

For several weeks a firestorm of responses appeared on the editorial page. The uproar finally came to a close with the following letter:

Dear Sir:

I have been married for thirty years. During that time, I have eaten 32,580 meals, mostly of my wife's cooking. Suddenly, I have discovered that I cannot remember the menu of a single meal. Andy yet, I have received nourishment from every single one of them. I have the distinct impression that without them, I would have starved to death long ago.

Sincerely,
(Signed by a reader)



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Those in need of prayers...

Rick & Sheila Beauchamp—his job hunt, mother, her ears
Lavonne McClish—her foot and many other health problems
Janice Parks—her back, new job, mother, and family
Jerry Smith—grandfather
Waynette Davis, Karla Dobbs, Sharon Harp—health problems
Rick Heimberger, Darrell Conley—health problems
Darrell Broking family—their job hunt

Records you helped make...

Bible Class	18	
Sunday AM Worship	18	
Sunday PM Worship	15	
Wednesday PM Bible Class/Worship	16	
Contribution	\$312.00	
Contribution average (2009)	\$329.24	
Chairman of Men's Meetings (July–September)		Rick Beauchamp
Preacher, <i>Lighthouse</i> editor		Dub McClish



The Northpoint Lighthouse

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THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

The Lord's church is the spiritual body of Christ (Eph. 1:22–23). It cannot be seriously argued that the work of the **spiritual** body of Christ should or can be different from the work Jesus came to do (and did) in His **physical** body. Most would not argue such verbally, but many strongly argue it practically. There is a new virus loose in the church—"provide-all-things-for-all-men" (not to be confused with personally "becoming all things to all men" in matters of judgment [1 Cor. 9:22]). It is also called "ministering to the whole man" and "meeting felt needs." By this approach, churches are justifying almost anything that men might enjoy and/or find useful, whether or not such things are authorized.

My first work out of college in 1959 was to serve as one of the preachers with a large church. There was a Methodist Church a few blocks away with a gymnasium in its basement. You could have tortured the elders where I worked and they would not have built such a building—they knew there was no excuse for such use of the Lord's money. Several years ago that same congregation built its own gymnasium. Oh, they call it their "Family Life Center." However, when I see a building with basketball goals, net poles for volleyball and lines on the floor for boundaries, pardon me for calling it a "gymnasium."

When one starts down the "minister-to-the-whole-man" road it is difficult to find a stopping place. Another symptom of this viral disease is the endless pleasure jaunts of senior citizen and teenager groups in the church (why are the "middle-aged" folks always left out?). I am in favor of having a good time and seeing pretty scenery as much as the next fellow. I commend Christians who plan and pay for (from their own pocket) such outings. I have never figured out why the Lord's church should be charged with hiring someone who spends much of his time planning such pleasure jaunts, often on a bus or van owned, operated, and fueled out of the church's bank account, however.

Can you imagine the Lord's planning a three-day sight-seeing trip to Tyre and Sidon for the "39ers" or the "Autumn Leaves" group? Picture Timothy's planning a "ski retreat" on Mt. Olympus for the "keen teens" of Ephesus. Did Paul ever consider taking a contribution from the Gentile churches to build a "Family Life Center" for the church in Jerusalem? Such suggestions are ludi-

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Worship 1:00 PM

Wednesday
B.C./Worship 7:00 PM

crous, if not blasphemous. Such things are no more the work of the blood-bought church of Christ in the twenty-first century than they were in the first. The kingdom is a spiritual entity by definition (John 18:36). Its work is tied inately to its nature—preaching the Gospel to the whole world (Mat. 28:19–20; Mark 16:15–16).

—Dub McClish
Denton, TX



LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER

“Beloved let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God” (1 John 4:7). As we look at this old world, most will agree that nothing is needed more than love. Yet, it is something that is not seen too often—at least, not as the word is used in Scripture. We are not referring to sensual love. We see plenty of that. Nor do we mean a strong affection for a person or thing (Webster’s definition). This is often a perverted love which amounts to idolatry, especially when it is directed toward things. The love to which we refer is not a romantic, sentimental thing. *Agape*, the word for love used most of the time in the New Testament, means to will and to do that which is good to another (cf. Rom. 13:8–10; 1 Cor. 13:4–7). It means acting toward others the same way God, in Christ, acted toward us, even while we hated and despised God and refused to serve Him (Rom. 5:6–8).

This type of love is not entirely lacking in people of the world. Jesus used the word in referring to the way the world loves in Luke 6:32f: “If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for even sinners love those that love them. And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for even sinners do the same.” In this passage, however, He showed how limited that love is in that it operates only within very small circle—“those that love them.”

The Christian’s love is much broader. He is to love as Jesus loved. Jesus said, “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another” (John 13:34). This includes even one’s enemies; that is, those who have malice and animosity toward oneself, not those toward whom one has hostility, for the child of God is not to harbor ill will. This is a distinctive mark that sets Christians apart from the people of the world.

This is not to say church members always love others this way. Indeed, churches have been torn apart from lack of love. Brethren have devoured one another, although such is condemned.

For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another (Gal. 5:13–15).

No matter how far we have progressed in loving others, there is always room to grow. Paul wrote: “Brethren, we beseech and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as ye received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, even as

ye do walk, that ye abound more and more” (1 The. 4:1) Paul also penned these words:

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; so that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of offence unto the day of Christ (Phi. 1:9–10).

Loving one another is not optional. John wrote, “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love” (1 John 4:8). Jesus said, “This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ” (John 17:3). If having eternal life is contingent on knowing God (and it is); and if the person who does not love does not know God (and he does not), then the person who does not love does not have eternal life.

John said: “We know that we have passed out of death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death” (1 John 3:14). *Death* means separation. To abide in death means to be separated from God. John says we have passed from being separated from God into life because we love the brethren.

There is no room here for equivocation. You either love the brethren or you do not. To passively not love a brother misses the mark. Do you answer the question, “Do you hate your brother?” with something like “I don’t hate him; just don’t love him?” Then you are abiding in death, for you must actively love the brother in order to have life. God requires a more active quality. The trouble with “not hating” is that it never remains merely passive. Unless we love the other (i.e., will what is good toward him), the least injury, real or imagined, will produce a response in us which is anything but love.

On the other hand, if we actively love him, we will think the best of a brother, regardless of what he might do or say. We will ignore words or actions that hurt. We will have a magnanimous, attitude toward him which is willing and anxious to forgive. Such love makes us like God and shows to all that we really have passed out of death into life.

—Al Brown
Deceased



MINIMIZING THE SERMON

The following exchange originally appeared in *The British Weekly* a few years ago:

Dear Sir:

It seems ministers feel their sermons are very important and spend a great deal of time preparing them. I have been attending church quite regularly for the past thirty years, and I have probably heard 3,000 sermons. To my consternation, I discovered that I cannot remember a single one. I wonder if a minister’s time might be more profitably spent on something else?

Sincerely,
(Signed by a reader)