is now known as the Pepper Drive Church of Christ in El Cajon. Her constant smile, quiet voice, and excellent cooking have been appreciated by the local brethren and traveling preachers alike. She was hostess to Homer and Helen King when Don was a very small boy; Homer and Susie Gay; and a host of trav-

eling preachers on through the seventies. After Walter's death in 1950 she lived with the Fishers, Marvin and Johnnie, until her death. She was a blessing indeed! Saturday, May 6, 1995, she was buried adjacent to her husband. Beautiful singing was by the Church of Christ singing group. Brother Fred Lay and I conducted the funeral services. Beautiful flowers were in abundance. Phone calls, cards, and personal expressions of sympathy were unsurpassed, plus unlimited food to the Fisher house. This outpouring of love attested to the high esteem in which she was held, and of the love that all had for her. She surely is a special flower in the master's bouquet. I ought to know; she was a part of our family for forty-four years, and she was indeed, a "Jewel." --Marvin E. Fisher



Barney Owens, 8782 Meadowview Ln., W. Chester, OH 45069 - It has been my pleasure to be with the church near Mitchell, IN again for a short meeting. It was good to have Jimmy Cating, Walter Hunter, and Dennis Smith in attendance. Also Joe Loughmiller and wife, who are always good to travel to any meeting in their area. Also it was good to be with the church at Lexington, OK for two services. I was glad to hear Allen Bailey recently. By the time you read this piece I'll be with the church at Sentinel, OK through 16th; then on to Mtn. Grove, MO 22-30. Aug. 4-11 I will be with the church at Imperial, NE. Pray for us in the work. If possible come to any or all these services. If you have vacation time without plans, why not join us for a meeting and explore the regions around them during the day?

Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808 June 5-The meeting at Lovejoy, Pa. was a wonderful experience. Brethren from all over the State of PA as well as some from OH and WV came to share with us in this great homecoming gathering. The building was filled every night except one. Our stay in the Eugene Lockard home was most enjoyable. Next we were in Tulsa, Ok. (Eleventh St.) with good crowds and one confession. The Lord willing we go next to Cleburne, Tx. June 7-11, then to San Angelo, Tx. June 18-25, Claxton, Mo. July 5-9, Fairview near Marion, La. July 16-23, Jamesville, Mo. July 30- Aug. 6, and Canon City, Co. Aug. 13-20. It is always good to have our fellow preachers in the audience when we preach. Of late we have been blessed with the presence of Richard Bunner, Jack Cutter, Kevin Presley, and Bruce Roebuck. The Lord bless the Church everywhere.

Carl M. Johnson, 1400 Northcrest Drive, Ada, OK 74820—I just closed a good meeting at Orange, CA. The presence of preachers Don McCord, Larry Lay, Carney Briggs and brethren from area congregations was a big help to the meeting. Since my last report I have also conducted meetings at Nashville, TN, Washington, OK, Abilene, TX, Lodi, CA, and Arlington, TX. These meetings resulted in one baptism, the restoration of an eighty-six year old sister, and several confessions of faults. I also gave an oral presentation

of the last four chapters of Mark at the Contending For The Truth commentary study in Irving, TX. I have finished the manuscript for the commentary on Mark and it should be in the hands of the publishers this year. My schedule for the next few months includes: Corsicana, TX (June 11-18), Oklahoma City (Twenty-first Street) (June 23-25), Marietta, GA (July 8-16), Aurora, Mo (July 21-30), Napoleon, AL (Aug. 6-13), Odom, Mo (Aug. 20-27), Niangua, Mo (Sept. 17-24), Arpelar, OK (Sept. 27-Oct. 1), Ceres, CA (Oct. 15-22), Auburn, CA (Oct. 23-29), Springfield, Mo (Nov. 4-12), Seminole, OK (Dec. 8-10). We continue to solicit your prayers.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, June 12- It has been my pleasure and privilege to preach at Yuba City, Atwater and Santa Rosa, CA since last report in addition to the Fremont congregation. Johnny Elmore held us a good meeting and we hope the church was strengthened. We were able to go over and hear him twice while he was in Turlock, CA which we enjoyed. It has been encouraging to hear good reports out of the Philippines lately. The work continues to progress. The Lord willing, Pat and I will visit them in a few months. They have long asked for her to come so we will do our best this year to grant their wishes. We look forward to the Lebanon, Mo 4th of July meeting and also a meeting at West Chester, Ohio afterwards. We lived and worked among them for about two years nearly twenty-five years ago so it will be great to see them again. Lord bless you all.

Jerry Dickinson, 13803 Crosshaven, Houston, TX 77015- I recently enjoyed being in meetings with the churches in Little Rock, Arkansas and Sand Grove, Texas. I think we had visitors at every service in Little Rock and I enjoyed my stay with the brethren there. I stayed with the Styers again and especially enjoyed talking and studying with Melvin who is always reflective and thought provoking. I have been going to Sand Grove for something like twenty-five years and I love these brethren dearly. We had a good meeting with enthusiastic, albeit small, crowds. I was refreshed by the end of the meeting. I also got to attend part of the debate in West Monroe, Louisiana. Allen Bailey and Billy Dickinson were both outstanding in their vigorous defense of the truth on the cups and classes issues. Every now and then I meet brethren who claim debates do no good and are even hurtful to the cause. They should have been at this debate. There were good attentive crowds (on both sides of the issues) and the debaters, though forceful of course, conducted themselves as gentlemen. At any rate, the seed was planted, and who knows where it will germinate to the glory of God. Brethren, if we do not get a little more aggressive in our espousal and defense of what we believe is the truth we are going to lose the next generation. They need to hear the truth preached, debated, and affirmed in no uncertain terms and they need to hear it from us! My schedule for the summer is as follows: Cable Ridge, MO May 28-June 4; Iuka, AR, June 7-11; Harrison, AR, June 17-25; Pleasant Hill, Mo, July 12-16; Goshen, OH, July 23-30; and Huntington WV, August 5-13. My son Jason has traveled with me a bit in the past and may travel with me a little again this year. He is living in Joplin right now and has been preaching in some of the churches in that area. He has expressed his desire to preach full time and would be interested in working with a congregation that might need the assistance of a young man. If you know of such a work you might contact him - or me, and I'll pass the word on to him. May God bless the work, the workers, and those who support them.

P. Duane Permenter, P. O. Box 1223, Riverbank, CA, 95367— Recently I held a meeting here at the 64th. Street congregation in Sacramento. The crowds were good and we were successful to have some outside interest. Other churches were also good to cooperate during the meeting. It was great to hear the preaching and singing over Memorial Day weekend at Turlock, California. It was a pleasure to hear Johnnie Elmore at Fremont in addition to Turlock. I continue to conduct Bible studies both at Oakdale and in Sacramento. The cooperation between these two congregations has been very good and I appreciate their desire to grow both numerically and spiritually. The teaching in the assembly here at 64th. street has improved considerably and this is a great help to the work. I am looking forward to the California Labor day meeting in Bakersfield this year. May God bless the faithful everywhere. Please pray for us.

Kenneth R. Middick, P.O. Box 269, Seneca, Mo. 64985 - During the past few months we have been able to enjoy the preaching of the following brethren: Ronny Wade, Bruce Roebuck, Taylor Joyce, Smith Bibens, Lonnie York, Nelson Nichols, Dale Wellman, Paul Nichols, Wyn Baker, Don McCord, Lynwood Smith and Kevin Presley. This area is blessed with plenty of opportunities to attend gospel meetings and the preaching brethren that have presented the truth have done a wonderful job. We have been blessed to have Bruce and Tanya Roebuck, and Kevin Presley stay with us while they held meetings in the area. We look forward to more good meetings throughout this year. We have had the privilege of speaking at Miami, Ok., Cable Ridge, Mo. and Leawood, Mo. in the past months as well. The work here, in Southwest Mo., has been going well and we have baptized several; however, even with private home studies, we have not been able to keep them all. The Lord is blessing us with increase and we are thankful for the effort of neighboring brethren for their continued help and support in the work. God Bless all throughout the churches.

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, June 8. Sally and I enjoyed the meeting at Fremont, Ca very much. We had a beautiful place to stay and enjoyed visiting the members, also. It is nice to see a church with young families like Fremont. We had good attendance and one confession of faults. I spoke at Manteca, May 17, to a full house and began the meeting at Turlock May 19. This is referred to as the memorial Day meeting and it was wonderful to see visitors from over the state. We had good crowds, good interest and great singing. We enjoyed staying with Richard and Glenda DeGough and visiting with preachers Don King and Bennie Cryer and Duane Permenter, and Alan Bonifay, Fred Harris, and Raymond Fox during the meeting. There was one confession of faults and we closed May 28. I am now in a meeting at Ft. Smith, AR where Taylor Joyce and Tony Denton live and work.

Bruce Roebuck, P.O. Box 184, Wynnewood, OK 73098, June 7 — The work here in Wynnewood has begun well. We've begun a weekly radio program on a local station, studies with a number of brethren, and a door knocking effort. We continue to work on leads as opportunities appear. Since my last report, we were privileged to hold a meeting in Seneca, MO. The meeting closed with one restoration. In April we enjoyed a Sunday with the brethren at Ada, OK. In May we were involved in a tent meeting with Doug Hawkins and Kevin

Presley in Watonga, OK. The meeting there resulted in one baptism, two confessions, and one restoration. The work there is promising and in need of our support. Brother Bob O'Rear is doing a fine work. He needs to stay there! At this point finances for this work are of utmost importance. If your congregation can help in any manner contact Bob immediately. It would be a sad commentary on our brotherhood to let this work die. Remember us in your prayers.

Brian Burns, A.P. 20026, Comayaguela, D.C., Honduras, Central America—Dear brethren, the church in Honduras greets you all. My family and I have been involved in the work here in Honduras for the past 19 months. This time has literally flown with all of the work that must be done throughout the country. During this time three new congregations have been started and two of these are in new departments where there are not any other congregations. The preachers have been working very hard in converting people to Christ and then teaching them to follow the commands of Jesus. Most all of the churches have been growing in numbers except in some of the most remote areas where it is hard to arouse interest in spiritual things. Since January of this year the faithful church has been meeting in El Salvador as well. Brother Jose Molina has moved there with his family and is doing a very good work in the area of the capital, San Salvador. There are now two congregations meeting there. We are very thankful to God for giving the increase in this work. The work here has received many blessings, but they have not come without some problems or "heresies" as the word of God tells us in 1Cor. 11:19. My family and I plan on visiting the States this summer and then returning to the work for at least two more years. We hope to see as many of you as possible during June and July. Please remember us in your prayers.

NOTE the new phone number: 011-504-21-8905.

Kevin W. Presley, P.O. Box 2398, Ada, OK 74821 (405) 436-1331. The meeting at Bloomfield, IA was successful. I enjoyed my first visit there. This congregation has been rather isolated for many years, and was ready for a gospel meeting. We had several visitors from the community, some of whom were out of duty. The meeting closed with one baptism, two restorations, and one confession. I look forward to being back with them next year. Next, I enjoyed being with the brethren at Watonga, OK. This was the tent meeting we advertised in the O.P.A. It was a pleasure to work with Brethren Bruce Roebuck, Doug Hawkins and Bob O'Rear in this effort. The Lord blessed this meeting with several encouraging results. (Read our report on the meeting elsewhere in the paper.) We appreciated Miles King and Bill Davis for coming over as well as all of the brethren from around that came. Some even came from as far as Missouri. The Lord willing, I will be in meetings throughout the summer. I am to begin tomorrow night in Seneca, MO. I go from there to White Bluff, TN for a meeting, and then on to both fourth of July gatherings. In July, I look forward to being with the brethren at Galey, OK and McAlester, OK. Pray for us in the Lord's work.

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

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

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

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

VOL. LXVII

LEBANON, MISSOURI, AUGUST, 1995

NO. 8

UNITY IN DIVERSITY - AGAIN?

By Jerry Dickinson

Adapting Ronald Reagan's famous one liner in his presidential debate with Jimmy Carter many years ago, we might well say with regard to the unity in diversity advocates, "Well, there they go again!" It has been quite a while since those who advocate we ought to fellowship brethren worshiping in error have raised their heads (among us anyway) however of late I see a few heads raising and a few voices once again rising to ask why we cannot accept and recognize our brethren who just happen to differ with us over matters such as individual cups, bible classes, fermented wine in the communion, instrumental music, speaking in tongues, dancing in church, etc.

Surely, someone may interject, no member of the church of Christ believes in fellowshiping people who practice the things you have just mentioned! Oh yes, dear reader, this is the position taken by those advocating unity in diversity. Many years ago some anonymous brother sent me a tape of one of Carl Ketcherside's sermons on unity in diversity. Carl Ketcherside is no longer living, but he was one of the founding fathers of the movement in question. In the sermon, he advocated accepting and fellowshiping brethren who practiced all kinds of unscriptural things, including those who spoke in tongues. He commented that sometimes people asked him what ought to be done about church members who claimed they were speaking in tongues. His reply was, he said, that we ought to just accept them and love them!

DIVERSITY IN MATTERS OF LIBERTY

Let me now say, dear readers, that I do believe in unity in diversity! However, the diversity among us must be in matters of liberty and not in matters of faith. In matters of liberty there are and can be differences of opinion and practice, but in matters of faith there can be no such variance. Sometimes we are asked why we can tolerate differences in brethren over such matters as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but cannot tolerate differences in other things such as individual cups or wine in the communion. In other words, the argument is advanced: If you can fellowship someone who differs with you on how the Holy Spirit

indwells Christians, why can't you fellowship someone who disagrees with you on using instrumental music in worship?

What a person believes about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit does not affect his salvation, nor does it cause him to transgress the will of God. Some believe the Holy Spirit personally indwells the Christian and others believe the Spirit indwells via the medium of the Word of God. Obviously, someone is wrong in their beliefs and conclusions. Neither of these beliefs or conclusions, however, affect a person's salvation. If I am wrong in my understanding of how the Spirit indwells a Christian, my misinterpretation does not cause me to transgress the Word of God.

Is the foregoing a parallel to the use of instrumental music in worship? We believe that our singing should be without the aid of instrumental music while others believe that instruments are permissible. Someone is wrong in their beliefs and conclusions. I maintain, in contrast to differences about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, that the difference over the use of instrumental music in worship does affect a person's standing before God and causes a transgression of God's Word. Do those who use instruments of music in worship transgress the Word of God? Regardless of what a person believes about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, that belief does not cause him to transgress the Word of God and sin. However, using instruments in worship to God is a transgression of the Word of God and constitutes sin. There, dear reader, is precisely the difference.

Let me give another example. I once talked with a brother who argued that a person needed to be baptized in running water. Since baptism washes our sins away, he argued, if a person is baptized in a baptistery or a pond that person's sins would be left to float around after baptism. The next person who got in the water would get the person's sins. But, he went on, if a person was baptized in running water then the sins would be washed on down the river or stream. I tried to reason with the man. I pointed out that the obvious fallacy with his position was that our sins are not

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Editorial

ELDERS #5

By Don L. King

"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior,..."(1 Timothy 3:2) Again, " But a lover of hospitality,..."(Titus 1:8)

Our study of qualifications for elders brings us to "hospitality." Not only is this a qualification given by the Holy Spirit for elders but for all Christians. Peter said in 1 Peter 4:9, "Use hospitality one to another without grudging." Hence, the elders are to lead and be examples in this also.

The word for hospitality in the Greek text is "PHILOXENOS" and is defined by Thayer and others as: " Hospitable, generous to guests, loving toward guests, given to hospitality," etc., etc. Webster says, "Receiving and entertaining strangers with kindness and without reward; kind to strangers and guests; disposed to treat guests with generous kindness." Hence it is written with insistence by the Holy Spirit that those who wish to be elders must be known for their hospitality. It is a part of their practice to be hospitable.

As we mentioned just above, all Christians are to be hospitable. "Use hospitality one to another without grudging."(1 Peter 4:9) Or, in other words when you invite a visitor home with you don't be thinking within (as you are inviting him) "Oh I hope he can't come! I'm too tired today." That's not really hospitality. That's only an outward act. You are begrudgingly being hospitable. How would you feel if the visitor could read your thoughts as can the Lord? That would be very embarrassing wouldn't it? The Record tells us we are to show kindness toward all men. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Galatians 6:10) Again, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." (Hebrews 13:2)

Elders must be men who love strangers (visitors too) and will without hesitation receive them into their homes to entertain them and supply their needs generously. They must be men who have the same attitude of the good Samaritan who helped the stranger on the way from Jerusalem to Jericho.

One of the great needs of every congregation is hospitality and friendliness, and who should be better fitted to lead and set the example for this good trait than the overseers? All of us (including elders) would be better known and loved if we all cultivated the habit of warmly greeting all new comers and visitors to ev-

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: Was the gathering in Acts 20:7 on Saturday night? If so, would it be scriptural to partake of the Lord's Supper at that time today? (CA)

Answer: The Scriptures teach in Acts 20 that while enroute to Jerusalem, Paul stopped in Troas where he spent a week with the disciples, and on the "first day of the week" assembled with them to "break bread." The meeting in question took place at night. (Acts 20:7-12) The "when" of the meeting has been the subject of controversy and discussion for years. Some believe that the meeting was held immediately following the onset of the Lord's day or Saturday night. Such a conclusion is reached by accepting the Jewish method of counting time i.e. from sunset to sunset or from evening to evening. Thus, the first day of the week would have begun at sunset on Saturday and continued until sunset on Sunday. Others reason that the Roman method of computing time should be used i.e. from midnight to midnight, hence the meeting took place on Sunday evening, just prior to the end of the first day of the week. It is the belief of this writer that the disciples assembled soon after sunset on what we now call Saturday evening, but what was to them the beginning of the first day of the week. My reasons for so believing are as follows:

1. There is no indication that the Roman method of computing time was in general use at that time. In addition, the Jews were the dominant force in the early Church. There is evidence that many of them continued to adhere to Jewish customs and practices and only gave them up under great pressure from the apostles (Note Paul's writings in Romans 14 and the book of Galatians). It would therefore be highly unlikely that these people would abandon their method of keeping time for one foreign to their practice.

2. Luke's account informs us that Paul arrived in Troas in the early part of the week and tarried there seven days. It would seem only natural that such a wait was for the purpose of assembling with the disciples to observe the Lord's supper on the first day of the week. If we assume that the meeting was on Sun-

day night, one wonders why the apostle would allow the whole of the daylight portion of the Lord's day to pass before convening the meeting. As Guy N. Woods notes, "This appears so inconsistent with what we know of the apostle that we unhesitatingly reject the view that he would be thus indifferent to obligations he deemed so vitally important." Some have advanced the notion that these disciples were slaves, hence unable to assemble in the daylight hours because their masters would not permit it. Such an assumption is just that: an assumption. There is no evidence that they were slaves.

3. Another problem surfaces with the assumption that the Roman method of recognizing time should be adopted here. Many believe that "the bread" in Acts 20:11 is a further reference to the Lord's supper. They reason that since the article appears before the word "bread" in verse 11, the writer intended for the reader to identify the "bread" with the earlier mention in verse seven. If this be the case, then the observance of the supper would have been on Monday morning since it was "past midnight." The interpretation of this text is certainly not without difficulty. However, it should pose no problem for God's people today. When churches partake of the Lord's supper during the daylight hours of the first day of the week, Sunday, there is no doubt that what they do will be acceptable. Our desire should always be to follow that which is right and cannot be wrong, rather than to see how questionable we can become. Even though Acts 20:7 was a meeting on what we would call Saturday night, in the opinion of this writer, those translations that say "On Saturday night..." do an injustice to the text and the reader, for no such translation is justified. While the comment may be correct, it is just that--a comment. To insist that the Lord's Supper be observed on Saturday night overlooks the obvious i.e. The first day of the week embraced more than Saturday night hence cannot be limited to that specific time. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Springfield, MO 65808)

"THEY THINK IT STRANGE"

By Billy D. Dickinson

The book of 1 Peter was written during a time of great oppression, when persecution was intense and severe and Christians were in need of comfort and encouragement. In 1 Pet. 4:4, Peter gives one of the reasons why the people of God were undergoing such affliction. It was because they were misunderstood and unappreciated by the people of the world: "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking

evil of you." Yes, there are many things about the Christian's way of life, including its self-discipline and refusal to participate in sinful behavior, that others find strange and surprising. That is why Christ's disciples are sometimes put down and mistreated, because people often treat with derision those things they can't quite fathom or that is different from the norm.

Here is a thought worth pursuing! If you are a

child of God, you need to contemplate on the following question long and hard: Is there anything about you that people find strange? Have you ever been told by someone, due to your way of life and manner of conduct, "I just don't understand you. You have a strange way of looking at things. What a strange person"? When the world can detect no difference between the conduct of a professed Christian and one of its own, something is drastically wrong. Let me emphasize right here that I'm not referring to what Paul writes of in 2 Tim. 3:5, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," but rather I am referring to real, genuine Christianity. It seems to me that real discipleship is so rarely seen in the world that sometimes even professed followers of Christ are amazed when they see it in action. When true Christian living is exemplified in the lives of those who are rendering acceptable service unto God, people are going to find certain parts of it strange. No, it's not being different just for the sake of being different, but when real, genuine Christianity is seen by people of the world today, it will have the same effect now as it did in Peter's day—"They think it strange." Let's notice some specific areas of life where that is true.

First, some think it strange when they see the Christian's total dedication to Christ. Surely all students of the Bible will agree the Bible teaches that a disciple of the Lord must be totally dedicated to Christ. After all, that is the undeniable import of such teaching as found in Luke 14:26, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Who will deny that Jesus demands to be first in our lives? Indeed, we are commanded to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt. 6:33). However, it is one thing to give lip service to that principle of truth and it's quite another to live accordingly! I submit unto you that when people put the Lord first in a consistent way, it produces some radical results. Since many have not really accepted the demands of true discipleship, they are amazed at those results. When people see the principle of total commitment carried out in one's life in a practical way—not just in theory, but applied in real situations, they are amazed to see what all is really involved.

In most churches today, for example, faithfulness in attending the worship services is not something of great importance. If members miss a Lord's day service to go on vacation, attend a family reunion, or to simply go camping in the mountains, that isn't considered to be a serious violation of God's word (regardless of what Paul writes in Heb. 10:25). Thus when they see people who are committed to gathering with the saints each first day of the week to eat the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7), they find it strange. When some go on vacation and part of the planning

of the trip is making sure there is a scriptural congregation to worship at on Sunday, some find that strange. When some would turn down a pleasure trip (even all expenses paid) simply because there is no scriptural congregation nearby to worship at, many think it strange to pass up such an opportunity. What if some members of your family came for the weekend and they didn't want to attend the worship services with you on Sunday? What would you do? Some would think it strange, and perhaps even rude, if you left them at the house and went on to the services. However, if you have a desire to put the Lord first, that would be what is demanded. Others have faced situations where their children's school activities and sporting events interfered with the services of the church. As a result, they asked the teachers and coaches involved to please excuse their children. How many times do you think a teacher or coach faces that problem? They surely think it strange for people to be that dedicated to the Lord's cause in this day and age. Yes, if you really put Christ first in your life, there will be times when people will think it strange.

Second, some think it strange when they see our commitment to purity of doctrine and worship. Some just don't understand why we believe in such strict adherence to the word of God, as we refuse to add to it or subtract from it (Rev. 22: 18-19). When it comes to the commands of the Gospel, many are amazed at how we insist that all that Jesus commanded is necessary to salvation—even the act of baptism (Matt. 7:21; Mark 16:16). When it comes to the worship services of the church, many find it strange how the worship is primitive and simple in design. I know that many must find our worship services "different," especially when they visit for the first time—no instrumental music, one assembly with the men only doing the teaching (no Bible classes), the communion every first day of the week, one loaf and one cup of the fruit of the vine in the communion, and a collection taken up only on Sunday. The neighbors of some brethren must find it strange that some actually travel a considerable number of miles each Lord's day to attend the services of a faithful congregation, all because they think it's important to worship God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Yes, modern-man may find that strange, but it's our respect for God's word and its authority that causes us "not to go beyond the things which are written" (1 Cor. 4:6). So many today have such little respect for the Scriptures, as they believe that any old way will do, they are shocked to see some still holding to the word of God for all they practice in doctrinal matters. Also, some will appeal to the Scriptures only in certain choice areas; when they see people consistently opposing all unscriptural innovations, they find it strange!

Finally, multitudes think it strange when we don't engage in their sinful behavior. That is the point of

1 Pet. 4:4. Real conversion had taken place and people could see the difference. When a person who formerly participated in sinful conduct becomes a Christian, the world can't understand why that person can no longer "run with them to the same excess of riot." If we will truly live as Tit. 2:11-12 demands— "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts...living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world"— people will see the difference and be surprised! It may be a Christian teenager refus-

ing to wear shorts in the gym class. It may be in taking a stand for righteousness by refusing to go to the prom or a school dance. It may be a refusal to tell a lie for the boss, or by walking away when others are engaging in filthy and suggestive talk. Yes, some don't understand the transforming nature of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16). However, if you are a Christian, you might as well get ready for it and learn to live with it— "They think it Strange!" -- 215 Forest Hills Dr., West Monroe, LA 71291.

GOD HATED "PUTTING AWAY" IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, MALACHI 2:16

NOTES ON 1 CORINTHIANS 7:10-11

God hated "putting away" in the Old Testament, Malachi 2:16. In the New Testament we learn quickly that "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." This instruction involving the divorce of a husband and wife is found in Matthew 19:6. It is a law regulating citizens of the kingdom of Christ. In spite of this plain instruction the apostle Paul had to answer a question about the matter of divorce in 1 Corinthians 7:10-11. We do not know the exact question to which he was replying but there are many things in these two verses that need to be considered from time to time. Perhaps there are things that need to be reconsidered by a few in the kingdom. The verses read: And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

A married couple evidently wanted to know if they could get a divorce and marry someone else. The Lord had spoken on this subject during His earthly ministry in Matthew 19:1-10. In those verses He had stated that there was only one cause recognized for a divorce and remarriage and that was "fornication." A divorce and remarriage for any other cause would constitute adultery on the part of both the one doing the "putting away" as well as anyone marrying either of them. Jesus made it clear that the

fornication had to occur before the divorce in order for the innocent party to have the right to another marriage. In spite of this instruction there are a few citizens today who believe they can get a divorce before any fornication has been committed and then wait until their former spouse has remarried (or, during the single state that followed the divorce, commits fornication) in order to get the Lord's exception. In this way, they believe they can qualify for another marriage. They also seem to believe that since they are the "innocent party," (that is, did not commit fornication themselves, and actually did not want a divorce in the first place,) that

they are still married "in the eyes of God;" therefore, even though a legal divorce has taken place, the fornication committed after the divorce adulterates this "marriage." Then, though the fornication took place after the divorce, they suppose that they have the scriptural right to a remarriage.

Brethren, this cannot be. The apostle Paul teaches the opposite of this in 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 in the following ways: **A LEGAL DIVORCE DOES NOT SOLVE THE MARRIAGE**

What ever "depart" means in verse 10, if it occurs, they would be in an "unmarried" state "in the eyes of God." A couple might be "separated" and married at the same time but they cannot scripturally or logically be "married" and "unmarried" at the same time. A person is speculating when he or she says, "We are still married in the eyes of God" if a divorce has occurred without the cause of fornication. The only way we can know what the "eyes of God" see about a matter is to read what He said in His word. His word says, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried.

That is what God considered was "in His eyes" about this matter. They are now "unmarried" just as the ones in verse 8. There, the "unmarried" were in the condition the widows and Paul himself were in. "In God's eye" they were not married and so he referred to them as "unmarried." We can attach no other meaning to the same word in verse 11. Once the wife departed they were "unmarried." If one of them then committed fornication it would not adulterate the previous marriage. That marriage had ended. Therefore, neither can claim the exception in Matthew 19:9 as a basis for remarriage.

To claim that "depart" in verse 10 just means a separation and not a divorce ignores this plain statement that they were "unmarried." At the very best it places a forced interpretation on the word "unmarried." Whatever interpretation is given to "married" in verse 10 is undone in verse 11 where "unmarried" is used. Whatever they had in verse 10

(married) they no longer had (unmarried) in verse 11 if she refused to accept the advise Paul gave her and followed through with a divorce. Besides, we have to give "depart" the same meaning as we give "...let not man put asunder" in Matthew 19:6 since, in both places, a form of the same Greek verb is used. Thayer's, p 674, indicates that in this verse it means "to leave a husband or wife: of divorce, 1 Co. vii. 11, 15." One of the reasons Thayer & other scholars add the comment "of divorce" to their definition of "*Chorizo*" is because the word was used in that manner before New Testament times, during the time of the New Testament writings, and also in the times following the writings of the New Testament. Moulton and Milligan in their works, "The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament: Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non Literary Sources," define *chorizo* and note that "the word has almost become a technical term in connexion with divorce as in 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11, & 15, (696). To prove their contention Moulton and Milligan supply four citations from the Papyri where *chorizo* is used of divorce (13 B.C.; 66 A.D.; 81 A.D.; 154 A.D.), (696). Baur, Arndt, & Gingrich provide similar evidence in their lexicon. After defining *chorizo* in the middle passive as to "separate (oneself), be separated of divorce" they add, "often in marriage contracts in the Papyri" giving one citation from the second century B.C. and three from the first century B.C. (898).

It seems to me that if we advise someone: "A divorce for trivial causes is not something to have despair about. Remember, you are still married in 'God's eyes.' Just wait around for awhile and maybe your former spouse will commit fornication or get remarried. Then you will have a right to remarry" - we are endangering their eternal welfare. That advice is not what Paul gave the "married" at Corinth.

WHY, THEN, IS ANOTHER WORD USED FOR THE HUSBAND PUTTING AWAY HIS WIFE?

This verb is used again in verse 13 regarding the

wife leaving her husband. The fact is, both words in the Greek are used to mean divorce. This is not an unusual style of writing. In the narrative of Matthew 19:3-12 three words are employed by the Holy Spirit that have to do with divorce. They are found in verses 3, 6, and 7. So it was not unusual for Paul to use two different words for divorce in his instructions in 1 Corinthians 7:10-13. One is translated "depart" in verse 10. The other is translated "put away" in verses 11-12, and "leave" in verse 13. "Depart," "put away," and "leave" have the idea of divorce in mind. This practice of using different words for divorce in the same context was also employed in New Testament times in legal documents concerning divorce.

WHY IS THE MAN STILL REFERRED TO AS HER HUSBAND IN VERSE 11?

Because at the time these instructions were being given they were still husband and wife. This is easy to remember when you read the first part of verse 10.

And unto the married I command... They were still married to each other at this time. In other words, the wife did not hear the first part of the instructions to her, run out and get a divorce, and then come back and say, "What is next?" They were still husband and wife. Their personal names were not used but since when Paul wrote this, the man was still her husband Paul identified the only one she could marry if she got a divorce for a cause less than fornication in spite of Paul's command not to divorce "her husband."

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, these verses teach that if a divorce occurs for some trivial cause the only marriage God will sanction for either one is a marriage to their former spouse. Some marriages in the Lord's family are not scriptural because the teaching of this verse has been ignored. Let those who direct the affairs of the congregations where such is the case beware. The Lord is coming back - perhaps soon.

SALVATION BY GRACE

by Jeffery L. Thompson

There are a number of people in the religious world today who, in an attempt to deny the responsibilities of the individual for his or her soul salvation, smugly quote (or misquote) Ephesians 2:8-9 and say, "Ye are saved by grace and that not of yourselves lest any man should boast." Certainly, no child of God would deny the grace of God is a rudimentary part of his salvation. And true, man did nothing to merit the consideration of God for salvation, and true, man had nothing to do with the design of God's gracious scheme of redemption. This is a far cry, however, from saying that man has nothing to do with his own salvation

or that he can be saved regardless of the actions he may or may not take. Such an opinion demonstrates a gross misunderstanding of the grace of God.

I'm of the opinion that the failure to understand grace as it pertains to man's salvation stems from one of two causes: 1) a misunderstanding of what grace is, or 2) a misunderstanding of what the Bible says about grace. Let us consider each of these possible causes of misunderstanding and find out just what does grace have to do with our salvation.

First, what is grace? The Greek word translated grace in Ephesians 2:8 is *charis*, and according to

W.E. Vine, it means "on the act of the bestower, the friendly disposition from which the kindly act proceeds. Graciousness, loving kindness, goodwill generally, especially with reference to the divine favor or "grace." In this respect, there is stress on its freeness and universality, its spontaneous character, as in the case of God's redemptive mercy and the pleasure or joy he designs for the recipient. Thus, it is set in contrast with debt, with works and with law..."

We see then, that by definition, grace is unmerited and unearned. It is not extended to one as payment for some debt (Romans 4:4), or in response to some request. Grace is more an attribute or characteristic than a tangible item. Grace is demonstrated by doing something that is in the best interest of another without being asked or forced to do so. This does not, however, eliminate the responsibility of the recipient of the act to take any steps necessary to receive or accept the gift that is offered by grace. It would be a mistake to think that because a person bestows a gracious act on another, that no action should be taken by the beneficiary in order to receive the benefits of that grace.

For the purpose of illustration, consider the following example. A person was in financial need and owed a tremendous amount of money for medical expenses, but he had no money or insurance to pay it. A wealthy philanthropist contacted the individual and offered to pay the debt for him. This should certainly be considered a gracious act, because it was done solely for the benefit of the recipient. It was not done because the person in need asked the wealthy individual for help, nor did the philanthropist owe the man anything. Furthermore, it would be no less gracious if the philanthropist required the person to drive to his mansion and pick up the check! Why, then, would we think it unreasonable for God to ask man to do certain things in order to receive the benefits of his grace and mercy? If God was gracious enough to make a plan for man's salvation, and offer it to man, why should he not expect some action on the part of man in order to receive the gift?

We understand the Bible teaches that the grace of God was shown to man without regard to works (Ephesians 2:9, Romans 4:4, Titus 3:5). It should be noted, however, that the works under consideration here are the works that PRECEDED the receipt of the gift, and not the works involved in the receiving of it, nor the works that would follow the receipt of the gift.

A few years ago, I read of a wealthy Florida businessman who decided to pay for an unwed mother of five, and current welfare dependent, to go to college and get an education in hopes that she would become self-supporting. This was a very gracious act indeed! Notice, however, the conditions of the gift. First, the woman had to agree to accept the money on the terms of the man offering it. In other words, she had to agree to use the money for an education. Second, it was

also understood that after receiving an education, the woman was to put forth an effort to become self-supporting and get off welfare. We understand that the grace was not extended to her because of works that she had done previously, but she did have to do certain works in order to receive the gift, and other works after she received it. So also must the individual who would receive the gracious gift of eternal life, offered by God, do certain things in order to receive it, and still others to maintain it. Surely if the woman under consideration dropped out of college, she would not continue to receive the money intended to pay her tuition, nor could she reasonably expect to. Likewise, if a person desires to be saved, he or she must do certain things to accept the gift on God's terms. He or she must also exhibit certain behaviors in life that would identify them as one of God's chosen people. Look at the context of Ephesians 2:8-9. Ephesians 2 in general, and verse 10 in particular, makes it clear that after we have received this gift by grace, we are to "walk in good works."

Secondly, what does the Bible teach us about grace? Ephesians 2:8-9 reads as follows: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God, not works, lest any man should boast."

This passage says that "by grace are ye SAVED THROUGH FAITH." Pointing out that the saving element is Faith, and it was given to man BY the GRACE of God. God freely designed a plan for man's salvation and freely gave it to man. That plan of salvation or FAITH, as it is called in Jude 3 and Ephesians 4:5, is the gospel or doctrine that every person must believe and obey in order to be saved according to Ephesians 1:13, 2 Thessalonians 1:8 and other passages. This is the action that must be taken in order to receive the gift of salvation. God extended his grace to man through the teachings of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:1-5). Jesus taught that, in order to receive the gift of salvation that God offered by grace, a person must BELIEVE that Jesus is the son of God (John 8:24), REPENT of his sins (Luke 13:3), CONFESS Christ before men (Matthew 10:32), and be BAPTIZED for the remission of sins and he would be saved (Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38). This is the gospel plan of salvation. We see then how God's grace was manifested toward man by giving him the opportunity to be saved, i.e. by revealing to man the plan of salvation, and not by simply saving him in spite of himself.

Since this opportunity for salvation came with, or by, Jesus Christ (John 1:17), this "saving grace" is not found in the Mosaic Law (Galatians 5:4). For this reason, when Paul writes to the Christians in Rome concerning the Jews, he tells them that the works of the Old Mosaic Law could not save them and that even the Jews must discontinue the works of the Mosaic Law and accept the grace that came by Christ by obeying the common gospel, if they would be saved (Romans 11:1-6). He did not, as some would argue,

tell them to sit idle and let God miraculously save them by grace, because they had nothing to do with their salvation. Instead, Paul places the responsibility of believing, accepting and obeying the gospel of Christ

directly on the individual whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free, male or female, first century or modern man (Galatians 3:28, Acts 10:34).

UNITY IN DIVERSITY - AGAIN?

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washed off like physical dirt but spiritually taken away when the Lord forgives us. That not working, I also pointed out that even according to his reasoning whoever is down river is going to get those sins, so running water is no better in the long run, than stagnant water. Of course, his real problem was he could not produce a scripture that proved running water was demanded. I tried to point out to him that all the passages referring to water in baptism simply demanded water, without reference to whether it was flowing or still. I did not convince him.

The point I want to make is that although I believe this brother was wrong in his argument and conclusions I could still fellowship him because his belief did not cause him to transgress the Word of God. If he believed the only way his baptism would be valid was for him to be baptized in a river this was not a transgression. As long as he was immersed for the remission of sins in accordance with the will of Christ he did not sin. (Perhaps I need to add parenthetically that if he sought to bind this belief on others to the detriment and division of the church I could not tolerate that, but the opinion he held I could tolerate.)

Having said all the foregoing let me now add that I have also talked to a number of folks who believe it is permissible to sprinkle water on people and call that baptism. I have tried to point out to them that baptism means immersion and is called a burial in the Scriptures. Those who accept sprinkling as a mode of baptism I cannot fellowship, even if they are members of the church of Christ. Someone might object, "If you can fellowship a brother who believes baptism must be in running water why cannot you fellowship another man who believes sprinkling is a mode for baptism. Both beliefs are wrong. Both men have misinterpreted the Scriptures. What is the difference?" The difference is that being baptized in running water does not cause the man to transgress the Scriptures (as previously shown) however, when a person is sprinkled with water that is not baptism - that is a transgression of the Word.

IF ANY MAN BE IGNORANT, LET HIM BE IGNORANT

Several years ago during a meeting I was holding a brother and I had a discussion about these very issues. He was advancing the idea that we ought to be more tolerant and even use brethren in our services who use cups, classes, fermented wine, etc. He asked me if there was any specific scripture that taught we could withdraw fellowship from brethren who used

the things just mentioned. He was convinced that we have no scriptural right to withdraw our recognition and fellowship from people who practice such. My response to him were the words of Paul in I Corinthians 14:38, "But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant." The Revised Version renders that, "If any one does not recognize this, he is not to be recognized." Paul declares that anyone who ignores and fails to recognize his teachings about the arrangement for church gatherings is not to be recognized. Dear reader, since Bible classes violate the teaching of the apostle Paul how can we recognize and fellowship those who embrace them? Shall we recognize those whom Paul says not to recognize? Those who advocate unity in diversity want us to do exactly what Paul tells us not to do!

Brethren, the Bible still says, "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." (Romans 16:17) The church has been divided over things contrary to what we have learned from the apostle Paul and other sacred writers. The only way the division can cease is for those who have gone beyond the Scriptures to lay aside their doctrines and practices and come back to a "thus saith the Lord". The unity in diversity folks say that is an intolerant and unloving position to take with regard to our erring brethren, but, dear reader, it is the scriptural position. But, they assert, we will never convert them to the truth by withdrawing fellowship from them - we can only convert them by accepting them and loving them. Really? That leads to the last point I want to make in this article.

BUT RATHER REPROVE THEM

"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." (Ephesians 5) "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." (I Corinthians 15:33) And their word will eat as doth a canker..." (II Timothy 2:17) "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (Galatians 5:9) "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." (11 Thessalonians 3:6) I deny that the way to convert people to the truth is by tolerating and overlooking their digressive practices. In fact, that is counterproductive to converting them because it teaches them that we don't really believe they are wrong anyway. We certainly need to let people know we love them, but we must also let them know they are wrong and need to change.

If you are a unity in diversity advocate I would like to ask you a question, if I may. How many people

have you converted from digression in your unity forums? How many people have given up individual cups, Bible classes, instrumental music, or fermented wine as a result of the fact that you have been for years calling on them in your services? After you hug everybody and show your love and fellowship for everyone in your unity meetings do you teach them the truth about worship? How many have changed?

The truth is, those who advocate unity in diversity are the ones who change! Little by little the truth is taught less and less. The more they compromise and tolerate, the more they give in to erroneous doctrines and practices they once stood staunchly opposed to. How many have started out saying they would never participate in the digressive practices of those they fellowship only to end up worshipping in a way they

once considered error. Dear brethren! Let us beware! The Lord knows what he is talking about in the area of fellowship, just as in every other area.

Let us stand fast and earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints! May we ever demonstrate our love and concern for our brethren who are in error, however, at the same time let us not recognize and fellowship those whom the Lord tells us not to fellowship. The way to convert our brethren is to show them the gravity of their digression from the truth, which has broken the sweet fellowship of those who walk in the light. May the Lord help us to be more tolerant in matters of liberty, and may he give us the courage to be inflexible and unyielding in our defense of the faith delivered once and for all time!--13803 Crosshaven, Houston, TX 77015.

ELDERS #5

Continued from page 2

ery service. Can you imagine the impact upon a first-time visitor if everyone (elders too) would personally greet him warmly, offer to study with him and also extend an invitation to come to our home for a visit?

Hospitality means more than just inviting the preacher or some close friend home with you. It means to invite strangers and weak members into the home with kindness and love.

The man who would be an elder must be "given to hospitality." He doesn't do it merely out of a sense of duty. Rather, he has cultivated a love for it. He is now "a lover of hospitality." (Titus 1:8) One who enjoys and delights in helping or being kind to all men. One of the greatest compliments that could ever be paid to any congregation is to have it said that the members are hospitable and friendly. This, of course, is especially true of the elders. The man

who hasn't developed this good quality can never be an elder. He is not qualified.

Hospitality is a custom fast fading from view among the Lord's people in many places. We are so tired and stressed from the everyday problems of life we are grateful for a few minutes just to relax and be alone. We all understand this. However, it is a certainty that because we spend so little time together the church suffers. Problems arise much more easily between brethren who seldom see one another except in the church services. When we spend time together, we tend to also discuss the Bible together. It is not difficult to be tolerant and patient in matters of liberty when we study together and know we agree on doctrinal issues. If Satan can keep us so busy in trivial matters that we spend no time together as brethren he has won a great victory. It is time for a change when alien sinners can visit our services time after time and never receive a single invitation from anyone, elders or otherwise. We had better think on these things.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BRETHREN, PLEASE NOTE THIS

The congregation at 1200 Mark St, Arvin, CA is no longer meeting. The various brethren there have dispersed to other congregations nearby. Please make a note of this so that you don't go there on the Lord's Day and be unable to worship. -Gerald Barrett

THE MYSTERY IS SOLVED

In the June issue of OPA we published an article titled "The Kingdom of God." It was printed without an author's name attached because we received it that way. We thank brother Gerald Barrett for letting us know he was the writer. DLK

CORRECTION NOTICES

In the June issue of OPA, an article by Jimmy Vannoy appeared titled "Why Callest Thou Me Good?" In the next to last paragraph the word "only"

is deleted from a sentence (by mistake). This makes the sentence contradict the main point of the writing. The line should read: "Jesus is not only Deity, He is the full expression of the Deity of God." We apologize for any misunderstanding. DLK

LABOR DAY MEETING - COLUMBUS, GA

The Southern Labor Day Meeting will be Thursday night August 31, 7:30 PM through Sunday, Sept. 3, 10:30 AM and 2:00 PM. Ricky Martin of Marietta, GA will conduct the meeting. For more information, please contact Ben Williamson (706) 561-8835 or Jerry Chandler (706) 561-3508.

THANK YOU

We would like to thank everyone for the prayers and financial support we received after Anita's car accident. As you travel this summer to and from meetings, please be careful and never drive if you feel too tired.--Joel and Anita Cole.

A NEW BOOK

"Passing it on" is the name of a new book of sermons honoring brother M. Lynwood Smith's fifty-two years in the preaching field. This is a beautiful book, blue with gold stamping and with fifteen full-length classic sermons, all vintage Lynwood. Pictures are included, some of which are priceless (as I see it), and a short biography of his life. The book came out at the 4th of July meetings and was received very well. The price is \$19.95 plus \$2.05 for postage and handling if mailed (check or money order). Oklahoma residents add \$1.40 for sales tax. You may order directly from me at this address: Pathway Books and Bibles, P.O. Box 1183, Ardmore, OK 73402- Johnny Elmore.

INTERNATIONAL SHORTWAVE PROGRAM

The Church of Christ of Council Hill, OK sponsors Brother James Hickey on a 15 minute program on International Shortwave, WWCR, Nashville, TN, Saturday, 10:00 AM on 15.685 KHI. Their polls estimate 2.5 million listeners in Europe alone. It also reaches Eastern Russia, the Middle East and Africa. The radio station has informed us of correspondence from Moscow saying it was coming in loud and clear and they liked the programming. If you know of brethren in these regions, they might like to know about the program and announce it to the people of their region. It can be picked up here, but it is not always

49TH TEXAS LABOR DAY MEETING

SEPTEMBER 1-4, 1995

The FORTY NINTH ANNUAL TEXAS LABOR DAY MEETING will be hosted by the Irving congregation. The Labor Day meeting will be held at the Irving Arts Center in Irving, Texas. September 1-4 will be the date of this exciting spiritual feast. Service times are 7:30 p.m. Friday night, 6:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday nights, 9:30 a.m. Sunday morning (at the Irving congregation) and 9:30 a.m. Monday morning. Please remember that the Sunday morning service is at the church building and not the rented facility.

The Irving Arts center is easy to find. From highway 114 take MacArthur Blvd. exit and go south three and half miles. The Art Center will be on the right side (west side) of the road. From Highway 183 take MacArthur Blvd Exit and go North one mile, the Arts Center will be on the left side (west side) of the road. The address is 3333 North MacArthur Blvd and is near MacArthur High School.

For further information contact Bruce Bailey (214) 438-7082 or Wayne Bowen (214) 438-8604.

NOTICE

The church is still meeting in Hawaii, but has lost use of its building. If planning a trip, please call in advance 808-677-8139. For the time being they will meet from house to house.

NEW CONGREGATION

There is now a church meeting in Paducah, KY at 2450A Jackson St., Sunday at 10:30 a.m. For more information contact Michael Anderson, 590 Gass Road, Ledbetter, KY 42058, 502-928-2175.

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

Howard/Cutter -- on the afternoon of June 10 at the North Sheridan Church of Christ in Tulsa, Dennis Wayne Howard and Tina Louise Cutter were united in marriage. A large gathering of friends, church and family members assembled to witness the exchange of the most ancient of human vows. Dennis is the oldest son of Marlett & Thelma Howard. Tina is the oldest daughter of Jack & Norita Cutter. For the immediate future, they are living in nearby Collinsville, OK. WE pray the richest and deepest of God's many blessings upon them as they begin a new and different life together. The writer officiated.--Jack Cutter.

Amber Byrd and Brian Scott -- were united in matrimony at the Church meeting house in Ardmore, OK on June 17, 1995. They plan to make their home in Durant, OK. Denison, TX will be their home congregation. They are both beautiful and special Christians. We believe the Lord will always be a special guest in their home. I was honored to be asked to officiate. They are both very humble Christians and the church at Denison loves and wishes them well.- Ed Bullard

St. John - Berendowsky -- Bro. Eric St. John and Sis. April Berendowsky were united in marriage at the meeting house of the church of Christ in Paris, TX on January 2. Their exchange of solemn vows was witnessed by a host of brethren, friends, and relatives from near and far. April is the daughter of Gary Berendowsky and granddaughter of Opal Barnes and Eric is the son of William and Denise St. John. Beautiful songs of praise were sung by Ewell Byrd, Thurman Trammell, Tanya Roebuck, and Shawn Risener. It was an honor to officiate for my son and to welcome April into our family. The congregation at Paris is thankful to have them numbered with us and we pray God's rich blessing upon their home. — William L. St. John

OUR DEPARTED

KENDALL- Pearl Price Kendall was born December 5, 1904 and passed away June 23, 1995. She grew up in the Spaulding community. On January 25, 1929 she was married to Herman Kendall and lived in Holdenville most of her life. She was a member of the Church of Christ in Holdenville. She is survived by three nieces, twelve nephews, two sisters-in-law and many friends. The writer attempted to speak words of comfort and warning from God's Word.- Vaden Morgan

SHANNON--Ross Shannon was born March 26, 1917, at Vanzant, Mo. He left this world for the next on Feb. 26, 1995, at the age of 77 years and 11 months. He was united in marriage to Edna Penner on Oct. 15, 1938. They lived faithfully together for 49 years before she preceded him in death on Oct. 28, 1987. To this Christian couple three daughters were born. He is survived by Yvonne and John Unger and Judy and Ron Wood of the Fieldstone, Mo. congregation, and Olive and Mike Wood of the Columbia, Mo. congregation. The fact that all of his children and grandchildren are Christians is a wonderful testimony of this good man. He had been a member of the Lord's church in Fieldstone for 57 years. The memorial service was conducted in the meeting house. It was packed with people standing and a large overflow stood outside. The reputation of this man, both in and out of the church, was exemplary. He was without question one of the best men I have ever known. We miss him, but rejoice in his hope in Christ Jesus!--Don Pruitt.

RUSSELL--William Curtis Russell was born in Locust Grove Oklahoma on February 24, 1934 and died in Visalia CA. June 5, 1995 from congestive heart failure at the age of 61 years. He was baptized into Christ by James Orten in 1951. He grew up and attended church at the Woodlake (Ca.) congregation spent his working career at the General Motors Plant

in Van Nuys Ca. attending the North Hollywood congregation After retirement he returned near his home again attending Woodlake. He is survived by his mother (93 years of age) 3 brothers, 2 sons, one daughter three step-daughters five grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. On a beautiful day June 9, 1995 services were conducted at the graveside in a little cemetery in Woodlake with a large number in attendance. A kind and gentle man was loved.--Don Rowland

MURPHY-- Margaret "Maggie" Murphy, 85, of St. Albans died June 6, 1995 at home after a long illness. Maggie was born December 4, 1909. She was baptized into Christ October 11, 1931. She was a charter member of the East End Church of Christ in St. Albans where she was a faithful member until her death. Maggie retired from Holz Meat Co. where she was a bookkeeper for 40 years. She is survived by a sister, Madge Lore of St. Albans; one brother, Pete Murphy of St. Albans; and in addition, she is survived by several nieces and nephews, who all were as her very own children. Maggie was an inspiration to all who knew her. A virtuous woman, a friend to those who needed a friend, always kind, always cordial. She will be missed. Friends and family members gathered to pay their respects and share fond recollections. Brother Dennis Smith and the writer spoke at the memorial service.--Jeff Thompson.



Barney Owens, 8782 Meadowview Ln., W Chester OH 45069--since last reporting I've enjoyed a series of meetings with the church at Harrodsburg IN. As you read these words I should be with the church at Imperial, NE. Closing here on Aug. 11 I'll begin at Tulsa OK Aug. 12-20 Then to St. Albans, WV the 23rd-27th. The church here at Sharonville continues for the right. We have been encouraged by 1 baptism (a former Baptist) and 2 confessions of faults. Your prayers are always needed and coveted.

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, July 6--We enjoyed being at Ft. Smith, AR very much June 7-11 for a meeting and some instruction in singing. I was surprised to see so many people that I already knew. I found them to be cooperative, helpful and friendly. It was good to be with Tony and Debbie Denton. Tony is a studious and zealous young preacher. We were glad to take delivery of the fin-

ished book of sermons by Lynwood Smith June 29.

We rushed to make it to the 4th of July meeting at Lebanon and then down to the meeting at Sulphur. Thanks to all who gave it such a good reception. It is a beautiful book and we hope it will do much good. If you wish to order one, see the notice elsewhere in this paper. I spoke at the Lebanon congregation July 2, and am scheduled to be at Tulsa, OK July 30.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, July 14--We have just returned from Cincinnati, Ohio where we enjoyed a meeting with the West Chester congregation. Having lived there in the late '60's and early 70's it has always been a treat to go back and be with old friends and brethren again. We enjoyed our stay with R.H. and Leora Renner with whom we have remained friends through the years. We couldn't have been treated nicer.

In fact, the hospitality of everyone was just great and we pray that good was done. We also enjoyed a short time at the Lebanon, Mo 4th of July meeting en-route to Ohio. It was a good meeting this year. We look forward to being with the brethren at Lowery, AL August 5-13 next. For those who have complained that your paper has been arriving late, we have spoken with those in charge and have been assured that the problems are solved. If you encounter problems with your subscription let us hear from you.

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE (USPS 407-560)

If the date near your name and address reads **8-95** your subscription expires with this issue. Please renew promptly. **DLK**

Send all subscriptions to 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, Cal. 94539.

Wyn Baker, 25520 S. State Rt. K, Harrisonville, Mo. 64701--On April 1, 1995, marked the end of a 5 year commitment to the work in Eldon, Mo, and found our efforts directed to the Kansas City area to work with a new congregation in Harrisonville, Mo. To leave the work in Eldon was emotional and difficult, yet with the experience, and ties of friendship that we gained, we consider it one of the greatest blessings of our life. The congregation at Eldon has come so far, and with its continued determination to grow, much can be expected for it's future. I want to especially thank the Lebanon, Mo. congregation for their assistance, cooperation, and oversight in seeing to my support and helping the congregation at Eldon in so many ways. We're grateful to know that Bro. David Griffin has moved back to Eldon for at least the summer to help them there. I feel very confident that David will be of great encouragement and good source of edification. Also for those who do not know, on January 2, 1995, I was united in marriage to the most wonderful woman in all the world, Michelle Bloss. She is the daughter of Tom and Judy Bloss of the Garrett's Creek congregation in Wayne, WV. I don't know what I ever did before without her. We really are happy! and I want to say to all of you who are single, it pays to wait for the right person, and God always knows best! At the congregation in Harrisonville, we have a core group of about 35-40, with several solid families represented in the immediate area. At the present our work centers around a correspondence course with 26 enrolled, community visitation, and plans to engage mass mailing to every address in the Cass County area. A few weeks ago, Ronny Wade held our spring meeting to which one young girl was baptized. These are just a few of the events that presently engage us here. In a later report I will expound on the work in more detail. For the summer, our plans are to be in Houston, Mo June 25, Lebanon 4th of July., 85th & Euclid KC, MO July 16, North Brighton KC, MO July 30., London, KY Aug. 23-27, Labor Day Chapel Grove, TN., and possibly Brookhaven to visit Hillcrest later in the fall. I do have times available this year and all of next if any want to contact me for meetings. Thank You! and Pray for us here!

Ronny F. Wade-- July 10 -The meeting at Cleburne, TX closed with two confessions. We had good crowds. Bro. Melvin Blalock is a dedicated and humble servant of the Lord, and he is much appreciated in that

area. Our next meeting was at San Angelo, TX. We had good crowds and outside interest. Two were baptized. Young brother, Brad Post, who aspires to preach, was with me at this place. The brethren received him well. We enjoyed the Lebanon meeting as usual. Good crowds and preaching prevailed. July 5-9 we were at Claxton near Falcon, MO. Surrounding churches helped us out, by attending and working for the meeting. Preaching brethren Doug Hawkins, Ron Alexander and David Griffin were present one or more times. The Lord willing, our schedule in the near term includes: Fairview near Marion, LA July 15-23, Jamesville near Nixa, MO July 31-August 6, Canon City, CO August 13-20. May the Good Lord bless all His people everywhere.

Todd Long, 8421 Blazing Star Road, Jacksonville, FL 32210, July 7--The work here in Jacksonville, FL is progressing extremely well. Since moving here in the spring of last year, the Lord has blessed us with several baptisms, confessions of fault, and others taking a stand for the truth. I have found this area to be very open to the truth. It does not seem to have many of the preconceived ideas and prejudice against Christ's Church as other areas of the country which I have labored. The brethren here are wonderful to work with. They have a great love for the Lord, the truth, and a tremendous desire to grow. But the most compelling thing is the love within this congregation. My family and I certainly feel blessed for the opportunity to work with these good brethren.

We have just returned home from both the Lebanon and Sulphur 4th of July meetings. Each was a great joy and inspiration to us. Both meetings have their own unique traits that set them apart, yet they are one in declaration of the truth and the love of Christ that abounds. Monte Wood, a young man who now lives in Springfield, MO, has returned home with me. We are planning to spend the next couple of weeks studying and working on various aspects of evangelism. Monte is a wonderful Christian man who has been a great deal of talent and a desire to develop and work for the Lord.

Over the last six months it has been my privilege to hold meetings in: Tulsa, OK; Athens, AL; Edmond, OK; Chapel Grove, TN; and Lowery, AL. We appreciate all these good brethren and could see many good things transpiring within each of these congregations. We also look forward to our other two summer meetings in Newton, IA (July 23-30) and with the brethren at Vance Jackson Rd. in San Antonio, TX (Aug. 18-27). If you are able, please come and be with us.

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

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

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

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

VOL. LXVII

LEBANON, MISSOURI, SEPTEMBER, 1995

NO. 9

NEO-DENOMINATIONALISM IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

By Kevin W. Presley

The shadows of apostasy and false teaching have always darkened some corners of our brotherhood. As long as the church remains there will always be dangers lurking about her walls. It is quite common to find ourselves discussing what we believe to be the greatest danger facing the church. To some it is worldliness, to others it is digression, some believe it is hypocrisy, and there are those who see false teachers as the greatest threat to the strength and stability of Zion. Although it may be difficult to narrow our weaknesses as a people down to one specific thing, it is the opinion of this writer that DENOMINATIONALISM is one of the greatest enemies of the cross of Christ and the church of our Lord. Many a veteran of the faith has gone down to the grave after a vigilant defense against this fiery dart of the wicked one. It should trouble every one of us to see the tide of denominational thinking sweeping across some of our more liberal churches. Some who once valiantly fought the evils of digression, would now equate the importance of one cup on the Lord's table to what color of carpet you put on the church house floor. What a sad commentary on those who have lost their conviction for the truth of our Lord. Some of us who are drinking from the fountains of modern pulpits, some religious journals, and discussions among brethren are beginning to taste bitter water. The stream of DENOMINATIONALISM is indeed seeping into the Church of Christ. The words of Paul in Galatians 1:6-7 are certainly timely; "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel; Which is not another, but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." It is a worthy thing that we notice some of these modern assaults on the bulwarks of our faith.

FELLOWSHIP IN DIVERSITY

The denominational man says that since we can never agree on the Bible anyway, we have no right to draw lines of fellowship on doctrinal issues. People who follow this line of thinking (and we have brethren that do consequently) look for a skin deep, say

nothing is wrong or absolute, tolerate one another platform, on which to unite, ignoring differences on matters of doctrine. These liberal thinkers run to passages like John 17:21 where Jesus prayed, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee." Upon the reading of such passages they hurl the charge that those who stand up and make the doctrine of our Lord a test of fellowship are divisive and reject the teaching of Jesus. However, let's closely notice the passage and see just who is "rejecting the teaching of Jesus." "That they all may be one," Jesus said. That who may be one? Verse 20 says, "them also which shall believe on me THROUGH THEIR WORD." In other words those who become followers of Jesus through the teachings of the apostles. Now that's where this unity in diversity heresy becomes heresy; in circumventing the commandments, traditions and doctrines of our Lord. They say that since we can't agree upon the doctrines of our Lord, then they are irrelevant to our fellowship. However, Jesus said in John 8:31-32 "to those Jews which believed 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." He did not say "if ye keep a good feeling in your heart toward me, that are ye my disciples indeed." Neither did he say "And ye shall THINK ye know the truth." He said "Ye SHALL KNOW the truth, and the TRUTH shall make you free." He taught that if we continue in that truth, THEN we are his disciples. They that are his disciples are the ones that Christ commanded to be unified in John 17. Thus John says in I John 1:7, "But IF we WALK IN THE LIGHT, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another..." Paul said in I Corinthians 1:10, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all SPEAK the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." On pgs. 23-24 of Volume 37, No. 2 of the Mission Messenger; a journal published in co-

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PROPER PERSPECTIVE

By Don L. King

We have been writing concerning elders the last several issues and will continue next month. However, other matters are seemingly more urgent for the moment.

We are concerned with things we hear about the subject of fellowship. It seems that a few are blissfully unaware of the very real dangers accompanying a loose and liberal grasp of fellowship. In this editorial, we wish to mention some very basic and fundamental points.

Why do we worship with one cup? Answer: because we read it plainly in Matthew 26:27; Mark 14:23; Luke 22:17,20; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:25-28. Is it wrong, sinful, to use more than one? Answer: yes, because more than one cup violates the examples given in these verses, it violates the command for us to do as Jesus did, "this do ye,..." (1 Corinthians 11:25) "Drink ye all of it..."(Matthew 26:27), etc., etc. Listen, brethren: we believe it is wrong to use more than one cup. We believe people are going to be lost for using more than one cup. Surely, we believe that! If people are not going to be lost for using more than one, then let's give up the fight and heal the division caused by those who have insisted on using more than one. If it is wrong to use more than one cup in the Lord's Supper I can't worship with those who use more than one. If I can't worship with them I can't fellowship them and I can't fellowship you if you do! Is that simple? I have believed that for forty years. Our brethren have debated this issue countless times over the years. Individual cups are a sinful violation of the Bible pattern. If it is right to use one cup then it has to be wrong to use more than one.

What about Bible Classes? Is it right to divide the public assembly into classes for the purpose of teaching and allow women to teach? The answer is simple. There is no example of the church ever doing that in Bible times. The pattern is always an undivided assembly with one man at a time doing the teaching. 1 Corinthians 14 is abundant proof of that. Folks, Bible Classes are not only unscriptural, (you can't read them in the Bible) they are anti-scriptural because they violate the Bible pattern we can read. Either they are right or wrong. If wrong, we sin in using them, worshipping where they are used or extending fellowship to those who do. If the Bible way isn't worth standing for nothing is. Let me say it plainly: If you fellowship those in digression, if you will use

Continued on page seven

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: Does God sanction governmental armies and police forces? (FL)

Answer: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." Rom. 13:1 W. E. Vine defines the word ordained "to place in order, arrange, signifies to appoint, e.g., of the place where Christ had appointed a meeting with His disciples after his resurrection, Mt.28:16; of positions of military and civil authority over others, whether appointed by men, Luke 7:8; or by God Rom. 13:1." Bauer says "appoint to or establish in an office (the authorities) who are now in power are instituted by God. Rom. 13:1" These powers according to this text were ordained of God to execute wrath or inflict punishment on evildoers. The latter part of chapter 12 tells us that Christians are not to take vengeance, not to return evil for evil. God will take vengeance. Chapter thirteen explains how God accomplishes this. The teaching makes it clear that God not only ordains civil governments, but at times uses them to accomplish His purposes in this world. He used Nebuchadnezzar, a wicked and idolatrous king, to punish the Jews for their wickedness; to punish Tyre and Egypt; and He even calls Nebuchadnezzar His servant in Ezekiel when foretelling the overthrow of Tyre. Does this mean that God condones and is behind everything done by governmental armies and police forces? Certainly not. It only indicates that civil government is necessary to restrain the evil actions of man in an imperfect world. The responsibility of Christians is to honor, obey, and pray for rulers. (1 Pet. 2:17; Rom. 13:1-7) Rendering such honor and respect for the offices occupied by these men, does not mean that we honor them in their ungodly lives, or the evil decisions they may make. Should they, in the course of their function pass a law that conflicts with the law of God, we are bound to "obey God rather than man." (Acts 5:29) Peter illustrated this principle for us in Acts 4:19-20 and his statement is a sound rule by which we all should live i.e. "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

Question: Does a Christian have a right to possess

a gun for self-protection?

Answer: The above question deals with whether or not a Christian can take the life of another human being. If one chooses to use a gun for purposes of self-protection, the obvious result might be the death of another person. May a Christian kill? The following passages give the tenor of New Testament teaching which regulates our attitude and conduct toward others: Mt.5:21-22 tells us that we are not to kill, not even be angry with our brother. We learn from Mt.5:39 that we "should turn the other cheek." We are further instructed to "love your enemies and do good to them that persecute you..." Mt.5:44. In Mt.26:52 Jesus told Peter, who was trying to protect him from physical harm: "put up thy sword into his place for all thy that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Notice carefully Paul's writing in Rom. 12:17-19 "Recompence to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." From these verses, it is evident that Christians should not kill other people. The fact, however, that a Christian cannot kill does not mean that he cannot defend himself in a number of other ways. One certainly has the right of taking necessary precautions to avert a situation that might later threaten his life. He also has the option of appealing to civil authorities, a right granted by Rom. 13. He may also choose to use restraining force, designed to preserve rather than destroy life. This does not mean that a Christian cannot own a gun. One can certainly protect himself from wild animals by killing them. Owning a gun for protection against intruders, however, even in the eyes of the authorities, is a questionable practice. Most warn that more people end up getting hurt or killed, than being saved, when a gun is used. Even though it may be hard for many to understand, those of us who subscribe to the laws of King Jesus, cannot kill another human being even if the motivation is self-protection. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 108011, Springfield, Mo. 65808.)

WHEN A CHRISTIAN SINS...?

PART 1

By Alan Bonifay

The riches of God's grace are marvelous beyond compare. For in Christ Jesus and through his blood, we have redemption—even the forgiveness of our sins (Eph. 1:7). When one believes and obeys the gospel,

all of his past sins are washed away (Rom. 6:3,4,16-18; Acts 22:16, 2:38; Gal. 3:26,27). As the penitent, obedient believer emerges from the waters of baptism, he is free from the bondage of sin for the first time

since the age of accountability, when sin sprang to life and murdered him (Rom. 7:9-11). His wretched shriek under the bondage and dominion of sin—"who shall deliver me from this death?"—has been answered, "Thank God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord" (Rom. 7:24,25). He has now been declared righteous—innocent, justified and free from the burden of sin (Rom. 3:20-26; 4:24,5:1).

Nevertheless, sin still must be recognized as a dangerous enemy looking for any opportunity to strike (1 Pet. 5:8). The forgiven believer must continue to struggle against the forces of evil—the world, the flesh and the devil (Eph. 6:12-18; 1 Cor. 9:27). For these powers search relentlessly for an opportunity to regain control of his life (1 Jn. 2:15-17; Mt. 16:24-28; 2 Tim. 2:3,4; James 4:7). However, for those who trust in God and are willing to put their shoulders to the wheel, God's rich provision again is evident.

In order to sustain believers in their battle against sin, God has provided his will in written form (1 Cor. 2:6-13; Eph. 3:1-6; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16,17). He has provided the church for our support and protection (1 Cor. 12:12,13,25-27; Eph. 5:23-27; Phil. 1:27,28; 1 Tim. 3:15). He has provided for us the avenue of prayer through which we can glorify his name as we present our petitions and thanksgivings (Heb. 4:14-16; Phil. 4:6; Eph. 6:18). He has also provided a second law of pardon for his children; for, unfortunately even in spite of all diligence, sometimes God's children stumble in their Christian walk—sometimes they sin. But even for this, God has made a way for his people.

Before discussing this second law of pardon, however, it must be emphasized that Christians are to give all diligence not to stray into sin. Sin must not be allowed to reign in the Christian's body (Rom. 6:12). The new testament commands a walk of life for God's children that avoids sin. In 1 John 1:17 the scripture predicates our fellowship one with another and the cleansing power of Jesus' blood upon our continuing to walk in the light as God is in the light.

But, if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin.

This passage reminds us of others calling for a certain kind of Christian walk. Paul told the Colossians that as ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him. Rooted and built up in him

and established in the faith as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. (Col. 2:6,7). Five times Paul used the word walk to describe the Christian life to the Ephesians. They were to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith (they were) called" (Eph. 4:1). In 4:17 they were not to walk as the Gentiles walk (Eph. 4:17-20). In chapter 5 they were to "walk in love" (Eph. 5:2-5). They were to "walk as children of light" (Eph. 5:6-13). Finally, he tells them to "walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time for the days are evil" (Eph. 5:14-21). Other passages teach Christians to walk "honestly" (Rom. 13:13), "in the spirit...and not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16,25); and "in wisdom" (Col. 4:5). In view of the weight of these imperatives it is no wonder that John says, "My little children these things write I unto you that ye sin not" (1 Jn. 2:1). The record is clear and unequivocal. Sin is not allowable, tolerable, permissible, or acceptable at all in a Christian's life. Righteousness is to govern his daily walk. Obedience is to be the believers rule of life. Diligent service makes his very step. Christians are not to sin - period.

However, even those who are of such a mind occasionally stumble as the walk. That is why John, at the Holy Spirit's direction, continued.

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 our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 Jn. 2:1b,2). When a Christian sins, what must he do to correct his relationship with God and his brethren and receive the forgiveness for his sin? The answer reveals God's second law of pardon.

In part two of this article we will endeavor to answer this question in some detail. Suffice it to say for now that when a Christian sins the word of God requires him to repent of that sin (Act 8:22). In addition he is required to confess his sin (1 Jn. 1:7-9; James 5:16; Acts 19:18-19). Finally he is required to pray to God for forgiveness of his sin (Acts 8:23-24). At that point the believer is restored to a right relationship with God and his brethren. From that point onward he must continue to walk in the light (1 Jn. 2:3-6) and bring fruits meet for repentance (Matt. 3:7; Acts 26:20). Next month we shall endeavor to elucidate these points more clearly.

WAIT FOR THE WORD

By Jerry Dickinson

Jesus could not have been born in the winter (certainly not December 25) inasmuch as the Bible tells us that shepherds were watching over their flocks by night in the fields just outside Bethlehem. On that night, after the angel brought them good tidings of great joy, they went into Bethlehem and found the child with his mother and worshipped. It appears that Joseph and

Mary stayed in Bethlehem for several weeks, if not months, and the next time we read about them they are living, not in the barn where Jesus was born, but in a house in Bethlehem. In fact, it was to this house the wise men came, following the star from their homes in the East. These wise men or Magi were part of a class of philosopher priests who studied the stars and

sought to know God and even claimed mediatorship between men and God.

They followed the star until they reached the city of Jerusalem and there it seems they lost sight of it. I do not know if the sky became overcast and they couldn't see it because of the clouds, or if the Lord hid it from their vision for awhile. At any rate, the Magi quite naturally assumed that King Herod would surely know where the new king was born and so they sought his aid. Herod, and all the leaders of Jerusalem with him, were troubled by these oriental pilgrims who claimed to have seen a star that proclaimed the birth of a new king in Israel. Herod feigned a desire to worship the babe and requested the wise men to come back when they had found him. Herod's scribes inform the Magi that, according to the prophet Micah, Bethlehem is the place and they resume their search.

Strangely, the star returns to their vision and leads them to the very house where the child Jesus lives with his parents. Can you imagine the expressions on the faces of Joseph and Mary when these strangers from the East (we do not know how many there were - there may have been three or there may have been thirteen) entered their house and offered gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh? No wonder the Bible says, "Mary kept all these things in her heart."

The wise men are warned by an angel not to go back to Herod, and steal away secretly. The angel then tells Joseph of Herod's plan to kill Jesus and gives him two commands. First: take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt, which he does that very night. Second: In the words of Matthew 2:13, "Be thou there until I bring thee word."

Now, dear reader, which of those two commands do you think was the most difficult to obey? I have no doubt that command number two was by far the harder command to comply with. We do not think of wait as a command, however over and over in the Scriptures we are commanded to wait for the Word. In II John, verse 9 John declared, "Whose transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." The word transgress literally means to cross over or go beyond. Literally John is saying, "Whoever goes on beyond the teaching of Christ, has not God." In other words, "Wait for the Word!"

This is what the restorers meant when they coined the motto, "Speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent." If you can read it in God's Word, then believe it and obey it. If the Scriptures are silent about a doctrine or practice then wait, i.e., stop and go no further. Oh, put it is hard for us to wait. There is nothing more aggravating than waiting in a doctor's office with nothing to read, but three year old magazines, or waiting at a train crossing while the railroad workers take their sweet time hooking and unhooking cars. And, even in religious matters, it is hard for some to stop where the Scriptures stop. Many, because of a desire to forge ahead and keep up with other organizations and programs, step across the

boundaries of God's Word. Some call this being progressive, but the Bible calls it sin.

Sunday School is a case in point. Sunday Schools were formed in an effort to forge ahead and create an institution to help teach God's Word. The only problem with it, dear reader, is it crosses over the boundaries of God's Word. The system violates the pattern clearly set forth in the Word. Many brethren, in the past, realized this dilemma, but forged ahead anyway, even causing division in the church. They refused to wait for the word. For your consideration, I submit the following article which appeared in the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal on October 1, 1970. In the article, Liff Sanders gives part of the history of the Churches of Christ in West Texas. Note, please, his report on the introduction of Bible classes into the churches of Christ and the struggle they had in getting them accepted. Clearly, somebody did not wait for the Word.

"The E. Lubbock (Broadway Church of Christ) built the first meeting house, among Churches of Christ in West Texas 50 years ago . . . and the first to have the individual communion cups on the plains; and also started the first Bible classes on Sunday morning about 1908. In making these changes we had to proceed with great care, for many brethren did not distinguish between custom and faith. They thought the way everything had been practiced in these were itemized in the scriptures for we had preached all of the time that they thoroughly furnished to every good work, that therefore, all details were given in the scriptures as to how the work we were doing was to be done. After the division over the organ and missionary societies in the late 1880's and early 1890's, the churches in Texas rejected the organized Sunday School which was run separate from the church. Such a Sunday School elected superintendents about each quarter with other officers, and it usually was this way in which the organ was voted into use, and from there into the church.

Eventually, most of the congregations gave up their meeting houses to the digressives. In fact, they took most of them and brethren moved out. Hence, we were all against the old-time Sunday School and the way it was run. But we saw that if something was not done we would lose our children to the other churches, therefore, we started to arrange Bible classes under the supervision of the elders as a work of the church.

We had some opposition, but we gave them to understand that we were not trying to force anything on them. We managed in such a way that we prevented any division, which many churches had. In this way we also managed to keep peace in the Lubbock Church while others had more or less strife and controversy and even division."

They may have kept peace in the Lubbock church, but the introduction of classes caused division all over the brotherhood, which continues until this very day. The very same attitude that brought instrumental music and missionaries societies into churches, brought in

the classes - and the subsequent divisions. Let us go back beyond those introductions, and divisions, and keep the original pattern revealed in the Word. Who objects to such a course of action? Brethren, let us

heed the message of the angel to Joseph on that long ago night. Wait for the Word! Jerry Dickinson, 133803 Crosshaven, Houston, TX 77015

DICKINSON-THRASHER DEBATE

By Allen Bailey

It was April 15, 1995 that Brother Billy Dickinson and Brother Tommy Thrasher had a public discussion on the class question in West Monroe, Louisiana. The attendance was excellent by both sides of the issue and the behavior of everyone was commendable. The disputants conducted themselves in the manner becoming of Christians. As with any debate, each pressed their points. However, they kept the discussion on a high level profile and everyone present appreciated the demeanor of both disputants.

This was Billy Dickinson's first public debate, while Tommy Thrasher has had well over fifty debates. No one would have ever guessed this was Billy's first debate. He turned Thrasher every which way but loose. When Thrasher headed back to Alabama, he was downtrodden and looked weary. He was defeated at every turn and like most debaters, he refused to admit the predicaments of his false position.

Billy defended the fact that "The Scriptures teach that when the church comes together for the purpose of teaching the Bible, the people must be taught in an undivided assembly by men only." Billy sent a wake up call to Brother Thrasher when he clarified what the real issue was in this debate. Billy showed that they were not discussing just any kind of a teaching situation or teaching in general. Instead, they were discussing a particular arrangement—the Bible class arrangement for teaching as it has to do with when the church comes together. Bible classes violate the arrangement for teaching bound and specified in the word of God that the church is to use when the church comes together. Billy gave abundant evidence, reasoning from Heb. 10:25 and other passages of scripture, that the arrangement specified when the church comes together is an undivided assembly with the men only doing the speaking and the women remaining silent. Classes violate this scriptural arrangement because they are the church come together. In fact, Thrasher admitted that classes are a gathering of the local church and at times they are even the whole church be come together, except they are not "into one place" like the Bible specifies when the church comes together. Having clarified what the issue is, Billy gained the upper hand at this point and never did relinquished it.

Prior to the debate, Billy asked Tommy this written question, "If a local congregation assembled together for the Lord's day service and no men were able to attend, could the women present go on with the service (with the teaching, praying, Lord's sup-

per, etc.)? Billy asked him this question to find out what he really believes about 1 Cor. 14:34-35, since he had left the impression in a previous debate that he believes 1 Cor. 14:34-35 applies today and it sets forth a definite, precise statement that it is a shame for women to speak in the church. However, Tommy gave the following answer: "I think the women could go on with the service as long as they did not violate 1 Cor. 14:23-35 or any other passage of scripture." Billy emphasized that Brother Thrasher's position on 1 Cor. 14:34-35 is a confusing one because how are women going to conduct a Lord's day service, including teaching and prayer, without violating 1 Cor. 14:34-35, according to Thrasher's own position? One of the many questions that Tommy had no answer for.

Tommy spent his time arguing that generically Bible classes are on par with overhead projectors, chalk boards, microphones, television programs, and radio programs. Billy answered this argument in a forceful way by showing that those extraneous matters are not parallel to classes because they either do not involve a coming together of the church or they are not a gathering of the church. It was obvious to the audience that Brother Thrasher didn't have a parallel to the proposition which states "when the church comes together." A devastating blow to Brother Thrasher's position.

In Billy's first speech he predicted what approach Tommy would take, and he hit the nail right on the head. When Tommy got in trouble on one point, he would try to change his line of argumentation, but Billy had all the bases covered. Tommy was a defeated man. Billy made an outstanding impression when he had a pointer in his hand, and he tossed the pointer through the air from one hand to the other to illustrate how Brother Thrasher would jump from one argument to another in an effort to prove his position. A classic illustration that came true as the debate progressed.

The beautiful part of the entire discussion was that those attending who have changed over from digression and are now worshiping with the one cup and no classes said this debate solidified their position on these issues. Truth will override error and error has to be exposed. I was very proud to serve as Brother Dickinson's moderator. He did an excellent job. All I basically had to do was keep his water glass filled and keep his time. Billy did the rest. He has defended the truth on these subjects over and over again in private and now it was an honor to see him on the po-

lemic platform defending the cause for which our Lord died.

A special word of thanks to the West Monroe congregation who hosted the entire discussion. There were

about 15 of our preachers who attended the discussion, some of which traveled many miles. We thank everyone for your interest and support during the religious discussion.

EDITORIAL

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them in your services, you and I can not be in fellowship because I believe it is sin and therefore must oppose it.

These are two matters (of several) which have divided the church. They affect and corrupt the Bible pattern for worship. You and I may very well disagree about a number of things which have no bearing on our worship. We may disagree over the exception given by Jesus in Matthew 5:32, 19:9 regarding marriage. However, the worship is not affected and unless you withdraw your fellowship from me I can worship with you. If you insist on instrumental music in the worship that is another matter. The worship is corrupted by using an instrument for which there is no Bible authority. I can't worship where such is used and I can't be in fellowship with you if you do. You may believe the Holy Spirit personally

indwells you separate and apart from the Word of God, I don't. However, our fellowship is not involved. Our worship is not corrupted. We can still offer acceptable worship to God together. The question is often asked, "if a woman cuts her hair is that wrong?" Answer: yes, because such is forbidden in I Corinthians 11:2-16. However, I often worship where there are women who have cut their hair and though I believe it is sin for her to do that, and I preach against it, my salvation is not involved. The worship is still carried on in a Scriptural way. Such can not be said for individual cups, Bible classes, instrumental music, etc. To worship where they are used involves my worship and I sin when so doing.

It seems that we ought to be careful lest we come into the classification of those about whom Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:7,

"Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." Think on these things. -DLK

NEO-DENOMINATIONALISM IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

continued from page 1

operation with liberal fellowship preachers, the statement was made; "Fellowship in the Lord Jesus Christ is not and cannot be created or maintained by doctrinal conformity." What a slap in the face of our Lord! Brethren can dress it up in all types of new robes, but it is the same old heresy "give us the man, but we don't care about his plan!" What a disgrace that some of our very own brethren would buy into such blasphemous doctrine! When we shake it all down we will find out that their problem is not fellowship, but a lack of conviction for the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Brethren, we must reject such men!

FEELINGS VS. THE BIBLE

Anymore, some want to "share with us" rather than preach to us. They prefer to "enlighten us" instead of instructing us. They only want to "love and encourage" rather than rebuke. Some issues have gone unpreached in congregations all because it will hurt someone's feelings. Such groups, all in the name of love and mercy, have turned their back on the admonition of Paul in 2 Timothy 4:2; "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." In so doing they have become as those Paul spoke of in the next two verses; "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." To some, a man's feelings are more precious than his soul! Some

feel as though they have really had a spiritual worship service if someone who belongs in the circus rather than the pulpit can get up and make them laugh or make them cry. Because of such attitudes, gospel preaching has been replaced by nothing less than testifying, stand-up comedy acts, and meaningless feellgoodism. Consequently, those who have sat under the breath of such so called teaching, are as weak as branch water and have about as much substance and solidity as the air. It blows their mind for a faithful gospel preacher to get up and preach a serious doctrinal sermon against sin, and if they or one among their number are guilty of it, it makes them mad! They, just like the denominations and digressives "become your enemy if you tell them the truth?"

GRACE VS. OBEDIENCE

The Christian who knows his Bible, understands that the grace of God moves man to obedience. Thus Paul said in Titus 2:11-12; "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;" Paul taught that it takes both to be saved. However, the liberal just depends on God's grace and believes it Pharisical to emphasize obedience to God's book. Such teaching originated with preachers of Calvinism, but now is proclaimed and defended by some in our own ranks. Those of us who demand baptism scriptural worship, and godly living as a condition of salvation just don't understand the grace of God. We have yet to be enlightened as to the "superiority of grace over law." We are "pulling ourselves up by our own bootstraps" because we believe

that only the obedient will be saved. Lest anybody think I'm exaggerating, I have heard such with my very own ears from some who used to be in our fellowship, and even some who are "teetering on the edge" as we speak. We have a few preachers scattered about the country that are saying things about grace that even the digressives reject. It's about time we reject such heresy as well.

In conclusion, we have fought too long and too hard against the evils of denominationalism to let unsatisfied renegades with a chip on their shoulder, introduce it into the Church of Christ. It's time we stand up and be proud of who we are and our distinctive-

ness, and reject such false teaching as stated before by rejecting them that do such false teaching. Remember the words of Paul; "I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which we have not accepted, ye might well bear with them. J.T. Marlin once said: "While the liberals cry, 'save the church'! Let us cry, 'God save the church from such men'." Amen and Amen!—Kevin W. Presley, P.O. Box 2398, Ada, Oklahoma, 74821

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COBB-WADE DEBATE

I still have a few copies of the Cobb-Wade Debate on cassette tape. The four tape set is only \$8.00 postage paid. Send orders to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808.

THE SUN WILL SHINE AGAIN SOMEDAY

This book by Ronny Wade is a history of the introduction of individual cups and Sunday schools into the Churches of Christ. Filled with pictures of preachers and places of bygone years. If you don't have your copy, order today. Supply is getting low. Price is \$8.00 postpaid. Send to Ronny Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808

Books for Sale: A new workbook has been printed by Brother George Battey entitled, "Vital Bible Doctrines." This book contains eight lessons which are reproducible. Each lesson contains numerous Bible passages which must be "looked up" and missing words "filled in." Questions follow the passages. The lessons, passages, and questions are arranged in a logical sequence to lead a nonbeliever thru reasons for belief in the Bible as the inerrant word of God, how to properly interpret the Bible, necessary steps for salvation, scriptural worship, and a final lesson warning of the "judgment to come." The text is based on the NKJV, but may easily be used with the KJV. In time, if interest is good, a text based on the NIV will be produced. The workbook is \$2.50 plus postage and handling. A "teacher's edition" with answers already "filled in" is also available for \$2.50 plus postage and handling.

Also, the "Debate Notes: Bible Classes" and "Debate Notes: Individual Cups" are still available. Each book analyzes the Biblical pattern for teaching and communicating respectively. The "Bible Class" book contains an analysis of 73 common arguments used to justify the class system with a Biblical response to each argument. The "Individual cups" book contains an analysis of 64 common arguments used to justify multiple cups in communion with a Biblical response to each argument. In most cases the arguments are documented to reference when and where such argu-

ments were made in debates of by-gone years. Numerous photocopies from popular lexicons and literary works are in appendices in the back so the reader can see with his own eyes the original sources cited in discussion of the topics. Each book sells for \$10.00 plus postage and handling. Orders of 25 or more books, in any combination, are \$8.00 each plus postage and handling. For any of these books, write to me: George Battey, 2710 Somerton Dr., Morrow, GA 30260, or call me at 404-968-5881.

GOSHEN, OH

The church at Goshen, OH is currently looking for an evangelist to come work with the church. We are located in the country, just out of the Cincinnati area. If interested, contact: Albert Moore, 1066 Brookcrest Dr., Mason, OH 45040 — (513)398-4850 or Ken Deatherage, 10708 Eltzgroth Rd., Goshen, OH 45122 — (513)722-2063.

FAIROAKS, CA

The Fair Oaks congregation Sunday evening services will be at 3:00 PM starting in September.

RECIPE FOR MAKING THE LOAF

One serving spoon of olive oil. One serving spoon of water. Three slightly rounded serving spoons of flour. Mix together in a bowl, knead together for about three minutes to insure consistency. Flour the counter and roll the dough out until it is about one quarter inch thick, then cut it out. (I use a 32 oz. glass as a cutter) Take a pie pan and coat the bottom with flour, then lay the dough on the flour and bake it in a 350 degree oven for exactly 19 minutes. (May vary with ovens)

Sent in by Chuck Mountain, San Antonio, Tx.

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

BOMAN-SMITH--On July 7, 1995, Bro. Delbert Boman and Sister Glenda Smith were united in holy bonds of matrimony at the Leawood Church of Christ in Joplin, Mo. A large crowd of friends and family gathered to witness the exchange of their vows and wish them well. Both Delbert and Glenda had lost their mates in the last year and we were happy to see them begin their lives together. Both have been long

time friends and I was honored to perform the ceremony. May God bless their new home and may they have many years in Gods' service. Ron Alexander.

GARNER-WEST--Winnie Ruth Welch Garner, of Belton, became the bride of James Edward West, of Harker Heights in a double ring ceremony Sunday, July 30, 1995, at the Sixth Street Church of Christ in Belton.

The bride's attendant was Autumn Dye, and the groom's attendant was Richard Welch, nephew of the bride.

The ceremony was performed in the presence of the couple's children, as well as many friends and other relatives, by a lifelong friend, Evangelist J. Wayne McKamie of McGregor.

The couple will live in Belton.

OUR DEPARTED

Freeman--Loretta Fay Freeman was born July 18, 1937 in Lebanon, Mo. and passed away on July 15, 1995 at Claremore, Ok., three days before her 58th birthday. Loretta married Joe Freeman on August 22, 1956 in Springfield, Mo. Loretta was a member of the 11th St. Church of Christ in Tulsa, Ok. at the time of her passing. She is survived by her husband, Joe, of the home, one son and daughter-in-law and one granddaughter. Also surviving are three brothers and four sisters. Loretta was preceded in death by her parents, one brother and a baby sister. Loretta died suddenly from a heart attack. Joe and Loretta moved to Springfield, Mo. during the early days of the old Church which met on Benton Avenue. Several young couples were getting their married and spiritual lives started at Springfield and we developed close relationships with Joe and Loretta during that time. Loretta will be missed by her family and those of like precious faith. The funeral was held at Claremore with burial at McBride Cemetery near Competition, Mo. Bro. Dan Wissinger and the writer offered words of comfort. Ron Alexander.

Fowler--Sister Alpha Maude Fowler passed from this life June 30, 1995, in the hospital, at Weatherford, Texas. Sister Fowler was born January 25, 1911 near Corsicana, Tx. She was eighty-four years old. She and Brother Fowler celebrated their 68th wedding anniversary last October. Sister Fowler was a member of the East Bankhead Church of Christ in Weatherford. Survivors include her husband, Joe Fowler; two sons, Wilburn Fowler and Laython Fowler; nine daughters, Juanita Collins, Nellie Jo McCoy, Margaret Wehrmann, Darie Ellis, Peggy Harvith, Lillian Sipes, Gracie Egbert, Linda Hearn, and Judy Ryan. She is survived by thirty-nine grandchildren, 56 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren.

The writer was honored to speak words of comfort and warning to a very large crowd. Brother

Turman Evitt led congregational singing and Brother Bill Fenimore led the closing prayer at the cemetery.—Melvin Blalock.

Langley--Brother Noah A. Langley of Napoleon, Alabama passed away July 5, 1995 at the age of 94. He was born November 24, 1900 in Randolph County, Alabama and lived there his entire life. He is survived by four daughters (Nell Burson, Narvell Duke, Martha Martin, and Jacqueline Yates) and one son, Noah Prince Langley, ten grandchildren, twenty great-grandchildren, three great-great grandchildren and six sisters. The funeral was conducted July 7, 1995 at the Napoleon Church of Christ where he was a lifelong member. As his grandson, it was my honor to be able to say a few words at the funeral. Special thanks go to Brother Lynwood Smith who conducted the funeral at granddaddy's request. Lynwood made my grandparent's home his home for 35 years while holding the annual "Homecoming Meeting" at Napoleon. Beautiful singing was done by the children and grandchildren of Brother Calvin Prince.

Granddaddy was laid to rest in the Church cemetery next to his beloved wife, the late Una Prince Langley. The family also expresses its thanks to Brother Terry Studdard for the wonderful prayer he led at the grave-side.

I am very thankful for the Christian heritage that was handed down to me by my granddaddy. He was a man who was not willing to compromise truth. He, along with others, stood against innovations in the church at Napoleon in the 1940s. Because of this stand, those who believed in one cup were locked-out of the meeting house and forced to find a new place to worship. He also served as treasurer of the Napoleon congregation for a number of years. Granddaddy was a great example to me, and often encouraged me to love the Lord and the Church, and for this I am thankful. One of his favorite songs was I Shall Be At Home With Jesus, and with great anticipation. I look forward to seeing him in his new home. Rick Martin.



Paul Asplin. 6902 N. W. 57th St., Bethany, OK. 73008-2018, (405)787-4286 July 22, 1995-I wish to thank the congregation in Kuala Lumpur for their kind hospitality on my recent trip there. I also wish to thank Bro. Keith Thompson and family and Jim and Marlene Franklin for their hospitality while in Australia and Africa. I wish to report that on my recent trip to Ger-

many that it seems that we have a congregation in Heide. Lord willing, I plan to visit this congregation again before the year is out. If any one has any questions about working in Europe, please feel free to call me for the latest developments. I also request the prayers of the faithful for success in Europe. I also wish to thank the brethren for the prayers on my cancer treatments. I am now much better, and hope to know more soon. I also wish to thank the brethren in Europe for their hospitality while I was there.

Kevin W. Presley, P.O. Box 2398, Ada, Oklahoma, 74821 (405)436-1331 July 28, 1995--The meeting in Seneca, MO went well. Large crowds, which are characteristic of that area, filled the house each night. It was a pleasure to stay with my good friends and fellow workers in the kingdom, Ken and Denise Middick. Next, I held a meeting for the brethren at White Bluff, TN. I have been there several times, and I seem to enjoy it more and more each time. These brethren are full of zeal and are working diligently for the cause. Although our crowds were rather slim, we still had a great meeting. There were two baptisms. My thanks to M.R. and Shirley Kimbro for their hospitality. After the fourth of July gatherings, I spent a week with the brethren at Galey, OK. These brethren love gospel preaching and it was a treat to hold a meeting for them. The meeting closed with two confessions. I returned last evening from Fairview, LA where I had the opportunity to hear Bro. Ronny Wade for several nights. It was thrilling to spend a few days with this wonderful congregation. Ronny's preaching was, as always, soul stirring and thrilling. It was good to see a number of visible results during his meeting. Lord willing, I will be in the following places the rest of this year; McAlester, OK, July 28-30; Council Hill, August 4-6; Beattyville, KY, August 23-27; Bandy, KY, September 10-17; Ada, OK, Sept. 29-Oct. 8; and West Monroe, LA, November 1-5. Pray for the Lord's work everywhere.

MICHURINSK, RUSSIA by Jimmy Vannoy--A new congregation has been established in Michurinsk, Russia, a city of 120,000. It is located 250 miles south of Moscow. The congregation in Corsicana, Tx. sent Gene Grant and me to Michurinsk for the month of July. We found a city which was friendly and very receptive to the Word. Twelve people were baptized. Leadership should come from an agricultural engineer, a gas engineer and a railway inspector. Two of these men received significant training in church leadership before we left. The third was baptized less than an hour before our train left for Moscow. Three teachers and a retired teacher were also baptized. The leaders of the church in Tambov, 50 miles away, will send a teacher to Michurinsk every other Lord's Day, and two preachers will be sent from America during the first three weeks in October.

Barney Owens, 8782 Meadwoview Ln., W. Chester, OH 45069--It has been a pleasure to be with the congregation meeting at Sentinel, OK. We had visitors from Oklahoma City and Watonga many times. Also one came (due to other business in the area) once from Sacramento Ca. Then we had some from Lexington often, with some there for every service. The final meeting in July was at Mt. Grove, MO. Having been there several times made it a joy to be with them. Visitors came from that area (too many places to name) Houston having some from that church every service. Preaching brethren who have come to lend support have been: Bob Orear, Don Pruitt, Irvin Barnes, and David Griffin. We attended some of the meeting at Lebanon, Mo; and we were with the church at Mt. Home, AR for one service. Family and I wish for your prayers.

Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808, Aug. 7--The meeting at Fairview near Marion, La. closed with five baptisms, three confessions of faith and one restoration. Crowds were large every night, with at least fifty outsiders present one or more times. Several preachers helped us out by their presence: Miles King, Terry Baze and Kevin Presley who stayed most of the meeting. From Fairview we went to Jamesville, Mo. for a meeting which coincided with their centennial celebration. We had good crowds and good support from area churches especially Mission Hills in Springfield. Jimmy Smith, Todd Long, Roy Criswell and Bill Ferguson were preachers who attended one or more nights. Lord willing, we go next to Canon City, Co., then to Hartwell near Huntsville, Ar. Sept 3-10; Mitchell, In. Sept 15-17; Atwater, Ca. Sept.30-Oct.8; Lodi, Ca. Oct.8-15; and Fair Oaks, Ca. Oct. 16-22. Pray for us in the work.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA Aug. 14--We just returned from Lowery, AL. I really enjoyed the meeting there. Good crowds prevailed throughout and a good spirit as well. We were able to visit in a number of homes where Southern cooking was appreciated and enjoyed. A wonderful place was provided for our stay and, to say the least, we were treated royally. One was baptized and one restored. We thank the Lord for that. We look forward now to the Labor Day meeting which is to be in Bakersfield this year. That's always a treat. We're to preach at Oakdale, CA next Lord's day and at Auburn the next. We need support for some Filipino preachers. Three good men, two of whom who are receiving \$100 monthly and another, because of a more expensive area receives \$150 each month. You can send your support directly to them. Are you interested? Let me hear from you. The Philippine work is a great one. Baptisms number in the hundreds over there every year. Brethren, let's get behind this work and see it succeed. We need your prayers.

J.W. Kornegay Sr, Rt. 2, Box 44-D, Youngsville, N.C. 27596, Aug 11-At Raleigh congregation we have recently enjoyed having Brother John Fisher and his family. He did some excellent teaching. Also, Brother Tony Denton preached July 17-23 and his teaching was also very uplifting. We are happy to have Brother Sidney Prince and family move into our area. He is a good teacher and a great asset to the church here. We enjoyed working with the Memphis congregation on Frayser Blvd. June 4-7. Good to be with Bro. Cayson and young brother Jeff Howard. We enjoyed being with the brethren at Witt Springs, AR June 14-18. There were two confessions at Pottsville, June 21-25, We were at Scotland, AR July 2 Choteau, Ok July 5-9 with very good attendance. Several visitors from various congregations. All were very hospitable. We stayed with Bro. and Sis Rodney Duncan who made us very comfortable and our stay enjoyable though we were recovering from a car accident during our meeting at Pottsville, AR. Please note our new address. We are now 12 miles north of Raleigh and one and one half miles off #1 Hwy. Our Phone is (919) 562-0725.

Felipe A. Bayani, 94-730 Kuhaulua Place, Waipahu, Hawaii 96797--Members of the church of Christ in the land of Aloha greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank the Lord for blessing us as we solved a difficult problem recently. The congregation has been growing in quantity and quality. However, I was worried because we suddenly were informed (only a few days before Sunday) that we would no longer be able to use the school room for worship services. I was afraid the members would be discouraged, but they were not. They just said, "it's part of life to suffer that kind of problem." We located a couple who are renting a house where there is a covered patio. We are allowed to use it and they are not only attending worship, but showing interest in the Lord's work as well. The patio will hold only 30 and so we are crowded. Through our studies there are those who are now attending worship though they have not yet been baptized. We hope they soon will be. This is the address of our new meeting place: 94-1027 Hapapa St., Waipahu, Hawaii, 96797. If you come to Hawaii call me at 677-8139 or 678-9158. If I am not at home please leave your phone number and I will call you back to give you directions. Pray for us.

Allen Bailey, 1633 Trinity View, Irving, Texas (214) 445-1055, July 13, 1995. It has been a while since reporting to the OPA Field Reports. I love this section of the OPA and I go there when I receive my monthly issue. My son, Luke was born May 22, 1984 and was born again on July 9, 1995. He was baptized at the Irving congregation and I was thrilled to assist him in this endeavor. Luke is eleven years old and reminds me of myself when I was his age. He gave me a list of sermons he wanted to preach, songs he wanted

to lead, and expresses a great desire to be a gospel preacher. We are certainly proud of him and his desires to be active in the church. The last several months have been busy in meetings and one debate. I was at Bakersfield, California in March for a meeting. It was a special delight to stay in the home of Terry and Vicky Osburn and to worship with the congregation at Planz Road. In April, Brother Billy Dickinson and I engaged in a religious discussion with Tommy Thrasher and Pat Donnahue. Look elsewhere in this issue for a report of the Dickinson Thrasher debate. Billy and I have been good friends for many years, it was a special treat to work with him in this discussion. He is a contributing editor for the OPA and a great gospel preacher. If you haven't had him for a meeting in a while at your congregation; call and schedule him for he does an excellent job. In early May we were in Cincinnati, Ohio for a meeting with the Goshen congregation. It was my first meeting there and a joy to have been with them. We look forward to our return trip in 2000 for another meeting. The seventh annual New Testament Study at Irving was another success with 28 gospel preachers present. We are so thankful for the encouragement from everyone regarding this study. Plan now to attend in 1996. We only have four more years and this study will be completed. It started in 1989 and will be completed in 1999. To God be the glory for all the good that results from this study. The fourth volume of the "Contending for the Faith" commentaries is out and it is on First Corinthians written by Brother Mark Bailey. The fifth volume of the commentary is entering its final editing stage and will be going to the press hopefully by Labor Day. It is on the Gospel of Mark, written by Brother Carl Johnson. Both of these volumes have about 600 pages and will be a contribution to your library. If you haven't been receiving these commentaries please call or write me and we will send them to you. They are written by faithful gospel preachers of our generation and the men are taking this work very serious and are doing a great job. During the month of June I held a meeting in LaGrange, Georgia. My first June meeting in LaGrange which was on my twentieth anniversary of preaching the gospel. It was a great meeting due to several community visitors at every service and the excitement of the entire congregation. It is obvious that a lot of good work is being done in my home town, where I grew up. It was a special treat to be with my Christian family in La Grange. Watching my father, Brother Alton Bailey, work during this meeting reminded me of how it was when I lived at home. The work of the church is forever on the mind and whatever assistance is needed to anyone in the congregation is held in high priority. I pray this lesson I learned as a child will be utilized in my years of service in the kingdom of God. We left LaGrange and headed for Houston, Missouri. I have deep roots in Houston since I lived and worked with these brethren for 13 years. Houston and Fieldstone have encour-

aged me faithfully throughout the years and I appreciate their kindness. I must close even though I have much more to say. Take care everyone and we love all of you.

Reggie Kinser, 9212 Ketcham Rd. Bloomington, IN 47403, July 14, 1995—During the course of the last four years most of our work has centered around the congregation at Spencer, IN. During that time we have seen the local church grow and bear much fruit for the Lord. The latest addition being Jada Freeman, who just recently obeyed the Gospel. When we first began this work the church at Spencer had about six members and was almost extinct. Presently, the Lord's Day morning service averages about 45. For every good thing that has been accomplished throughout the course of this work we give God the Glory. We are also forever indebted to our brethren from around the country who have made it possible for us to be a part of this effort. May God bless you for your interest in spreading the Gospel. Moving away from one's home of over 40 years is extremely difficult for many reasons. Although my wife and I never thought we would leave Indiana, in the interest of preaching the gospel we are now in the process of doing so. By the time this report makes the OPA we should be getting settled into our new work at Columbia, MO. We are looking forward with great anticipation to working with the brethren there. They have made us feel very much at home on the occasions we have had to visit with them. Most importantly, they seem to be ready to work at spreading the gospel. I hope and pray that the hearts of the people in the Columbia area will be open to the truth. Before I close this report I want to mention the wonderful opportunity I was given recently, to study the Word of God with a small group of people in the state of Washington. At the request of the church in Bedford, IN., brother Jack Silvers and I flew into Seattle to study with members of his family. During the course of our stay we studied night and day with people who had never heard the Truth. At least four of the persons with whom we studied live about four hours from the closest faithful congregation. Although they did not obey the gospel, during our stay, they did express a desire to learn more about God's Word. They have also asked about the possibility of establishing a congregation in their area. We did our best to encourage them, and made sure they could get touch with brethren who can assist them. We also studied with two other families from Snohomish, WA. One couple, Daren and Denise Hayes attended Lord's Day worship with us at the Tukwila Congregation. Immediately after services they were baptized into the Lord's church. Although we weren't able to spend a lot of time with the two new converts there was an instantaneous bond that was formed within our hearts—a bond that cannot be expressed in words. All of the brethren at Tukwila were very gracious toward us. We appreciate the hospitality and kindness of Randall

and Marci Reynolds during our visit. Most of all we are thankful for the kindness which was shown toward Daren and Denise by the congregation. I was reminded of the gracious and redundant words of Paul to Philemon in verses 12, 15, and 17 when he said "receive him..." A special thanks to the church at Bedford and to Brother Jack Silvers for everything they did to make this work possible. Please pray for Daren and Denise.

REMEMBER THESE "NEVERS"

1. Never neglect daily private prayer; and when you pray, remember that God is present, and that He hears your prayers. (Heb. 11:6). Never ask God for anything you do not want. Tell him the truth about yourself, however bad it makes you; and then ask Him, for Christ's sake, to forgive you what you ought to be (John 4:24).
2. Never neglect daily private Bible reading; and when you read, remember that God is speaking to you, and that you are to believe and act up on what He says. Doubtless much backsliding begins with the neglect of these two rules (John 5:39).
3. Never let a day pass without trying to do something for the Master. Every night reflect on what the Lord Jesus has done for you, and then ask yourself, "What am I doing for Him?" (Matt. 5:13-16).
4. If ever you are in doubt as to a thing being right or wrong, go to your room and kneel down and seek God's blessing upon it (Col. 3:17). If you can not do this, the thing is wrong (Rom. 14:23).
5. Never take your pattern for holy living from other disciples, or argue that, because such and such people do so and so, you may do likewise (2 Cor. 10:12). You are to ask yourself, "How would my Lord and Master act?" and strive to follow Him (John 10:27).
6. Never believe what you feel, if it contradicts God's Word. Ask yourself, "Can what I feel be true if it is contrary to God's Word?" If both can not be true, believe God, and make your own heart the liar (Rom. 3:4; 1 John 5:10, 11).—Selected.

"PASSING IT ON"

The caption above is the name of a new book of sermons honoring brother Lynwood Smith's fifty-two years in the preaching field. This will be a beautiful book, blue with gold stamping and with fifteen full-length classic sermons, all vintage Lynwood. Pictures are included, some of which are priceless (as I see it), and a biography of his life. The book was expected to be out by July 4. The projected price is \$19.95 for the book, plus \$2.05 for postage and handling, if mailed (check or money order). (Oklahoma residents add \$1.40 for sales tax). You may look order it directly from me at this address: Pathway Books and Bibles, P.O. Box 1183, Ardmore, OK 73402--Johnny Elmore.

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

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

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

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

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NO. 10

FALSE TEACHERS AND FELLOWSHIP

By Billy D. Dickinson

False teachers and the subversion of souls by heretical teaching is a problem the Bible addresses. There are numerous passages of Scripture that warn us to beware of the false teacher, but one of the plainest is found in 2 Pet. 2:1-2. "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." According to what Peter writes in these verses, it's obvious that a false teacher is anyone who leads souls astray by contradicting what God has revealed in His word. Would it surprise you to discover that Peter makes a specific reference here to false teachers who are members of the church and not outsiders? That has to be true because they could not have denied "the Lord that bought them" unless they had obeyed the Gospel and had been purchased by the blood of Christ. Remember that 1 Cor. 6:20 declares that children of God are bought with a price, and Acts 20:28 says that Jesus purchased the church with His own blood. Brethren, we need to heed the warning! I am persuaded that the greatest threat of false doctrine confronting the church today is not a threat coming from without. No, for the most part denominational error is recognized by brethren as just that—error that stands in opposition to "the true grace of God" wherein we stand (2 Pet. 5:12). It seems to me, then, that the greatest threat of false doctrine has always come from within. If we are not vigilant, we'll be caught off guard when brethren from within our own ranks "arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30).

If a man who has been teaching and practicing false doctrine wants to correct the situation, what does he need to do to make things right with God and faithful brethren (brethren who have been opposing the false teaching and standing for the truth)? Bear in mind that the question does not have to do with someone who holds a point of view merely as a private opinion that he keeps to himself, but rather it has to do with someone who has preached, taught, spread, and even

practiced false doctrine. If we recognize that to push and practice false doctrine is a sin (Who will deny that it is?), and if we believe that sin must be repented of and confessed (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9), surely we will all agree that repentance is necessary and the false doctrine needs to be repudiated in no uncertain terms! Brethren, that is not being judgmental or implacable; that's simply insisting that the situation be corrected in the scriptural way. Indeed, for the sake of the soul of the one who has led souls astray by false teaching, as well as for the sake of the safety and purity of the church, we need to follow the Bible pattern for restoration.

We have had some in the church, for example, who have taught and practiced false doctrine in regard to fellowship. Let me emphasize again that this was not a private opinion that they entertained, but to the contrary some have pushed and practiced open fellowship in a variety of ways: (1) By attending and participating in "Unity Forums" with the likes of Carl Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett, (2) by publishing journals that existed for the specific purpose of advocating open fellowship, and (3) by branding faithful brethren (those who oppose unscriptural innovations and who cannot extend the right hand of fellowship to those who have divided the church, Rom. 16:17) as a "party" or a "faction." If those who have advocated and practiced such departures from the faith want to make things right, that is good and desirable. But things cannot be made right without a full and complete repudiation of the errors involved.

It has been our contention all along that the loose views held by many on fellowship leads to a compromising of the truth and eventually to an acceptance of false worship—the very practices they once opposed. Time has proven that to be the case! While it's good when brethren see the need for repentance and confessing their sin of having worshiped in error, in some cases they need to realize that their acceptance of unscriptural practices, like individual cups, was merely the symptom of a more deep-seated problem. The real problem is the false doctrine on fellowship that has led them deeper into error. It's time for them to

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QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELDERS

By Don L. King

In this issue we shall consider the quality of being "apt to teach." This is, of course, found in 1 Timothy 3:2; and is implied in Titus 1:9 where the apostle says, "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

There seems to be disagreement and perhaps misunderstanding regarding this qualification: Some say that an elder is "apt to teach" even if he is capable of teaching only privately. Can this be? Is it possible that the Lord is willing to place the huge responsibility of piloting, shepherding, guiding and ruling the body of Christ upon the shoulders of men who are unable to teach in a public manner? Can it be possible that an elder in the area of teaching is less adequate, less qualified, less skilled than an ordinary public teacher who merely takes his turn when called upon? It appears, that to merely word the question furnishes the answer. We don't believe the Scriptures substantiate such a weak position. An elder is one who is able to "convince (convict) the gainsayers." (Titus 1:9) Does that sound as though he may be incapable and unskilled in public speaking? The term "convict" which is part of the meaning of the word "convince" given by lexicographers, pictures a man who is able to gather his thoughts, and present a convincing case to the audience before which the "gainsayer" (one who speaks against) has taught. What value is a lawyer who is not able to publicly present his case to the judge and jury in an effort to convict a lawbreaker? Would you be willing to trust your case to such an inept fellow? Of course not, and we may be sure the Lord does not intend His church, for which He died, to be ruled by those who are unable to publicly direct her affairs.

The Greek term in 1 Timothy 3:2 is "didaktikos" and is rendered by Strong's Lexicon as: "instructive ('didactic'):- apt to teach." Pg 23. Thayer says, "Apt and skillful in teaching: 1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:24,..." Pg 144. W.E. Vine says, "skilled in teaching, is translated "apt to teach" in 1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:24." He adds that the term "didaktikos" is akin to the word "didasko" (verb) which means to give instruction as per 1 Tim. 2:12. There Paul wrote, "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

A careful study of these verses leaves little doubt in the mind of anyone that the qualification "apt to teach" requires the ability to publicly teach the Word of God.

Continued on page ten

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: Is it scriptural to sing gospel songs with the accompaniment of instruments of music so long as it is not in a worship service? (LA)

Answer: Instrumental music in praise or worship to God is not authorized in the New Testament. We are commanded to sing and make melody in our hearts to the Lord (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19). Vocal music is here specified. The specification by Paul excludes all other kinds of music. Since instrumental music is another kind of music, it is not authorized. As one author wrote "Our Lord never commanded it, no apostle ever sanctioned it, no New Testament writer ever specified it, and no apostolic church ever practiced it." The singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, is an act of worship by which we praise God (Col. 3:16; Rom. 15:9; Acts 16:25). The word of God regulates our activities in the assembly, and in private worship as well with regard to the kind of music we must offer to him. When Paul and Silas were singing praise at the midnight hour in Acts 16:25, they were not in a public worship assembly, but in prison. James asked "Is any among you suffering misfortune? Let him continue praying. Is any cheerful? Let him continue singing praises" (Jas. 5:13). The reference is to an individual, private devotion. The Acts reference gives us an example of a private situation where these men worshiped God in song without the use of a mechanical accompaniment. In James, we have the command to sing praise. Not to play on an instrument, but sing. But one might argue, "I agree that it is wrong to sing with an instrument when we worship, but what about singing just for entertainment or pastime?" This question has two very dangerous implications, so far as this writer is concerned. Most of all, the idea that one can properly sing "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" for entertainment without any regard for the words and sentiment expressed by the songs, is highly sus-

pect and comes very close to a violation of the third commandment. It is a sin to take the name of God in vain. The phrase "in vain" translates a Hebrew word that means to do something in a flippant, frivolous fashion, without due regard for, or attention to, the sacred nature of the same. When one utters the name of God, Christ, and other sacred themes as a mere pastime, or for purposes of entertainment they are perilously close to profaning the same. Some have advanced the argument that since we can drink grape juice outside the worship service and it have no spiritual significance, we can do the same with singing praise to God. The comparison, however, falls short. While it is true that grape juice has no spiritual significance apart from its use in the Lord's supper, the names of God, Christ, heaven, the doctrine of grace, redemption and salvation, all of which are frequent themes in our song books, do possess spiritual and religious significance everywhere and at all times. The second implication of the assumption is that one may add mechanical instruments, even though God gives us authority for singing only. In a tract written by a Christian Church preacher, in defense of instrumental music, the following statement is made "While in a debate with (blank) at (blank), he said it was all right to sing gospel songs with a piano at home if you did it as a pastime. Oh! But what a hypocrite that would be. Just think, you would sing, 'What a Friend We Have in Jesus,' just for pastime. Or 'We Praise Thee O God for the Son of Thy Love,' as a pastime. . . ." Brethren this is something to think about. Whatever may be the proposed justification for such a practice, I will attempt none. I can only conclude that the safe and wise course is to refrain from singing religious songs with instruments of music at anytime or place. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 10811 Springfield, Mo. 65808)

WHEN A CHRISTIAN SINS...?

Part 2 - By Alan Bonifay

When a Christian sins, what must he do to correct his relationship with God and his brethren? In other words, what must he do in order to receive forgiveness for his sin? The Word of God is quite clear about the solution to this problem. The alien sinner, of course must be immersed in water for the remission of his sins upon his faith, repentance, and confession of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. The Christian who sins, however, does not need to be baptized again. In fact, should a guilty Christian seek forgiveness of his sin through re-baptism he will only become a wet, guilty Christian. That is because God does not intend for Christians to receive the forgiveness of their occasional sins

committed after becoming a child of God by rebaptism. (According to Acts 19:1-6 there are individuals who do need to be rebaptized but the reason they do is because they were baptized either incorrectly or for unscriptural reasons the first time and never did become a Christian). A Christian who sins must seek the forgiveness of God and his brethren through what we have styled the second law of pardon. This process involves three steps and a consequent manner of life.

1. The Christian Who Sins Must Repent

In Acts 8:22 Peter commanded an erring Christian to "repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray

God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee "Repentance involves first a recognition that one has sinned. One must come to the realization that his thought or word or deed has violated God's will (Acts 8:20-24; Gal. 6:1; James 5: 19, 20). He then must regret his action enough to cause him to change his mind or will about the action (Acts 8:24; Mt 21:28,29), and consequently, to change his life (Mt 21: 28,29, Acts 26:20; Mt. 3:8). These scriptural indications of the meaning of repentance are, of course, consonant with the definition of the Greek word translated "repent" or "repentance" To change one's mind.. to feel remorse, repent and be converted. Since in metaneo the negative impulse of turning away is dominate it is also used with apotinos: to repent and turn away from something (Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich pg. 513, 514). Thayer adds the comment that repentance describes especially the change of mind of those who have begun to abhor their errors and misdeeds, and have determined to enter into a better course of life, so that it embraces both a recognition of sin and sorrow for it and hearty amendment, the tokens and effects of which are good deeds (p. 406)

According then to what Peter commanded of the sinful Simon, a Christian who sins must repent. That is he must recognize his sin as sin; he must change his mind and turn away from his sin, and he must evidence his change of mind by an ongoing reformation of life.

2. The Christian Who Sins Must Confess His Sin

Three passages of scripture bring this teaching to light. The first is discovered in 1 John 1:7-9 which says: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. This passage emphasizes that as long as the believer continues to habitually walk in the light two blessings accrue to him: one, he maintains his fellowship with the church and with God; and two, the blood of Christ which cleanses from sin continues to be available to him for cleansing. In order to receive these blessings the Christian must do two things. In verse 8 we read that he must recognize that he is still likely to sin and in fact, does sin from time to time. Sin continues to be a problem he must deal with. If he denies this he deceives himself and departs from the truth. According to verse 9 he must keep on confessing his sin If he is careful to do these things then God will continue to forgive him and cleanse him from all unrighteousness. There is no automatic erasure of sin taught here—such teaching is false doctrine. What is taught is that the Christian who sins does not need to be re-baptized. The blood of Christ continues to cleanse him as long as he continues to confess his sins.

The second passage bearing on Christian confession is found in James 5:16: "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." Notice that James requires Christians to confess their faults -not that they have faults, but what they are. Sometimes a Christian comes forward in the assembly simply to ask for the prayers of the brethren for strength. This is a noble request and should be honored. But it is not a fulfillment of James 5:16. James requires a specific confession of one's faults. Also worthy of note here is that the confession described here is reciprocal in nature (i.e one to another or each to the other) and therefore probable no public (i.e. in the assembly). However, the principle is introduced that confession of sin whether in the public assembly or not requires an open admission of one's sin and what it is.

The third passage relevant to Christian confession of sin deals directly with a public confession Consider Acts 19:18 19:

And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed. Contextually this occurred in Ephesus after the discomfiture of the exorcists who were sons of one Sceva, a Jew. The Christians realized that their witchcraft practices were sinful. Consequently, they "came and confessed and showed their deeds." This is the only New Testament example of a public confession of fault and it clearly delineated the three step process required: coming; confessing; showing. If a Christian has sinned in such a way as to require a public confession of fault he then must be humble and contrite enough to say what it is that he has done.

3. The Christian Who Sins Must Pray God

Peter told Simon to "repent. . . and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22). John says if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." Here the confession is to God and is accomplished through prayer Also James 5:16 indicates that prayer to God is the final step in order for the Christian who sins to be forgiven.

Clearly then, the scriptures teach that when a Christian sins he does not need to be re-baptized in order to have his sin forgiven. In fact, to do so is not even right—provided, of course, that his original baptism was scriptural. It is not right because God has graciously provided a different plan for the Christian to receive forgiveness for his occasional missteps. The blood of Jesus is still available to the child of God. The Christian who sins must repent of his sin; he must confess his sin; and he must pray for the forgiveness of his sin.

In Part 3 we will consider the forgiven Christians renewed obligation to walk in the light and bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Finally, we will make some observations about the congregation's response when a Christian confesses his sin.

TEARING DOWN THE WALLS

By Bruce Roebuck

"I have been a hatchet man for factionalism long enough, and I am weary of serving as a sectarian battle-axe... I seek now to tear down the walls that I once helped build." These statements appear in a book called "The Stone-Campbell Movement." The sentiment of tearing down walls is noble indeed, unless those walls separate the Lord's people from innovation and heresy. In which case it becomes compromise. That is the case with these statements. To remove the barriers between righteous men and sin is to encourage disobedience. While there are certain barriers we may remove there are some we must never tamper with.

BAPTISM

Baptism is a wall between the righteous and the sinful that cannot be altered. The apostle Peter, when preaching to Pentecost, plainly stated, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins... (Acts 2:38). Again he states, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us... (1 Pet. 3:21). Do not these verses teach us that baptism is essential? In Romans 6 the apostle Paul describe this act as a death, burial, and resurrection. That is exactly what baptism is, the death and burial of the old sinful man and rising of a new creature in Christ. To tear down this wall by denying its importance will rob men of the means of salvation. Does man have the right to tear down this wall? No, he does not!

COMMUNION

The communion question leaps to mind when we speak of these things, if it can be called a question. This holy supper is a wall between scriptural and unscriptural worship. The Bible very plainly teaches us how to observe this supper in Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, and I Corinthians 11. To change or advocate changing the way this supper is observed is to deny the Word of God. According to the above verses it is to be observed with a loaf of unleavened bread to represent the Lord's body, one cup to represent the New Testament, and unfermented grape juice to represent the Lord's blood shed for the salvation of men. In the bygone days of yesteryear men sought to tear down this wall. They introduced individual communion cups to their own demise. Having left the pattern they split brethren and condemned themselves by adding the Word of God. In ignorance men have attacked those who believe in using only one cup in communion. They have called them Anti's and accused them of causing division when the truth is the individual cups caused the division not the one cup. This is a well documented fact. Men have also decided to change the appointed time of remembrance. According to Acts 20:7 the purpose of gathering on the Lord's day is to "break the bread." Yet some would commune quarterly or semiannually or even worse only once a year.

According to I Corinthians 11:26 Paul says, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." They must not think of Him very often. This divinely appointed wall has for centuries divided between those who worship according to His will and those who will not. Again we ask does man have the right to tear down this wall? Certainly not! The only way to unite on this issue is to submit to the Word of God.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Another wall worthy of note is that of Sunday School classes. While on the surface this may appear to be an honorable idea further study reveals it to be a departure from the word of God. Paul writes in Ephesians 6:4, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." This verse and many like it throughout the Bible teach that the instruction of children is the responsibility of the parents not the church. To burden the church with that duty is unheard of in the Scriptures. While the church does have responsibility to teach, it has no more responsibility to children than any other age group. Another fact that some fail to realize is that God has never segregated His people to teach them. Under the Old Testament law they were to be brought together every seven years to hear the law read. In Deuteronomy 31:9-13 we find that they were in one group, "gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates...". The express purpose of this gathering is also mentioned, "that they may hear, and that they may learn, and observe to do all the words of this law." Even in this assembly of thousands the children could learn. We find this same example in Nehemiah 8 when the people came to hear the law. "And all the people gathered themselves together as one man in the street..." (Neh. 8:1). These verses state a historical fact. God's people are taught in one assembly. In the New Testament we find the same example, "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper" (I Cor. 11:20). The succeeding verses explain how they had turned the Lord's supper into a feast and therefore it was no longer the Lord's supper. The point for us here is that they were together in one place. They were not divided into different rooms. Surely we can see from these two principles that the modern Sunday School system is foreign to God's arrangement. Can man tear down this wall? Not without violating divine plan.

There may be walls of personal differences that we can tear down or walls of traditions we may destroy, but no wall placed by God between His children and those in error may be torn down. Let us no longer seek concessions with error, but let us remain steadfast in His word. -P.O. Box 184, Wynnewood, OK 73098.

THE BIBLE IS INSPIRED BY GOD

By P. Duane Permenter

The above declaration is supported by the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 3:16 where he says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,..." Peter also affirms that the Bible is of Divine origin, but he in addition to the above states who inspired men to write the Scriptures. Listen to what he reveals, "For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:21)

The above quotations support the belief of every true Christian; the Bible was given by God. The purpose of this book is to serve as an infallible guide from earth to heaven. We are told in Ephesians 3:4, that when we read these pages we can understand and know the will of God. Jesus told certain individuals during His life in John 8:32, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

These verses and many more are the reason Christians can have faith in this Book of books. Even though every faithful Christian accepts the truth found in the above caption, there is much skepticism in this world. Listen to what Robert J. Ingersoll once said, "...The inspiration of the Bible depends upon the ignorance of the one who reads it!" Do we have to settle with this conclusion without any rebuttal whatsoever? Absolutely not!

Regretfully, this skepticism is not only found in the world, but sometimes this attitude creeps into the church, as well. How are we going to know for sure that the Bible is true? Is there more evidence to be found? Is it possible to find supporting proof outside the Bible, along with God's divine book?

There certainly is more evidence that should be considered. The above proof is internal or found within the Bible; however, there is some external confirmation

Specifically, we are going to briefly investigate the field of science called astronomy. Astronomers have learned many facts of the material universe through observation and experimentation. Many of these details were already in the Bible centuries before man had gleaned them. Some of these scientific facts were learned in the recent past, yet the Bible affirmed them long ago. Though we will limit our writing to astronomy, there are many other facts of science marked out in the scriptures before man's knowledge of them. Even though the Bible is not an astronomy textbook, many facts from the field of astronomy are found within its pages. Astronomy deals with the material universe beyond the earth's atmosphere.

These holy scribes of the Bible were neither astronauts of modern origin or even scientists. They knew little of modern astronomy, but when they spoke of astronomical truth, they spoke absolutely true every time.

For instance, Jeremiah revealed hundreds of years

ago this modern truth, "...the host of heaven cannot be numbered." (Jeremiah 33:22) For many centuries people mocked and scoffed at the idea that a man could not count the stars. For hundreds of years astronomers thought the stars could be enumerated by men.

In particular, about 150 A.D. Ptolemy a Greek astronomer said he thought the stars could be counted. He proceeded to count them and his concluding number came to 1,056 stars. About 1,425 years later a Danish scientist by the name of Tycho Brahe said that he could count only 777 stars. Who was right of these ancient scientists Ptolemy or Brahe? Were either scientists correct in their calculations of the stars?

Another astronomer about 25 years after Brahe by the name of Johannes Kepler who was of German origin, said, he had counted the stars of heaven, and he came correct in telling us through Jeremiah and others that the multitude of the stars in heaven cannot be numbered by man.

Today, in a book entitled, "Astronomy and the Bible," by Donald DeYoung, 1993, page 57, it is stated that there are 100 billion stars in the Milky Way Galaxy, and there are at least 100 billion galaxies in the universe. DeYoung said at the time of his writing that there were at least ten to the twenty second power stars in the universe. This number is so great that a 1 followed by 22 zeros would be necessary to write the estimated number of the stars in the cosmos. Were astronomers of the past correct in their count of the stars? Anyone in his right mind must answer no.

Further, listen to what one scientist suggests; "If a man could count 10 stars a second and do this 24 hours a day for 1000 million-billion years he could finally count the number." (Henry M. Morris, "Science and the Bible," 1986, page 12.) The stars of heaven truly are infinite, and no man could ever physically live long enough to tally every star even if he could see them.

How do you think Jeremiah knew the stars of heaven were uncountable? Even centuries before the first telescope was invented by Galileo? Some would have us believe it was pure chance or accident. What do you think? Could this have been a coincidence? Surely no one would suggest that this knowledge of Jeremiah was mere luck. This truth must have come from some intelligence who knew the answer.

Many are the facts revealed in the Bible and supported in various fields of science. The Master Mind of the universe chose to write down His thoughts and give us a road map from earth to heaven. The evidence is found upon its many pages; we need only to seek and knock to find the truth.

The psalmist wrote, "He counts the number of stars; He calls them all by name. Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite." (Psalm 147:4,5).

This same God who counts and names His stars reveals Himself through this book we call the Bible. Any person desiring to know Him can come to a knowledge of God through this infallible book. The Apostle Peter says, "As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue." (2 Peter 1:3)

Assuredly, any candid person that can discern evidence would have to admit that if God delivered infallible truth in the area of science then the rest of His book must be reliable as well.

Most certainly, Peter was correct when he said, "...holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:21)--P. O. Box 1223 Riverbank, CA, 95367

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU ARE SAVED?

By Franklin L. Harris

The question "How do you know you are saved?" is an entirely valid one—and one we must be able to answer. How can I know for sure I am saved? And how can you be certain you are saved? We meet people every day who sincerely believe salvation is theirs, yet we believe they cannot know they are saved because they are sincerely mistaken and unsaved, a sad situation indeed. But are we in a better condition than they?

Can we know? Yes, we can, and this assurance should encourage every member of the Lord's body.

As we consider this question, it is helpful to understand how a question was settled in the Old Testament: When the facts about a person needed to be established, Deuteronomy 19:15 tells us witnesses had to be produced. The Bible says, "One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established." In the Old Testament, whether or not a man was guilty was determined by witnesses, and there had to be more than one. The facts under question were established through this system.

In the New Testament, Jesus Himself recognized the value of witnesses in the establishment of truth. In Matthew 18:15-16, Jesus established the same precept given in Deuteronomy 19:15 as New Testament doctrine. Furthermore, the Lord used the "witness principle" to prove to unbelieving Jews that He was indeed from God (John 5:31-37). The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 13:1 that witnesses would confirm the truth of the situation he found when he arrived at Corinth. And part of the instruction Paul gave to Timothy was this bit of information in 1 Timothy 5:19: "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses." The Bible teaches us, "If you want to prove a matter, bring forth more than one witness."

How does all of this discussion about witnesses help to settle the question "How do you know you are saved? Quite simply, witnesses help to prove a fact, and we are trying to prove the fact of our salvation. With the right witnesses, that fact can be authenticated. Read what the Bible says in Romans 8:16: "The

Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." We know many people who speak of being saved, and how wonderful it is, and yet we understand they are deceived. They have only themselves to testify of their salvation, and even Jesus said in John 5:31, "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true." Those who are truly saved have more than themselves to bear witness of the fact.

So we ask these people who claim salvation, "How do you know you are saved? Where are your witnesses? Who can testify to the salvation you say you possess? The Bible says the Holy Spirit must bear witness to your salvation before you can know it. Does He testify in your behalf?" Most people would be swift to reply that of course the Holy Spirit testify for them; and proceed to tell us they can feel the Spirit moving within them—a feeling that is undeniable testimony from above that they are indeed a child of God. But is this "feeling" the witness of the Holy Spirit? Is this how the Holy Spirit testifies with our spirit and so assures us?"

To answer this question, we ask another: how does any witness "bear witness"? If a witness is called during a trial, how does he testify? He takes the stand, answers questions, and makes statements. He says things. He relates what he knows to be the truth of a matter. Some today think this passage in Romans means that the saved person gets a warm fuzzy feeling inside, or excitement wells up in his breast, and these emotions are the testimony of the Holy Spirit saying, "You are saved." They are wrong.

First, although a person might have these marvelous feelings, he remains his only witness; and the Bible insists there must be more than one. Secondly, to testify as a witness in a case one must declare the facts. W.E. Vine agrees that a witness is "one who can or does aver what he has seen, or heard, or knows." Can you imagine a lawyer calling a witness to the stand who did not speak? Can we envision a court in any land who would call up a witness, put him on the stand, and then gather around and try to "get a feel" for the testimony as the witness just sat and emanated impressions? What nonsense! All witnesses must speak; and the witness of the Holy Spirit can be no different. However, the Holy Spirit does not testify by such nebu-

lous, apt-to-be misunderstood means as feelings. The witness of the Holy Spirit is clear, unmistakable testimony: He speaks.

Does this mean we will hear the Holy Spirit whisper assurance into our physical ears? No. Jesus promised a select number of His disciples that after His ascension they would be inspired by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 16:13). As these men were instructed by that Spirit, they wrote down His dear, unmistakable words in The New Testament (Eph. 3:2-6; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Remember, a witness must speak words, and since the words of the Holy Spirit are found in the New Testament, His testimony about our salvation must come through the New Testament scriptures. But how does this work practically? Let us notice testimony of the Spirit given in the New Testament:

1. The Holy Spirit testifies through the Word that a person must hear the Gospel (Romans 10:17).

2. The Holy Spirit testifies through the Word that a person must believe in Jesus (John 8:24; Mark 16:16).

3. The Holy Spirit testifies through the word that a person must repent of his sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38).

4. The Holy spirit testifies through the Word that a person must confess Jesus is the Son of God (Romans 10:9-10; 1 John 4:15).

5. The Holy Spirit testifies through the word that a person must be baptized (immersed) in water for the remission of his sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

6. The Holy Spirit testifies through the Word that it is this baptism that places a person into Christ

(Galatians 3:27).

7. The Holy Spirit testifies through the Word that salvation is, in fact, in Christ (Acts 4:10-12).

This is the witness the Holy spirit bears about salvation. How does He bear this witness with our spirit (Romans 8:16)? The spirit of any man can testify whether he has completed the steps to salvation required by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament: A person can testify he truly believes in Jesus. He can testify he truly has repented of his sins. He can testify he confessed in full Faith that Jesus is the Son of God. He can testify he has been baptized for the remission of his sins. If a person has done these things then his spirit can testify with absolute assurance to that fact.

When the Holy Spirit testifies that these are the actions that place a person in a saved state in Jesus Christ, and your spirit can testify that indeed you have done these things, then truly the Holy Spirit is bearing witness with your spirit that you are a child of God. The situation described in Romans 8:16 occurs: there is more than one witness, and they agree. And so the question "How do you know you are saved?" is settled. If your spirit cannot testify that you have taken these steps, the Holy Spirit does not witness with, but against you, and you must realize you are lost. The witness of the Holy spirit changes for no one, for it is settled in the New Testament; and our spirit must testify agreement with that Holy Spirit. Only then can we know we are saved.--21581 Highway 116, Monte Rio, CA 95462

LEST WE FORGET

By Rick Martin

As Christians we need a sense of identity — we need to know what it means to be a part of the people of God. God has always placed great emphasis on His acts for us in history and our memory of them.

History is a very important part of Christianity. Christianity is not something that was invented by man's imagination, it is something that really happened. Unfortunately, many people today are mainly interested in the "now" and history is unimportant to them. As God's people, we have a treasured history, one that we should be knowledgeable of and proud of.

The Christian principles of conduct are built upon Christian doctrines. Christian doctrines are built upon God's revelation of Himself in history. Paul reminded Timothy "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make the wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 3:15). Paul also charge Timothy "and the things thou hast heard among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2). Our faith has roots in history and this must be taught.

Families have memories and experiences—bonds—that hold them together. As Christians we have memo-

ries and experiences in the history of the world that should hold us together also. The places and the stories in the Bible should be of special significance to us. When we become familiar with this history by reading and studying God's word, we will become stronger Christians. By knowing this history, we can see how God's people are different from the world.

As we take a brief look at the history of God's people, we see that there have always been people who wanted change. We also see that whenever these changes took place, the results have been disastrous. For example, Adam and Eve wanted change and look what happened to them. Aaron introduced a change by making a golden calf for the people to worship, and God was not pleased with such a change. Moses wanted change and because he changed what God told him to do, he was kept out of the Promised Land. On one occasion, God commanded Moses to speak to the rock and it would bring forth water. Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it as he was commanded. These examples show us that making changes in God's arrangement of things is always disastrous.

As time went on, God sent His Son to this earth. Jesus our Savior lived His perfect life—He was cru-

cified, buried, and arose from the tomb. Thousands gave up their physical lives in martyrdom for the cause of Christ. The church was established and people followed the simple pattern of New Testament worship. Then, along came some who would prefer change and through their efforts, a great apostasy took place. Catholicism was established. Time continued and there came men who began to question the corrupt practices of the Catholic church. These people called for a reformation and out of it came Protestantism. Then, after these men, there arose another group who called for a restoration of New Testament Christianity. They worked toward that effort, but they too were forced to fight against change. They fought battles over such things as instrumental music and missionary societies. Later the battles were fought over Sunday School and individual communion cups. There were those who fought against these innovations—standing firmly on the New Testament pattern for worship. They could not go against their conscience and against the precious truths (history) of God's Word. Because of their opposition to error, many were put out of their buildings, but through much effort and personal sacrifice, they erected new buildings—the simple New Testament pattern of worship was sustained. There have been other battles fought and surely there will be more to come.

As we look around us, to some it may seem as though the liberals have "won." After all, the liberals have more people and bigger buildings than we do. They have given in to change and error. About the only difference between the liberals and a sectarian church is the name above the door. It is so amazing to

me that in their religious journals, the liberals are so concerned with changes that are taking place. There are those among them who are calling for even more change. My question is what do they expect? If you can make the changes in the New Testament pattern of worship that they have already made, then why can't you make more changes? To paraphrase a Toyota commercial, "They asked for it and they got it." Fortunately, we don't have to fight our battles standing on the same ground they do. We are able to fight our battles standing on God's unchanging truths—our treasured history provides a firm foundation for us.

The historian Robert Kelly wrote, "History is our social memory. Our memories tell us who we are, where we belong, what has worked and what has not worked." The 21st century is fast approaching, if God allows this world to continue. As we face the coming years and the new century, let us never forget who we are—we are God's people. Let us always remember that we belong to God and Christ. We must remember that truth has always worked and error has always failed. Let us remember the battles that have been fought, the pain that has been borne, and the tears that have been shed. We are the Church of Christ. We have a history that dates back to the days of the apostles. We have a history of standing against error and innovations—for this we should be proud!

Deuteronomy 4:9 says, "Only take heed to thyself and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy son's sons." The words of this brief article are a reminder of our precious history — "Lest We Forget."

FALSE TEACHERS AND FELLOWSHIP

Continued from page 1

reconsider their position on this issue and to repudiate it in no uncertain terms! The truth is that the so-called unity in diversity movement is founded upon one assertion after another. Some have argued, for example, that fellowship is only a state that exists between parties and it is not something that can be extended or withdrawn. However, while the term fellowship is often used as a noun in the Scriptures, it is also used as a verb, such as in Eph. 5:11 and other passages. In other words, Eph. 5:11 states something we are not to do— "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Thus fellowship is something that can be extended or withdrawn and we must recognize the line of division that exists between truth and error as drawn for us in God's word. It's time for brethren in error on this subject to lay aside their assertions, open up their eyes, and see where their loose views are taking them.

Some in the so-called unity in diversity movement have even been led to an acceptance of denominationalism. Leroy Garrett once wrote under the title, "What

Do You Do When Your Leader Goes To The Presbyterians?" He argued that a brother does not necessarily reject Christ when he leaves the church of Christ. In fact, he wrote, "Going to the Presbyterians might be a matter of conscience, not a lack of it, an act of faith and not faithlessness." Can you imagine how in any sense going to the Presbyterians could be described as "an act of faith"? The arguments some have made to justify open fellowship not only lead to an acceptance of false worship, but when consistently applied, they eventually lead into denominationalism itself. Those who have been advocating and practicing false doctrine in regard to fellowship need to repent of it and confess the same. Those who have worked arm in arm with men like Leroy Garrett in pushing this doctrine need to repudiate the so-called unity in diversity movement and try to rescue the souls they have influenced to get involved in it. For the sake of the church and their own souls, may that be done before it's too late!--215 Forest Hills Dr., West Monroe, LA. 71291

EDITORIAL

Continued from page 2

Notice carefully: Paul says the elder must be "apt to teach" which, according to W.E. Vine, means "skilled in teaching." Why is this? The answer is found in Titus 1:9. "...that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." Oh, now we see: he must be skilled in teaching so that he may be able by SOUND DOCTRINE (the truth) to convict the one who is speaking against the truth (a gainsayer). It is hardly plausible that the gainsayer will always speak against the truth in a private manner! Logic alone (to say nothing of past experience) tells us that such a fellow would seek some public way to do his dirty work. If so, how is the elder to refute his false claims if he is incapable of public teaching? Brethren, the very nature of words such as convince or convict in this context indicate a public situation.

Paul forbade the woman to teach (didasko) in 1 Timothy 2:12. This term means to give instruction. Now we know a woman may teach (give instruction) in a private and informal manner as did Priscilla and her husband in Acts 18. However, she is not allowed

to do so publicly as Paul plainly taught in 1 Corinthians 14:34,35. The point is, she may give instruction (didasko) privately; but not publicly. Isn't it strange that what Paul forbids the woman to do publicly, he commands the elder to be skilled in? The elder must be a skilled teacher. The same term (apt to teach) is used with reference to teachers or preachers in 2 Timothy 2:24. "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient. If "apt to teach" would allow an elder to be skilled only in private teaching what about the preacher? Is it possible that a preacher, an evangelist, might be skilled in private teaching but not a public speaker? Who believes it?

Brethren, please don't try to explain away what the Spirit inspired Paul to command. If a man you wish to appoint as an elder is not a skilled public teacher, don't appoint him until he is. He isn't qualified. Remember, we must not be guilty of making the qualifications weaker or stronger than what the Book says. We need men who are truly "apt to teach."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ROANOKE, VA

CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATE--E.R. Brown, Jr, 1742 20th St., NE, Roanoke, VA 24012, (540)3434860; A. L. Adams, 2053 B Dale AVE SE, Roanoke, VA 24013, (540)342-2127; Jerry A. Gillispie, 163017th St, NE, Roanoke, VA 24012, (540)343-2251.

ANOTHER MYSTERY

In the August issue appeared an article by Bennie Cryer titled "God Hated Putting Away in the Old Testament." Bennie's name was somehow left off in the printing process. Our apologies, it was unintentional, we are sure. DLK.

THANK YOU

Robert and Inez Lee of Manteca, CA celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary on May 8. Many attended a reception their children honored them with on April 29, 1995. Robert and Inez wish to say thank you for all the expressions of love, congratulations, and gifts sent from around the country and particularly for the many prayers. They would also like to thank their six children for coming "home" for the reception. It was wonderful for everyone to be together again.

PREACHER WANTED

The church in Denver, CO is looking for a preacher to work with them on a full time basis. They would like someone who is experienced in personal work. If interested contact: Rod Martin, 6937 W. 70th Ave., Arvada, CO 80003, (303)422-4507.

NEW YEAR'S MEETING

The annual New Year's Meeting will be held in Oklahoma City again this year at the Western Heights School auditorium, located at Southwest 44th Street and Council Road. Services will begin Tuesday evening, December 26th and terminate at midnight December 31st. Additional information will be mailed to each congregation soon.--Church of Christ Capitol Hill



Bruce Roebuck, P.O. Box 184, Wynnewood, OK 73098, September 7 - All is well. The work here continues to go fine. Since my last report we have had a baptism here, for which we are certainly grateful. It was just the thing we needed to cheer our souls in times like these. In June we held a meeting in Miami, OK. It was a honor to be with them. While there we enjoyed the hospitality of Joe Dan and Kriss Morgan. In July we were privileged to attend the Fourth of July meetings in Lebanon and Sulphur. As always we were encouraged and uplifted by the fine preaching. In August, Brother Joe Hisle held us a good meeting here at home. It helped to define where we stand with some of the people we have been working on. We look forward to holding a meeting in Paris, TX October 25-29. Remember us when you pray.

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, Sept. 4-1 have been around home mostly since last report. We enjoyed the 4th Sunday singing here in July at Healdton last month. I heard Wayne McKamie at Healdton and Joe Hisle at Wynnewood. We enjoyed being at Tulsa July 29,30. We enjoyed having Richard DeGough preach for us August 2. I have just returned from the great Labor Day meeting at Neosho, MO. The preaching was some of the best I ever recall hearing at such a meeting. The singing and visitation also refreshed me. I spoke at Burkhart, MO and Arpelar, OK enroute home on Sept. 3 expect to be at Duncanville, TX Sept. 29-Oct. 1 and Harrison, AR Oct. 4-8.

Carl M. Johnson 1400 Northcrest Dr. Ada, OK 74820, Aug. 29--We just closed a wonderful meeting at the Odom congregation near Dora, MO. We had exceptionally good crowds every service, and the meeting resulted in the restoration of a couple

who had been out of the church for several years and two confessions of faults. It was my pleasure to stay with Jim and Jessie Howard who celebrated their fifty-fifth wedding anniversary during the meeting. Since the Fourth of July meeting, we have also conducted meetings at Marietta, GA, Aurora, Mo. and Napoleon, AL. We enjoyed each of these meetings immensely and believe good was done. I had the privilege of baptizing my nephew Matt and my niece Lauren into Christ recently. Matt is a senior in high school and Lauren is a sophomore and they are the children of my brother Benny and his wife Sondra. My schedule for the next few months includes: Niangua, MO (Sept. 17-24); Arpelar, OK (Sept. 27-Oct. 1); Ceres, CA (Oct. 15-22); Auburn, CA (Oct. 23-29); Springfield, MO (Nov. 4-12); and Seminole, OK (Dec. 8-12). Please pray in our behalf.

Brett Hickey, 1718 Fuller St., Mtn. Home, AR 72653 (501) 424-2523 August 16, 1995--Our summer proved to be exciting. Doug Hawkins' meeting in May gave Mountain Home the boost we needed. Louise and I value the quality time spent with Doug and Lori. Doug's preaching was powerful and personal. The congregation benefited from a moral checkup. Many outsiders heard the truth of the gospel for the first time. Aggressive personal efforts by many, concentrated phone-calling and prayer resulted in 48 different visitors from the community. Support from neighboring congregations and preachers, Jimmie Smith and Kevin Presley, also contributed to the meetings success. Jim Hickey and Barney Owens also delivered soul-stirring sermons at Mtn. Home over the summer. Joe Hisle's meeting at Lone Rock climaxed with a full house on Saturday night. The combination of Bro. Hisle's sermons and fellowship with Joe and Darlene was encouraging to all. It was also good to see and hear Billy Dickinson at West Plains. We enjoyed our meetings at Aurora, MO, and Pochontas, AR, as well as preaching engagements at Broken Arrow and Sulphur, OK, Bakersfield (Planz Rd.) and Ventura, CA. We anxiously anticipate meetings in Pottsville, AR Sept. 6-10, and evangelistic efforts in Broken Arrow later this fall. We are also eager for Lynwood Smith's meeting at Mtn. Home, Oct. 13-15. We continue to have studies develop from our weekly newspaper article. We have been able to preach in the local jail and several weekly studies with inmates have resulted. Katie Witterman and Nellie Maynard, two sisters in their 90's, passed away this summer, but four baptisms and one restoration on the last two days of July helped fill the void left by our departed. With the return of the television program out of Springfield with Ronny Wade preaching, we now reach the community through all three major media. Some of our most devoted members came from the TV program. May the Lord bless your efforts in expanding the borders of Zion locally and abroad.

Billy D. Dickinson, 215 Forest Hills Dr., West Monroe, LA. 71291--1995 is quickly passing by and it has been a very good year for the Lord's cause in our area. In the last two months several souls have been baptized into Christ. I understand that Fairview's meeting resulted in five baptisms in July. We had a baptism here at West Monroe on Aug. 2. There was also a baptism at Midway (Shreveport) on Aug. 4. Brethren, souls are still responding to the Gospel and to God we give the glory! Since last reporting, I've held meetings at Frisco, TX., Fieldstone, MO., West Plains, MO., and Yakima, WA. It's always wonderful to labor with fellow preachers in such endeavors. I enjoyed being with Don Pruitt at Fieldstone and Bob Johnson at Frisco. We were refreshed by the hospitality extended to us in each of these places and the brethren's commitment to sowing the seed of the kingdom. If my memory serves me correctly, we had outside interest in each of these meetings. I'm now looking forward to meetings at Collins, MS. Sept. 20-24 and Frisco, TX. Oct. 11-15. The Midway congregation is to have a meeting Oct. 18-22 with a different guest speaker each night; I am to speak on the 18th. My family and I are planning on attending the Tennessee labor day meeting this year. Lord willing. It will

be a first for us.

Barney Owens 8782 Meadowview Ln. W. Chester, OH 45069--It has been a pleasure for me to assist again the church meeting at Imperial, NE. The attendance was not as hoped, yet there were some that came who stand in need of the gospel. Next, I was with the church at Tulsa, where interest was good and crowds large. Several came from great distance to assist. John Scott came most every night from Neosho, MO. In addition brethren who preach were helpful, those attending included: Jim Hickey, Ron Alexander, Edwin Morris, Jack Cutter, Jackie Lee, Tony Denton, Nelson Nichols, Kevin Presley, Bruce Roebuck, John Anderson, Larry Combs, and Wm. St. John. We were heartened by 4 making confession of faults. Ending my summer meetings, joyfully I was with the church at St. Albans, WV. We had good help from the surrounding congregations, some outside the church also attended, and I was baptized into Christ. Here at home we are looking forward to a good year for the Lord. Our fall meeting will be October 21-29 with Irvin Barnes. Come and be with us if possible. Pray for me.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr, Fremont, Ca. 94539, Sept. 11--The California Labor Day meeting for 1995 was held in Bakersfield, Ca by the Planz Rd. congregation. The neighboring congregations cooperated in a splendid way. Crowds were large, preaching was good and all conducted themselves in the spirit of Christ. Lynwood Smith did a great job conducting and helping to organize the services as well as doing some great preaching, in my view. It was wonderful to see everyone who came. The flu bug has hindered me from going about my normal schedule lately (as it has so many others) but we are better now and looking forward to the work. We are to be in Joplin, Mo (Leawood Congregation) Oct. 22-29 if I'm not mistaken. All who can come, please do. This next Lord's day we are scheduled to be at the Sanger, Ca. congregation for two sermons. It has been nice to be at home lately. We appreciate the brethren at Fremont. They have stayed with the Philippine work since 1981 doing what they can to encourage and promote. God be thanked for brethren who won't quit until the job is finished! We still need your help too. If you want to support the gospel in the Philippines let us hear. We will tell you how to send your support directly to the preacher and get reports back from him to you. The work is growing but is far from done. Let us not grow weary in well doing. Pray for us.

P. Duane Permenter, P. O. Box 1223, Riverbank, CA, 95367, Sept. 5--The meeting I held in Athens, TX was truly a pleasure. Glen Ballard and the Brethren in that place had prepared amply for the success of the meeting, and there were several visitors from the community. Two young people obeyed the gospel during the course of the week; two young mothers made confessions of fault. Many Brethren from various parts of Texas and especially Tyler were good to attend the meeting. I appreciate Terry Base and his family who attended all the services except for the meeting times at Tyler. One family from Ada, Oklahoma attended the last weekend of the meeting, too. During this trip it was my delight to preach in Midland and Tyler, Texas for the first time. It was nice to get acquainted with the congregations in these places. During the Sulphur meeting it was a privilege to preach at Capitol Hill in Oklahoma City one Lord's day. It was a pleasure to visit family, and see the faithful Brethren in that place once again. Since arriving home, I have preached at Oakdale, 64th. Street in Sacramento and Santa Rosa, California. It was a joy to attend the California Labor Day meeting in Bakersfield and to participate along with the other preachers during the meeting. Lynwood did a fine job of directing the services as usual. The church here in Sacramento continues to plug along. Brethren, we need your prayers. May God bless all the faithful.

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Gregory J. Day, 621 Day Street, Tula, Russia 5621
September 4, 1995--We have just returned from the California Labor Day meeting, held at Bakersfield this year and conducted by Lynwood Smith with the theme of "Living For Jesus In This Present World." The crowds were good and the preaching excellent. We enjoyed getting to see all who were there. My wife, Cassie, and I traveled to Tula, Russia July 18. thru August 8, 1995. Our original plan was to be there till August 15 to hold a three week meeting, but unfortunately we were only able to preach two weeks. Our grandson, Hayden, had to have heart surgery to repair a defective valve so we came home early for that. The surgery was successful and Hayden is recovering and doing fine. This was my second trip to Russia and Cassie's first. We were picked up at the Moscow airport on July 19, 1995 by a family in Moscow who showed us around and drove us to the train station for the journey from Moscow to Tula. Max and Peggy Buttler have been in Tula for over a year and made our stay there much more enjoyable. They have since left Tula to come home to California, but they really did a good work there. Unlike previous meetings in Tula, we were able to purchase advertising for the meeting, and did not encounter any resistance from the local authorities. My sermon material for the entire meeting was a verse by verse study of the book of Ephesians. I was able to cover chapters 1, 2, 4, and 5. The book's many verses on doctrinal issues, personal and family matters were excellent for the congregation. Even though the crowds were small, averaging less than 20 per service, we were able to baptize four in the first two weeks of the meeting, with others close. After we left, since our advertising was in place, Max continued the meeting and 3 more were baptized during the last week. The congregation at Tula is less than three years old and doing the best it can to survive and thrive in the midst of persecution and difficult circumstances. They have withstood the perils you would expect from conversions there: drunkenness and immorality, plus they have even withstood an assault from the digressives. Please remember the work there in your prayers.

Doug Hawkins--Since last reporting to the O.P.A., we have had a good summer of meetings. Our meeting in Hillcrest, Ms. closed with good crowds and three confessions of faults. We next went to Wayne, W.V. There again we were met with good crowds from churches in the area and too we had some outside interest. Lori and I enjoyed the hospitality of Frank and Sandy Marshall. During the meeting, two made confessions of fault and Bro. Dennis Osborne baptized his granddaughter into Christ. We then went to Lexington, Ok. There the attendance was excellent. Many different congregations were represented and we had some interest from the "cups" church as well. The meeting closed with one baptism and one confession of fault. Preaching brethren Bruce Roebuck, Kevin Presley, Jimmy Cating, Bill Davis, Jimmy Cutter, Bob Orear, and Joe Hisle were present one or more services. I am always thankful for our gospel preachers. May God bless them all! Presently, we are working in cooperation with Bro. Ron Alexander and David Griffith in an effort to begin a congregation in Brumley, Mo. Lori and I have committed to the work in that area so we will be making our home around Osage, MO, working between the congregations at Eldon and Brumley. We look forward to meetings at Chestnut Ridge, Ky. Sept. 6-10; Oakdale, Ca. Oct. 6-15; Scotland, Ar. Oct. 27-29; Holyoke, Co. Nov. 10-12; Imperial, Ne. Nov. 15-19; Buffalo, Mo. Nov. 26-Dec. 3; Chapel Grove, Tn. Dec. 6-10; and Neosho, Mo. Dec. 14-17. Come and be with us if you have the opportunity. God bless all the faithful!

Jose Hernandez Ortiz, Apartado Postal 81, Francisco I. Madero, Coahuila 27900, Mexico, August 28--This is the first time to send a report of the work I am doing in Mexico since my conversion from digression in November, 1993. I am working with 3 congregations, one in each of the following places: Francisco I. Madero, San Agustin, and Nuevo Laredo. The congregation in Francisco I. Madero was converted from digression in November, 1993, the congregation in San Agustin was established in February, 1994, and the congregation in Nuevo Laredo was converted from digression in August, 1994. The work has progressed in each congregation, however, we have experienced some difficulties from some of the brethren in the Nuevo Laredo area which has damaged the work. In spite of opposition and difficulties, the work has grown. For example, in a little more than one and a half years two congregations were converted from worshiping in error and a new congregation has been established. This has resulted in fifty persons making decisions to serve the Lord and worship God in spirit and in truth. There have been thirteen baptisms and thirty seven confessions of fault. Because of Brother Murl R. Helwig it has been my pleasure to have had the opportunity to meet the following brethren: Joe Norton, Wayne McKamie, and Glenn Ballard. These brethren were invited at different times to assist in the development of certain evangelistic efforts. They accepted my humble invitation to help us in the Lord's work. Brother Joe Norton and Brother Wayne McKamie were here in May, 1994, which resulted in one baptism. In February, 1995, Brother Glenn Ballard and Brother Murl R. Helwig preached in short meetings in each of the congregations which encouraged the brethren with their lessons. In May, 1995, Brother Helwig and his wife, Retha, came and he preached in Francisco I. Madero and San Agustin with excellent results. There were five persons who obeyed the gospel, three teenagers and two adults. Of all of the brethren who were invited by whom we have been morally and spiritually encouraged, it is Brother Murl R. Helwig and his family who have continually helped in conducting meetings every three or four months. Our prayer to God is for them because of their humility and their continued support by their presence and goodwill in the preaching and carrying forth of this work. We are laboring together in the vineyard of the Lord. I want to thank everyone for their moral and spiritual support of my labor. We send our love to all the brethren in Christ. May the Lord bless you all.

Gary D. Weaver, P.O. Box 1974, Rolla, MO 65402, September 15, 1995--Lord willing, at the time this appears in the O.P.A. Bobby Pepper and I will be in Michurinsk, Russia. We solicit your prayers in this work. This is a new area in which the church has been established. Jimmy Vannoy and Gene Grant baptized twelve after their recent visit there. In Rolla, four were baptized here last year. Three of these were local, including my youngest son, Nathan, but this year we have yet to baptize any. We've remained encouraged though, by the many good studies with outsiders in the area and occasional visitors to the services. There still remains much interest and possibilities throughout central Missouri. As we plant the seed and water it, I hope we will always remember that the increase and all glory for it belongs to God. Preachers and brethren alike need to remember that it's never in the best interest of the cause of Christ to build up or hinder a work for their own benefit. Let's remember who the real enemy is and fight the battle together against Satan and those who serve him, both here and abroad.

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

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

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

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

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NO. 11

WHATEVER BECAME OF SIN?

By Carl M. Johnson

One of the greatest challenges facing evangelism today is convincing our society of the existence of sin and its seriousness. Many Americans, Christians as well as unbelievers, have been conditioned by the prevailing, "politically-correct" attitude that makes light of, and even encourages sin, but will not tolerate the guilt sin produces.

Americans seldom use the word "sin" in a serious context any more. When speaking of serious misbehaviors we speak of offenses, mistakes, compulsions, obsessions, and addictions, but we never refer to them as sins. Today, if someone says he is sinning, we smile, because the word is usually used in a humorous setting only. It is confined to behaviors such as eating slightly too much or resting idly in the recliner. There was a time when the word "sin" had a very serious connotation. It was very serious to contemplate that one had an unresolved sin in his heart, or an unconfessed sin on his record, but in today's society "sin" is used almost exclusively as a jocular term.

Our society has also declared an all-out war on guilt. An article in the July/August issue of *Psychology Today* entitled "Goofing Off Without Guilt," is typical of the plethora of articles in magazines and periodicals that encourage self-indulgent, hedonistic behavior while condemning feelings of guilt.

I recently saw a compelling television commercial that further illustrates our society's attitude toward guilt feelings. The commercial shows a pitiful, sobbing woman who is emotionally distraught because she cannot control a compulsive, self-destructive behavior. The commercial concludes with the voice of the narrator sympathetically saying to the woman, "It's not your fault."

A recent survey published under the heading of "Americans Not Guilty" in *USA Today*, says that when U.S. adults were asked what they most feel guilty about, they overwhelmingly responded "Nothing in particular."

It becomes obvious nobody is supposed to feel guilty anymore, and people who trouble themselves with feelings of personal guilt are usually referred to therapists whose task it is to boost their self-image.

The therapists' counsel is usually along the lines of: "Your compulsive behavior is not your fault, don't take the blame for it"; "Don't blame yourself for what you cannot control"; "Don't be so hard on yourself"; "Let go of your guilt"; etc. Nearly every kind of guilt can now be off-loaded because we live in a no-fault society.

Dr. Karl Menninger, a Kansas psychiatrist, made the following observation twenty-three years ago:

Is no one any longer guilty of anything? Guilty perhaps of a sin that could be repented and repaired or atoned for? Is it only that someone may be stupid or sick or criminal—or asleep? Wrong things are being done, we know; tares are being sown in the wheat field at night. But is no one responsible, no one answerable for these acts? Anxiety and depression we all acknowledge, and even vague guilt feelings; but has no one committed any sins? Where indeed did sin go? What became of it? (Whatever Became Of Sin 13).

Today's society has an answer to Dr. Menninger's question about how "wrong things" can be done if no one is responsible: "We are all victims." Because we are all victims we are not responsible for what we do; we are casualties of what happens to us. We are all supposed to be "sensitive" and "compassionate" enough to see that the very behaviors we used to label "sin" are actually evidence we have been victimized. The concept of victimism has so pervaded our society that there is hardly anything that can be labeled "sin" anymore. We can easily escape responsibility for wrongdoing by claiming we are victims.

A national television audience watched in horror as rioting gang members in Los Angeles beat truck driver Reginald Denny almost to death. One of the thugs hit Denny in the head with a brick and then danced around him with his arms raised as though he had just scored the winning touchdown in a football game. A Los Angeles jury sent these hoodlums home virtually scot-free because their lawyer convinced jury members the accused men were victims of circumstances who just got caught up in the passion of the

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The image shows a silhouette of a typewriter on the left. To its right, the word 'Editorial' is written in a large, elegant, cursive script. The entire graphic is enclosed in a simple rectangular border.

ELDERS

By Don L. King

Our study about elders brings us, this month, to the subject of wine. 1 Timothy 3:3 begins: "Not given to wine,..." The same phrase is found also in Titus 1:7. It is apparent that the Apostle definitely had abstinence in mind with regard to strong drink of any kind. If not he surely wouldn't have said, "Not given to wine,..."

When I was a boy, I wondered why Paul forbade an elder from the use of alcohol. Back then, I didn't know church members who were trying to live right ever used it at all. I'm sure I was naive then. However, I've certainly learned better. It is not so uncommon to hear of arguments made in defense of the use of alcohol in this day and time. Likely, Paul lived in such a day as ours or worse. There were obviously problems with alcohol. Paul knew it and was led by the Spirit to specifically forbid its use by those who were to lead the church into the path of right and duty. To say the least, if the elders are to leave it alone we would do well to follow their example! Who can deny this? Why not take the safe way? It is so unnecessary for the Church to have problems here. Just leave it alone and the problem is solved. If we studied as hard to obey what the Lord says as we do to figure a way around it, we would be much better off, wouldn't we?

The Greek term for "wine" in 1 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7 is "paroinos" which means "staying near wine, i.e. tipling (a toper):-given to wine." (Strong's lexicon) Bullinger defines it as: "beside wine, sitting long beside wine: also implying that which goes on or takes place beside or over wine." Thayer says the word means "...one who sits long at his wine, given to wine, drunken;..." He later adds that it has a secondary sense of being quarrelsome over wine; hence brawling, abusive, etc.

J.W. McGarvey says, "It is not merely drunkenness that is here prohibited; if it was, we would doubtless have the word which is appropriated to the expression of that idea. Neither is the idea of MUCH in the original. The term is PAROINOS, by wine, and means simply, given to wine. It doubtless contemplates a man who is given to a freer use of wine than was customary among strictly sober people even though he might never become intoxicated." (From the book, THE ELDERSHIP by J.W. McGarvey)

Hence, the idea seems plain. A scripturally qualified elder gives himself to the Lord rather than wine or strong drink of any kind. It has been wisely said that wine is a shrewd, wicked and unreasonable master. If we may say so, it also makes clowns and fools of normally wise men and women. Anyone who is

Continued on page eight

THE QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: When and where is it scriptural for Christians to give to the treasury of the church? (Tx.)

Answer: The existence of a church treasury is supported by an abundance of evidence in the New Testament. Many years before the Christians at Corinth were told to give on the first day of the week, the Christians at Jerusalem were laying money "at the apostles feet" (Acts 4:35,37). This collected money was used to aid the needy saints at that place. Thus we see not only a treasury, but treasurers as well. In Acts 4:36-37 we read of Barnabas who sold his land and brought the money to the apostles. In contrast to this good example we have the case of Ananias and Sapphira who, after selling their property, kept back a portion and lied to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:2). As the church grew, problems developed over the care of certain Grecian widows (Acts 6:6). As a result of this, the church selected seven men who were appointed to look after this need. Since the apostles could not leave the ministry of the word and prayer, one might conclude that the oversight of the treasury, at least in part, was passed to these seven men. The church at Philippi collectively supported Paul financially in the preaching of the gospel. "And ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving, but ye only" (Phil. 4:15). The implication is clearly that these saints had a common treasury from which they sent these funds to the apostle. In 1 Cor. 16:1-2 we have recorded the instructions to the Corinthians regarding their contribution to the poor saints at Jerusalem. Paul commanded that the collection be taken on the first day of the week, so that it would be ready when he arrived. In this verse, we have a specified time for the collection of this money i.e. the first day of the week. Can the church take a collection at other times? May Christians give to the treasury at other times? In answering these questions, let us consider the following: 1 Cor. 11 teaches us that the Corinthian church came together to partake of the Lord's supper. Nothing, however, is said about when they assembled. However, in Acts 20:7 we are told that the disciples in Antioch gathered on the "first day of the week" to "break bread." This verse teaches, by approved example, the day upon which the Lord's supper is to be observed. We thus conclude that, even though 1 Cor. 11 does not specify the first day of the week, it must have been on that day, since that would be the only time consistent with the example of Acts 20:7. In the same way 1 Cor. 16:1-2 specifies the first day of the week as the time for the church to collect funds into the treasury. To do so on any other day would be contrary to the example and without scrip-

tural precedent.

Question: Please explain 1 Cor. 5 :11. What kind of relationship can we have with such a person? What about family members? (GA.)

Answer: The individual with whom we are not to eat, is one against whom the church has taken action because of a continuation in one of the sins mentioned by Paul. We are to engage in no activity with that person that would leave the impression that we condone his behavior in anyway. Eating is one of the most fraternal activities of life. To "break bread" with someone is indicative of a close, special relationship. Hence Paul forbids that we participate in this activity with such a brother in order to show to him and others the utter contempt in which his sinful life is being held. Eating must be considered representative of other activities as well. For example, Paul is not saying we can run around with this fellow all day just as long as we don't eat with him. We can fish with him, play golf with him, just don't eat with him. Surely not. We are to do nothing with him that would in anyway give anyone the idea that we condone his sinful behavior. It seems evident that Paul is not alluding to a relationship in these verses involving husband and wife. God's laws are never in conflict, but always harmonious. Wives have certain duties to their husbands and any situation arising later must be understood in the light of this fact. If a Christian woman's husband is withdrawn from because he is a drunkard, she does not cease to be his wife. She still has duties that her relationship as wife make it necessary for to perform. She is, however, to do nothing that would indicate that she condones her husband in his sinful activity, but should do everything possible to bring him to repentance. The reason for Paul's instruction is to save the sinner from his sinful way and the church from the leavening influence of his sin

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

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THE SPIRITUAL OBSTINACY OF CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS

By: Merlin "Jack" White

Soon people from all over the globe, will be embarking on a season of frenzy and excess. Homes will be decorated with lights and greenery. Millions of dollars will be spent on gifts for family and friends. Greeting cards will be sent out by the millions. Massive feasts will be served and gluttony will abound. Lies will be told to children. Feelings will be hurt. Thousands of gallons of alcohol will be consumed. Families will argue. Suicide rates will rise. All of this will be done in celebration of His birth.

When logically and rationally considering these behaviors, one wants to repeat the prayer "Father forgive them for they know not what they do."

The majority of the followers of these "Christmas" traditions are not aware of the origins of these practices. It is a fact that birthday celebrations were a pagan custom observed hundreds of years before the birth of Christ. The birthdays of many pagan gods were observed by multitudes and considered religious feast days. One of the most important of these celebrations was the Saturnalia, the birthday of the pagan sun god. The date of this celebration was December 25th. During the season surrounding this feast day, the pagans gave thanks for the longer hours of daylight that seemed to mark the rebirth of the sun. Also, during this season people would exchange "good luck" gifts with their friends. Trees were worshiped and decorated in order to show tribute to an "unknown god". Homes were decked with greenery in order to rid them of evil spirits.

Let us consider at this point what Paul had to say as he preached in Athens to quite possibly some of these same pagans. In Acts 17:23 we read;

²³ For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

We Christians also know that no amount of greenery in our homes will rid them of anything evil. So we must ask why do we do it?

Now let's consider what our Father in Heaven feels about these practices. In Jeremiah 10:24 we read:

² Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.

³ For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe.

⁴ They deck it with silver and with gold, they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.

When the Catholic Church attempted to convert the Roman pagans they were reluctant to change their ways. The pagans refused to give up the feast day in honor of their sun god's birthday. In order to strike a

compromise with them, around the year 350 A.D., Pope Julius I decreed that December 25th was the true date of the birth of Christ. Therefore, a Christian festival could be substituted for the heathen celebration. Since then, people everywhere have been disobeying the admonitions of the apostle Paul who said in Col. 2:8;

⁸ Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Pope Julius I did an excellent job deceiving the world with this decree because millions of people honestly believe that Christ was actually born on December 25th, even though nowhere within the pages of the Bible can the date of our Savior's birth be found. In fact, had it been December, it is unlikely the shepherds would have been "abiding in their fields keeping watch o'er their flocks by night."

Therefore, we can surely deduct from all of the above historical facts concerning December 25th and the celebrations surrounding it, that Christmas boils down to a pagan holiday that pays homage to a false god, or at the very least, catholicized paganism. One version of the Webster's Dictionary defines paganism as the practice of not acknowledging God. God has warned that he is a jealous God and that we are to have no other Gods before him. Paul tells us I Cor. 10:14;

¹⁴ Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

Can you or anyone find within the Holy Scriptures whether by direct command, example or inference that we are in any way to celebrate the birth of Christ. We are commanded to remember His death by partaking of his body and blood each first day of the week in I Cor. 11:25-26. God's silence on the celebration of His Son's birth prohibits the celebration of it within the New Testament. There are numerous references to speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where it is silent. In I Peter 4:11 we read;

¹¹ If any man speak let him speak as the oracles of God... Gal. 1:8 reads;

⁸ But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. Paul, in order to emphasize this important admonition repeats it in Gal. 1:9. In interpreting II Tim 3:16-17 it is quite plain that all scripture comes from God and that the scripture makes the man of God perfect. And that he is thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Since all scripture comes from God thoroughly furnishing man unto all good works; and yet he did not tell us in the scriptures to celebrate His son's birthday, He must have thought that "Christmas" was not a good work.

We now come to the point of considering the matter of celebrating Christmas in a "non-religious" way. We then have to ask, Can this be done in a scriptural way? Admittedly, and repentantly the writer of this article thought this could be done.

However, further study reveals otherwise. One illustration points this out. We read in the book of Daniel concerning King Nebuchadnezzar, who had a huge idol of gold made. Nebuchadnezzar demanded that all who heard the music must bow down before this idol in worship. We know that three of God's servants Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednigo, despite the threat of being thrown into the fiery furnace, which blazed seven times hotter than usual, refused to bow down and worship this false god.

Therefore, King Nebuchadnezzar had them thrown into this super-heated furnace. When the king saw that the three servants of God were untouched by the inferno he released them.

Now, let us change the scenario for the sake of illustration. Let us suppose that Meshach, Shadrach and Abednigo agreed among themselves. Sometime before the music was played, that when they heard it, they would bow before this false god, but that they would not mentally worship or pay homage to it. Would this have been pleasing unto God? The answer is obvious. Neither can we take any part in observing Christmas in a nonreligious way.

Lets also consider all of the falsehoods and misconceptions that are gendered concerning this holiday. Children are told that Santa comes down the chim-

ney and brings gifts; he knows whether they have been naughty or nice. Santa Claus himself is of Catholic origin. Santa Claus or St. Nicholas was a bishop in Asia Minor during the fourth century. He was considered to be the Roman Catholic Patron Saint of children. According to the World Book Encyclopedia, he was thought to be very generous and people thought that any surprise gift that they received came from him.

Because the myth has been handed down from generation to generation does not make it spiritually correct. It is really a lie fostered upon each generation. It has been explained as a little lie hurting no one. But let's consider what Paul commands in I Thess. 5:22

²² Abstain from all appearance of evil.

Also what John says in Rev. 21:8, here paraphrasing, "...all liars have their part in the lake that burneth of fire and brimstone..."

Please, all Christians, obey the voice that John heard in Rev. 18:4;

⁴ And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

My brothers, and sisters, if you truly want to obey this voice come out now. There is no arguing that Christmas was established by the Catholics, nor that it is really a Pagan holiday in disguise. Let us take heed to what the apostle Paul told the Corinthians.

I Corinthians 5:6

⁶ Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? (KJV)

IS THE BIBLE THE WORD OF GOD OR JUST A "PRINTED PAGE"?

By Brian Burns

In recent years there have been several alarming statements made by some of our preachers concerning the Word of God. These have been made private, from the pulpit, recorded publicly, printed in papers, and contested in each form as well. God's word has been called "the printed page" and in one recorded sermon was referred to as just "a book." What is wrong with such statements? As one sister said, "It sounds to me like they are saying you don't have to study anymore." This is the exact thought that is being received from many preachers today. Whether this is the intent or not the message that is understood is that the word of God in written form is not sufficient to sustain and guide a Christian in his life on earth. But, what does the word say about itself? Does the Word of God indicate that there is a deficiency within and that it is just a book of printed pages? Notice what Peter said about the written word of God when he wrote about Paul's writings (II Peter 3:15-16). He identified these words as scriptures and said that destruc-

tion awaits those who twist and abuse the words. In what form do you think those people had those words? No doubt they were written, since they were in the form of an epistle, v. 16, and the people had access to them. They were not minimized in importance just because they were written. However, care was to be used because they are scripture, and we know that "all scripture is given by the inspiration of God..." (2 Tim. 3:16). Paul did not belittle his words because they were printed or exalt them because they came from himself. Rather, he encouraged others to read them because they would then be able to understand his knowledge in the mystery of Christ which had been revealed to him by Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:1-4). Why did Peter and Paul emphasize the importance and authority of the written Word of God when centuries later men would inform us that it is only a "printed page" or just "a book"? Some seem to be saying that if you want to study and be guided by The Book you are slighting yourself. If that is the case, what are we

missing? Peter certainly did not indicate that the scriptures, recorded by Paul lost any authority or power after they had been written down. What did Paul write to the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 14:37)? "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." So being written down did not keep these words from being teachings and commandments of the Lord with his authority behind them. The Bible is much more than just a "printed page." Notice what God's Word, reserved in printed form, says of itself. Dear brethren, please look up and read each of the following references: A. The Word of God

1. Introduces God - Gen. 1:1
2. Saves - Acts 13:26, James 1:21
3. Produces the new birth - 1 Pet. 1:23, James 1:18
4. Builds up - Acts 20:32
5. Comforts - 1 Thes. 4:18
6. Is living and powerful - Heb. 4:12
7. Is scripture - 2 Pet. 3:16
8. Is inspired - 2 Tim. 3:16
9. Corrects, instructs, supplies - 2 Tim. 3:16, James 1:22-25
10. Judges - John 12:48
11. Is life and spirit - Jhn. 6:63
12. Truth - Jhn. 17:17
13. Indwells us - 1 Jhn. 2:14, Col. 3:16
14. Sanctifies - 1 Tim. 4:5

15. Cleanses - Jhn. 15:3
16. May be rejected - Acts 13:46
17. May be received - Acts 13:48-49, 17:11
18. Provides Faith - Rom. 10:17, Jhn. 20:30-31
19. Reconciles - 2 Cor. 5:19
20. Is the sword of the Spirit - Eph. 6:17
21. Gives hope - Col. 1:15
22. Works in us - 1 Thes. 2:13
23. Gives confidence that our prayers are heard - 1 Jhn. 3:22, 5:14
24. Calls - 2 Thes. 2:14-15
25. Gives freedom Jhn. 8:31-32

These attributes of the word of God have been true in every form in which God has provided it to man. To believe and teach these things does no injustice at all to the work of the Holy Spirit, confidence in prayer, the providence of God or any other topic that the revealed Word of God teaches us today. Even Jesus battled and defeated Satan with an emphatic "It is written..." while being tempted in the wilderness. There is danger in belittling the word of God in written form by calling it "the printed page" or just "a book". This danger is in giving people a false hope of something that God never offered and turning them to trust their "feelings" rather than a "thus saith the Lord."

OPA NOTE: This first appeared in March of this year. However, several typographical errors were contained and we offer again in hopes that the correct meaning can be understood. *DLK*

"DOING WHAT WE CAN" PREACHING THE GOSPEL

By Dennis E. Smith

"She hath done what she could," Jesus said of the woman who broke the box of precious ointment upon his head in Bethany shortly before he was crucified. He further said, "wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." (Mk. 14:8,9) All of the Lord's disciples would surely love to hear such praise spoken by the Master of their deeds. And then to hear Him say further; your actions will be a memorial to you and an inspiring example to people of faith in the future, would certainly bring great joy to all Christians. I hope that this report will bring some things to your attention that "can be done" to spread the gospel message to the vast, "LOST," world.

About 14 months ago, sister Amy Berry of the Brazil, IN congregation asked my advice with regard to developing a correspondence course in French. Amy teaches French in a high school about 30 miles from Indianapolis. Her idea was to find a course that could be translated into the French language and offered through classified newspaper ads in French speaking countries. She soon learned that such a course already existed, so she contacted several international news-

papers to try to arrange running the classified ad. For unknown reason, the international newspaper that is printed exclusively in French, and published in Paris, refused to run the ad. The International Herald-Tribune, which is published in English, accepted the ad, and began running it last fall. From this experimental and somewhat stumbling beginning, some remarkable things have come to pass, and my confidence in the Lord's providential blessing of the effort is firm. Let me list a few reasons for such confidence:

To date, approximately 220 people from 44 different countries have requested the correspondence course. After having studied the lessons and answering review questions, the learners are given the opportunity to request baptism for salvation. Two have been baptized in Israel as a direct result of the course, and in the past couple of months, seventeen more requests for baptism have been received. Two more from Israel; six from Ethiopia; one from Zimbabwe; two from Thailand; four from Kuwait; one from the Philippines; and most recently one from Ghana.

Brother Doug Edwards and I have assisted sister Berry by giving advice and suggestions and by doing what we can in following up on leads. In the April,

1995 issue of the Christian's Expositor, brother Doug wrote an article entitled "The Gospel in Israel", in which he outlined the trip that he and I made to Israel in February of this year. We were able to conduct several studies with the few contacts that we had at that time, and one lady was baptized. A month or so later, a man who is from the country of Nigeria, but is living in Israel, requested baptism. In June, brother Richard Bunner and I traveled to Israel to study with and baptize Michael Anickwensi. We were able to study with several others as well and to teach the two Christians there in Tel Aviv to start assembling for worship on the Lord's Day. Being still far from a firmly established assembly of the church; it is, nevertheless, a start. Lord willing, brother Richard Bunner will visit Israel on his return home from Russia next month. We are hopeful that he will be able to baptize the two new individuals there who have requested baptism, and study with several others that can be contacted. Two of these individuals, I might add, are of the Jewish faith. While we were there in June, we placed an additional ad in the Jerusalem Post newspaper for the correspondence course, and there have been approximately 30 requests for the course already (this includes the two Jewish people that I mentioned.)

I must highly commend the brethren of the following congregations for assuming the financial obligation of the efforts I have mentioned: (Avon), Indianapolis, IN; Pleasant Grove, IN; Marengo, IN; Bedford, IN; (18th Street), Huntington, WV; and Bunner's Ridge, WV.

Initially, sister Berry was independently financing and administering the course, but now ten other brothers and sisters are actively assisting with the administration, and the Pleasant Grove, IN congregation is assuming the financing of this good work. I believe that this is an example of good inspiring good. The good example of one "doing what they can."

We are contacting various brethren to ask assistance in following up on the responses that are being received. Brother Don King has agreed to see that responses from the Philippines will be put into the

hands of brethren there to follow up. Brother Jerry Cutter has been sent names of people who have responded from eastern Europe, who we hope can be contacted. As already mentioned, brother Richard Bunner is going back to Israel in October. Other preaching brethren who are familiar with the areas that I mentioned where people have requested baptism are being contacted to give advice and assistance.

I encourage you brethren to do what you can. There are fields to be harvested. Some are remote and not easily accessible. Sometimes expenditures of time, personal comfort, and financial requirements are great, but was it not costly, precious ointment that the women used to do "what she could" for Jesus? Mark 14:3-9..." there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."

Various excuses have been offered by some in an attempt to justify their lack of involvement and interest in mission minded evangelism. Is there not a lesson to be learned in Mark 14:3-9 that would guide us to do what we can in the Lord's service; saving souls; wherever the field of harvest may be; giving freely what we can to harvest souls. What is the worth of a soul?

May God bless you in every way to do all that you can in preaching the gospel.--2899 S. County Rd. 1050E, Indianapolis, IN 46231.... Sept. 12, 1995

WHATEVER BECAME OF SIN?

Continued from page 1

moment and were not responsible for their actions.

Another jury refused to convict the notorious Menendez brothers, who confessed to the murders of their own parents. The Menendez brothers' lawyers argued the boys had been sexually molested by their parents as children and, therefore, the boys were the real victims and were not responsible for their destructive behavior.

A similar line of defense was used in the trial of Susan Smith, who confessed to drowning her two little children. Smith's lawyers put her step-father on the witness stand and he confessed to having molested her in her earlier years. The next morning headlines

in a major newspaper shouted, "It's Not All Her Fault."

It is entirely possible today in America to commit the most heinous crimes with virtual impunity simply by blaming someone else, or some set of circumstances, to explain why you are not responsible for your behavior.

Just about every week now, we read a newspaper headline blaring news of genetic links to everything from alcoholism to obesity to homosexuality to violence. Claiming we are victims of our own biological traits, Americans can relieve guilt about behavior they want to change, but can't. For example, many thought the discovery of a "gay gene" proved homosexuality is not a personal choice and should therefore not lead to social disapproval. As it turns out, however, most

of the headlines are more hype than reality. Many discoveries loudly touted to the public, including the one about the "gay gene," have been quietly refuted by further research. Nevertheless our society aggressively clings to many of these discredited theories because it wants sin without guilt, and these theories provide just that.

Clearly, Americans have become experts at blame-shifting—making scapegoats of parents, childhood disappointments, and genetic functions beyond their control. Regardless of your problem you can always find someone who will explain to you why your failing is not your fault, and instruct you how to soothe your guilty conscience.

The dilemma we face as we try to reach Americans lost in sin becomes increasingly clear. If no one is supposed to feel guilty, how could anyone be a sinner? And if we are not really sinners, why do we need a Savior who offers a plan for saving us from sin? This logic offers one of the reasons we see so few people interested in hearing the gospel, and so few visible results to our preaching.

Dr. Menninger, who is certainly no preacher, and not even a member of the Lord's church, said the following about the responsibility of preachers:

It is their special prerogative to study sin—or whatever they call it—to identify it, to define it, to warn us about it, and to spur measures for combating and rectifying it... Whose job is it to cause society to repent if not the Church's. So long as a person lives under the shadow of real, unacknowledged, and unexpiated guilt, he will continue to hate himself and to suffer the inevitable consequences of self-hatred. But the moment he begins to accept his guilt and his sinfulness, the possibility of radical reformation opens up; and a new freedom of self-respect and peace... No psychiatrists or psychotherapists, even those with many patients, have the quantitative opportunity to cure souls and mend minds which the preacher enjoys. And the preacher also has to a superb opportunity to do what few psychiatrists can, to prevent the development of chronic anxiety, depression, and other mental ills (192, 193, 195, 201).

Menninger's assessment of the preacher's role in dealing with the problems of sin and guilt are amazingly accurate, and out of character for a psychiatrist, as he admits. We must redouble our efforts to establish in the minds of Americans the existence of sin, to clearly define it, and make people aware of its horrible consequences. Our pulpits need to thunder against the unrighteousness practiced by some of our own people, because Americans are not going to respond to God's mandates unless they are convicted of sin.

We must also make it clear that there is no help for those who deny responsibility for their own behavior. "So then everyone of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12). Every responsible person should know that sin is certain to produce deadly ef-

fects in his life. No man can sin with impunity. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. 6:7).

We should also acknowledge our guilt feelings when we sin instead of trying to stifle them. I recently read of an Avianca Airlines jet which crashed in Spain in 1984. Investigators studying the accident made an eerie discovery. The "black box" cockpit recorders revealed that several minutes before impact a shrill, computer-synthesized voice from the plane's automatic warning system told the crew repeatedly in English, "Pull up! Pull up!"

The pilot, evidently thinking the system was malfunctioning, snapped, "Shut up, Gringo!" and switched the system off. Minutes later the plane plowed into the side of a mountain. Everyone on board died (The Vanishing Conscience 36).

This tragic story perfectly illustrates the way modern people treat the warning messages of the conscience. The wisdom of our age says guilt feelings are nearly always erroneous or hurtful, therefore, we should switch them off. Far from being a defect or a disorder, however, our ability to sense our own guilt is a tremendous gift from God (1 Tim. 1:5; 1:19; 3:9; Heb. 13:18; 1 Pet. 2:19). God has designed the conscience to be the soul's automatic warning system that tells us, "Pull up! Pull up!" before we crash and burn. Guilt feelings may not always be rational, but they are nearly always a reliable signal that some thing is wrong somewhere, and we had better come to grips with whatever it is and make it right.--1400 Northcrest Dr. Ada, OK 74820

ELDERS

Continued from page 2

wise will show it by leaving alcohol alone. Paul is positive about the matter, "NOT given to wine."

The use of alcohol by Christians (elders or not) does bring reproach upon the Church. Whether or not your conscience allows you to use it, those of the world still associate it with sin. Your influence for good is damaged before those people if they know you are a Christian. So much harm is done by thoughtless members every day who are unconcerned as to their actions before the world. The way we dress, the way we act, the language we use, the places we go, the company we keep, are all part of a general impression we make on all who see us. You may well be the only sermon they ever hear or see preached. If for no other reason, we need to abstain from it's use because of the harm it may do to our influence.

So, the elder is not to be given to wine. In fact, the best thing anyone can do is to leave it alone. Thomas A. Edison once said, "I do not drink alcoholic liquors. I have a better use for my head. To put alcohol in the human brain is like putting sand in the bearings of an engine." DLK

ANNOUNCEMENTS MEET BROTHER JIMMY CATING

With the assistance of other interested churches the congregation at Bedford, Indiana sponsored the TV program for a period of 8 months on a Louisville, Ky., station during 1991. Brother Jimmy Cating, who was 16 years old at the time, wrote in expressing an interest. Follow up work resulted in a church being started in the home of Bro. Cating's parents, Sheldon and Elsie Hawkins at Marengo, In. The church is now meeting at English, In. Bro. Doug Edwards is laboring with them. Jimmy is now 19 years of age and is developing into a very capable gospel preacher. He is an excellent speaker and exhibits a remarkable knowledge of the scriptures. The north side church here in Springfield, Mo., had Jimmy for a meeting in March. We were thrilled with his ability and dedication. Our young people seemed to especially appreciate, not only his preaching work, but his serious, yet pleasant, well balanced attitude and demeanor. I personally recommend Bro. Jimmy Cating to the brotherhood without reservation. He may be contacted at Rt. 1 Box 38, English, Indiana 47118, Phone 812-338-3104.--Irvin Barnes



PASSING IT ON

The caption above is the name of a new book of sermons by Brother M. Lynwood Smith, honoring his fifty-two years in the preaching field. This is a beautiful book, blue with gold stamping, and printed on an excellent grade of paper. It has fifteen full-length classic sermons, all vintage Lynwood. Some priceless pictures are included and a short biography of his life. Many have told me that they could not put it down until they had read every word. It would be an excellent way to give a gift which could teach someone the truth. The price is \$19.95 per copy, plus \$2.05 for postage and handling, if mailed. OK residents add \$1.44 for sales tax. Order from: Pathway Books and Bibles, PO Box 1183, Ardmore, OK 73402.--Johnny Elmore

NEW CONGREGATION

Dear Brethren: As of the 1st Sunday of October 1995, we will be meeting in Doniphan, MO at the below listed address. This is a "NEW CONGREGATION" in the city of Doniphan, MO. **NOTE:** Church of Christ, SUNDAY MORNING 10:30 A.M. only. DONIPHAN COMMUNITY CENTER, 105 Washington Street, Doniphan, MO 63935. Ed Ball, Rt. 1 Box 1640, Doniphan, MO 63936, Phone 314-354-2456. Jeff Mock, Rt. 1 Box 1640, Doniphan, MO 63935, Phone 314-354-2487. We wish your prayers and support in this work. We hope you will stop by and worship with us if possible when you are in this part of Missouri.--Ed Ball

PADUCAH, KY

Dear Brother King,

We would so appreciate if you could print this information about the congregation here at Paducah, Kentucky. We failed to have it printed when we first started meeting in July. The directions to the Paducah Church of Christ is as follows: from Interstate 24, take 62 east and take that to 25th street. Turn right on 25th and it's the gray building on the left. Contact: Gene Anderson, 502-928-2175 or Vida Robertson, 502-753-8538. Thank you all so much for your help, and may God bless and keep you.--Gene Anderson

BONDS OF MATRIMONY

SNOW-GARMA--Dwayne Snow and Jana Garman were united in matrimony July 28, 1995 at the Clairborne Church of Christ in West Monroe, LA. A "standing room only" crowd attended to wish them well. The wedding music was provided by Richard and Joy Nichols, Alice Thompson and Floyd Harris. The bride is the daughter of Brother and Sister Royce Garman of West Monroe, LA; the groom is the son of Brother and Sister Don Snow of Morrow, GA. It was quite an honor for me to be asked by this couple to perform the ceremony. May God grant them a long, happy life together, always in His service. The couple will reside in Morrow and worship with the Church in Jonesboro, GA.--Larry Thompson

MILLER-JOHNSON--On June 2, 1995 Aaron Michael Miller was united in marriage to Amy Louise Johnson. Aaron's parents are Mr. and Mrs. Mark Miller of Joplin, Mo. Amy's parents are Mr. and Mrs. Buddy Johnson of Irving, Tx. The bride and groom make their home just south of Joplin and are members of the Leawood Village Congregation. We are happy to have such a fine couple in this area and wish them many years of happiness in the Lord's service.--John W. Anderson

OUR DEPARTED

WRIGHT--Ada Fay Wright was born June 6, 1912, at Douglas, Ariz., and departed this life Sept. 21, 1995 in her home near Odell, Oregon. She was married to Thomas George Wright in 1929. She is survived by her husband: George of Odell; two sons: Georgie of Eagle Creek, Oreg., and Tom of Gresham, Oreg., and their spouses; three daughters: Mary Neville and Shirley Williams both of Odell, Oreg., and Norma Curtis of Hood River, Oreg., and their spouses; 16 grandchildren; 25 great-grandchildren; and 4 great-great grandchildren. At the time of her death, George and Fay Wright had been married 65 years. She obeyed the Gospel when she was 15 or 17 years old, and as far as my personal knowledge is concerned, she died as a faithful Christian with her name written in the book of life. From the time she and George were married, they worshiped together with the church at El Centro, Calif., until 1946. At that time, they moved to the Hood River Valley, Oreg., where they continued their serving the Lord, and where Fay was considered a faithful member of the Church of Christ at Odell at the time of her death. Much of her time during her life, she used doing things for her family and for others in helping to supply their needs. She is missed by her family, by the church, and by others who also loved her. The writer conducted services at the Anderson Funeral Home in Hood River, Oreg. Sept. 25, 1995.--Gayland Osburn

POTTS, Elsie --Dec. 24, 1917 - July 29, 1995-- Elsie Adell Hensley Potts of Cedaredge, CO, died of natural causes at the age of 77. Sister Potts was a homemaker and a licensed practical nurse and a resident of Cedaredge since 1954. She was born in Norman, OK where she spent her childhood and attended school. She married Robert L. Potts, Sr., on July 14, 1934. He preceded her in death Dec. 20, 1992. Sister Potts was a member of the Church of Christ in Cedaredge. She believed in strong determination and hard work and could put a positive spin on the very worst of circumstances. She will be greatly missed.

NORSWORTHY--Mary Amma Norsworthy of Strong, AR, was born July 20, 1910 in Lillie, LA., and departed from this life Aug. 29, 1995 at the age of 85 years. She is survived by five sons: Sam Jr., Livy, Lindall, Glen, and Deaton (who is a gospel preacher); three daughters: Betty, Nellie, and Jo; twenty-eight grandchildren, twenty great-grandchildren, and two great great-grandchildren. Sister Norsworthy had been sick and incapaci-

tated for several years. During this period of illness, she resided at home. The family is to be commended for how they responded to her needs; they lavished great care upon her every step of the way. Sister Norsworthy was a woman who was loved by others and who possessed an abundance of love for others. She loved the Lord and His church, her family, and her fellow man. She was always willing to help others; it didn't matter who they were or the color of their skin. As it is said of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31:28, "her children arise up, and call her blessed!" This writer, assisted by Miles King, attempted to speak words of comfort and warning to the large audience that was present.--*Billy D. Dickinson*

BROWN--Robert E. (Bob) Brown died August 1, 1995 in San Antonio, Texas while on vacation with his family. Bob had been ill for some time and he and the family were out for what Bob surely knew would be their last outing together. He died surrounded by his loved ones. Bob had been out of duty for a while, but made a confession and got back into the church a little while before he got sick. Elaine, his wife, told me Bob's faith had grown during his illness and the closer he came to the end the more he prayed and meditated about the Lord. Bob was born in Tulsa, OK February 16, 1942. He was a member of the Arpelar Church of Christ in Arpelar, OK. He is survived by his wife, Elaine, son and daughter-in-law Robert and Amy Brown, daughters Ladonna and Melanie Brown, sisters Elaine Elmore, Christine Verner, Mary Davis, Rebecca Hollis, and Jo Stachmus. He is also survived by his mother, Naomi Brown of McAlester. Bob was a big man physically, but he was a gentle giant, always making everyone at ease around him. I will always remember his pleasant manner and smile and I will miss his gigantic presence whenever I am back in McAlester.--*Jerry Dickinson*

FRISBEE--Franklin D. Frisbee of Conway, LA, was born Oct. 27, 1934 in Dyess, AR, and he passed away on July 1, 1995 at the age of 61 years. His death was a sudden one due to a heart problem; once more we were given a grim reminder of the uncertainty of life. He is survived by his wife: Sue; his parents: Charlie and Pleasant Frisbee; two sons: Charles and Greg; a daughter: Kim; three brothers: Ralph, Marvin, and Carl; four sisters: Gladys, Charlene, Glenda, and Doris; three grandchildren and a host of nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by a daughter, Tracy. Frank was a resident and noted farmer in West Carroll Parish for thirty-five years before moving to Union Parish five years ago. He was a faithful Christian, devoted family man, and a gentleman who was respected by everyone. To say that he will be missed by the Conway congregation is a great understatement. He was instrumental in leading several souls to Christ with the aid of his wife, Sue. Frank understood the law of the harvest; he knew that one reaps exactly what is sown. In his life he sowed the seeds of goodness and righteousness and he reaped a harvest of good things. Having sown to the Spirit, he has the promise of eternal life. This writer, along with Miles King, considered it a privilege to assist Wayne Fussell in speaking words of comfort and warning.--*Billy D. Dickinson*

ZIENTA--James Joseph "Ski" Zienta of the Jacksonville, FL congregation departed this life on August 31, 1995 at the age of 79 years. Brother Jim is survived by his wife of 50 years, Lois Pat; two sons, Robert Zienta and his wife, Carolyn; James Zienta II; and two granddaughters, Tiffany and Jennifer Zienta. I was privileged to know Brother Jim for over 33 years and always found him to be most humble, caring and a faithful member of the church. He always had a beautiful smile and warm greeting. He will be greatly missed by his loved ones, the church and all who knew him. The church was full, the flowers beautiful and singing by the Prince Family was outstanding. This writer

was highly honored to officiate and speak words of comfort to the loved ones and friends.--*Carl Hurd*

In Honor of Sister Patsy Nunnally

On a warm summer morning in July, beneath the shade of a spreading oak, family, brethren and friends said farewell to a beloved sister in Christ. Patsy Nunnally closed her eyes in death on July 21st following a lengthy illness. She was remarkable for her determination to attend the worship of the church until her illness finally confined her to bed.

When Patsy was sixteen years old, her fiance, Frank Nunnally, received her confession of Christ and immersed her for the remission of her sins. Shortly after, Frank and Patsy were married; their union prevailed for forty-three years. They were blessed with three children of their own: Cheryl, Rhonda Lea and the late Ricky Wayne. In addition, through the years, Frank and Patsy opened their home to some two hundred foster children. One of those children came to live with Frank and Patsy when she was but a year old. Seven years later, Patricia Nichole, "Nicki," was adopted as a member of the family.

When daughter Rhonda Lea was sixteen years old, she penned the following poem in admiration of her mother. We offer this poem as a tribute to the life of our sister.

Let me tell you of my mother,
She's very dear to me.
She's more than just my mother,
She's other things you see.
Number one, she is a Christian.
Number two, she is my father's wife.
Number three, a faithful worker-
She has been all her life.
Number four, she reared two daughters
Who love her very much.
And she had a big ol' boy
Who loved her tender touch.
So if I live to be a hundred,
And have many things in life,
The dearest thing will always be
My father's loving wife.

Words of hope were accompanied by songs from those gathered at the grave. Patsy will be sorely missed by all. Please remember our brother Frank, in particular, in prayer.--*Submitted by Michael Fox*



Barney Owens, 8782 Meadowview Ln., W. Chester, OH 45069--Recently I have had the pleasure of hearing brethren Ronny Wade, Doug Edwards, and Mark Bailey one or more times in Gospel Meetings. My next will be with the church at Burkhart, MO (near Racine). Nov. 22-26. This covers the time Americans call "Thanksgiving." Since most will be off from work on holiday, why not spend that evening (and perhaps others) with us in collectively praising the Lord and trying to spread the gospel to the hearts of those who have not believed? We would count it a joy to have your help. At least pray for good. God bless all "who call upon the Lord's name."

Johnny Elmore, 419 K SW, Ardmore, OK 73401, Oct. 3--We wish to express our sincerest thanks for all the prayers, cards and well-wishes sent our way because of Sally's carotid artery operation last month. It was considered a life-threatening risk without it. Many thanks, too, to the congregations who sent to our need. We are very thankful to God for her recovery and for

such caring, considerate brothers and sisters in Christ. I especially appreciate LaClida Cocklin for staying with her during her recovery. While she was hospitalized in Oklahoma City, I was asked to speak at the 21st St. congregation, and also heard Allen Bailey one night. I spoke at Duncanville, TX Sept. 29-Oct. 1, closing there at 2 p.m. At the Garland congregation's invitation, I spoke there at 6 p.m. the same Sunday.

*Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Ct., Bonner Springs, KS, Oct. 3--*The work with the Stony Point congregation in Kansas City is going well. We are thankful, and happy to give God the glory. We rejoice that we have the privilege to be associated with this church. It is the exception when we fail to have our regular weekly studies with certain ones who are very interested in increasing their knowledge of the scriptures. We recently studied with a young man for over three hours. Since then he has missed only two services (when he went out of town). Richard DeGough is presently with us in a Gospel meeting. The attendance is good and the preaching is sound, and so far we have had two baptisms and one restoration. I look forward to being in a meeting at Blue Springs, KY the last week of this month, the Lord willing. God bless all the faithful all over the world.

*Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, Oct. 10--*It was my pleasure to speak one time at the new congregation in Grants Pass, OR, recently. They are few, but we hope that will change. The congregation in Fremont continues in peace and we have been glad to see a few outsiders attend recently. It is always nice to preach at home. We began here in 1971 with 13 members and today about 50 to 60 worship at Fremont. They take care of their own affairs and studies and I'm able to be gone in meetings as required. Growth is always needed in some areas, but we are thankful for the growth we have made. Fremont is rich in young people and we thank God for that. We are looking forward to hearing Ronny Wade a few nights in Lodi before we must leave for a meeting in Joplin, MO, the last of the month. There is still a need for support for some Filipino preachers. If you can help, let me hear from you. You can send your support directly to them and be a part of this great work in a direct way. Pray for us.

*P. Duane Permenter, P. O. Box 1223, Riverbank, CA, 95367, Oct. 5--*Please note my current phone number (916) 391-3390. The meeting in Kentucky was certainly enjoyable and ended with two making confessions of fault. The brethren worked hard for the meeting and I am appreciative for all who helped make the meeting a success. It was a pleasure to stay with Sister Carmen Murphy, the widow of the late Thomas Murphy from Liberty, Kentucky. We were blessed with outsiders every service, and many from the other congregations in the area were also good to support the meeting. While on the trip it was a joy to attend a meeting at Chestnut Ridge near Mount Vernon, Kentucky, where Doug Hawkins was doing some good preaching. I look forward to returning to this part of the country in the future. It is good to be at home here in Sacramento once again. My family is all doing fine, and we are working very hard. Brother John Bradley (a young man that was baptized by one of the brethren here at the 64th. Street congregation last January) recently gave his third talk and did an excellent job. This weekend we are going to have Brother Ivan Costa with us for a singing school, and he is to preach for us on Lord's Day morning and evening. Brethren, please remember us in your prayers. May God bless the faithful.

*Kevin W. Presley, P.O. Box 2398, Ada, Oklahoma, 74821 (405)436-1311, October 8, 1995--*I had an enjoyable meeting with the brethren in McAlestar, OK during the last weekend of July. We had good crowds with some outside interest. Three were baptized during the meeting. The first weekend of August took me to Council Hill, OK. This was my first meeting with those brethren. I very much enjoyed the company of these brethren. We had a good meeting although there were no visible results. My next meeting was at Bear Track, KY. I have held sev-

eral meetings there, and this was the best one yet. The congregation there is small in number, but they worked hard for the meeting. One night we had over thirty people in attendance, most of whom were digressive. I look forward to being back there next year. From there I flew to California for the Labor Day meeting. The meeting was superb. Bro. Lynwood was in fine form and did a wonderful job conducting the meeting. The hard work on the part of the good brethren at Planz Rd. in Bakersfield, also made the meeting a success. I enjoyed being able to spend time, as always, with Lynwood, a man for whom I have great admiration and respect. I also was privileged to preach at Brundage, Ln. (Bakersfield) and at Covina. My next meeting was at Bandy, Kentucky. This as well was my first meeting in that place. We had the largest crowds that had been in that building for years. The meeting was very enjoyable, resulting in two confessions. Last evening, I concluded a ten day meeting with the brethren here at Ada. It was great to be at home and have the privilege of holding them a meeting. We had one restoration during the meeting. I could not say enough to express my appreciation to the church at Ada. They have encouraged and supported my efforts to preach, unwaveringly. The guidance and influence of brethren Joe Hisle and Carl Johnson is something I will always cherish. I look forward to the following meetings this fall; West Monroe, LA, November 1-5; McGregor, TX, November 15-19; and Marion, IA, December 1-3 (tentative) May God bless the faithful everywhere.

*Irvin Barnes, 3218 E. Farm Road 88, Springfield, Mo. 65803--*I was privileged to be with the church at London, Ky., for a meeting in May. It is always a great joy for me to work with Bro. Arvil Baker, Phillip Scott and others in the church at London. It is a joy for me to be in the region and see those whom I have known so many years. I have seen the church at London go from a struggling few to a well balanced body of believers. I was in a good meeting at West Monroe, La., in June. It had been 7 years since I had been there. The church has shown some excellent growth in that time. I always enjoy and benefit from being with Bro. Billy Dickinson. What a blessing indeed, to enjoy the hospitality of the Royce Garman home where we stayed during the meeting. In July, Lynwood Smith preached here at the north side for 5 nights. As usual his presence evoked memories of the old time meetings we enjoyed in our growing up days. I go to Hale, Arkansas to help out once a month. Our crowds at Hale have increased some this summer. I enjoyed attending two services of the Labor Day meeting at Neosho, Mo. Here in Springfield, (north side) with all our members present, the seating is nearly filled to capacity. I am scheduled to be at Sharonville, Ohio, Oct. 21-29.

*Jerry Dickinson, 13803 Crosshaven, Houston, TX 77015--*I have just returned home from the Labor Day meetings in Texas and Missouri. The brethren in Neosho hosted the Missouri Labor Day meeting and I am glad they put me on the schedule along with a number of other preachers. It was a bit of a whirlwind trip for my daughter Leah and I to make from Houston (I am about to get too old to make such all night drives, though) but we enjoyed being back in the area and the meeting was superb. On the way back to Houston we decided to take in the last day of the Texas Labor Day meeting and what a meeting it was. As I have stated I am just back home, a little weary but very invigorated and encouraged after such a weekend. My summer meetings included being in Cable Ridge, MO where I stayed with the Bentsch family and enjoyed their hospitality, not to mention Hugh's world famous popcorn. What a great group of brethren at Cable Ridge - I look forward to being with them again! Next, I was in Iuka, AR for the second consecutive year and enjoyed once again being with that small group of brethren. Josh and June treated me like one of their own and I love them for that and for their love of the church. I was in Harrison AR next where I stayed with Jimmie and Cindy Smith. I felt like their home was my own and Cindy worried about me like I was one of her own, especially when I got sick the last weekend. What can I say about Jimmie? We have been good friends since

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we were both young aspiring preachers and I have always admired his staunch stand for the truth, the church, and for conservative principles in our worship and Christian living. He is a rock in Arkansas, not to mention the whole brotherhood. There was one confession and one restoration during the meeting. Next I was in Arpelar, OK, where I stayed once again with Bill and Christine Verner. These are my old stompin' grounds and I enjoyed being with these brethren one more time. After this I was in Pleasant Hill, MO for a great meeting that resulted in four baptisms and one restoration. As usual I stayed with the McDavitts - I cannot think of any place I feel more at home. Jason, my son, went with me to my next meeting in Goshen, OH and was a great help. He preached in some of the congregations in the area and even preached in my place one night. The Moores treated us grandly and Jason and I had a great time with them and the rest of the gracious folks in Goshen. Lastly this summer, I was in Huntington, WV. This was my first time in Huntington, but I felt like I had known these brethren all my life by the time I finished. I stayed with Bill and Tammy Chatterton where I had a marvelous time. Bill and I seem to see eye to eye on a lot of things (too many things according to Tammy) and we had a good time together. I pray the Lord will bless us all as we enter the last quarter of the year 1995 - may we redeem the time as we work for the Lord!

*Max Butler, P. O. Box 6307, Folsom, CA. 95763--*My wife, Peggy, and I have just returned to the U.S. from the work in Tula, Russia. During the 1994 portion of our stay in Tula, we were there from mid July through mid October, and the Lord added 10 by baptism at the conclusion of a 10 day gospel meeting conducted just prior to our departure. In 1995 we returned to Tula on January the 2nd, and began the process of putting the congregation together again. During our absence in November and December they had been scattered by false teachers, unfaithful members and Orthodox zealots. After resolving the present problems, we prepared for a gospel meeting with brothers Alan Bonifay and George Battey. Alan and George arrived on January 19 and we again encountered more opposition from Orthodox zealots. During the four weeks Alan and George were present the Church changed locations twice and went "underground" until Alan and George departed for home in mid February. While there was no numerical growth, the brethren were greatly increased internally by their efforts. In the months that followed it was my pleasure to continue to work with the Russian brethren to ground them and build them up in the most holy faith. As they grew in the knowledge of the Lord they began bringing family and friends to our meetings which resulted in the baptism of one married couple with two children. On another occasion I taught "English" to a group of people wishing to speak American. We used the Bible as our text book, which resulted in the baptism of our land lady who had been participating. At the close of that trip, the Lord had added 3 more souls to his church. We returned home briefly on the first of June to renew our visa, returning on 22 June. Again, in our absence Orthodox zealots had succeeded in having the brethren evicted from the meeting place. We immediately began the search for another meeting place and preparing for a gospel meeting with brother Gregory Gay. With the help of a local business woman (the mother of one of the members) we were able to locate a place to worship with the possibility of purchasing it for a permanent location for the church. Brother Gay arrived 21 July with his wife, Cassie, and preached for two weeks feeding the flock wonderful lessons each evening from God's word. During that campaign the Lord added 4 by baptism Brother and

Sister Gay returned home on August 6 to be present during their grandsons heart operation. In the following weeks the Lord restored 2 who had been out of duty for several months and added 6 by baptism, bringing the total to 10 for this trip. During this year the Lord has added 22 souls to His kingdom in Tula. The brethren there are learning to visit new or weak members, and visitors, and do the personal work of the church. One brother (Valery Sterhov) and one sister (Valentine Vorobyeva) are the primary participants in these efforts, and it is of great value to the overall work. It has been a very good year. It has been filled with pressures from the State Church who aggressively oppose any competition, but the Lord's church has persevered and grown. In addition to souls baptized, much good has been accomplished working with the Russian brethren to prepare them to do the Lord's work there in Tula. Brother Gay's efforts have been of tremendous assistance in this regard by conducting individual studies with those who wish to teach and lead God's people. The possibility of purchasing the current location is exciting because that would remove the primary obstacle to State registration, which is desirable because that provides opportunity for expanded public advertising and preaching and unrestricted public contact. That would of course accelerate the work in Tula. This is a good work, and I encourage the brethren to support it with prayers and dollars. A great deal has also been accomplished in producing written materials in Russian. At the present time translation and printing is complete on 15 tracts and one 15 lesson correspondence course. Translation is complete on one 30 lesson course which is now ready for printing. Much good will come from the circulation of this literature through the months and years ahead. The Russian people are coming out of more than 70 years of atheism and have no understanding of Bible authority and true worship. Teaching them to worship faithfully may come more slowly and require much patience and endurance, but the church at Tula is maturing at a good pace and they will be able to stand against the fiery darts of the wicked one without endless American involvement I believe in the near future. That is the goal being sought and we see evidence of that becoming reality. God bless you all for your past support, and (hopefully) for your future support of the work of God both in Russia and throughout the world.

*Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo., 65808, Oct. 10--*The Missouri Labor Day Meeting was a good one this year. The congregation at Neosho, Mo., is to be commended for planning and conducting it in such an efficient manner. Our meeting at Hartwell, AR, closed without visible results. We enjoyed our stay there, as usual, and appreciate all those who drove to help us out by their presence. Next we were at Pleasant View, near Mitchell, In. This is a growing church. The last Sunday of the meeting three people took their stand with the church, coming from digression. Their new building is nice and accommodating. In fact, it does exactly what a church building is supposed to do, i.e. provide a place for the church to assemble and worship. Nothing more, nothing less. We closed at Atwater, Ca., Oct. 8 with one coming back to the church and confessing her wrongs after being away for nearly twenty years. This caused great rejoicing among the saints. Currently we are at Lodi in the midst of a good meeting. While here we are making our home with our long time friends Jimmy and Vera Winchester. Few have been made to drink more deeply from the cup of sorrow than they, yet they retain their dignity and faith in a remarkable way. God bless them. From here we are scheduled to go to Fair Oaks, CA, then to Eldon, Mo., Nov. 4-6. Remember us when you pray.

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

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

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

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NO. 12

"FOLLOWING CHRIST"

By William L. St. John

Christians are obligated to follow Christ. The very name Christian means to be Christlike. As followers of Jesus Christ, we must teach the things that Jesus taught. In Acts 8:4, Luke records that the members of the church of Christ were scattered abroad and that they went every where preaching the word. The apostle Paul told the church at Ephesus that they were to "speak the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15) and in setting this example, Paul had warned the Ephesians day and night, even with tears (Acts 20:27). Christians may be tempted to concentrate on enjoyable subjects and avoid teaching the "whole counsel of God" because it is not always popular. However, speaking the truth in love requires warning others about things that are wrong.

The principle of a watchman is very applicable today. In Ezekiel 33:1-11, the Scriptures tell us how God dealt with such matters. Like a watchman on the wall warning the city of dangers, God's servants were to cry out against the sins of the people. The Lord God told Ezekiel, "When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand" (Ezekiel 33:8). Remember how Paul had warned them and had not shunned to declare unto them the whole counsel of God, Paul was free of their blood. If Christians fail to warn those in error, then even though those in error will be held accountable for their own sins, the Christian will also be held responsible - the sinners' blood will be upon their hands.

Jesus warned that most people were going to be lost (Matthew 7:13-14). He taught that we must confess Him before men or we will be denied before the Father in heaven (Matt. 10:32-33). After saying this, Jesus went on to say, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter against her mother-in-law" (Matt. 10:34-35). God's word, the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17), has often been the focal point of division; because one will accept it and another reject it. Christians cannot

afford to give in to please others, not even those close family members that they love so dearly. This is evident from Christ's next statement: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:37-38).

The teachings of Jesus have often brought about controversy and even the death of His followers (Acts 7:54 - Acts 8:1). Yet for the sake of a false sense of unity and peace, many choose to remain silent about error. Paul spoke of some who would be saying, "Peace and safety," and how "sudden destruction would come upon them" when the Lord Jesus would return like a thief in the night (I Thess. 5:2). True unity among God's people can only come about when they are all faithfully following the word of God. Paul told the Corinthians, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Cor. 1:10). In order for there to be "no divisions," we must "ALL speak the SAME thing." If all God's followers will "speak the same thing" and join together in the "same mind" and in the "same judgment", then there will be no divisions.

What is to be the standard of judgment? Some people say that ten different men will come up with ten different ideas and that no two people can agree. This may well be true if each is left to follow his own conscience, opinions, ideas, or feelings. By inspiration, the apostle Paul told the brethren at Philippi, "let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample." If we would be Christians, then our standard for judgment in spiritual matters must be Christ and His apostles. The word of God is the sword of the Spirit, and when we fail to use it as the

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Editorial

QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELDERS

By Don L. King

The quality we are studying this month deals with an elder's ability to control himself. In 1 Timothy 3:3, Paul says: "Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre;..." He also instructed Titus that one who is looking to become an elder is not to be a striker in Titus 1:7. This is a very important quality of the bishop or elder, etc. which concerns his attitude and resulting conduct toward those with whom he must deal.

Those who are given the charge of the church must deal with every conceivable situation and type of individual. Some may be stubborn and refuse to heed sound instruction either from the pulpit or personally. Such a person requires all the self control an elder can manage. The elder cannot be the kind of fellow who is immediately hurt and angry because his suggestions may not be eagerly accepted. He must be in control and not give sway to an immature urge to fight and bicker. That never shows control. When a person is great within his own eyes he is more likely to become angry when he is corrected. We have all seen such people. Preachers have this to handle all too frequently. Paul is simply saying that such a person is not qualified to become an elder. As you look over the congregation where you worship and consider various brethren for the office of elder, look closely. Does the man who would be an elder have a tendency to lose his temper? Is he a fighter? (surely not!) If so, he isn't qualified as long as that character flaw remains. Frankly, that should never be a problem with anyone who seeks to be a Christian, let alone a leader of the church. God forbid that such men with immature and insecure personalities ever be in a leading role. The Lord needs men who are settled, mature and able to control themselves. We wouldn't allow such persons to control our personally owned businesses, would we? Hence, let us beware as we choose men to become elders.

The Greek term for "striker" is "PLEKTES" and is defined as "a smiter, i.e. pugnacious (quarrelsome)-striker." (Strong's, etc.)

Our own English versions render this variously as, Not a striker; not violent; not pugnacious; not a fist-fighter; not given to blows; not ready to wound; as well as not a brawler, etc.

Perhaps you are thinking the term "brawler" is familiar. Yes, that was used in the last article dealing with wine. The Revised Version uses the word "brawler" with respect to the wine topic while the King James Version uses the same word to designate an-

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THE QUERIST COLUMN

By Ronny F. Wade

Question: Is it scriptural for women to make decisions and enforce them pertaining to the way the church services are conducted? (AR)

Answer: It is the will of God that men lead the church. Faithful men are to be teachers, 2 Tim. 2:2. Men are to be bishops or elders I Tim. 3:1. Women are not permitted to be public teachers of the word 2Tim. 2:11-12, and are to remain silent in the assembly so far as teaching is concerned I Cor. 14:34-35. Since the services of the church, are public worship assemblies, it would seem evident that the responsibility for the arrangement and oversight of these gatherings be left to the men in charge. For women to usurp authority in this area would be without divine approval.

Question: What should be said in the prayer of thanks for the bread and cup of blessing, when observing the Lord's Supper? (OK)

Answer: The Scriptures do not give us a detailed word for word prayer that is to be offered. However it seems to this writer that none could be better nor more to the point than the statement made by Paul in I Cor. 10:16 "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" The "we" bless refers to "we the assembled" (Alford, and other Greek scholars). Hence in the giving of thanks all the assembled participate through the prayer of the one serving at the table. To "bless" according to Vine is to "consecrate a thing with solemn prayers, to ask God's blessing on a thing...". In the giving of thanks the bread and cup are blessed. The prayer offered at this time is for a specific purpose. To use it to thank God for everything under the sun, at least in the opinion of this writer, is not appropriate. I have heard some well-meaning brethren become so engrossed in thanking God for various things that they actually forgot to give thanks for the bread and cup of blessing.

Question: Are the terms "blessing something" "giving thanks" and "prayer" in anyway different? (OK)

Answer: The word prayer is a broad general term referring to our petitions to God. These petitions may include thanksgiving for certain blessings, as well as our requests for various needs. The scriptures are abundant with examples of both. In I Tim. 4:3-5 we read "Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." It is obvious that the prayer under consideration here is one of thanksgiving. That is, we petition God, thanking Him for our blessings. We have many

blessings from God, and should not be neglectful in thanking Him for every one of them. Our health, food, provisions for life, places of dwelling, modes of transportation etc. etc. the list is endless. Prayer may also be used to "ask" for various needs. In Mt. 6:9-13 we have an example of such a prayer. Such phrases as "Give us this day our daily bread" and "forgive us our debts. . ." illustrate a prayer of request. In Phil. 4:6 we read "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." According to Vine (proseuche) is the most frequent term used in the Gospels and Acts referring to prayer to God. The word (deesis) generally stresses the sense of need. The english words request, supplication, and beseech are variously used to refer to prayer in the N. T. scriptures. While thanksgiving is not the same as making a request, we are praying or petitioning God when we do both. Blessing something, as used in I Cor. 10:16 is included in giving thanks. McGarvey notes "Not the cup which brings blessing (though that it does), but the cup over which blessing is spoken, the cup consecrated by benediction." Barnes points out the following: "...there is a sense in which it may be said that the cup is blessed, and that by prayer and praise it is set apart and rendered in some sense sacred to the purposes of religion." In the giving of thanks, we ask God's blessing upon the emblems before us i.e. to consecrate them for the purposes indicated in the scripture. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade, P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, Mo. 65808)

THE FORGIVEN CHRISTIAN MUST WALK IN THE LIGHT AND BRING FORTH FRUITS MEET FOR REPENTANCE

By Alan Bonifay

In two previous articles we have reviewed God's gracious provision for the forgiveness of our sins. We have noted several of the spiritual blessings that he has given us in order to sustain us as we strive to walk in the light. We observed that God instructs the Christian not to dabble in sin at all under any circumstances or for any reason. However, the fact is that Christians do occasionally become entangled in sin. But this, too, God has provided for. The Christian who sins does not need to be baptized again. He needs to repent, confess and pray for the forgiveness of his sin. This is known as God's second law of pardon. But now what is required of him since he has been forgiven and restored to a right relationship with God and his brethren through this process called the second law of pardon? And how should the church re-

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THE FORGIVEN CHRISTIAN MUST WALK IN THE LIGHT AND BRING FORTH FRUITS MEET FOR REPENTANCE

continued from page three

spond when a Christian confesses sin?

Confession without repentance only breeds more confessions. I John 2:3-6 sets the proper tone for the forgiven believer's subsequent life.

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

John the Baptist's instruction to the impenitent Pharisees and Sadducees is still appropriate today. The restored believer must "bring forth fruits meet for repentance" (Mt. 3:8). Paul used similar language toward those who would be saved (Acts 26:20). The Old Testament illustrates with great clarity the teachings of the New Testament concerning both repentance (Lev. 26:40-42; I Kgs. 8:47-50; 2 Chron. 6:37,38; Neh. 1:6; 9:2; Job 33:27,28; Prov. 28:13) and the necessity to bring forth fruits meet for repentance or to amend one's ways (Jer. 7:3-7; 26:13; 36:3).

WHAT SHOULD BE THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE WHEN A CHRISTIAN CONFESSES HIS SIN?

Clearly Jesus taught us repeatedly that we are to be possessed of a forgiving spirit (Mt. 18:21-35; Lk. 23:34). In other words we are to express in both our words and our behavior a willingness to forgive our brethren. However, Jesus is equally clear that repentance is to be required in order for forgiveness to be granted:

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 (Lk. 17:3,4)

However, it should be readily evident to all that forgiveness of sins does not necessarily equal the restoration of trust. To rebuild trust, works that demonstrate repentance must be forthcoming. Several examples underscore this point: When a teenager lies to his father and is discovered, he may repent and be forgiven. However, it may yet be awhile before his word is again accepted at simple face value. Consider again, the unfortunate person who molests a child. If he repents we must forgive him, but prudence would suggest that such a person not be retained as a baby-

sitter right away. Or what if a brother is caught stealing from the treasury of the church? He repents in abject sorrow. Forgive him? Of course, we must; but even a modicum of wisdom would call for a new treasurer. The penitent forgiven Christian must labor to reestablish his credibility and that may take some time.

We create a problem for ourselves when we insist that forgiving a brother requires that we use him to direct some or all phases of our worship. No scripture teaches such a principle. The congregation should be allowed to take the measure of the forgiven Christian's penitence. Does he have the attitude of humility that the prodigal displayed upon his return (Lk. 15:17-22)? The prodigal was obviously making a clean breast of all his sin. To me it seems evident that if questioned he would not have bridled in haughty resentment, as we have seen some supposed penitents do—even recently. When a Christian makes a public confession the church has an obligation to find out what specific sins have been confessed—especially in a case that results from some form of public censure. Otherwise the confession all take to be for drunkenness is only later discovered to have been for fornication. Not only is such an obligation inherent in good leadership, it is what the scriptures demand (James 5:16; Acts 19:18,19).

Nevertheless, on the other hand, we must not allow ourselves or our congregations to be judgmental in ways that the Bible condemns (Mt. 7:1-5; Rom. 2:1; John 7:24; I Cor. 4:5). The church can and should only judge behavior and that according to the true facts of the case (I Cor. 5:13; John 7:24). When a brother demonstrates works of repentance we should accept him in all senses of the word. Paul wrote to the Corinthians the second time in order to persuade them to lighten up on the brother they had imposed punishment upon lest they cause him to be "swallowed up with overmuch sorrow" (2 Cor. 2:1-8).

Summary

God has provided in his plan a way that believers can obtain the forgiveness of the occasional sin committed in their Christian walk. In the first place, Christians are not to sin but to walk in the light (I Jn. 2:1,2; 1:7-9). In the second place, when a Christian sins he must repent in his sin (Acts 8:22); he must confess it (I Jn. 1:9; James 5:16; Acts 19:18,19); he must pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:22). In the third place, the penitent forgiven Christian must begin again to walk in the light and bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Finally, the church must accept the penitent's confession, but use some careful judgment by allowing him to gradually rebuild a position of trust—guarding against endangering either the restored or the church by thrusting him too quickly back into leadership or direction of the worship. Let us all work together in the light of God's word, with prudence and foresight.

THE COLLECTION FOR THE SAINTS

By Jim Franklin

Extensive abject poverty and hunger in the U.S. has not been a problem the church has had to deal with since the days of the "Great Depression." Surely, we are grateful to the Lord for having spared us the adversity. However, poverty and hunger are very real in Africa at the present time. We have brethren who are among the affected. I know. They come to me—begging. It is not an enviable situation to be in—to be either the begger, or the one being begged. In my particular case. I am in both positions. People are begging me for assistance. I, in turn, beg the American brethren on their behalf. It is not fun and games!

There have been times when the pressure has gotten to me. I have responded to the Africans in this manner: "What makes you think that I have plenty of money?" "I came here to preach the Gospel and to help this brotherhood develop spiritually; not to run a relief agency!" "Do you feel that it is the responsibility of the American brethren to take over the responsibility of the government?" To be honest, I thought I was saying the right things. My fear has been that people would come to look upon us as a source of material, not spiritual needs. And, I might add, these are not ungrounded fears. Even so, I have had to do some serious thinking about this problem of providing relief for our brethren. I wish to share some of my thoughts. If I have erred, perhaps someone could help me.

I am fully convinced that the collection must be included as an item of worship on the Lord's Day in every assembly of the Lord's church. I would not need to look further than I Cor. 16:1-2 to have this assurance. However, I would like to include verses 3 and 4 in the quote and then make some observations.

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me."

"**Now concerning . . .**" This is Paul's unique approach to re-introduce a matter which he apparently had previously discussed with the congregation at some point in time—either in person, or by letter—and is now bringing it up once again. This introduction also, to me, tends to stress the

degree of importance upon the matter he is about to discuss. His subject is:

"**the collection . . .**" Collection is a noun naming a specific action, i.e. "a bringing together" (Webster); "a gathering, collection" (Analytical Greek Lexicon, p.249b). It is not simply a collection because the definite article does appear in the Greek text. It is the collection, i.e. a specific collection, exclusive of all others. It is a special collection in that it is:

"**for the saints . . .**" The purpose for the collection is for the saints. Saints is a term used by Paul in reference to members of the church (Rom. 1:7; Eph. 1:1. etc.). In the passage under consideration, saints is both inclusive and exclusive. By inclusive, we understand the collection is for saints, i.e. members of the Lord's church without regard of nationality or geographical location, or whether or not they are members of the local congregation where the collection took place. Also, by Paul's use of the term saints we understand that the collection is for them alone, thus excluding all who are not members.

"**as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.**" "I have given order" is translated from a single word in the Greek. The word is *διεταξα* (*dietaxa*). It is a verb. It is the first person, i.e. Paul the one who is doing the speaking. The tense is the aorist. We may understand this as being the simple past tense, i.e. something which Paul did prior to the time he is speaking. The voice is that of the active, i.e. the subject, namely Paul who initiated the action. The mood is the indicative, i.e. the action of the verb is stated as a matter of fact. Some have the impression that since this verb is not in the imperative mood, i.e. the mood of command, Paul did not place the congregations in the province of Galatia under obligation to have a collection as part of their services. This conclusion will not agree with the language of the Greek. First, Paul is not commanding himself. He is simply relating an action he had taken. A definition of the verb will name the action. The root of the verb *διεταξα* (*dietaxa*) is *διατασσο* (*diatasso*) which means: *order, direct, command* (A GREEK-ENGLISH LEXICON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, Arndt & Gingrich, p.188b). The action Paul took was to **command** the churches in Galatia to put into effect "the collection for the saints." This procedure, however, was not to be

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THE COLLECTION FOR THE SAINTS

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limited to churches in Galatia. Paul bound the same upon Corinth: "even so do ye." "Do" (Greek ποιεσατε [poiesate]) is in the imperative, the mood of command. Corinth is **required** to include the collection as part of its worship on the Lord's Day. This, I believe, is the procedure required of all congregations everywhere since that day until the end of time.

"Upon the first day of the week . . ." A specific day is designated for the collection. This excludes any other day for the church to practice this ordinance.

"**let every one of you...**" Paul could not have made it any clearer to each member of the congregation that they were personally responsible to be a party to making a contribution to the collection. I believe this same injunction is still binding upon every member today.

"**lay by him in store . . .**" There are some who have concluded that this has reference to making a store of a portion of their earnings at home, not in the assembly. This, I believe, is not correct. There are at least two reasons.

First, Paul's epistle is being addressed to an assembly of the church at Corinth. Consider what he says regarding their assembling: "Ye come together" (1 Cor. 11:17); "When ye come together in the church" (1 Cor. 11:18); "When ye come together therefore into one place" (1 Cor. 11:20); "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place" (1 Cor. 14:23). In this letter, Paul deals with specific activities which require congregational participation when they came together. He deals with the Lord's Supper in chapters 10 and 11; singing, praying and teaching in chapter 14; and the collection in chapter 16. These activities constitute what we refer to as "items of worship" each assembly observes every Lord's Day.

Second I believe that Paul's language would be contradictive if he were instructing every member to keep a separate treasury at home. Did he not say, "that there be no gatherings (the same Greek word translated as collection in verse 1) when I come." For the members to keep their funds at home and then bring them to the congregation when Paul arrived is the very thing he opposed. The members were to make their contributions every first day of the week while they were assembled. The congregation then became the caretaker of the collected funds. (I suggest you consider what scholars like McKnight, commentators like McGarvey & Pendleton, B.W.

Johnson and James Burton Coffman have had to say on this issue. I believe these men are correct on this issue insofar as their research of the New Testament Greek is concerned).

"**As God has prospered him . . .**" This has to do with what one has gained insofar as material blessings are concerned. It is significant that Paul obligates the members of the church to make their contribution on a week by week basis.

"**That there be no gatherings when I come.**" Today this phrase is often overlooked by the one responsible for initiating this part of the service in an assembly. We usually hear something like this: "In 1 Cor. 16:1&2, the Apostle Paul gave instructions for us to lay by in store upon the first day of the week. This is the first day of the day, so let us all do our duty and lay by in store." Sometimes one may quote these passages down to this last phrase and omit it. There are times it is included in the quote, but no satisfactory explanation is given to what Paul is talking about. Of course, what Paul is talking about is contained in the following verses, verses 3 & 4. Yes, I have been guilty too! In so doing, I am convinced the significance of the collection is overlooked.

I am going to assume that you will now read 1 Cor. 16:1-4 once again. Notice how insistent Paul is concerning the collection. This letter is actually the second which Paul wrote to Corinth (See 1 Cor 5 :9). We do not know all the details of the first letter, but we know Paul was to write yet another epistle, Second Corinthians in which he again stresses the brethren's need to have the collection.

Furthermore, it is just as important to notice that the collection of the Corinthian church as well as Shose in Macedonia (No doubt about those in Galatia either!) was being channeled to needy brethren in Judaea. In fact, Paul is very emphatic about the matter! What we see, brethren, is that the collection in its inception was designed to take care of needs beyond the local congregation to that of destitute brethren who lived in another area of the world! I would never contend that the collection is limited to sending it to needy brethren in other lands. But, neither can it be denied that Paul's goal was to set up the collection in all churches and have them to send relief to needy brethren elsewhere. This Paul did by inspiration when he set forth the procedure in the churches (Gal. 1:11-12).

I am guilty of having said, "The Lord did not set up the church as a benevolent organization, but to be responsible to see to it that the Gospel was supported and carried throughout the world. "Brethren, I am convinced that I was only half right! While 1 Tim. 3:15 does convey the idea of

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THE COLLECTION FOR THE SAINTS

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the church's responsibility to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world, *it does not limit the responsibility to that one objective.* The church in its universal sense, is definitely a benevolent organization bearing the responsibility of taking care of its needy members—*universally!* Each congregation in the world is autonomous. But, just like Corinth, each is a part of the universal church bearing the responsibility of sharing their collection with brethren in need, no matter where they may live on this earth.

In addition to what Paul wrote the Corinthians, listen to what he wrote the Galatians concerning the trip he and Barnabas made to Jerusalem to visit James, Peter, John and other inspired leaders of the church. (Other details regarding this visit are recorded in the 15th chapter of Acts). This trip to Jerusalem was made by Paul after his first missionary journey, but before the second.

"And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do."—Gal. 2:9-10

While benevolence was not Paul's purpose for making the trip to Jerusalem, Apostles and leaders made it an issue—by inspiration, no doubt!

Prior to his first missionary journey, Paul had traveled with Barnabas to deliver relief from the church at Antioch to brethren in Judaea (Acts 11:29-30). Paul was aware of the continuing problem of brethren in Judaea requiring relief when he received instructions from the inspired brethren at Jerusalem to remember them. Paul responded with the procedure authorized by Heaven—commanding congregations everywhere to include "the collection" as part of their responsibility during worship upon the first day of the week and *sending* it to those needy saints in Judaea.

None of us would ever doubt Paul's zeal to spread the Gospel. Neither should we doubt the zeal he exercised in gathering relief for the needy in Judaea. He said: "The same which I also was forward to do" (Gal. 2:10). "Forward" is a translation of the Greek verb σπουδαζο (spoudazo) which means: "*be zealous or eager, take pains make every effort*" (Arndt & Gingrich, p.771b).

Paul was not one to give up. He had to constantly remind Corinth of their obligation to assist the needy in Judaea. How many other congregations he had to prod, we do not know.

However, I can imagine how frustrated Paul must have been with Corinth. He even told them that among the many burdens he had to bear was "the care of all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:28). We see in Paul the Spirit of Christ, the concern for brethren everywhere. There were congregations, like Philippi and Antioch in Syria who expressed the same spirit as Paul. Then there was Corinth. Unless I have just overlooked it, I do not recall reading in the Scriptures where it tells us that Corinth actually ever sent their relief. I am presuming they did because of the strong language of Paul in 2 Corinthians, chapters 8 and 9. As you consider the matter, do you suppose the Lord would have been pleased with Corinth if they had disregarded His servant's instruction?

Brethren, today *our* Judaea is Africa, and perhaps other third world countries.

The majority of our brotherhood in Malawi live in the villages. The greatest percentage of the villages; live far below what is considered the poverty line. It is not something they can help! They are victims of circumstances. There are absolutely no jobs available. They must depend on their gardens for existence. You would think this is a simple solution to their problem of hunger. Well, it is not! (1) The majority of the villagers do not have enough money to buy good seeds that have been treated to prevent ants and vermin from eating it after planting. In addition to being destroyed by pests, local seed will not produce enough to make it worthwhile to plant. People need to plant hybrid seed if they are to have a decent harvest. (2) There is no irrigation in the villages. The country must depend upon the rains. When the rains do not come, crops die. The people are then in real trouble. (3) The majority of the people who are totally dependent upon their gardens for income cannot afford to buy fertilizer. Unless gardens are fertilized, the harvest will be nothing more than paltry nubbins.

On the 10th of this month, I made a tour through some areas where the rainfall has been insufficient. Brethren from the villages have been telling me that things were not too good. I really did not understand how serious it was until I made the tour. I visited areas in the districts of Zomba Chiradzulu and Mulanje. We have a high concentration of members in these areas who are suffering now and will continue to suffer for some time. I saw many gardens which were totally lost. (Even if rains should come today, most of the crops are already too far gone for it to do them any good). There were a few gardens which will produce very low yields. This means that even these people will not have enough food to make it through the year.

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COLLECTION FOR THE SAINTS

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There are other areas that are suffering which I have not yet had the time to visit. One is the lower Shire Valley. It is one of the driest areas in the country. However, knowing that area as well as I do, I do not need to visit it to know what the conditions are when there has been no rain.

So far, the Government has not been able to obtain enough grain from donor countries to provide the relief needed here in Malawi. It is needed now! At this very moment I have a list of 1,479 families needing assistance (These in addition to 3,966 who have already received assistance). I do not have anything thing to give them. Brethren, PLEASE! These Africans are our brethren—and, they are the Lord's; "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one to the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Mat. 25:40). — P.O. Box 573, Blantyre, Malawi, Africa - March 28, 1995

QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELDERS

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other of the qualifications. This can be explained by taking the word in one place to mean the CAUSE (such as strong drink) while at another it is the EFFECT (such as the physical reaction of one who is drunken). In other words, one who simply cannot tolerate having his authority or rights called in question by anyone. He is much too important for that.

I have read that some believe that this word "striker" means "a quitter"—or one who goes on a strike. There may be such men somewhere but that isn't what this word means. This refers to one who is always ready to fight those who oppose him; one who is even ready to strike back with a physical blow.

An elder must be firm and steadfast in his defense of the truth, but that is a very different thing from fighting back in kind at the personal insults against him and seeking vengeance against all who may oppose him. We need to have the mind of Christ. 1 Peter 2:23 says, "When he was reviled, he reviled not again." Think on these things. DLK

"FOLLOWING CHRIST"

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standard of judgment, division is the result. By following the teachings of Christ and His apostles as recorded in the New Testament, we can have true unity.

How will this standard help us to judge in spiritual matters? Remember that Jesus said to "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24). So we must first be willing to lay aside prejudices, feelings, opinions, and even our conscience. Suppose that two people disagree about whether or not baptism is for the remission of sins. If they follow their feelings or opinions, then they may disagree. But if the word of God is their standard, then there is no room for disagreement. The word of God teaches that baptism is "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Suppose that several people disagree about whether or not membership in the church of Christ is necessary for salvation. Again, if each person follows their own feelings or opinions, there will be confusion and division. However, if the word of God is their standard, then there can be true unity and peace. The word of God teaches that the church is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23), that Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it (Eph. 5:25), that He purchased it with His precious blood (Acts 20:28), that He is the savior of the body (Eph. 5:23), that there is but one body (I Cor. 12:20), that the members of this spiritual family bear the name of Christ (Eph. 3:15; I Peter 4:11), and that Christ adds to this body those who are saved (Acts 2:47). Leave out such verses as these and there is room for disagreement. Accept them and there can be unity and peace.

In Romans 11:22, the apostle Paul wrote, "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." Please take notice that this is conditional. There are many cases throughout the Scriptures that demonstrate both the goodness and severity of God. For example: If we endure chastening, then God deals with us as sons (Hebrews 12:7). If we are righteous, then the eyes of the Lord are over us and His ears are open to our prayers; but if we do evil, then His face is against us (I Peter 3:12). In Romans 2:5-11, Paul declares that on the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, God will "render to every man according to his deeds." Those who patiently continue in well doing will receive eternal life. Those who are "contentious, and do not obey the truth will receive indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish." This again emphasizes that obeying the commandments of God is not an optional matter if we want to go to heaven.

There are many cases that demonstrate God's severity upon the disobedient. Consider the case of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron. In Leviticus 10:1-2, Moses recorded that "Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord." Some-

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times people are led to believe that they can do anything they want to as long as there is no direct command against it. These verses clearly show that such is not the case. Notice the phrase, "which he commanded them not." God had not told them to offer strange fire. Nor, had He told them that they were NOT to offer strange fire. But they died for violating His will. How can this be?

In Leviticus 16:12-13, the Scriptures state that the fire for burning incense was to be taken from the altar of sacrifice. Exodus 30:9 commanded that no strange incense was to be offered on the altar of incense. But Nadab and Abihu were not offering strange incense, they were only offering strange fire—that is, fire taken from someplace other than the altar of sacrifice. What then was their error? They were offering something that was not authorized. When God tells how something is to be done, that rules out any other way of doing it. He did not have to tell Nadab and Abihu not to get fire from any place else; His silence made it forbidden. When Nadab and Abihu offered something that God had not authorized, they failed to sanctify God. Aaron had just seen two of his sons die in the fire at the hand of the Lord. It is at this point that Moses, divinely inspired, tells Aaron that "this is that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me" (Lev. 10:3). Christians will respect and reverence God and his word.

Another example of the severity of God is the case of Uzzah. The Scriptures record, "And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put for his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God" (I Sam. 6:6-7). Surely no one would doubt Uzzah's sincerity. But why was he killed? What was his error? At first, David was displeased with the death of Uzzah; but, after considering this matter, David remembered the command of God that only the Levites were to carry the ark of God (I Chron. 15:2; Deut. 10:8). Uzzah was not a Levite; in touching the ark, he violated the will of God. Even good intentions did not spare him from death at the hand of the Lord.

Another example that we might consider is the man who picked up sticks on the Sabbath day. In Numbers 15:32-34, the Scriptures tell of a man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath. The people brought him to Moses, Aaron, and the congregation. They put him in ward, because God had not told them what to do with such a person. The law was clear that the man was not to kindle a fire on the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8, 35:3); but, what was the penalty? Numbers 15:35 states that "the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp." This may seem like severe punishment, but it is nonetheless an example of the severity of God. Are we so foolish to think that we

can fight against God? Gamaliel, a doctor of the law and member of the Sanhedrin council, wisely said, "If it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God" (Acts 5:39). There are those today, even religious people, who do not like nor accept the things that God has said. If God dealt severely with people who may have had the right attitude, how will he deal with people who clearly have the wrong attitude?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MARION, IOWA CHURCH OF CHRIST

Current address for Richard F. Johnson, 3840 Holly Drive SW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404, (319) 362-6903

TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY MEETING

December 1-2-3

Irving, Texas

We would like to invite everyone to attend the tenth anniversary meeting in Irving, Texas. This congregation was established in 1985 and has had ten prosperous years in the vineyard of the Lord. All are invited to come and spend the weekend with us while enjoying the preaching of Brother Wayne McKamie. He will be speaking all four services.

We especially encourage those who at one time considered Irving your home congregation to come and spend the weekend. Our homes are open to everyone and your presence would be appreciated. Over the past ten years there have been many who have moved in and out of the area. We would love to see you again and worship God together. For more information call Dick and Jean Knopf (214) 554-8811 or Wayne and La Rinda Bowen (214) 438-8604.

DENVER, CO

The congregation in Denver is looking for a preacher. Please contact Rod Martin, 6937 W. 70th Ave., Aruada, CO 80003, (303) 4224507

CORRECTION

In the October 1995 issue of OPA, page six, in my article titled, "The Bible is Inspired By God", the first column, fifth paragraph, one sentence was partially deleted and it should read, "There certainly is more evidence that should be considered. The above proof is internal or found within the Bible; however, there is some external confirmation which also supports the Bible's claim of inspiration."

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Announcements continued from page eight

Also, second column, third paragraph, two partial sentences were deleted. The article should have read, "Another astronomer about 25 years after Brahe by the name of Johannes Kepler who was of German origin, said, he had counted the stars of heaven, and he came up with 1,005. However, modern astronomy has shown us that the Bible was correct in telling us through Jeremiah and others that the multitude of the stars in heaven cannot be numbered by man."--P. Duane Permenter

PLEASE NOTE

Brethren: Until further notice, the church in Salem, Oregon will be discontinuing Sunday evenings services.

CAN YOU HELP

Recently, a new work was started in Grants Pass, Oregon. The brethren involved believe there is great potential there. They have managed to purchase a building in which to meet. It is located at 725 S.W. 5th Street, in Grants Pass. Their numbers are small, but they are pressing forward. Brother Glenn Arnett has been preaching locally for a number of years and has dedicated himself to this work. He can give himself to the work full time if he can receive \$700 per month. Surely, there are brethren who are able and willing to see this work go forward. Please, contact Brother Arnett immediately and arrange to help him. He will be happy to send you regular reports of the work. His address is: Glenn Arnett, 1445 S.E. N. Street, Grants Pass, Oregon 97526--Don L. King, Bennie T. Cryer

OUR DEPARTED

TORTELLET- As we near the first anniversary of his death, it has come to our attention that we have failed to announce the passing of brother Dale Tortellet of Grand Rapids, Michigan, who departed this life November 6, 1994. Brother Tortellet and his wife, Mildred were in their winter home in Florida, preparing for Lord's Day worship when he suffered a heart attack. Having lived faithfully the Christian life for many years, he is greatly missed by his wife, Mildred, his brother, and his spiritual brethren who survive him. He is fondly remembered by those in Florida and Michigan who knew him as a godly man. The congregation in Grand Rapids, Michigan met in the basement of Dale and Millie's home for many years, and they keenly sense his absence. The Tortellet home was always open to preachers and brethren from near or far, whether it be for a visit or for worship. Their

hospitality was greatly appreciated by the church. In his declining years, Dale suffered from poor eyesight. It was so frustrating for him to have to depend on others for what he once could do with ease. However, due to the fruit we saw him produce in his manner of life as he labored in the masters vineyard, and our faith in the fact that God keeps His promises, we feel confident that Dale is able to see clearly now, more clearly than we, as he no longer peers through a glass darkly. This writer felt honored to be asked to speak words of faith, hope, and comfort in an effort to minister to those who remain. May our prayers be with our sister Tortellet during this difficult time of the year.—Floyd E. Harris, Jr.

DHYNE-- Grace B. born July 8, 1920 - Died October 6, 1995 at her home in Longmont, CO, at the age of 75, from cancer of the liver. She leaves Edmond, her husband; three children; 16 grandkids; 1 great-grandson. Memorial services were held Monday morning, Oct. 9, at the Ahlberg Funeral Chapel in Longmont. She was a remarkably talented woman, loved and honored by all her family. She and Edmond have been faithful members of the Lord's church for the last 23 years.

How sweet a thing indeed, when God calls one of His children home!—Rod Martin.

BYRD—Gilbert Lloyd was born October 28, 1920 in Clemscot, OK and passed away at Andrews, TX on October 15, 1995, just thirteen days before his 75th birthday. He is survived by four sisters: Opal Easter, Iva Jo Smith, Barbara DeGough, and Mona Sue Elliott, one brother, D.J. Byrd; a host of nieces and nephews, relatives and friends. His funeral was held at East Healdton Church of Christ in Healdton, OK, where he lived in and around for the first fifty-five years of his life. Brother Don Pruitt and myself spoke to the bereaved family and friends who gathered for this service. We trust that what we said; glorified God, uplifted Jesus Christ, helped all to remember Lloyd, comforted the bereaved, and warned others that they too must pass this way. Lloyd was handicapped from birth. Though 75 years old physically, he was yet a child otherwise and consequently was not accountable. We look forward to seeing him in his new body, walking down the street of gold, to meet us, when we all get to Heaven. What a day of rejoicing that will be! Brother Johnny Elmore led congregational singing, which included Lloyd's favorite song, "I'll Fly Away". His nephews served as pallbearers and considered it a great privilege to carry Uncle Lloyd to Mount Olive Cemetery in Healdton to await the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and his home-going. We are happy that he is free from the torment of his twisted and distorted body, and resting for awhile in the care and keeping of a loving God.--C.A. Smith.

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF LLOYD BYRD

People often remarked how amazing it was the Lloyd had lived so long. Well, the following poem bespeaks the why of his longevity.

A MEETING WAS HELD QUIET FAR FROM HOME

It's time again for another birth, Said the angels to the Lord above, This child will need much love.

His progress may seem very slow. And he'll require great care

From the folks he meets down there. He may not run or talk or play;

His thoughts may seem quite far away. In many ways he won't adapt,

And he will be known as handicapped. So let's be careful where he is sent,

We want his life to be content. Please, Lord find parents who will do a special job for you. They will not realize right away The leading role they're asked to play, But with this child sent from above

Comes stronger faith and richer love,

And soon they'll know the privilege given, in caring for this child from Heaven,

This precious charge, so meek and mild,

Is Heaven's very special child.

(Anonymous)



Howard C. Heath, 2475 W. Thrasher Rd., Bloomington, IN 47403—I would like to report that we at Harrodsburg Church of Christ are holding our own. We just closed a meeting with Brother Dennis Bumbough, of Longwood, FL congregation. The sermons were presented very well and enjoyed by the congregation. We are happy the families of Bro. Dough Edwards, Bro. Walter Hunter, and Bro. L.K. Alexander at the service. The church at Harrodsburg is thankful to have young men teaching, Bro. Randy Heath is helping out here at home and the congregation is supporting Bro. Jimmy Cating monthly. Also we are happy to report that we are able to help in the Russian work. We are still holding fast to the truth. May God bless us all and lets pray for each other.

Barney Owens, 8782 Meadowview Dr., W. Chester, OH 45069—We rejoice for one who has been away from the church for sometime returning by confessing faults. Irvin Barnes came to help us in our October Gospel Meeting. He represented himself well and was a help to all of us. We are happy to have him among us again. Crowds were good and we were happy to have visitors from distant places as well as locally. Folks came from Georgia, Indiana, and W. Virginia. The 17th of December I am to be at Huntington, W. VA.

Paul O. Nichols, 14970 Forest View Court, Bonner Springs, KS 66012, Nov. 3—Our meeting at Stony Point Church of Christ in Kansas City, Kansas with Richard DeGough closed with two baptisms, one restoration, and two confessions of fault. At one service we had the largest crowd I have seen in the building since we moved here to work with the church. The congregation appreciated Richard's preaching, and we enjoyed having him and Glenda and Mary Smithy stay in our home. We thank

God for the good that was done. Last Lord's Day I closed a nine day meeting with the church at Blue Springs, Kentucky. I look forward to meetings with these brethren. We always have large crowds and good interest there. Brother Zade McClure is a real influence for good in the area. Every time we go there are new converts that Zade has baptized. We had a good cooperation from the surrounding congregations, and before we closed there were seven states represented, which was very much appreciated. Paul Becker came from New York and attended most of the meeting. The Lord willing, I return for another effort in the fall of 1997. Here at Kansas City we are happy to have Pat Moore and his family from Harrison, AR, who recently came to this area to live and work. He is a good teacher and we appreciate his help. We are encouraged with the progress the church here is making. Some of our younger men are showing more interest and marked improvement in developing their talents and abilities for the Lord. We thank God for them. We continue to have our weekly Bible studies with our teachers and other men and boys of the congregation, as well as any outsiders who will let us study with them. The Lord bless the church and all righteous efforts everywhere.

Bruce Roebuck, P.O. Box 184, Wynnewood, OK. 73098, Nov. 7—The brethren here at Wynnewood continue to enjoy peace and a portion of good health. This past year has certainly been a good year for Tanya and I. We've enjoyed hearing several gospel preachers in meetings nearby as well as holding a number of meetings across the brotherhood. Most recently we were in Paris, TX for five days. It was good to be home and among familiar friends. While there we stayed with my parents, a special treat indeed. The meeting closed with a total of eight confessions. It certainly was a meeting to remember. We've also held several Sunday appointments. Here at home a young lady was baptized this past Sunday. Next we look forward to a meeting in Council Hill, OK Dec. 8-10. If it is convenient we would love to have you there. We close this year with fond memories and sad regrets and yet look forward to another exciting year. Remember us when you pray.

Kenneth R. Middick, P.O. Box 269, Seneca, MO. 64865, 417-776-2028; We have been enjoying many meetings in our area of Southwest Missouri, and we still have a few to go before the year is out. Don Pruitt just closed a great meeting here in Seneca. The crowds were large, the singing was uplifting and the preaching was masterful. I appreciate my brother Don for his forwardness in probing the Word, even when the subject is controversial. We have had the opportunity to preach at the following congregations one or more times since last report: Cable Ridge, MO; Neosho, MO; Leawood, MO; Miami, OK. We will be in West Virginia for the New Year's meeting this year. The meeting, hosted by the 18th Street congregation in Huntington, will be Wednesday the 27th through Sunday the 31st. Make your plans to be with us there if at all possible. The church here at Seneca has purchased some land and have broken ground for building a meeting house. This has been a goal of this congregation for years and soon will be a reality. The congregation continues in peace and we are growing in spirit and number. Some wonderful things have happened over the past few months and the spiritual growth is very visible. We pray that the church in Seneca will soon be a stronghold in the Lord and continue for years to come. Pray for us in His Work.

Don L. King, 41931 Chadbourne Dr., Fremont, CA 94539, Nov. 13 -The meeting in Joplin, MO closed without visible results. However, we believe good was accomplished and trust the church was benefited by the meeting. There were many congregations represented and about ten preachers also came one or more nights. It was good to see them all. It was my pleasure to stay with Harold and Mary King (Harold is my first cousin). We spent many hours discussing Bible themes and old times as well. I could not have been treated better by them or any of the brethren there. We look forward to returning for another meeting in 1997. I have also enjoyed preaching one or more times at Atwater and Montebello, CA. since the meeting in Joplin. It is good to be at home for a while and worship with the home church. Pat and I plan to leave for the Philippines on December 26 where

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we will visit among as many churches as our three weeks stay will permit. According to reports, the work is progressing there. We will report in detail after our return. Remember us, please.

P. Duane Permenter, P. O. Box 1223, Riverbank, CA. 95367.
*Oct. 18-*My studies continue to progress each week. It has been my pleasure to consistently participate in 6 or 7 Bible studies each week when I have been home in Sacramento. Most of these studies are with a mixture of outsiders and members. A man and his wife who had been away from the church for some time recently came back to the fold for which we give God the glory. The month of October has been busy in gospel meetings in this part of the country, and it has been my privilege to hear Doug Hawkins and Ronny Wade. Since last reporting it has been my privilege to preach at Manteca, Yuba City and here in Sacramento at 64th. Street. The Lord willing, I leave for Chapel Grove, TN Nov. 1st and return home Nov. 5th. We are looking forward to the study in Arlington and the New Years meeting in Oklahoma City. My family and I are busy in the Lord's work, and we solicit your continued prayers on our behalf. May our Lord bless you is my prayer.

Miles King, Rt. 1 Box 115, Scotland, AR 72141, Oct. 30 - Last night we closed a weekend meeting at Scotland with Doug Hawkins. Such a good meeting and Doug presented the gospel in such a dynamic manner. One was baptized into Jesus Christ and one confession of fault and it seems the church was made stronger. I have had several enjoyable gospel meetings this year at Monroe, La., Powe, Mo., Council Hill, Ok. Newton, Iowa, Pocahontas, AR and Union Hill, Tennessee. One more meeting for this year at Amarillo, Texas in December. We have had other good meetings at Scotland with Jimmy Cating and Brett Hickey. We were sorry Billy Orten could not hold our meeting because of sickness; Taylor Joyce and Tom Acton filled in for him. We continue to work also with the churches at Scotland and Lamar, AR. The brethren at Lamar continue to work on their new church building and hope to move in soon. We are so thankful for the brethren who have sent financial help for this building and "thanks" to others who have given encouraging words and donated labor on the building. Brethren, I have saved some other good news for the last part of this report. This past Summer during Alton Bailey's meeting at McGregor, Tx. my brother Charles who had been out of the church for many years) returned to Jesus Christ. Then about a week ago my dad, Warren King came back to the church, after being away for over 40 years in a religion known as "The Way". They are both so happy to be back; sometimes "fighting away the tears they can hardly talk. Yesterday at McGregor, Charles' wife was baptized into Christ. This is such wonderful results and we are so happy to share this news with you. Thanks so much to the brethren who support, encourage, and pray for us.

Richard DeGough 1907 Tully Road, Hughson, California - This year I have enjoyed preaching in meetings in Australia, New Salem, Mississippi, and 79th and Kansas Ave. in Kansas City, Kansas. The brethren in all of these places were kind, hospitable, and considerate. Enroute to Mississippi I preached in Ardmore, and when traveling home I preached in McGregor, Texas. It was enjoyable to associate with Brother Lynwood Smith, Johnny Elmore, Wayne McKamic, and Paul Nichols, all of them longtime friends and brethren. We made our home with the Elmores, McKamic's and Nichol's, which we enjoyed very much. I believe the singing was the best I have heard in a long time at New Salem and Kansas City. The leaders sing out, and the congregations lifted up their voices in joyful praise right along with them. Co-operation among the area churches was

great, which makes a good meeting. We saw some old time friends that came from places far away to encourage us. It was a pleasure to be with our brethren in Mississippi where we lived for a short time. In Kansas City we really enjoyed the stay with Paul and Wilma. One would have to know the close association, and the work that Paul and I have done together in the past to understand my feelings. I miss him in California, and rejoice that he can work with and among the brethren in Kansas City. The Labor Day meeting in Bakersfield was the best. Lynwood Smith conducted it in an orderly way. The singing and preaching was the best I have heard in a longtime at such a meeting. Large crowds gathered at every service. Johnny Elmore held our Memorial Day meeting at Turlock. His preaching was excellent, the singing was good, and the attendance was good. This meeting is an annual event at Turlock, and we invite all to come be with us.

I have heard good preaching of late by Ronnie Wade in Lodi and Fair Oaks, and Doug Hawkins in Oakdale. I continue to help those small congregations that need us in the area, and preach at Fremont the 5th Lord's day. My home church in Turlock is dear to me, and ready unto every good work. We have lost some families to the Manteca congregation for one reason or another, and we hope they are happy in their new home. My prayer and hope is that we can continue to grow spiritually and numerically. This year, we have baptized some along with confessions and restorations. The glory belongs to the Lord and we rejoice to see it. May the Lord bless the brotherhood in every way, and especially with peace and unity.

Bobby J. Pepper, 16870 H.S.V. Brownsferry Rd., 35611— The congregation in Corsicana, Tx. asked Bro. Gary Weaver and me to go to Michurinsk to help the congregation there to continue to grow toward perfection in Christ. Bro. Jimmy Vannoy from that congregation made the arrangements for us to meet bro. Kostya from the Tomboa congregation at the air port and he was with us the entire stay as our translator. He is a very dedicated teacher for the Lord. He makes at least two trips a month to help the new congregation in Michurinsk.

Volodia was our coordinator in Michurinsk, and he had us scheduled to visit eleven schools. They said we were the first Americans to visit them. They had questions concerning God, the Church, and the Bible. It was encouraging to see them wanting to know more about God's Word. I will always be grateful to have had the opportunity to do teaching concerning those questions.

In the afternoons at three o'clock we used the Bible to teach English. I was able to cover the book of Ephesians. At seven, we would meet back to have our lectures, and then open for questions.

We were well accepted, and the local paper had encouraging articles about us visiting their town.

The Christians in Michurinsk and Tomboa have a strong desire to see the Lord's Church grow in Russia. We went to Tomboa and spent the night with Kostya and family. It was good to see them so happy and rejoicing in the truth they have found.

The only baptizing facilities in Michurinsk is the river, and this time of year the water is cold (believe me it was cold) but it did not deter one from being baptized into Christ. I am very thankful to have had the opportunity to see first hand some of the work that our brethren have accomplished by preaching the gospel in Russia. I know they seek no recognition or glory, realizing that it is by the providence of God that the walls of separation have been removed between Russia and America.

Brother Gary Weaver is a very conscientious worker for the Lord, and I enjoyed working with him. Please continue to pray for all the faithful!