

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXIII

1994

January

April

July

October

February

May

August

November

March

June

September

Defender



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January 1994

Number 1

By Our Words We Shall Be Justified

Shan Jackson

In some cases, the separation between humans and beasts is very small. In other cases, however, the separation is much larger. The latter is true when we speak of man's ability to communicate. Speech and communication, when properly used, are of tremendous benefit, but used incorrectly, they can bring much and lasting harm. The difference between the two lies often in the attitude of the speaker. The tongue, or as James says, “the little member” (James 3:5), is rooted and grounded in the very essence of man. With this knowledge in mind, Jesus Asked the Pharisees, “How can ye, being evil, speak good things?” (Mat. 12:34). Therefore, Christians must not only consider the words they speak but also the attitude with which they speak them.

During our lifetime, we all garner a tremendous respect for the power of the human tongue. We all have seen it improperly used to great ill effect, and, we have also seen it used to the honor of the speaker and the glory of the Father. It can be that which “defileth the whole body” (James 3:6), or it can be used to “build you up” in the most holy faith (Acts 20:32). Correctly used, the tongue is unsurpassed in expediting the commission of the Master. Let us first notice this in the area of teaching truth.

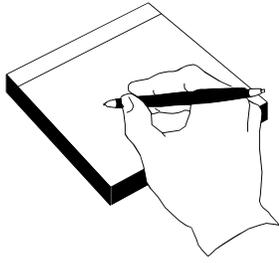
As stewards of God, Christians must always be willing to accept the responsibility of being Christ's disciples. We are instructed, among other things, to “be ready always to give an answer to every man” (I Pet. 3:15). This readiness to share God's saving truth is easiest seen in our desire to teach both publicly and privately. Our teaching, though, must be in accord with His directives. “If any man speak, let him speak

as the oracles of God...” (1 Pet. 4:11).

In His commission, Christ commanded Christians to go and teach, but our teaching must be “...all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Mat. 28:20). Paul exhorts his friend and fellow preacher, Timothy, to preach, but he limited his preaching to “the word.” He continues this line of thought by telling Timothy why such encouragement was given. He says, “...the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Thus, a proper use of the human tongue is for the teaching of God's truth. Let us also notice this in the area of our worshipping God.

All Christians are to worship the Father in spirit and in truth (John 4:23). A close study of the New Testament shows that God desires worship from us and authorizes certain acts of worship. Five distinct acts are outlined in Scripture and a failure along any of these lines brings God's displeasure. The Father is to receive the worship and we, in turn, receive certain blessings from the worship. Congregational singing, public prayer, and public teaching are all essential to Christian worship. And, by bringing our feelings into sweet harmony with the words of the songs, the essence of public **prayer, and the truthful presentation** of God's word, we show our deep and **abiding love** for a loving and abiding God. Let us also notice this in the area of public confession of faith.

Just as there are five distinct acts to a Christian's worship there are also five (*Continued on Page 3*)



Notes From The Editor Bobby Liddell

The challenge to be better servants of Christ faces us all in 1994. What shall we do in response? Looking back to 1993, do we find need for improvement? Quite probably, we do. A servant is one who performs duties for another (Webster). The New Testament word “servant” generally indicates bond service; i.e., a servant in bondage as a slave to his master (Vines). Paul served his Master well and his example is worthy of our study and emulation.

WHOM DID PAUL SERVE? Paul served Christ. He often referred to himself as, “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ...” (Rom. 1:1; Tit. 1:1; Phi. 1:1). Other great men of faith, notable in their accomplishments for the cause of Christ, likewise, referred to themselves simply as servants of Christ (Jam. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:1; Jude 1). Paul, as they, thought it an honor and privilege to be a servant of Christ and, in his humility, referred to himself, not as “Paul, the Highly Educated,” nor as “Paul, the Great Preacher,” but as “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ.”

In serving Christ, Paul served his fellowmen. “For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more” (I Cor. 9:19). He served his fellowmen by preaching the saving gospel at every opportunity (I Cor. 9:16; 2 Cor. 4:5). Paul did not put pleasing men above serving Christ for he submitted himself to the will of Christ, his Master, not to the will of men (Gal. 1:10).

Paul did not serve self or sin. “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor. 9:27). He put to death the deeds of the flesh to live and serve in the spirit (Rom. 6:3-6; 8:13; 16:18; Col. 3:1-5). He had known the cruel taskmaster, Sin, and he rejoiced to be free from its bondage to serve it no more (1 Tim. 1:12-16).

HOW DID PAUL SERVE CHRIST? Paul served by faith (2 Cor. 4:13). He did so by keeping his eyes fixed upon Jesus, the author and finisher of the faith

(Heb. 12:2). By exercising faith, Paul had the strength to serve, to speak and to encourage those who heard the gospel he preached (Rom. 1:16). Faith made the difference between courage and compromise, between earnestly contending and falling to criticism, between enduring in faithful service and giving up (Acts 26:22-27; 2 Tim. 4:7).

Paul served in hope (2 Cor. 4:14). There is no hope in unbelief; thus, the man without strong faith finds no comfort in service and no endurance to serve (Heb. 11:1; Rom. 15:4). Paul lived and served, “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” (Tit. 1:2). He had hope to serve in this life and hope of a resurrection to a better life and reward for his service (1 Cor. 15).

Paul served with love. Thus, he preached: “...by love serve one another” (Gal. 5:13). Love motivated Paul to serve, putting first things first (Mat. 6:33). Love never fails (I Cor. 13).

Paul served with a right attitude. He had the right attitude toward his body (2 Cor. 4:16). He had the right attitude toward his burden (2 Cor. 4:17). He had the right attitude toward his blessings (2 Cor. 4:18).

WHY DID PAUL SERVE CHRIST? Paul served because of gratitude. He knew he had been bought with a price--the blood of Christ and for that he was thankful (1 Cor. 7:23). His attitude of heart was one of thanksgiving (I Tim. 1:12). He penned: “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:57).

Paul served by choice. He well knew: “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Mat. 6:24). Paul chose to yield himself to Christ, obeying from the heart, being made free from sin (Rom. 6:16-18). Thus, he could encourage others to follow him as he followed Christ, Who also chose to be a servant (1 Cor. 11:1; Phi. 2:7).

Paul dared not serve any other. There is no hope in any other (Eph. 2:12). There is no rejoicing in any other (Phi. 4:4). Because, there is no salvation in any other (Acts 4:12; Eph. 1:7). Paul was indeed a servant of Jesus Christ. Like Paul, those who serve Christ shall be blessed now and eternally (Col. 3:25; Luke 12:37; John 12:26). All who, like Paul, obey from the heart the doctrine of Christ shall be made free from the bondage of sin to become servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:16-18). Let us all be better servants of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, in 1994.

Continued from Page 1

distinct steps to a sinner's salvation. From various parts of the New Testament, we read of the essentiality of one's hearing God's truth, believing it, repenting of a sin-filled life, confessing the precious name of Jesus, and being immersed for the remission of those sins. It is the acceptance and obedience to these commands that places us "into Christ." And, just as our singing must be vocalized, so must our public confession of faith. Consider this command of God as penned by Paul, "...if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10). Jesus, being our sole advocate with the Father, stated that we must, in our lives, confess Him before He will be able to confess us before God's throne. Let us also notice this in the area of defending God's divine truth.

So many of the current problems that are attacking the Lord's church come from her members

being unwilling, or unable to defend the truth. As we have mentioned, we must always be ready to give answer. Defending truth has always been a characteristic of God's servants. Consider the approach of the prophets and John the Baptist and look at the style of Jesus and his disciples. We see how they defended the truth of God in the face of danger and even death. This should stimulate us with a desire that cannot be quenched or abated.

God gave man a tremendous tool when he blessed us with an extreme talent in communication. But our speech must be correctly used if it is to bring us blessing and God glory. As we teach truth, worship God, confess our faith, and defend His word, we realize that God has a desire for us along these lines. However, as the Bible says, our speech must be seasoned with salt and full of wisdom, as we always remember, "...by thy words thou shalt be justified..." (Mat. 12:37).

P.O. Box 904
Palacios, TX 77465

THE LONG DAY IN JOSHUA

Jerry Moffitt

When Israel entered the promised land, they knew they would have to fight for the possession of it. Some Hivites approached them and lied, saying they were from a very far country. By their lie, they made a pact of peace with Israel. Soon Israel learned the Hivites were their near neighbors, but because the pact was made in the sight of God, the Israelites honored it. The other Amorites of the land saw grave danger in the alliance between Israel and the Hivites, so they wanted to crush the Hivites first, then take on Israel. There were five Amorite kings led by Adonizedek, and they marched on the Hivites. The Hivites sent word to Joshua, and he and his troops made a night march to save them. A battle began, and Israel was winning, slaying them with a great slaughter. The Amorites fled north, and God hurled hail stones upon them, and more died from that than from the battle. Then we read, "Then spake Joshua to Jehovah ... Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Aijalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies" (Jos. 10: 12-13).

The problem some have with this is: if the sun would seem to stand still in the sky--and the text says it did for about a day--then in actuality the earth would have stopped its rotation for a whole day. There would, they say, have been catastrophic results. Trees would have been smashed flat, cities leveled, seas thrown out of their basins.

So great would be the consequences that many religious theories have been spawned. One says it is only poetry in this passage, but the context and the verses themselves do not sound like poetry. It seems real. Some say it was a miracle of refraction so that it just seemed like the sun had not set. Some say there was a cooling storm which refreshed them so much that they did two-days work in one day.

However, this writer has no hesitation in saying what he believes to be the truth, that it was a gigantic (from man's point of view) miracle. What seems to be impossible to us is trivial to God. Who denies that He can make the earth stand still without such harmful results? It would be easy for Him Who spake the universe into existence with a few words.

And, this simple interpretation best agrees with the language of the verses.

A FEW SCRIPTURES

“I am the Almighty God” (Gen. 17:1).

“Is anything too hard for the Lord?” (Gen. 18:14).

“I know that thou canst do every thing” (Job 42:2).

“With God all things are possible” (Mat. 19:26).

“For with God nothing shall be impossible” (Luke 1:37).

“Our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased” (Psa. 115:3).

“He commanded, and they were created ... Fire, and hail; snow and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word” (Psa. 148:5-8).

If one believes these verses, the long day in Joshua is no problem.

213 Sabine Street; Portland, TX 78374

“AWAKE THOU THAT SLEEPEST”

Harold Blevins

In the years of 1991 and 1992, I drove more than thirty thousand miles for thirty-nine try-outs over nineteen months and made expensive telephone calls to obtain a work for the One called Wonderful (Isa. 9:6). How did I find myself in such circumstances?

In my first work, there was a lack of leadership, those who viewed Saturday night dancing as scriptural and materialism was a major amusement of many. In my second work, the very weak older men allowed the younger men to rule and almost all the men refused to uphold sound doctrinal preaching. In another work, the brethren accommodated argumentative business meetings of the men that were long, loud and lost in sin. Anguishing, we took another work. There, were elders who were seldom present at all worship services and a membership of the extremely weak. The last work had an unqualified eldership who tolerated public mixed swimming, absolutely awful singing, and much, much more. Also, the unscriptural Image magazine was being introduced to the congregation, and many of them loved to have it so (Isa. 30:9-10; Jer. 5:30-31).

When a preacher begins the task of “looking,” it oftentimes takes thirty to sixty days to gather the names of congregations seeking a preacher, and to obtain lists of openings from preacher institutions and friends. At this point, the usual ninety days is almost spent. Comfortable? Absolutely not. When the evangelist telephones or writes prospective places to preach, it is customary to be asked to send a resume, or, a resume and a tape, or, a resume, tape and a picture. Today, some request a video tape. Suchlike is expensive. Whatever happens to that resume/tape/picture is seemingly a mystery. It is my experience to note that elders/men often do not send back, or comment, or communicate

about any of these things (Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 3; Tit. 3). Even when telephoned again, some are very slow to give answer.

Sometimes, a prospective preacher travels three hundred to five hundred or more miles the day before the trial sermon. The Lord’s Day finds him teaching the Bible Class, preaching the whole day, and tired. It is then customary to call a business meeting of the men. Many times, there is little organization and few questions of merit. Most all of the men say absolutely nothing, save one or two. There are usually only two questions on the minds of many: (1) What will it take to get you here; and, (2) can you build up our congregation? The visiting preacher is then asked to leave the room while the men ponder the events of the day. The summary of which is oftentimes, “We have others to hear. We will be in touch.” Too many times, there is neither a letter nor a phone call as promised! One may even be hired and several days later learn the men changed their minds (Jam. 1:8).

Dear reader, if you had experienced the aforementioned, would you be willing to keep on pursuing the work of a gospel preacher? Perhaps as we, you would wonder, what is wrong? Having come to this impasse, I began the search as depicted in the opening paragraph. There was opportunity to reflect upon the years of preaching, church problems, and the purpose of preaching. My conclusion was: (1) the church, in many places, is in apostasy; (2) many congregations need an attitude adjustment; (3) the church needs preachers with enough backbone to keep on preaching in spite of very weak and/or liberal so-called saints; and, (4) faithful gospel preachers need elders to hold up their hands (Exo.

17:11 ff, Eph. 3:8; Rom. 1:13-17; Phi. 1:17; 1 Tim. 2:8; Tit. 1:9, 2:1; Jude 3).

How did it happen that so many faithful preachers have such difficulty finding a sound place to preach? Satan has influenced many souls to surrender to sin. Sadly, too many in the church are slack in daily Bible study and attendance, and slothful in general. Uninformed elders/men and congregations in particular are hazardous to the cause of Christ. How can a sound and conservative preacher find a work when brethren are so unconcerned?

In the past few weeks, I have talked to a number of intelligent, educated, active members of the church, many of them in positions of leadership in different areas of our nation and have been shocked by their apparent lack of knowledge of prominent problems in the church. It cannot be that these brethren are ignorant of what is happening to the body of Christ ... *they have chosen not to know!* ("The Ostrich Complex," Rod Rutherford, *Seek the Old Paths*, May 1993, p. 11.)

If one is over fifty years of age and has moved several times, some brethren consider that preacher to be obsolete (Mat. 7:26). Notice what brother Franklin Camp said.

Simple gospel preachers are no longer respected as in days past and gone. The man in the pulpit with a knowledge of the Bible and love for the lost world has been pushed into the background. Television has not only affected the morals of the nation, it has turned preaching into entertainment. The preacher that has the largest audience today offers the biggest show. (Conversely brother Camp continues) I never heard him (brother Gus Nichols) preach or lecture that I was not determined to live better. That is the purpose of preaching. (p. 1, from his excellent article, "Paul's Pen Picture of a Preacher," reprinted many times in brotherhood publications.)

It should be no wonder then, that some preachers have left the pulpit and others are seriously considering so to do.

Our late astute brother, Andrew Connally, wrote the following.

Many times it takes tremendous effort to persevere in our work in the kingdom. Only those who have been

there really understand the unremitting toil, sacrifice, time and effort, and even money it takes to continually achieve for the Master... ("Is It Not Worth the Effort?" *Power*, August 1992, Vol. 1, 8).

Brethren, what shall we do?

Shall we surrender to ungodliness? No! Shall we let others pry us from the preaching of the Prince of Peace? Never!

Shall we surrender to persecution? No!!

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. (Mat. 5:10-12; cf. 2 Cor. 10:4). If they stoned the prophets past, those of the same mind will shun present day preachers of the truth (Mat. 23:37; cf. John 16:1-2).

Shall we surrender to the unfaithful? Voices of faith from the past cry: "If I perish, I perish" (Est. 4:16) and, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15).

Shall we surrender to Satan? Just pray that all will end well? Christ says otherwise: "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24). The ASV (1901) marginal writing says, "*Gr. received.*" God will not find a work for that praying preacher, *HE ALREADY HAS!* Thanks be to God, we gladly sing: "What have I to fear ... Leaning on the everlasting Arms?"

Dear reader, why must we keep on keeping on? The saved need such (Job 23:12)! The soul must have such (Mat. 5:6)!! The Savior demands such. (2 Tim. 4:2ff)!!! "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. 5:15).

552 N Randall Road, Elgin IL 60123

"Changes In The Church Of Christ"
Befiview Lectures
June 11-15, 1994

WOMEN PRIESTS

Burt Jones

There she was, backward collar and pious countenance in all her glory, pictured in the religion section of the local newspaper. A woman priest! I knew it was just a matter of time before the National Organization of Women influenced world religions. Even the staid and sedate Catholic and Episcopal organizations have fallen prey to their “squeaky wheel-gets-greased” tactics. Women priests?

But, just then, I settled back into my chair, relaxed and realized that we in the Lord’s church had no reason for surprise. WE have enjoyed the presence and benefits of women priests for two thousand years! We have a brotherhood FULL of men AND women priests. This priesthood, as lively stones, is built up a spiritual house, an HOLY PRIESTHOOD (BJ), to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2:5).

The difference between these “lively stones” and those floundering, fallacious, femme fatales masquerading in the guise of dispensers of holy truth is that *one* is embraced by the Word of God and the *other* is not. You see, our Lord loved us, ...and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and PRIESTS (BJ) unto God and his Father...” (Rev. 1:5-6). The “us” in this passage of inspired scripture is every man and every woman who has been redeemed by our Saviour through the cleansing waters of baptism and thus added to HIS church as a full-fledged, Bible-totin’ PRIEST!

“The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, TEACHERS (BJ) of good things; that they may TEACH (BJ) the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Titus 2:3-5).

The priesthood in the New Testament is a holy nation offering up “spiritual sacrifices” (I Pet. 2:5) and presenting their bodies “a living sacrifice” (Rom. 12: 1). In NO sense has the church of Christ the official OFFICE of PRIEST. Nor is it any part of the New Testament conception of this priesthood of believers that ANY individual should act in respect for any other individual.

This intercessory “OFFICE,” acting in behalf of

other persons, is some freakish perversion of man that daily is consigning thousands of souls to Satan. By virtue of our precious relationship as joint-heirs with our Lord to God we have DIRECT access to GOD *through* Christ *through* prayer as a Christian.

We understand the worldly ploy involved in this pitiable and pontifical farce which any true priest knows has no value and is a vain show of phylactery.

The fact that women “priests” are now being hoisted toward the spotlight of world attention should be no more ridiculous to Christians than the previously all MALE contingent of “earthly” intercessors with God: HOLY FATHERS; VICARS; MONSIGNORS; CARDINALS; BISHOPS; PRELATES; ARCHBISHOPS; POPES; PRELATE NULLIUS; ad nauseam.

I read with deep respect of the lives and deeds of those precious women priests of the early church, from Lydia,, the first Christian convert in what is now Europe, to Priscilla, the faithful help meet of another priest who happened to be her husband, Aquila. I am in awe of Eunice and Lois, the mother and grandmother of Timothy. These priests seem to step from the pages of inspired scripture to demonstrate the importance of the early training of a child. Only one verse in The Record gives us an inescapable clue as to the character of Eunice and Lois. Paul, writing with the pen and ink of inspiration in his second epistle to his son in the gospel said, “When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also” (2 Tim. 1:5). Here is the complete biography of these two priests standing triumphantly alongside so many women of the early church as well as by their sister priests today. The recorded immortality of so many of our sisters is made manifest through their progeny or through those they taught.

I read of Phoebe a “deaconess” at Cenchrea. She presumably bore the epistle of Paul to the Romans. She was a servant of the church of Christ at Cenchrea and a “succorer of many,” and of Paul. Paul asked the early Christians in Rome to receive Phoebe “as becometh saints” (Rom. 16:2).

And finally, as we witness the politically correct demeanor of these modern day “wanna be’s,” it may just be my imagination, but in studying closely the faces

of these liberal feminist pawns, I am certain that I caught just a fleeting glimmer of capricious cynicism in their expressions—or, perhaps it was just a reflection from the television lights.

Brethren, this charade of women seeking the OFFICE of priest within their respective religious organizations is not about the right to properly function as a priest. Those Christian sisters of the early church and of today have already shown the true role of women priests. Make no mistake about it. This is a grab for power and preeminence. It is about authority versus ability.

A mature woman may have the ability to bear the

child of just about any man whom she may meet on the street. But, SHE HAS NO AUTHORITY TO DO SO! A twelve-year old child may have the ABILITY to drive a vehicle as well as a professional truck driver, but he or she has no AUTHORITY to do so. It is about AUTHORITY versus ABILITY.

No, these women priest Johnny-come-lately's, are about two thousand years too late, and of the wrong stripe, because my Lord "...hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:6).

926 E Jackson Street Ext.
Millersburg, OH 44654

For Your Information

Great New Book

I heartily recommend **Worship: Heaven's Imperative Or Man's Innovations?** by Curtis A. Cates as a concise exposition of God's word on the subject of Christian worship and as a fatal blow of refutation to the innovations and departures from God's will being pushed upon the Lord's church by some of our own brethren. The arguments presented for truth and against error are true to the Bible and simply unanswerable! I dare say none of our wellknown brethren who currently promotes unscriptural changes in the worship shall have the courage to begin to answer this book.

The book forcefully presents the truth while manifesting the author's compassionate concern for the church and his deep devotion to Christ. Considering the tremendous challenges facing the church today, especially in the area of worship, every member would do well to study this book carefully. We who love the Lord and His church truly owe brother Cates our gratitude for this excellent, timely and much-needed volume.

Brother Cates has also produced a series of thirteen sets of questions to accompany the books for teenage and adult classes. We plan on using them in three of our adult classes at Bellview. Order from Cates Publications, 5512 Cottonwood, Memphis, TN 38115 (\$3.50 plus \$1.00 shipping. Churches ordering ten or more books will also receive that many copies of questions plus a discount of 20%.)

Bellview Lectures

Make your plans now to attend June 11 - 15, 1994. This year's theme is: "Changes In The Church Of Christ." We believe these shall be the best lectures ever and expect our biggest attendance ever.

New Work In Sheridan, WY

Johnie Scaggs, Jr., will move to Sheridan in June, 1994 to begin a new work. There is a great need for a full-time man to enter into the work in that part of the country. He is in need of additional support. For more information, you may contact him at Route 2 Box 215-13, Willow Springs, MO 65793 or call (417) 469-1280 or 469-2136.

Contributions To Defender

We are grateful to the following who have generously helped with the costs of producing and mailing Defender. Jesse Bruce--\$5.00; Ector and Cordia Watson--\$20.00; Jesse and Evie Brown--\$2.00; West Side Church of Christ, Evansville, IN--\$420.00; David Dart--\$7.50; Mr. and Mrs. Eldon H. Mackey--\$20.00; Mr. and Mrs. Rocky A. Craig--\$5.00; Beatrice Thompson--\$20.00; Greg and Pam Lewis--\$90.00.

Student Needs Support

Four fine men from Bellview are now attending the Memphis School of Preaching. The Bellview congregation collectively and several of its members individually are helping all four men. One of them, Scot Brazell, is in need of additional support. We commend him to you as worthy and encourage those who can to help. You may send your contributions, appropriately marked for Scot's support, to Bellview.

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BOBBY LIDDELL, EDITOR

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXIII

February, 1994

Number 2

“Mission Work From A Personal Perspective”

Jerry Martin

When I was a young preacher fresh out of the Memphis School of Preaching, there were not a lot of larger, “established” congregations that were looking for a young inexperienced preacher. So, guess where I landed? That’s right, I ended up in the “mission field.” More specifically, I went to the “mission field” of Georgia. I left school with a wealth of Bible knowledge fresh on my mind, good study habits and a zeal that wanted to set the world on fire. There was only one thing I lacked and that was experience. The work had many responsibilities and was tremendously demanding, I was forced into many roles for which I was not prepared. After two years of such demanding requirements, I was drained and discouraged. I made a bad decision on a blue day to leave a good work that was steadily growing.

I remember often sitting and thinking that an older preacher with more experience would know better how to handle the burdens of such a work. I thought about how nice it would have been to have gone to a congregation with good strong elders who could have helped train me for what I faced in the “mission field.” I longed for a congregation that would be personally involved in the work of the mission field, maybe even send their “older, more experienced” preacher into the mission area to prepare it for me.

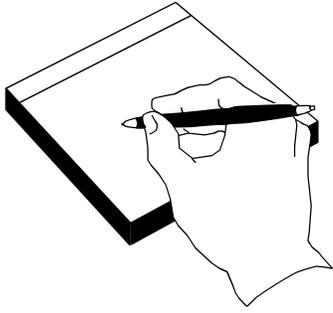
That is precisely what the Holy Spirit instructed the church at Antioch to do when He said, “...Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them” (Acts 13:2-3). Paul and Barnabas planted congregations in the cities of Asia Minor and Paul and Silas visited those same congregations later in order to confirm and establish them in the faith (Acts 15:40-41;

16:4-5). It was only after those older preachers had laid the ground work that the younger preachers like Timothy and Titus were sent to those congregations to build on a solid spiritual foundation. Both young men are mentioned often in Paul’s epistles as being extremely helpful in the growth of the church in Asia Minor. In fact, both Timothy and Titus have personal letters written to them to instruct them on how to conduct their work among the churches.

Many years passed, and I became that “older, more experienced” preacher who preached for the “larger, established” congregation with good strong elders. I will have to be honest--mission work from this viewpoint sure looked different. I liked where I was and my family was comfortable. I had not kept the verses listed above as clearly in my mind as I should have. But, while on vacation in Colorado one summer, we worshipped with a small band of Christians that reminded me a lot of the precious saints in Georgia. My conscience reminded me of what I once thought would be the proper arrangement for mission work. The Christians in that small Colorado town pled with me to help them find a preacher. I did try, but no preacher mature enough to handle the work, myself included, wanted to go. The plea from Colorado haunted me much like the “Macedonian call” must have haunted Paul (Acts 16:9-10). I finally- shared my feeling with the great Blackwater Macedonia congregation in Walker County, Alabama, where I was the local preacher. The good members and the elders decided to travel to Colorado and conduct a Vacation Bible School. They were all convinced this was a great mission opportunity. The

(Continued on Page 3)

Notes From The Editor Bobby Liddell



Progression In Digression

The title means going forward in going aside. We might ask, "What benefit is there in making good time on a road away from your destination?" Spiritually, going forward in going away from the right path brings neither blessing nor happiness (1 John 1:6-10; 2 John 9-11). Nor does it facilitate one's reaching the destination he should, if wise, desire. Psalm I shows the man blessed and happy who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. The prescription for security thus requires one to refrain from progression in sin.

Digression In The Church

One need not look far to see the problems in our brotherhood arising from brethren's going forward in going aside. Sadly, some rejoice to see it. Satan surely does. When brethren begin to hold and teach error, is that progress? If it is, then progress costs men their souls, is a curse to the Lord's church and denies God the glory due Him. Our plea is, "Let us go back to the Bible." God's word is our standard. Let us hear and heed the truth (John 8:32; 17:17).

Music In Worship

Some brethren are going forward at full speed in going aside from what God has authorized concerning music in worship. In the past, the cowards were afraid to speak out, but now they think they have sufficient support to do so with impunity. Some contend for special music" such as choirs and solos. Others say they will not "preach against" mechanical instrumental music in worship. Some openly fellowship those who use mechanical instrumental music in worship.

All the while, they criticize those who refuse to join in their devilish decision to go forward in going aside. It

is always surprising to see how caustic and judgmental such brethren can be in condemning those

whom they perceive to be caustic and judgmental. They call those who oppose their error "gopher wood preachers." For those who may not know, that comes from the illustration of God's authorizing gopher wood in the ark; thus, all other woods were not authorized. So, God has authorized congregational singing when the saints assemble in worship; thus, all other music is not authorized.

An Interesting Quote

Note the following quotation from the Church Manual Designed For The Use Of Baptist Churches by J. M. Pendleton, page 81. (This copy has no date but was printed prior to 1943).

It may be laid down as a principle of common sense, which commends itself to every candid mind, that a commission to do a thing authorizes only the doing of the thing specified. The doing of all other things is virtually forbidden. There is a maxim of law, that the expression of one thing is the exclusion of another. It must necessarily be so; for otherwise there could be no definiteness in contracts, and no precision in legislative enactments or judicial decrees. This maxim may be illustrated in a thousand ways. Numerous scriptural illustrations are at hand. For example: God commanded Noah to make an ark of gopher-wood. He assigns no reason why gopher-wood be used. The command, however, is positive, and it forbids the use of every other kind of wood.

Following The Baptists

Since so many of our brethren have taken their theology (along with their degrees) from the Baptists, perhaps they should reconsider their position in light of the foregoing. Of course, we know the Baptist position (excepting the Primitives) today on the use of mechanical instrumental music must deny the argument above in that connection.

The Baptists have gone forward in going aside from God's will. In former days, brethren united in that observation, but now they make the same arguments made by our Baptist friends for the use of "special music" and mechanical instrumental music in Christian worship. These arguments were wrong when made by the Baptists and they are wrong now.

Brethren, let's go forward in going back to truth.

Continued from Page 1

elders decided that Blackwater would take on the job of finding a preacher and getting other congregations to assist in the work. They were convinced that a “young inexperienced” preacher would not be best for the job. They felt strongly that the work demanded an “older, more experienced” preacher. But, where would we find such a man?

My family and I finally recognized that we were the obvious choice, a fact we had tried hard to ignore. The elders at Breakwater Macedonia were not easily convinced, but after much prayer and deliberation, agreed to send us to Colorado. It was an extremely hard decision for everyone involved, but the work in Colorado has grown from four members to twenty-two members in two years and the work at Blackwater continues to flourish. There is a wonderful spirit of love and cooperation between the members here and the congregations that are helping with the work.

I am certainly not saying that this is the only way mission work can be done, but it surely seems to be more like what the Spirit intended. Whether in our local communities, within the states of this great nation or in

distant lands, let us all be determined to do all that is within our power to be able in our lifetime to say, like Paul, that the gospel has been “...preached to every creature which is under heaven...” (Col. 1:23).

P.O. Box 125, Meeker, CO 81641

Plan To Attend

The Nineteenth Annual Bellview Lectures “Changes in The Church Of Christ” June 11-15, 1994

Matthew 7:12

Shan Jackson

“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Mat. 7:12). When Jesus uttered these words, the teaching was not new. Centuries had passed since the Lord said to Moses, “...thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself..” (Lev. 19:18). Still, we must realize that the word rendered “neighbor” in this text implies to love those of the same race or those of the same clan. To the Jew of the Old Testament, this was the law. To them, this was the brotherhood. And man has, down through the ages, made it abundantly evident that he normally seeks after the good of himself and those of the clan. However, Jesus’ teaching in the “Golden Rule” is for the universal good of mankind and not for a few alone. Self-preservation may serve as one of the basic motives of human nature but it guarantees little for the needs of others. Man’s most natural inclinations offer only indifferent assurances toward a betterment of lives.

In similar setting, Jesus gave the text we mention. The time had come to restate this ancient item of the law. With this restating also came an expanding with

new heights of meaning and direction. The treatment we want from others, we must provide first for them. This is the core message of Matthew 7:12. But how could it be more simply stated by the Savior? How could He have said it to make it more clear? The natural and powerful factor of self-preservation is not to serve as guide to our relationship with others. Brotherly relations and clannish love consisted of doing as you would be done by others. Here seems the maxim by which all other providential maxims will be gauged. By the Master, we are given a glimpse of the ideal relations needed for the kingdom. By Christ, we are shown a glimpse of true spiritual life.

Today, as man strives to set his own standards of life, he views this test with varied interpretations. In his attempt to overstep New Testament liberty and freedom, he has stretched and mangled even these simple words of our Lord to say things Christ never intended to say. For instance, some treat His words to teach, “Do to others as they have done to you” thus promoting the spirit of vengeance and retaliation. How they make this assertion in the face of His teaching in the previous

verses is rather hard to understand but they do (cf, Mat. 5:38-42) Another group attempts to escape all spiritual responsibility by claiming that Christ's teaching is that if relations with neighbors are to reach such heights, then my neighbor is to leave me alone and I him so as to not take the chance of offense or harm. Again, nothing could be further from Christ's truth, We may feel, or hope, that this never happens but a close look shows these moldings are often seen in common life. Retaliation against and apathy towards others are too often the rule rather than the exception.

Here, and throughout His teaching, Jesus points to a spiritually positive approach to life. Life, as He saw it, was an equal measure of doing good and avoiding evil. Thus our "Golden Rule" is not a measuring stick for what "has" happened but rather a model by which

every thought and action towards others is shaped. It remains the very mainspring of conscience and thereby a most important aspect of life. When a pang of conscience, weighing evidence of events and opportunities against our Biblical knowledge of right and wrong, begins to stir, we must heed it as if Christ sent it. For it functions best when trained on truth. This is the gist of Matthew 7:12.

In our age, when our minds are cluttered with billboards and our hearts are too influenced by the commercials of man, we have a particular need that the truth of the "Golden Rule" be prominently displayed in our lives for all men to see, read and observe. All the pure points of life that we would love to find in man are always to be found in us.

P.O. Box 904 Parades, TX 77465

Brethren, You Are Being Asked To Make A Decision

Gary W. Summers

Those who have departed from the faith are the ones forcing the issue. Nothing could be clearer than that members of the Lord's church are being asked to make a decision. The question is: "Do you want to keep your Pharisaical posture of being 'the' church, or will you now admit that we are just a denomination?" We are being urged to cancel our exclusivistic attitudes in favor of peace, unity and love. We are being asked to ignore Biblical doctrine and the boundaries of fellowship that God (not man) set forth.

Consider Rubel Shelly's Wineskins publication as an example. In the November, 1992 issue he printed the blasphemous "Christmas at Matthew's House" article, in which the author refers to the virgin birth of our Lord as "the scandal of Mary's 'immaculate conception.'"

By the way, how does that square with Shelly's purpose statement from the first issue, in which he affirms: "A man or woman need only be possessed of a genuine love for Christ to qualify for submitting articles to this journal." Is that love for the Lord--to question His divine origin? Are there not enough skeptics in the world that a so-called brother feels compelled to savage the Son of God? Readers were asked to "pray for God to direct" Wineskins to His end and glory. Rubel, somebody's prayers have failed.

In December, the "Bad Dreams" article mocked hermeneutical principles (as well as misapplied them) that even God uses. The January/February issue con-

tained Max Encode's article which urges us to fellowship those in denominations. And, March's, issue is replete with an article glorifying "Easter."

Is there anyone who does not get the picture yet? Like Jeroboam, these "brethren" have forged a golden calf, and they are asking the rest of us to bow down to it. They have put one up in Nashville, and they have another in Abilene (the first two articles cited above were written by Abilene Christian University professors).

While Moses was leading Israel to, the Promised Land, some were calling for a return to Egypt. As Leroy Brownlow stated so well at the 1990 Freed-Hardeman Lectures, we have those today who are leading us right back to the denominationalism that many of us have come out of (buy the tape).

The Basis For Fellowship ala Lucado

In his "Dream" article, Max Lucado badmouths the concept of seeing the Bible alike. He says repeatedly that fellowship cannot be based on agreement of unanimity of thought. How unlike Paul who wrote: "Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). Consider Lucado's reasoning from the same article.

TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL LECTURESHIP

MARCH 27-31, 1994.

MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING

4400 Knight Arnold Road Memphis, Tennessee 38118

THEME: *“Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon: Divine Wisdom on Life, Love, and the Mutual Affection of Christ and the Church”*

SUNDAY, MARCH 27, 1994

9:30-10:20 AM. “Introduction to Ecclesiastes” Rex A. Turner, Sr.
 10:30-11:30 AM. “The Failure of Science to Bring True Happiness—1:1-11” Steve Ellis
 6:00- 7:00 P.M. “The Failure of Human Philosophy—1:12-18” Thomas B. Warren

MONDAY, MARCH 28, 1994

9:00- 9:50 A.M. “The Failure of Sensuous Pleasures—2:1-11” Kenneth Gossett
 10:00-10:50 AM. “The Christian Life Is a _____ Life” Thomas B. Warren
 10:00-10:50 AM. “The Christian Woman Approaches Life With Wisdom” (Women’s Class) Lavonne McIlsh
 11:00-11:50 AM. “The Failure of Materialism—2:12-26” Harrell Davidson
 11:00-11:50 AM. Class 1: “He Math Set Eternity in their Heart—3:11” Garland Elkins
 Class 2: “Reverence for God—12:13” Hal Johnson
 Class 3: “The Dead Know Not Anything—Soul Sleeping?—9:5” Johnny Skaggs
 Class 4: “The Spirit of Compromise and the Jubilee” J. E. Choate
 11:50- 1:10 P.M. LUNCH
 1:10- 2:00 P.M. “The Providence of God—3:1-15” Kenneth Jones
 1:10- 2:00 P.M. Class 1: “The Wisdom and Foolishness of Solomon” Willie Cox
 Class 2: “Apostasy into Denominationalism—Ever Present Danger” Adron Doran
 Class 3: “Maintaining Communication in the Home” (Women’s Class) Racine Wilder
 2:10- 3:00 P.M. “The Folly or Living for Self—3:16-4:16” Goebel Music
 3:10- 4:00 P.M. “Open Forum” Garland Elkins
 4:00- 7:00 P.M. INTERMISSION
 7:00- 7:30 P.M. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
 7:30- 8:30 P.M. “The Folly of False Religion—5:1-9” Winfred Clark

TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 1994

9:00- 9:50 A.M. “The Folly of the False Attitude Toward and Use of Riches—5:10-6:12” Wayne Coats
 10:00-10:50 A.M. “The Christian Life Is a _____ Life” Thomas B. Warren
 10:00-10:50 A.M. “Maintaining Attractiveness in One’s Marriage” (Women’s Class) Corinne Elkins
 11:00-11:50 AM. “The Value and Use of Wisdom—7:1-8:17” Buster Dobbs
 11:00-11:50 AM. Class 1: “Who Is As the Wise Man?—8:1” Gene Wood
 Class 2: “Remember Also Thy Creator—12:1” Terry Cole
 Class 3: “The Curse of Slothfulness—10:18” Gary Atwater
 Class 4: “The Spirit of Compromise and Ecumenicalism” J. E. Choate
 11:50- 1:10 P.M. LUNCH
 1:10- 2:00 P.M. “True Wisdom and Surmounting Life’s Problems—9:1-18” Ira Y. Rice, Jr.
 1:10- 2:00 P.M. Class 1: “God Made Man Upright; But They Have Sought Out Many Inventions—7:29” Ben Vick, Jr.
 Class 2: “Apostasy Into Denominationalism—Ever Present Danger” Adron Doran
 Class 3: “Submission, Not Inferiority” (Women’s Class) Annette Cates
 2:10- 3:00 P.M. “The Folly of Violating True Wisdom—10:1-10” Jim laws
 3:10- 4:00 P.M. “Open Forum” Garland Elkins
 4:00- 7:00 P.M. INTERMISSION
 7:00- 7:30 P.M. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
 7:30- 8:30 P.M. “Sowing Unto Righteousness—11:1-10” Joe Gilmore

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30, 1994

9:00- 9:50 AM. “Introduction to the Song of Solomon” Dub McClish
 10:00-10:50 A.M. “The Christian Life Is a _____ Life” Thomas B. Warren
 10:00-10:50 A.M. “Sources of Problems in the Home and Their Solutions” (Women’s Class) Jane Foster
 11:00-11:50 AM. “The Bride’s Love Expressed; The Bridegroom’s Response; Wooing Each Other—1:1-2:1” Mike McDaniel
 11:00-11:50 A.M. Class 1: “Keep Yourself Pure for Marriage—1:15; 4:7; 8:8-10” Howard Horton
 Class 2: “Render Due Benevolence—1 Cor. 7:1-5” Marvin Weir
 Class 3: “Foundations for a Happy Marriage” Robert R. Taylor, Jr.
 Class 4: “The Spirit of Compromise and the Role of Women in the Church” J. E. Choate
 11:50- 1:10 P.M. LUNCH
 1:10- 2:00 P.M. “Mutual Expression of Love; Groom’s Desire to be with Bride—2:2-17” Joe Meador
 1:10- 2:00 P.M. Class 1: “All Men Are Amenable to God’s Pattern for Marriage” Allen Webster
 Class 2: “Apostasy unto Denominationalism—Ever Present Danger” Adron Doran
 Class 3: “Older Women Teach the Younger Women” (Women’s Class) Maggie Colley
 2:10- 3:00 P.M. “Bride Seeks Groom’s Companionship; The Wedding—3:1-11” Bobby Gayton
 3:10- 4:00 P.M. “Open Forum” Garland Elkins
 4:00- 7:00 P.M. INTERMISSION
 7:00- 7:30 P.M. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
 7:30- 8:30 P.M. “Man Goeth to His Everlasting Home; The Whole Duty of Man—Ecc. 11:1-14” Gary Colley

THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 1994

9:00- 9:50 A.M. “The Wedding Feast; Honeymoon; Groom’s Praise; Her Response—4:1-5:1” Jerry Moffitt
 10:00-10:50 AM. “The Christian Life Is a _____ Life” Thomas B. Warren
 10:00-10:50 AM. “Sexuality and Marriage” (Women’s Class) Irene Taylor
 11:00-11:50 AM. “The Marriage in Difficulty; Groom Is Rejected, Then Sought—5:2-6:3” William Wilder
 11:00-11:50 AM. Class 1: “Husbands, Love Your Wives—Eph. 5:15” Don Eubanks
 Class 2: “Wives, Love Your Husbands—Tit. 2:4” Jerry Martin
 Class 3: “Attempts by Man to Circumvent God’s Marriage Law” Michael Hatcher
 Class 4: “The Spirit of Compromise and the Worship as Celebration, Holy Wow” Eddie Whitten
 11:50- 1:10 P.M. LUNCH
 1:10- 2:00 P.M. “Groom’s Undiminished Love; Her Response; Mutual Growing Love—6:4-8:5” Mike Hisson
 1:10- 2:00 P.M. Class 1: “Can I Myself Save My Marriage?” Clifford Newell
 Class 2: “The New Hermeneutic—Neo-Modernism” Charles Moore
 Class 3: “Working Out Priorities In Marriage” (Women’s Class) Dorothy Mosher
 2:10- 3:00 P.M. “True Married Love—Flame of Jehovah; Her Preparation for Marriage; Their Communication—8:6-14” David Brown
 3:10- 4:00 P.M. “Open Forum” Garland Elkins
 4:00- 7:00 P.M. INTERMISSION
 7:00- 7:30 P.M. CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
 7:30- 8:30 P.M. “Because Sentence...Is Not Executed Speedily—8:11” Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

NOTE: Attended Nursery for all lectures. There will be classes and activities for pre-school children daily, and also evening losses. AFTER/ELECTRICAL HOOKUPS PROVIDED.

True unity is not achieved by leaving our differences hidden, but by dealing with them in the open meadow of Christ's mercy. I have brothers and sisters with whom I do not agree on the role of women, the meaning of baptism, the place of millennialism. But our uncommon ground is a barren island compared to the great continent of common ground we share. If we can agree on the majestic uniqueness of Christ, don't we share enough to accept one another?

NO! With this philosophy, a person can believe virtually anything and still be in fellowship. It cannot be pointed out too strongly or too often that Max's view of fellowship ignores truth.

Visualize Max's argument. Brother A, in harmony with I Timothy 2:12, knows that the word of God plainly forbids women preachers, but brother B thinks the practice is okay. Max says, "No big deal; we can still have fellowship." What kind of precedent does this set?

If we can ignore the teaching of the word of God on one subject, then why not on all of them? Oh, but this is a matter of interpretation. Max says of differences on subjects like these: "...fellowship is not found in common opinions but in a common Savior." Well, guess what? The homosexuals have their own interpretation of the Scriptures. They have come up with inventive insights that allow them to continue their ways. Do we still have a common Savior, Max?

He also mentioned millennialism, which denies passage after passage of both Old and New Testament teaching. And this poses no problem for him. Lucado is on the wrong continent. He's on the one called error. He probably went through the wrong gate to get there, too--the wide one.

But worst of all, he insists that we can disagree on the meaning of baptism. The Bible teaches that it is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) and that you must believe and be baptized in order to be saved (Mark 16:16). Now along comes someone and says, "I was baptized, but not for the forgiveness of sins." Are we both on the same continent, Max? Are we brethren? Can one affirm that he was saved first and that baptism had nothing to do with salvation while another teaches that in baptism sins are washed away--and both be right? Can both be brethren? Can two walk together (have fellowship) unless they both are agreed (Amos 3:3)? Amos 3:3

is Divine wisdom. Max's human wisdom asks: "And if we never agree, can't we agree to disagree?"

What Respect for Fellowship Demands

God has (wisely) not left it up to us to determine the rules of entrance into the kingdom; we only abide by His will. We recognize as brethren all who have obeyed the gospel. As much as we might love, admire, or appreciate those who have not been baptized for the forgiveness of their sins, they cannot be called "brethren." One of them might even help us in a spiritual way; some of them may do many good works; that does not make them Christians. Only the blood of Christ can do that.

Those who are in the church must continue to walk in the light. Fellowship is predicated upon just that condition (1 John 1:7). Now when one chooses to walk disorderly, fellowship must be withdrawn (2 The. 3:6). Such are not man's rules; God is the gatekeeper. He (through His word) determines who remains outside the fence.

Do we respect the teachings of the Scriptures on the subject of fellowship? Or, should we ignore God's will? We do not draw lines or boundaries of fellowship. We respect the ones, however, that God has drawn.

The Bible also contains a few words for false teachers--those who abide not in the doctrine of Christ, but go onward (2 John 9-11). We must withdraw fellowship from them, also.

So, we are being asked to decide by Shelly, Lucado, Abilene professors and others to make a decision. What is your answer? Do you want to return to the ways of denominationalism and modernism? Or will you stand for the Old Paths? As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

It is time to withdraw from these men since they have departed from the Lord. They have been talked and reasoned with. They have determined their course. So must we ours!

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Mailing List

Please advise us in advance of your moving that you might not miss a single issue and that we might not have to pay for the return of your paper(s). Those who fail to notify us of their moving shall be removed from our mailing list.

ETSOP Lectures

The Twentieth Annual East Tennessee School of Preaching Lectures are scheduled for March 6-9, 1994, on the theme: "Holiness--Without Which None Shall See God." The lectures will be held in the facilities of the Karns Church of Christ in Knoxville. More than twenty speakers will present almost forty lessons on themes pertaining to spiritual growth and Christian living. For a schedule, contact East Tennessee School of Preaching, 6608 Beaver Ridge Road, Knoxville, TN 37931, (615) 691-7444 or 691-7411.

Footsteps Of A Firm Faith

Howell Bigham has produced a fine book of twenty sermon outlines on the book of James. Not only preachers, but all, would benefit from a study of the concise insightful treatment of key passages in James. The cost is \$3.00 (includes postage). You may order from Howell Bigham, 6677 County Road 236, Town Creek, AL, 35672.

"Changes In The Church Of Christ"

Nineteenth Annual Bellview Lectures, June 11- 15, 1994. Topics will cover changes in worship, changes in morals, changes in preaching, a history of change in the church, agents and tools of change, changing attitudes and more. The 28 speakers include: David Brown, Curtis Cates, Winfred Clark, Wayne Coats, Buster Dobbs, Roy Deaver, Garland Elkins, Guss Eoff, Joe Gilmore, Dub McClish, and Flavil Nichols.

Salvation

Is in Christ only: "Neither is there salvation any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Requires hearing the word: "...to you is the word of this salvation sent" (Acts 13:26). "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth..." (Rom. 1:16; cf. Rom. 10:17).

Requires belief and baptism: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..." (Mark 16:16).

Requires repentance: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor. 7:10).

Requires confession: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10).

Requires action on man's part: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phi. 2:12).

Is possible through a knowledge of Scripture: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim 3:15).

Was brought by grace: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Tit. 2:11).

May be neglected: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him" (Heb. 2:3).

Requires obedience: "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9).

Have you obtained salvation in Christ? If not, we urge you to obey Him today (2 Cor. 6:2).

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (904) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

BOBBY LIDDELL, EDITOR

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXIII

March, 1994

Number 3

An Exposition Of Matthew 18:15-20

Clifford Newell, Jr.

There are several things that are under attack in our promiscuous society. One of the most ludicrous teachings to rear its ugly head is the false notion that one has to go to the false teacher in person before his false doctrine can be confronted. It is being advocated that a brother who holds to, and has publicly advocated false doctrine, must be personally contacted before it is proper and right to refute his errors publicly.

THE TEXT

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them (Mat. 18:15-20).

When we carefully examine the text, we can see that Jesus, the Master Teacher, had under consideration offenses of a personal nature. The personal injury that one brother suffered was from another brother, there-

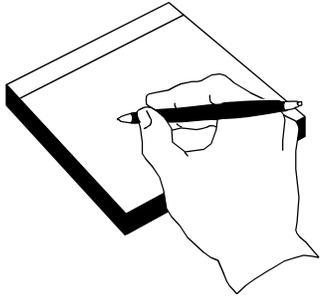
fore, this passage has not the slightest reference to, nor may it be properly applied to the false notion one in error must be first personally contacted before exposed.

THE CONTEXT

The matter of context is very important when one desires to know and understand the truth. This chapter (Matthew 18) teaches that citizenship in the kingdom of heaven requires the grace of humility, the cost of discipleship, the value of the person, the maintenance of peace and unity among brethren and the necessity of extending forgiveness. The chapter begins with conversion and ends with forgiveness. Thus, from the beginning to the end of the chapter, the emphasis is upon the individual!

The offense involved in our text is a trespass (hamartesei, literally, commit a sin), by a brother against a brother. Therefore, Jesus stated six principles that are involved in dealing with this matter. First, Jesus stated, “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother” (Mat. 18:15). For peace and unity to prevail among brethren in settling their personal differences, let them personally visit and resolve their difference. Evidently this trespass was between these two, and it should stay that way, unless as the text states, it becomes necessary to pursue it further. Second, Jesus stated, “But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established” (Mat. 18:16). One visit may not be sufficient, therefore, go back and try to resolve the personal difference so peace and unity may prevail. However, the one or two witnesses are for the (Continued on Page 3)

Notes From The Editor



**Bobby
Liddell**

“Denominational Agenda” Or Bible Content?

Escambia County, Florida, will begin a pilot program of Released Time Bible Classes at Pensacola High School in 1994. Since I have a son at PHS, this is of particular interest to me. Beginning with the fall 1994 semester, students who elect to do so may leave the campus for one period daily for an elective noncredit course in Bible study. The School Board is considering crediting the courses in the future.

A recent letter from a group encouraging our participation in the program said: “The local churches will be in charge of promoting, educating parents, fundraising, and signing up students.” The “Pastor’s Input Meeting” will be at the local Baptist Center with proposed classes conducted at the Korean Church near PHS. The outline for proposed study included this statement: “This study will not placate a ‘Denominational Agenda,’ but will represent Bible *Content*” (emphasis in the original, BL).

The “Consequential Objectives” of the first course included: gaining an overview of the Old Testament; grasping the structure of God’s great plan; answering questions of origination; increasing the student’s ability to identify Old Testament characters; and, expanding the student’s awareness of the geography and customs of these characters. The last objective is: “To give the student an escalated desire to deal with their own difficulties God’s way” (emphasis in the original, BL).

We truly appreciate the concern of moral people in denominations for the welfare of the city’s young people. We admire their zeal and their ability to reach the goals they set. We commend their good deeds, and we are always happy to see people encourage others to

study the Bible, especially when they propose to do so without a “Denominational Agenda.”

However, when members of the church of Christ call for non-denominational Bible study, we are quite often met with great disfavor by those very denominational people. Why the difference? Obviously, those in charge have agreed the teaching of denominational doctrine in Released Time Bible Classes would be out of place, offensive to some, a cause of concern for others and construed as opportunistic proselytizing by many. We totally agree. In addition, we simply cannot conceive of *any time* or *any place* where the promulgation of denominationalism would not be out of place. Certainly, the Lord who prayed and died for the unity of His followers in Him must be offended whenever men teach their commandments instead of His (John 17; 14:15). Surely, God is concerned when men call His creation to follow them instead of the Father.

Therefore, please consider this plea. Let us all, young and old, abandon all denominational agendas and study the Bible. Let us see what the Bible says—without man’s addition, subtraction or substitution. Let us hear God’s word without some denominational slant or biased interpretation. Let us put aside all prejudice and preconceived ideas and open our hearts to God’s Holy Book (John 8:32; Jas. 1:21).

Let us also escalate our desire to deal with life’s difficulties God’s way. We, in the Lord’s church, preach and teach there is only one right way, God’s way. Many are needlessly confused because they hear denominations offering another way, their way, to deal with the problems of life instead of God’s way. Friend, who is wiser, God or man? If we have any wisdom, whose words will we follow, God’s or man’s?

We call men back to the Bible—our only rule of faith and practice. We call upon men to do Bible things in Bible ways and call Bible things by Bible names. We wear the Bible name, “Christian” (Acts 26:28). Congregationally, we wear the Bible name, “church of Christ” (Rom. 16:16). We endeavor to speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent. In matters of opinion, we seek liberty; in matters of faith, unity; and, in all things, love.

There is nothing difficult about understanding the biblical concept we offer. It is really very simple, isn’t it? We know not all shall be content with an undenominational study of the Bible and not all shall desire to do things God’s way, but we always encourage everyone everywhere to so do and we fervently pray we all shall.

Continued from Page 1

purpose of establishing their words and would prevent any misunderstanding or future misrepresentation. Third, Jesus stated, "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church" (Mat. 18:17). The purpose of following the way prescribed by Christ is for peace and unity among brethren. The idea involved in telling it unto the church is for the prayerful, sympathetic, and united effort on the part of the church to restore him. The church is to be pure, cleansed, glorious, holy, and without blemish (Eph. 5:26-27), in order for it to exercise a positive influence upon the erring one. Fourth, Jesus stated, "But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" (Mat. 18:17). It is vitally essential that we all recognize that a person can so live as to forfeit fellowship with the saints. Listen carefully, "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" (2 The. 3:6). Fifth, Jesus stated, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Mat. 18:18). Literally, the idea is whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall have been already bound in heaven. The same is true regarding the loosing, whatsoever ye shall loose on

earth shall have been already loosed in heaven. The matter of forgiveness and withdrawal of fellowship is to be studied and applied in harmony with this text. Actually, the binding and loosing, regarding our text, was to be done by the apostles and implemented by the church. Sixth, Jesus stated, "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mat. 18:19-20). The promise of "two of you" must be applied to the subject of the context, namely, the proper treatment of offenders. The statement "there am I" confirms the promise that the prayer of any two of them would be answered. When brethren seek the Lord's will in all their relationships, He gives assurance of His presence.

CONCLUSION

Surely, it is obvious that Matthew 18:15-20 when properly applied, is applicable only to personal offenses; i.e., where one brother has sinned against another brother. Dear reader, it is a horrendous mistake to make this passage the rule of procedure regarding instances where false doctrine is being advocated and reaping havoc upon men's souls. Think about it!

502 Bradley Avenue, Bay Minette, AL 36507

Changing Views On The Inspiration And Interpretation Of The Bible (1)

Stanley Ryan

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE NEW HERMENEUTICS?

First, those advocating a new hermeneutics have no divine standard for determining the hermeneutic we should use. All they are sure about is the old hermeneutic is wrong (for not accepting unity in diversity). Second, they ridicule the idea of restoring the New Testament church by asking, "Which church?" They think by identifying human imperfection in the lives of church members, they make a case (God overlooked moral problems, so he will overlook doctrinal imperfections); however, they overlook the fact the divine side of the church was/is perfect. Third, some believe since we are saved by grace, one cannot be expected to submit to patterns (Christ did not die over the instru-

ment, or baptism for the remission of sins). Fourth, some are so convinced the New Testament is bound by culture, it must be cleansed to become relevant (leadership role for women). Fifth, they undermine the authority of the Scriptures by telling us the "Gospels" are more important than the epistles and the epistles are just "love letters" without authority (Christocentric theology: Jesus's words are authoritative, but not the epistles on: music, women's role, qualification of elders, divorce and remarriage, salvation, morals, etc.).

THEY SAY JESUS IS THE PATTERN

One professor said to me, "It is wrong to talk about the Bible pattern, Jesus is our only pattern." Later he brought up the "Christocentric theology ...not the commands," and referred to a "legalist view" of Scrip-

ture, commands, examples and inference as “Bibliolatry” (worship of the Bible). Brethren, a simple question confounded the teacher. “What do you know about Christ that you did not learn from the Bible?” This exposed the problem, his view toward the authority of the Bible, its inspiration and interpretation. Christ truly is our example and we should follow his teaching as revealed to us in the Bible (1 Pet. 2:21). Christ has all authority as stated in Matthew 28:18 (authority or power), even the power to delegate authority to the apostles to speak and write His word (John 14:26; 16:13; Acts 2:4; 2 Cor. 5:18-20). Thus, Christ’s authority is recognized in the written word (1 Cor. 11:23; 2 The. 2:1-2). The whole counsel of God, suitable for man’s needs, was revealed and recorded (2 Pet. 1:3; Acts 20:27; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Jude 3; Mat. 25:35; Heb. 1:1-3; 1 Pet. 1:22). We are warned not to go beyond what is written, not to add to it, not to subtract from it, but to abide in it and teach the same things to others (Gal. 1:6-9; 1 Cor. 4:6; 2 John 9; 2 Tim. 1:13; 2:2). The scriptures were to be read and understood then and now (2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Cor. 1:13; Eph. 3:4).

THEY CALL FOR CHANGE WITHOUT ANY STANDARD OF AUTHORITY!

The call for change (demand for a new hermeneutic) is being heard far and near. Mostly, it comes in the form of criticism against the church and of the old hermeneutic (some say it is “outdated,” others say it was a “static institutional model,” or “flawed copy”); however, no legitimate alternative is being offered. One advocate said, “Ramifications of this new model ...have not been worked out systematically.” Rubel Shelly said, “We have no illusions that what we are offering (what he calls a Christocentric theology) is final or definitive” (Music, *Behold The Pattern*, pp. 302-304). Mike Cope stated, “When someone asks me, ‘Where is this leading us?’ I have to say, ‘I’m not sure.’ When asked ‘Is it safe?’ I have to respond, ‘Probably not!’” (“Traumatic Winds of Renewal,” *Wineskins*, August 1992). Jesus referred to this type of situation and where it leads, “If the blind lead the blind both shall fall into the ditch” (Mat. 15:14).

Their call for change is a direct assault against the verbally inspired word of God. God’s word says “Preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:1-5); however, it is obvious the “change agents” are determined to criticize book, chapter and verse quotations. One teacher said, “Please don’t preach like Stephen (Acts 7). He was too

harsh, people won’t like you, it ruins the image of the church.” When it was pointed out Stephen was inspired and was preaching the word of God (the problem was not Stephen but hard-hearted people), the teacher wanted to go to another point. Brethren, why would a man training preachers not use Stephen as an example of preaching “in season, out of season” (2 Tim 4:2), and being “faithful unto death” (Rev. 2:10). Surely a “Christocentric theologian” has not missed the principles of self denial (Luke 9:23), hardship and persecution (Mat. 5:11-12; 10:17-18; Mark 13:11; 2 Cor. 11:23-28) that may accompany preaching. If our pulpits were filled with men like Stephen preaching the word (2 Tim. 4:2) to please God rather than to make men “feel good” we would at least have sound preaching. The word will not drive honest hearts away, it draws them to God (John 6:45) and makes them wise unto salvation (2 Tim. 3:15; Jas. 1:22). God’s word is the truth (John 17:17). It can produce faith (Rom. 10:17), instruct in love (1 Cor. 13), comfort (1 The. 4:18), give light and understanding (Psa. 119:30), sanctify (John 17:17), build up and give an inheritance (Acts 20:32). God wants His word preached to keep people from turning unto fables (2 Tim. 3:3-4).

THE OLD HERMENEUTIC STILL STANDS THE TEST

Respect for Bible authority is the heart of the Old Hermeneutic. True belief in the inspiration of “all scripture” requires respect for the authority of the word because He who gave the word has all authority (2 Tim. 3:16-17). His word is true because, it was/is “...impossible for God to lie” (Heb. 6:18). Therefore, “If any man speak let him speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11), “preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2), “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Mat. 29:20), and “do all in the name (authority) of the Lord” (Col. 3:17).

Jesus accepted the authority of the Old Testament as the word of God in written form. He quoted Scripture: “It is written” (Mat. 4:7-10; Mark 7:6; Luke 19:46). Jesus saw God’s word as authoritative and quoted it to rebuke the devil and to instruct man. He came to “fulfill the law and the prophets” and taught others “to do and teach them” in order to be great in the kingdom (Mat. 5:17-19). Thus, Jesus referred to the Scripture as law (binding authority) and He also understands faith and grace

(Continued on Page 6)

Changes In the Church of Christ

Nineteenth Annual Bellview Lectures

June 11-15, 1994

Saturday, June 11

7:00 P.M. What Is The Church Of Christ?

Jerry Martin

8:00 P.M. Does The Church Of Christ Need To Change?

Winfred Clark

Sunday, June 12

9:00 A.M. The Call For Change: Is It Valid?

Bobby Liddell

10:00 A.M. Changes In Morals: The Decline Of Moral Values

James Rogers

Lunch Break

2:00 P.M. Changing Views On The Inspiration And Interpretation Of The Bible

Stanley Ryan

3:00 P.M. Changes Influenced By Christian Education

Clifford Newell, Jr.

4:00 P.M. Changes In Morals: Changing Views On Marriage

Stephen P. Waller

Dinner Break

7:00 P.M. Changes In Preaching: Ethics Of Preachers

Curtis A. Cates

8:00 P.M. Is The Church Of Christ Subject To Changes In Culture?

Terry Hightower

Monday, June 13

9:00 A.M. A History Of Change In The Church Of Christ

Paul Vaughn

10:00 A.M. How Effective Bible Study Promotes And Prevents Change (I)

Roy Deaver

11:00 A.M. Changes In Preaching: What Shall We Preach?

Eddie Whitten

Lunch Break

2:00 P.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Love

John Stewart

3:00 P.M. Changes In Worship: Special Music

Flavil Nichols

3:45 P.M. Open Forum Discussion On Special Music

Dinner Break

7:00 P.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Fellowship

Garland Elkins

8:00 P.M. The Gospel Of Christ Is Unchanged And Unchanging

Dub McClish

Tuesday, June 14

9:00 A.M. Changes In Preaching: The Role Of The Preacher

Noah Hackworth

10:00 A.M. How Effective Bible Study Promotes And Prevents Change (II)

Roy Deaver

11:00 A.M. Changes Influenced By Brotherhood Publications

Waymon Swain

Lunch Break

2:00 P.M. Changes In Preaching: Motivation To Preach

David Brown

3:00 P.M. Changes In Morals: Questions About Homosexuality

H. A. (Buster) Dobbs

3:45 P.M. Open Forum Discussion On Homosexuality

Dinner Break

7:00 P.M. Changes In Worship: Feelings Over Faith

Joe Gilmore

8:00 P.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Baptism

Lindell Mitchell

Wednesday, June 15

9:00 A.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Church Growth

David Courington

10:00 A.M. How Effective Bible Study Promotes And Prevents Change (III)

Roy Deaver

11:00 A.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Truth

Garry Brantley

Lunch Break

2:00 P.M. Changes In Worship: Is All We Do Worship?

Garry Barnes

3:00 P.M. Agents And Tools Of Change

Wayne Coats

3:45 P.M. Open Forum Discussion On Agents And Tools Of Change

Dinner Break

7:00 P.M. Changes In Worship: The Role Of Women

Fred Davis

8:00 P.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Pure Religion

Guss Eoff

Continued from Page 4

(Luke 24:44-47; John 1:14). Paul and Peter refer to the Old and New Testament writings as Scripture, the inspired word of God (2 Pet. 1:20-21; 3:15-16; 2 Tim. 3:8). Does it sound strange that the New Hermeneutic claims, “The model is Jesus in the gospels, not the flawed copy in Acts and the epistles”? Jesus recognized the authority of God’s commands (direct statements--Mat. 15:3). He used the example of David as authority (Mat. 12:3) and Jesus used a necessary inference to teach the resurrection (Mat. 22:32). Brethren, the “Old Hermeneutic” comes from Jesus’s approach of “interpreting or explaining” God’s word. The Old Hermeneutic principles are scriptural, provable, explainable and understandable, and most of the New Hermeneutic folks were converted by them, lived by them, worshipped by them and are supported by them today! We have wolves in the sheepfold determined to slaughter the sheep (Acts 20:28-32).

THEY ARE CLOUDS WITHOUT WATER

They say, “We have constructed a theology that’s nothing more than stubborn tradition,” a, “perfectionist theology,” and that, “Pattern theology has been our undoing ...generated by a hermeneutic of command, example, and inference.” We have answered their charges with the example of Jesus in the word of God, proving the Old Hermeneutic does hold true.

SOME FALSE VIEWS ABOUT INSPIRATION THAT SOUND FAMILIAR

Some liberal (modernist) theologians deny that the Bible is the word of God. The left-wingers in this group

hold the “intuition” view and consider the Bible as a religious scratch pad upon which ancient writers by human intuition (natural insight and knowledge) came up with (discovered) divine truth. The right-wing holds to the “illumination” view and maintains that the Bible contains divine truth and that God illuminates the understanding of the author giving mysterious insight (inspiration) to men of great piety.

The Neo-orthodoxy view has its left-wingers such as Rudolf Bultmann and Shubert Ogden who support the “demythologizing” view. They say the Bible may become a revelation from God if one successfully strips away the myths, errors, and culture to get at the core truth and if it brings one into personal contact with absolute love. The right-wing adopts the “existential” view, that the Bible may become the word of God if he chooses it as a tool—not in propositions about God (Karl Barth) but as a means of a personal encounter, existential experience, a crisis encounter with God. Emil Brunner says to consider the Bible objectively and prepositional to be the word of God is “Bibliolatry” (*A General Introduction To The Bible*, Geisler and Nix, pp. 37-41). The NEW HERMENEUTIC is textbook liberalism that rejects the inspiration of the Bible.

503 Harrison Ave. Jay, FL 32565

Thanks to brother Ryan for this excellent material which he prepared for the 1993 Bellview Lectureship Book in connection with the lectureship theme: “Changes In The Church Of Christ. “ We will print Part II in the April DEFENDER. Editor.

The Church of Christ

Was established according to the eternal purpose of God (Ephesians 3:11)

Was built by Jesus Christ the Son of God (Matthew 16:18)

Was bought with the precious blood of Christ (Acts 20:38)

Honors Christ by wearing His name (Romans 16:16)

Is the one body of which Christ is the head (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 4:4)

Is the church to which the Lord adds the saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:47)

Thus, it is the only church of which you should be a member (Acts 2:47; Ephesians 3:21)

For Your Information

Free Bible Correspondence Course

The Bellview Church of Christ is happy to offer a free Bible study course. To receive yours, write:

Harold Maxey
20 Emory Drive
Pensacola, FL 32506

Thirteenth Annual Southwest Lectures

"The Book of Daniel" will be the theme April 10-13, 1994, at the Southwest Church of Christ building, 8900 Manchaca Road, Austin, TX, 78748. A full discussion of the book, along with special and related lectures, will be presented. For more information, contact Gary Colley, Lectureship Director, at the above address or call (512) 282-2486.

Second Annual Southeastern Pennsylvania Firm Foundation Lectureship

Lectures on "The Challenge Of Being A Christian" will be presented April 24-27, 1994, at the Coventry Hills Church of Christ building, 1339 S. Hanover St., Pottstown, PA, 19464. For more information, contact Bob Eddy, Lectureship Director, at the above address or call (215) 326-4028.

Second Annual Jackson Church Of Christ Lectureship

April 27-30, 1994, are the dates for a study of "Jesus Our Savior." The Jackson Church of Christ building, located 1.7 miles west of Jackson, KY on Hwy 30, will be the site. For more information, contact Paul Vaughn, Lectureship Director, at P.O. Box 975, Jackson, KY 41339 or call (606) 666-5628.

"Changes In The Church Of Christ" Nineteenth Annual Bellview Lectures June 11-15, 1994

Topics will cover changes in worship, changes in morals, changes in preaching, a history of change in the church, agents and tools of change, changing attitudes and more. The 28 speakers are: Garry Barnes, Garry Brantley, David Brown, Curtis A. Cates, Winfred Clark, Wayne Coats, David Courington, Fred Davis, Roy Deaver, Buster Dobbs, Garland Elkins, Guss Eoff, Joe Gilmore, Noah Hackworth, Terry Hightower, Bobby Liddell, Jerry Martin, Dub McClish, Lindell Mitchell, Clifford Newell, Jr., Flavil Nichols, James Rogers, Stanley Ryan, John Stewart, Waymon Swain, Paul Vaughn, Stephen P. Waller and Eddie Whitten.

Whatever Happened To Heaven And Hell?

"Whatever Happened To Heaven And Hell?" was the theme for the 1994 Shenandoah Lectures conducted by the Shenandoah Church of Christ of San Antonio, TX. Terry Hightower always compiles a great lecture-ship book and this one is the best book on this subject (other than the Bible) which I have seen. It is filled with varied in-depth chapters written by faithful brethren on the many facets of Heaven and Hell. You will certainly want to get a copy. The book is almost 700 pages, hardbound, and sells for \$15.00 (plus \$2.50 shipping). For more information, contact brother Hightower at the Shenandoah Church of Christ, 11026 Wurzbach Road, San Antonio, TX, 78320-2504 or call (210) 696-5532.

Denton Lectures Book On First Corinthians Back In Print

This very excellent volume of the lectures presented in the First Annual Denton Lectures, 1982, has been out of print for some time. Due to the great demand, it has been reprinted. You may obtain your copy (\$14.00 plus shipping) by contacting Valid Publications, 908 Imperial Drive, Denton, TX 76201.

Kiev Bible Institute

The Kiev Bible Institute, a work of the Centre Church of Christ, Kiev, Ukraine, now has ninety students, all of whom are faithful Christians. Roger Campbell, of Crawfordsville, IL, is serving as acting director while Jim Waldron is temporarily assisting similar schools in South India and Lahore, Pakistan. The study program involves two years for women and three years for men. Daytime courses meet for twenty-two hours per week while the evening school meets for eleven hours per week. For more information, contact the Avondale Church of Christ, 4017 Memorial Drive, Decatur, GA 30032 or phone (404) 299-1475.

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BOBBY LIDDELL, EDITOR

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXIII

April 1994

Number 4

Changing Views On The Inspiration And Interpretation Of The Bible (II)

Stanley Ryan

THE TRUTH ABOUT VERBAL PLENARY INSPIRATION

The Bible is the verbally inspired word of God. Verbal means that God revealed the actual words to men to speak and write. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:13, “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth.” The Lord said unto the apostles, “Take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour” (Mat. 10:19). In Mark’s record, it says, “Take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate” (13:11). Paul told those at Thessalonica that they had received the word of God (1 The. 2:13). God did not give him an idea or thought to study out but gave him the actual words to speak and write. Verbal inspiration recognizes that the Holy Spirit was able to inject the personality and vocabulary of the writers into their work (2 Pet. 1:20-21). Thus, we reject the “mechanical dictation theory.”

Plenary inspiration means that which is full, complete; thus, the finished, perfect, entire, final revelation. The apostles were to be guided into “all truth” (John 16:13). Paul said he, “kept back nothing... declared unto you all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:20, 27). Jude encouraged them to, “...earnestly contend for the faith which was once (for all time) delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). We are not to accept any other gospel (Gal. 1:8) than that revealed and written (John 20:30-31). We are not to add to or take from the word that is written (Rev. 22:18-19). We are to abide in the doctrine of

Christ (2 John 9-11). We are to know the truth (John 8:32), preach the word (2 Tim. 4:2), and keep the faith (2 Tim. 4:7). God has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). The revelation is complete to instruct us in the narrow way that leads to life.

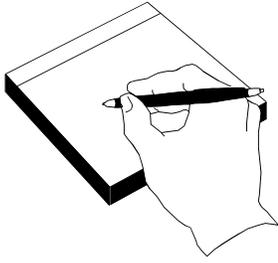
Inspiration is from the Greek word *theopneustos*, which is a combination of *theos* (God) and *pneuo* (to breathe) therefore filled with the breath of God; i.e., God-breathed. Divine inspiration is the influence of God and Christ by the Holy Spirit to move holy men to speak, and write the word of God (2 Pet. 1:20-21; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 2:10-13). Thus, the verbal, plenary inspired word of God is the inerrant (true), infallible, final authority in matters of faith and practice.

CHANGING VIEWS ON THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE WHICH RESULT IN LIBERALISM

Foy E. Wallace, Jr. stated that at one time you could not find a liberal among churches of Christ with a fine-tooth comb, but now, you could bale them up with a hay rake. Brethren, it is sad that some who were once sound in the faith and highly respected now lead the forces of liberalism and modernism within the church. They may claim to defend the inspiration of the Bible but their speech betrays them.

The Modernist (in our colleges, schools, classes, pulpits) may refer to the “Genesis poem” and the “Hymn myth” of Genesis 1. He may teach Darwin’s evolution theory as fact and laugh at a miraculous creation in six days (Gen. 1:31; Exo. 20:11; 31:14-17).

(Continued on Page 4)



Notes From The Editor Bobby Liddell

“Tedious preachers .. threadbare speeches...insignificant themes”

“God doesn’t change, but the church must change” (Rubel Shelly, “God Never Alters--But the Church Must Change,” *The Nashville Tennessean*, July 22, 1991). Having made that pronouncement, brother Shelly reveals several reasons why, he says, “The ‘baby boomers’ dropped out of organized religion in their 20’s,” including, “They heard tedious preachers delivering threadbare speeches on insignificant themes.”

Brother Shelly has packed a full charge of prevaricating powder in that one-sentence bombshell which he aims at the Lord’s church. Those who love the Lord and His church deny Rubel’s affirmations.

According to Rubel, the boomers dropped out in their 20’s and are now in their 30’s and 40’s; thus, the time he considers involves ten to twenty years. I cannot speak from his experience; i.e., concerning the preaching he has heard in the last twenty years, but I can speak from my own. In that time, I have heard over a thousand sermons (by preachers other than myself), including several by brother Shelly. Admittedly, some were better than others. However, the words “tedious,” “threadbare,” and “insignificant” fit neither the sound brethren I have known, nor their preaching.

The preachers I have heard (with rare exceptions, including the few who taught error, as does the present-day Rubel) have been men of great faith whose lives have been given to proclaiming the Gospel. Their love for God and His word motivated them and their diligent study shone through their presentations. With great fervency, they sought to persuade men to come to Jesus and His way, for their souls were burdened at the thought of men lost in sin. They sacrificed the things of this world to reach men for eternity. They suffered persecution and denigration, even at the hands of

brethren (and now, brother Shelly). Yet, lovingly, they continued to call all men to follow Christ, with them.

Their lessons, to me, were great fountains bubbling forth plain, understandable instructions full of hope. They called their hearers to open their Bibles and read for themselves as they quoted passage after passage and gave the application. They did not prepare sermons from some German theologian’s book or quote the latest philosophical and psychological word of men. When they sat down, the Good News of Jesus Christ had been preached, God had been uplifted before men and sin had been exposed for what it is.

Threadbare speeches? I have thrilled to hear the same old story (almost 2,000 years old) over and over again. “Tell me the old, old story.” Who could ever hear it enough? What Christian would tire of hearing the “Wonderful story of love”? “Tell it to me, again.”

Threadbare? I have seen that which approached “threadbare”--the Bibles which were worn, frayed and marked with untold hours of study and use by God’s faithful preachers. That study and use made their “speeches” anything but threadbare. Yes, sometimes, their clothing was somewhat threadbare because their brethren did not take care to support them adequately, but they were still going to preach the word, regardless.

Insignificant themes? No Bible theme is insignificant. Would Rubel deny anyone preached the Bible in the Lord’s church in the last ten to twenty years? Would he say most did not? If men preached the Bible, regardless of their lack of eloquent speech or educational attainment, the message was significant. If the boomers missed that, then, shame on them.

Maybe I missed the bus Rubel was riding, but I simply have not heard the tedious preachers he obviously has. He must have heard them for he speaks so certainly. I have never heard the “threadbare speeches” he obviously has heard (though I have heard some sermons more than once, and some many times, they got better instead of threadbare). He must have heard a great many like that or he would not have said what he did. Nor have I heard sermons on “insignificant themes” as he obviously has (except from some of these modern church-changers who, seemingly, have misplaced their Bibles and now preach the ideas of men). Yet, Rubel must have because that is what he says so assuredly. Right?

As a bona fide baby boomer, I have the highest regard for Gospel preachers, and Gospel preaching. I have no respect for those who belittle either.

Changes In The Church Of Christ

Nineteenth Annual Bellview Lectures

June 11-15, 1994

Saturday, June 11

- 7:00 P.M. What Is The Church Of Christ? Jerry Martin
8:00 P.M. Does The Church Of Christ Need To Change? Winfred Clark

Sunday, June 12

- 9:00 A.M. The Call For Change: Is It Valid? Bobby Liddell
10:00 A.M. Changes In Morals: The Decline Of Moral Values James Rogers

Lunch Break

- 2:00 P.M. Changing Views On The Inspiration And Interpretation Of The Bible Stanley Ryan
3:00 P.M. Changes Influenced By Christian Education Clifford Newell, Jr.
4:00 P.M. Changes In Morals: Changing Views On Marriage Stephen P. Waller

Dinner Break

- 7:00 P.M. Changes In Preaching: Ethics For Preachers Curtis A. Cates
8:00 P.M. Is The Church Of Christ Subject To Changes In Culture? Terry Hightower

Monday, June 13

- 9:00 A.M. A History Of Change In The Church Of Christ Paul Vaughn
10:00 A.M. How Effective Bible Study Promotes And Prevents Change Roy Deaver
11:00 A.M. Changes In Preaching: What Shall We Preach? Eddie Whitten

Lunch Break

- 2:00 P.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Love John Stewart
3:00 P.M. Changes In Worship: Special Music Flavil Nichols
3:45 P.M. Open Forum Discussion On Special Music

Dinner Break

- 7:00 P.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Fellowship Garland Elkins
8:00 P.M. The Gospel Of Christ Is Unchanged And Unchanging Dub McClish

Tuesday, June 14

- 9:00 A.M. Changes In Preaching: The Role Of The Preacher Noah Hackworth
10:00 A.M. How Effective Bible Study Promotes And Prevents Change Roy Deaver
11:00 A.M. Changes Influenced By Brotherhood Publications Waymon Swain

Lunch Break

- 2:00 P.M. Changes In Preaching: Motivation To Preach David Brown
3:00 P.M. Changes In Morals: Questions About Homosexuality H. A. (Buster) Dobbs
3:45 P.M. Open Forum Discussion On Homosexuality

Dinner Break

- 7:00 P.M. Changes In Worship: Feelings Over Faith Joe Gilmore
8:00 P.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Baptism Lindell Mitchell

Wednesday, June 15

- 9:00 A.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Church Growth David Courington
10:00 A.M. How Effective Bible Study Promotes And Prevents Change Roy Deaver
11:00 A.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Truth Garry Brantley

Lunch Break

- 2:00 P.M. Changes In Worship: Is All We Do Worship? Garry Barnes
3:00 P.M. Agents And Tools Of Change Wayne Coats
3:45 P.M. Open Forum Discussion On Agents And Tools Of Change

Dinner Break

- 7:00 P.M. Changes In Worship: The Role Of Women Fred Davi;
8:00 P.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Pure Religion Guss Eoff

Bellview Lectures Information

HOUSING

Free housing in the homes of Christians will be provided on a "first come, first served" basis (call our office at: 904/455-7595, or write at: 4850 Saufley Road, Pensacola, FL 32526). The following Motel is available nearby and is providing special rates for individuals attending the Bellview Lectures. Hospitality Inn (4910 Mobile Highway) offers the following prices (tax not included) \$38.00-\$45.00--1 to 4 people per room; includes free breakfast; children stay free. Their phone number is 904/453-3333. When checking into the above motel, show them this brochure announcing these special rates, or when calling for reservations, be sure to tell them you are with the Bellview Lectures.

BOOKS

The Lectureship book, "Changes In The Church Of Christ" will be available during the Bellview Lectures and afterwards by mail. It will contain twenty-eight chapters and approximately 350 pages. Everyone who attends the Bellview Lectures will want to purchase a personal copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

MEALS

The women of the Bellview Church of Christ will provide a free lunch from Monday through Wednesday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants and a map will be available at the registration table in the foyer.

NURSERY

An attended nursery will be provided during all lectures for children up to school age. Children must not be left in the nursery during meal breaks and unscheduled hours.

AUDIO AND VIDEO TAPES

All lectures will be recorded on cassette audio tapes and video tapes. These tapes may be purchased during the Bellview Lectures or by mail *order afterwards*. *Order blanks* and price information will be available during the Bellview Lectures or by mail upon request. (We request the cooperation of all who attend the Bellview Lectures in keeping the pulpit area free of privately-owned recorders and microphones.) If you would like to make your own recordings, please see one of our sound technicians, Richard Parker or Bill Crowe, in the recording room.

EXHIBITS

Limited reservations will be accepted subject to approval of Bellview elders and available space. Exhibits are expected from schools, children's homes, book stores, publications, and other projects of general interest to the brotherhood.

TRANSPORTATION

If you will be flying to the Pensacola Regional Airport and will need transportation, please contact our office. We will arrange to meet you at no charge if we know when, where, airline, flight number, and the number in your party.

(Continued from Page 1)

He may teach the Day Age theory (that each day was eons long) or the Gap theory (long ages between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2). He may deny the miracles or rationalize them but the bottom line is a lack of respect for the inspiration of the Bible.

Note, the influence of the Documentary Hypothesis (that Moses did not author the Pentateuch) and Form Criticism (that Matthew and Luke copied from Mark and other sources called Q. One brother stated, "Luke did his research. He said, Look I've followed this out real closely and read the accounts that are circulating, whatever they were, Mark, Q, what, I don't know, scraps, listening to preaching, but when he sat down the Spirit of God so guided him that he pulled all his notes together, and his recollections, what he put down was a proper account" (quoted in, *Music, Behold The Pattern*, p. 300). Does this sound like one committed to verbal inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16-17)?

While some call for strict adherence to what they call the "core" gospel (virgin birth, resurrection, etc.) they endorsed and published an article that characterized Mary as "sexually questionable" (Andrew Resner's "Christmas at Matthew's House," *Wineskins*, November, 1992). But Matthew 1:23 shows that Mary was a virgin and that Jesus is the virgin born Son of God. Luke 1:28-35 shows that there is nothing "sexually questionable" about Mary. She had not known a man (sexually). Do these brethren think that the unchurched "baby boomers" might have a problem identifying with one sexually unquestionable?

Brother Resner also refers to "the dilemma" of the four evangelists and how they would frame the beginning of their writing. What is the professor's view of inspiration? What is the view of those who published his article? Later, he puzzles us by stating, "How could the early church think this was the most appropriate way to start the New Testament?" Brethren, does the professor believe that Matthew was inspired by the Holy Spirit to record God's word? Does he believe the early church thought up this way to start the New Testament rather than God? The truth is that Matthew did not have a "dilemma." Jesus had promised, "Take no thought how or what ye shall speak for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Mat. 10:19-20; Luke 12:11-12). The Holy Spirit would teach all things and bring to their remembrance all that Jesus said and He would guide them into all truth (John 14:26, 16:13). This was true when speaking

orally or in writing (1 Cor. 14:37); Holy Spirit inspired men spoke the word and wrote the word delivering it to the church to be heard and read (the word produced the church). The church was not in a dilemma to produce the word or figure out how to start the New Testament. The key is respect for verbal inspiration. Jesus says the truth will set you free (John 8:32) and Paul warns that some will turn to fables (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Brethren, some have turned from the verbal inspiration of the Bible to fables.

SOME HAVE CHANGED THE DEFINITION OF WORDS AND PHRASES TO ACCOMMODATE FALSE DOCTRINE

In the past, we have been careful to do our research and to define words by context and in harmony with established and recognized authorities such as Vine's Expository Dictionary, Strong's Concordance, Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon and others. However, we will see that the new definitions and explanations (applications) are not the result of indepth research or from recognized authorities because they have no such standard or criteria. Their definitions (?) are formed from a cultural criteria of, "This is what we want this to mean," or, "This is what it means to me"; thus, humanism, subjectivism, relativism and emotionalism are injected. Many terms are used in a common denominational sense rather than a biblical way. Every change is designed to corrupt truth and to accept some denominational error. What a word means to us is not what a word means to them. They give common words twisted meanings.

The verbally inspired word of God, the Bible, means to us that God gave the words and that we have them recorded (2 Tim. 3:16-17). God's word is an absolute objective authoritative standard to regulate faith and practice. To them it is a human production, the thoughts of men, subjective and without authority. The epistles are said to be "a cultural response to the gospel" that carries no authority. They say we must be "open to the leading of the Holy Spirit." This leads to the error of the direct operation (new revelations) of the Holy Spirit separate and apart from the written word.

The church means to us the "called out," assembly, congregation (Mat. 16:18; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:1-2). It is not a denomination but is the one body, the bride of Christ, divine in origin (Eph. 3:8-11) and eternal in hope (Heb. 12:23; 1 Pet. 1:4). To them, it is a big sick denomination, bound **by human tradition**, in a deep rut and about to go extinct. This is their view to destroy confidence in the uniqueness and distinctiveness that sepa-

rates the church from the denominations. They want to be accepted into the denominational family.

The Gospel means, to us, the “good news” (Rom. 1:16), the whole body of truth, the faith, the apostles’ doctrine, the doctrine of Christ (Acts 2:42; 2 John 9; Jude 3) that has certain facts, commands and promises. To them, the Gospel is separated from doctrine (except the deity of Christ). Thus, “Jesus, yes, but His doctrine, no--the man but not the plan.” They intend to “love Jesus” but refuse to obey Him (Mat. 7:21). They will ignore the rebukes, exhortations and instructions in the epistles that would cause cultural problems.

Singing (church music) to us means congregational singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). To them, it means solos, choirs, choral singing, contemporary music, instrumental music, instrumental sounds made with the voice, humming, etc. They say, “There is as much authority for a solo as for congregational singing.” However, no proof is given. Notice what Thayer says about, “Speaking to yourselves in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing...” (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). He gives three uses. 1. Third person, singular and plural, to denote that the agent and the person acted on are the same. 2. It serves as a reflexive also to the first and second person. 3. It is also used in the plural for reciprocal pronoun. Thus, to be reflexive or reciprocal means: “...that the agent and the person acted on are the same” (p. 163). The ones doing the singing are the ones being sung to. This is congregational singing. Others agree with Thayer (cf. Machen, p. 154 and Summers p. 120). Some will do anything to get entertainment and professional performances in the Lord’s church like the denominations have. It will not please God because it is not scriptural!

The public invitation means to us an opportunity for one to obey the gospel (Mat. 11:28-30; Acts 2:38-42; 18:8) or be restored (Acts 8:18-24; Jas. 5:16; 1 John 1:9). The change agents suggest not telling people what to do to be saved, just open the floor for testimonials, and have priestly absolution, come if you have a need (any need), etc., be like the denominations. They want us to be more emotional.

The church and the kingdom are often used interchangeably (Mat. 16:18-19; Col. 1:2,13; Rev. 1:9) and we understand that those born again enter the kingdom (John 3:3-5) and that is the same as being baptized for the remission of sins and being added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:47). However, we are hearing that the church and the kingdom are not the same. This is aimed at acceptance of the various millennial (future kingdom) theories within the denominations.

Grace and works means a harmony between the favor of God extended to man and obedient faith (James 2:24). This is not a means of earning or meriting salvation, but of appropriating the blessings of grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9). Some are saying it is by “grace alone,” but again this is denominational error.

Adultery (Mat. 19:9; Rom. 7:3) means to us harlotry, unlawful intercourse, an act of sexual sin. To them, it is disloyalty to pledges or covenants, not the physical act of intercourse. To them, one who repents of covenant breaking is forgiven and then can remarry, or if already married, stay in that relationship. This justifies divorce and remarriage without the guilty party having to live single.

Subjection (1 Tim. 2:11-15) is a military term meaning to rank under (Rom. 8:20), to submit (2 Cor. 9:13), obey, yield (Heb. 13:17). Women are not to teach or take the leadership (authority) role from the man which God obligated him with in the beginning (1 Tim. 2:13-14). This is true in the home (Eph. 5:23-25) and in the church where elders are to lead or oversee the flock (Acts 20:38). We are told that woman’s role of subjection was a cultural thing and that she deserves a leadership role in the church. This error is designed to have women preachers, women elders and deacons like the liberal denominations.

Hell (ge henna) is the place of eternal punishment (Mat. 25:46; Rev. 20:15). Some are saying it is not a real place, but is a description of “life without God.” This error removes the dread of punishment for wrong doing. Since they want people to feel good about themselves, it only seems natural to remove any notion of punishment for evil.

Worship (John 4:23-24) means to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to do obeisance, to show deep respect, to offer sacrificial praise from the heart, unto God. Specific acts or avenues of praise are (prayer, singing, giving, the Lord’s supper, and preaching the word). To some, worship, is to be an “existential moment, an encounter experience with God, a holy WOW!” Some suggest testimonials, hand clapping, a confession and priestly absolution. Some would include entertainment and professional performances to make the crowd feel good. The error is God is dethroned and man is served.

Truth to us is the revealed word of God (John 17:17, 8:32), real facts based upon evidence, objective and authoritative so that we can learn, and know. To sortie, truth does not describe reality but creates reality. To them truth is “any understanding that involves me.”

To them, truth is subjective, relative, always changing depending on their understanding (situation ethics, humanism). They say we can not be dogmatic on any point and that we can not say others are wrong who differ with us. This enables them to justify fellowship with all kinds of error.

As you can see, the “change agents” redefine terms to teach error. If they are challenged and their error is exposed, they simply say they were misunderstood. However, most of these men are highly educated and are capable of using scriptural terms defined in scriptural ways. But, of course, that is the Old Hermeneutics and would defeat their purpose of being accepted by the baby boomers and the liberal religious culture that we live in.

HAVE SUCH CHANGES PAVED THE WAY FOR CHANGING THE CHURCH?

Their departure from Bible teaching and scriptural practice may captivate the weak, the novice, rebellious,

gullible, indifferent, lukewarm and the unconverted. It may excite those who operate by convenience rather than conviction. It may energize those who feed on emotionalism and entertainment. It may soothe the worldly and immoral. But, when the dust of controversy over this apostasy has settled and every man stands before God, His word will be the standard (John 12:48). Let every soul be warned of danger, let every soldier defend the truth. Liberalism has nothing to offer to those who love God and who believe the word (Acts 20:32; 2 Tim. 4:1-8).

*503 Harrison Avenue
Jay, FL 32565*

Thanks to brother Ryan for this excellent article which he prepared for the 1994 Bellview Lectureship Book in connection with the lectureship theme: “Changes In The Church Of Christ.” Part I was printed in the March DEFENDER. Editor.

EXCUSE MY EXCUSES

Allen Webster

Whenever the gospel is preached, you can rest assured that the devil is in attendance. He is not interested in supporting the truth but in destroying its effect on the hearts of men. He brings his bag of excuses (2 Cor. 2:11) and sits waiting for the gospel to enter the hearts of listeners. When one is about to obey, Satan tries to steal the word and replace it with excuses (Mat. 13:19). To equip us to meet him, we now note five of his most common excuses.

“WAIT, IT WILL BE EASIER TO OBEY LATER”

This is one of his favorites. After all, it has been effective for a long time. When Paul preached to Felix, the devil pulled it from his bag. “And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee” (Acts 24:25, emph. AW). So far as the Bible records the “convenient season” never came for Felix. Watch out for this excuse!

“WAIT, YOU ARE ALREADY A GOOD MORAL PERSON”

This is most likely true, but no one is good enough to save himself (Tit. 3:3-5). Trusting Christ is the only way to be saved (John 14:6) and humble submission to

His Gospel puts one into God’s grace (Rom, 5:2; Heb. 5:9). No one, no matter how good, will be saved without having his sins washed away (Acts 22:16). Watch out for this excuse!

“WAIT, YOUR RELATIVES WILL DISAPPROVE”

The terrible thing about the devil’s tactics is that he can turn our good intentions into bad actions. It is proper to honor parents (Eph. 6:1-2) and God demands obedience to them. But God has never expected a person to put the wishes of his parents ahead of the will of the Father. Jesus said, “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” (Mat. 10:37). It is always in the best interest of your family to obey God. Perhaps, by your good example, they too can be led to walk more closely with God. Watch out for this excuse!

“WAIT, YOU COULD NEVER LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE”

Many sincere people feel so inferior that the devil preys on their humility. God does not expect His children to be perfect. If He did, no one would make it to heaven (1 John 1:8-10). And, without the Lord’s help and longsuffering, no one could live the Christian life

(Heb. 13:5). But by vigilance and God's providence the devil can be defeated and Christians can live the life that God expects (1 Pet. 5:8; 2 Tim. 4:8). Watch out for this excuse!

**“WAIT, THERE ARE HYPOCRITES
IN THE CHURCH”**

Satan usually saves this one as the last resort, but often uses it very effectively. Let it first be stated that hypocrites make God sick (Rev. 3:15-17) and that they will be cast from the kingdom (Mat. 23:13). They are not to be defended nor ignored. But to allow another person to stand between you and salvation is very foolish. If you stay away from God, you will end up spending eternity with these hypocrites (Mat. 7:21-23). But, maybe, if you become a Christian you can help them to change and go to heaven with you. Watch out for this excuse!

Did you notice what each excuse has in common? Each time the devil wants the sinner to WAIT. He knows that each time one sits through an invitation song it becomes easier. Each opportunity lost is one step closer to eternal damnation. Each day spent in the world is one less to be used to God's glory. Therefore, his constant refrain is “wait, wait, wait.” But remember the words of God, “...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2, emph. AW) and “...To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts...” (Heb. 3:7-8, emph. AW). Please do not let the devil hand you an excuse from his bag and win the battle for your soul. It is your decision. OBEY GOD NOW!!

Route Box 38, Tiplersville, MS 38674

HEARTS, HEADS, AND HANDS

Shan Jackson

In the physical body, the heart and the head are alike related to the hand. We associate the heart with feelings, the head with thoughts, and the hand with actions. The motivating power may be said to come from the heart, the guiding principle from the head, and the efficiency of labor from the hand. Thus, feelings, thoughts, and actions make the man who he is.

Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes 10:2: “A wise man's heart is at his right hand” This means, first of all, that his affections need to be seen with the right perspective. The heart is not only the moral power of the human being but also the seat of principle. As the Scriptures say, “With the heart” man believes.

Second, a man's principles are at the back of practical power. The “right hand” is a symbol of honor and power, and a forceful Christian expresses the

energies of a heart renewed by divine grace.

Third, that man's purpose in life should be kept fit for the accomplishment of God's ideals. True wisdom is seen when a man's heart chooses God's will and his hands choose God's way.

Finally, his resolve is at a degree of strength that prompts correct action. The answer of a wise man is not “soon” but “now.” His is the heart, mind, and hand that can be easily and correctly used in the vineyard of Christ. His are the feelings, thoughts, and actions that will make him right and righteous in God's sight.

P.O. Box 90; Palacios, TX 7746

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BOBBY LIDDELL, EDITOR

**Write For Your
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Course
4850 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXIII

May 1994

Number 5

The Call For Change: Is It Valid?

Bobby Liddell

There is a call for change from certain brethren who would restructure the Lord's church. Is the call for change valid? Should we echo that call? Or, is it a call for compromise and a call to destruction?

Christians love the Lord Jesus Christ, His word, His church; that is, their brothers and sisters in Christ, the souls of all men and their own souls. Therefore, no one in Christ delights in pointing out sin in others and rebuking his brethren, nor does he find joy when brethren go astray in doctrine or in practice. God, in His word, instructs: “Ye that love the LORD, hate evil” (Psa. 97:10), and, “Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way” (Psa. 119:104). Surely, those who hold to their first love must hate evil and every false way, but without hating the souls of those involved in the evil and false way.

Christians have the responsibility to expose and oppose error. “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11). In so doing, we must exercise righteous judgment. Jesus said: “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24). We may certainly heed John 7:24, in judging righteously, without violating Matthew 7:1-5, which condemns unrighteous, hypocritical judgment.

To our brethren who castigate those who judge that one who departs from the faith is in error, Matthew 7 does not teach what you claim, nor does it prohibit all judgment (cf. John 4:24). It does teach one may judge good and evil, and know false “prophets” by the fruit produced (vv. 15-20).

We must confront error with truth, openly and plainly calling that which is false, false, and naming those who are preaching doctrines contrary to the word of God. We do not apologize for, in care for our own souls, we seek to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15). Let all men know we have no personal animosity toward any, nor do we envy their influence (or notoriety) but we hate every false way and shall do all we can to walk in the light and to call all men to repentance—away from sin and to God, to walk in that light also (1 John 1:6-10; Amos 3:3).

THE CALL FOR CHANGE IS A CALL FOR COMPROMISE

Compromise means: to come to agreement by mutual concession, or, to make a shameful or disreputable concession (Webster). Compromise may be necessary in matters of option. Husbands and wives, if wise, will learn to come to agreement by mutual concession. Even within the church, there is a place for mutual concession in the realm of opinion. However, in matters of faith, who dares give place or space to compromise? If one makes a shameful or disreputable concession to sin and Satan, shall God bless him? Should his brethren applaud him?

Or, should they, as some argue, if they disagree with his position, just leave him alone? If they publicly oppose his publicly proclaimed error, do they violate Matthew 18:15-20, as some claim? Matthew 18:15-20 regulates private trespasses, not public teaching of devilish doctrines. Therein, even private trespasses are to be made public (“tell it unto the church,” v. 17) after the proper avenues have been taken without success. Please, brethren, do not so boldly manifest your ignorance of the Scriptures by whining that we do wrong when we openly expose the false teaching and the false teacher who publicly taught his error. Shall he be allowed to continue unopposed to lead the sheep to slaughter while those, who, possibly, could prevent their demise, must resign themselves to private conversation with him? Surely, Satan would love for us to swallow that lie. Matthew 18:15-20 does not prohibit one from publicly exposing public error and the false teacher who espoused it.

AT THE CENTER OF THE CALL FOR CHANGE/COMPROMISE

When ascertaining the center of the call for change, not all, but at least many roads lead to an influential group of brethren in Nashville, Tennessee. There are many fine congregations and sound, faithful brethren in Nashville. For them, we are thankful. However, there is, comparatively, a small number of churches and a vocal minority of brethren who are calling for a radical restructuring of the church of Christ. They have begun a yearly gathering each July in Nashville, which they call the “Jubilee.”

The Jubilee began in 1989, with the Madison Church of

Christ as its sponsor. Since then, the Madison, Antioch and Woodmont Hills congregations have been the main sponsors. When it began, many wondered what it would be and what would come from it. Others waited to hear more. Sadly, those featured were men known for their “liberal” leanings or for their association with those who so believed. Rubel Shelly, Walt Leaver, Steve Flatt, Lynn Anderson, Joe Beam, Larry West, Mike Cope, Marvin Phillips, Landon Saunders, Max Lucado, Randy Mayeux, Rick Atchley, Gayle Napier, Ray Fulenwider, Royce Money, and other birds of the same feather have flocked together as featured speakers at the Jubilee.

In 1991, *The Tennessean* (Nashville newspaper) featured several articles which gave a negative look to the Jubilee. In an obvious effort to stem the growing criticism from area brethren, the Jubilee folks spread the word they were straightening up beginning with their 1992 celebration. The list of speakers for 1992, including Wayne Kilpatrick, Joe Beam, Mike Cope, Steve Flatt, Phillip Morrison, Gayle Napier, Walt Leaver, Royce Money, Ray Fulenwider, Harold Hazelip and Rubel Shelly, shows their direction had not changed at all from before. In 1993, a brother from Pensacola, Buddy Bell (minister of the Gateway Church of Christ), appeared on the Jubilee.

We do not hate our brethren. Yet, we dare not shrink back from doing right, in the right spirit, regardless of the consequences. We plead with our brethren to come back to their first love and to preach the word, not the dogmas, doctrines and reasonings of men (Rev. 2:4-5; 2 Tim. 4:2)

COMPROMISE AND DEPARTURE

In the first century, God, through His word, warned of those who would depart from the faith (I Tim. 4:1; cf. Heb. 3:12). Today, men are calling for a departure from the faith once delivered (Jude 3). They want to change the church of Christ. They make it sound appealing to some by throwing around words like “tradition,” and “rigid,” “inflexible,” and “unchanging” with great disdain. Having left the truth, they do not want to be alone; thus, they seek approval, association, admiration and authority. To gain these objectives, they would have control over existing congregations, with their buildings, finances and members.

Brother Rubel Shelly, in an article in *The Tennessean*, July 22, 1991, entitled, “God Never Alters—But the Church Must Change,” affirmed Jubilee ‘91 had “put the issue of change versus constancy in religion on the newspaper’s front page ...Churches tend to be rigid, inflexible, and unchanging.” He asserts, “The God of Judeo-Christian scripture, on the other hand, is always doing exciting things. More often than not, he shocks and surprises.” Where is the proof to back up such a statement? He continues, “To the dismay of the religious ‘establishment,’ he will never be defined by the imperfect dogmas we formulate or confined to the deep ruts of our traditions.” Thus, Rubel appeals to the anti-establishment rebels in making baseless assertions and off-handed remarks designed to foster resentment. We would ask Rubel to explain what he means by “imperfect dogmas.” A dogma is a body of doctrine concerning faith or morals formally stated and authoritatively proclaimed. Does Rubel mean we, in the Lord’s church, have established an imperfect body of doctrine? If so, would he please

explain that to which he refers? It is easy to build up straw men—and to destroy them.

What about the “deep ruts of our traditions”? That sounds bad, does it not? Most would say, “If you are in a rut, you need to get out of it!” I have an English Springer Spaniel named Vic (by far, the best dog in the world!) who has certain paths or ruts he follows in our back yard. He seems to think those ruts are important and will go out of his way to cross the yard in that rut rather than to cut a corner. I cannot explain why he so does. It means extra steps for him, but he does not seem to mind. In the church, we have a certain path to follow. I can explain why we are to so do—God said so. It means extra steps for us (when compared to the world), but we dare not cut corners when it comes to following Christ (cf. 1 Pet. 2:21). Those ruts are deep because of the faithful who have walked that way; that is, in the old paths. “Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein” (Jer. 6:16).

The modern day church-changers say, “We will not walk therein.” They would have brethren leave the old paths for some new paths and some shallow ruts, made not by the feet of Jesus, but by men like Rubel. But, they claim, it is wrong to walk in the “deep ruts of our traditions.” Again, we would like some explanation. Does Rubel use “tradition” as a word to describe the church’s faithfulness in the past to God’s pattern? To kick around a word like “tradition” as an instant anathema is incorrect and unscholarly. “Tradition” sounds bad and denominational. True, we are to follow Christ and not the opposing traditions of men (Mat. 15:6,9). As one who forsook Methodism for Christianity, I understand full well the problem with men’s traditions. Yet, not all traditions are wrong! The inspired Paul said, “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” (2 The. 3:6).

“God doesn’t change, but the church must change,” Rubel continues. How does he know that? Where does God so say? We would have proof and not assertion. Sadly, too many need nothing more than for someone in a pulpit to make such a statement for them to believe it as though it were the Gospel. Shame on us for our lack of knowledge (Hos. 4:6). Rubel, obviously, thinks the church should change so the “baby boomers” will come back. Notice what he says: “Now in their 30’s and 40’s, these same people—a bit jaded by harsh reality but still retaining vestiges of their idealism—are looking for a church that has changed.”

What if the “baby boomers” are looking for a church that has changed? Are we to please them instead of God? “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” (Gal. 1:10). What are the church-changers going to do when the homosexuals look for a church that has changed? What about the feminists? What about the multiculturalists? We have no authority; thus, no right to change the church to suit the whims, or the sinful desires, of men.

“These baby boomers are coming back to examine the

churches they left a generation ago. If they perceive that those churches haven't taken seriously the message of repentance (i.e., change) in their absence, they will reject them again. They will reject sin, hypocrisy, and affectation.

They will reject dullness, irrelevance, and monotony." If that does not say the church is full of sin, hypocrisy and affectation, I do not know what it says. If it does not say the worship of the church is dull, irrelevant and monotonous, again, I simply do not know what it means. We call all men to leave sin, hypocrisy and affectation. We understand some in the Lord's church need to repent of these sins, but we deny that such is characteristic of the Lord's church, as a whole. We call all men to worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). If one thinks the worship is dull, irrelevant and monotonous, that says far more about the worshipper than it does about the worship. One who makes such a statement is indicting himself rather than the church. One's shortcomings in his own approach to worship certainly do not validate the call for change in worship which the church-changers are making. The Jews in Malachi's day were bored with worship as God commanded. They said, "Behold, what a weariness is it!" (Mal. 1:13). So, Malachi went to the Jubilee, issued a call for change and followed it with an article in the paper. Right? Wrong! The Lord pronounced a curse upon them and called upon *them* to change—to repent, return and remember God's law. "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments" (4:4). Any, today, who are bored with worship according to the will of God need to repent, return and remember God's law in force now.

Does Rubel teach the truth? Should the church heed his call for change? Notice a few of his many departures as listed by Roy McConnell, ("Are There Yet Seven Thousand?," *Contending For The Faith*, June, 1992, p. 11). On Inspiration: "...The sermon that Matthew from memory, maybe from some notes he jotted down hearing Jesus preach at various times." On the Kingdom: "The Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven is neither the church nor the future state of the saved." On the Old Law: "I'm not sure there is any sense in which the law of Moses is abrogated." On Divorce and Remarriage: "Adultery is not a sexual word...remarriage is not what makes it adultery—it's divorce that's covenant breaking." On Obedient Faith: "It is a scandalous and outrageous lie to teach that salvation arises from human activity. We do not contribute one whit to our salvation." On the Church: "I no longer have as my goal the re-establishment of the first century church." On Singing in Worship: "The New Testament precedent is actually clearer for solo or small-group singing than for congregational singing (cf. 1 Cor. 14:6-28)."

Another of the church-changers is Max Lucado, speaker on the Jubilee. Does Max teach the truth? Should the church heed his call for change? Max has no problems with preaching for denominations and encouraging them. At the First Presbyterian Church in San Antonio, he said, "I know I'm not worthy to be with you, but my, the fellowship is sweet! ...And thank you for the kind introduction, Reverend Zbinden." In a prayer, before the Presbyterian church, he said: "...Father, if my intercession is worth anything, I ask, oh God, let your blessings be upon these

wonderful people! Be with Reverend Zbinden. Bless his great work. Bless his associates and his secretaries. Bless those stalwart families of this congregation that you know and they know, and let this church really be a church built on Jesus Christ..." In a book on *Christ In Easter: A Family Celebration Of Holy Week*, he said: "Easter should be a day of unsurpassed joy and celebration ...This book will enable your family to experience this Easter joy in a new way ...Covering the eight days from Palm Sunday to Easter, *Christ In Easter* provides a way for your family to prepare for Easter with worship and fun times together ...The four main sections of study are Palm Sunday, the Last Supper, Good Friday, and Easter. There are also four sections for the other days of Holy Week" (from Editorial by Ira Y. Rice, Jr., "See Any Rats? No, Not A Rat!", *Contending For The Faith*, Nov., 1991, pp. 3-4). When Max calls for change, is the call valid? Certainly not!

Brother Marvin Phillips, spoke on the first Jubilee on the subject, "Putting Celebration Back Into Worship" (see Virgil L. Hale's article, "Marvin Phillips and 'Jubilee,'" *Contending For The Faith*, Oct., 1989, pp.8-9). He rejoiced at what he called, "A marvelous trend in churches of Christ," that is, concerning changes. When talking about the five items of worship, he said, "Deliver us from whoever taught us that." God, in His word taught us that, Marvin. He said, "Church is always supposed to be a party...It's a party you see." What Scripture says so? He said Luke 15 represented a "church service" and, thus, we cannot condemn dancing for there was "music and dancing." He observed, "People in the world don't care about doctrine," and, the charismatics are growing, not because of their doctrine, but because of their "celebration, warmth, love, feeling." Obviously, Marvin has looked at the "other nations" and wants to be like them. He contended there is, "Not one example in the whole New Testament of the church meeting together and singing praises to God." Brother Phillips referred to the passages concerning singing and said, "Not a one of the passages is an identifiable church worship service." This, from a man who found a church worship service going on in Luke 15!

In Ephesians 5:18-21, there are two verbs and five participles, related to the two verbs, all of which are in the imperative mood (indicating a command) and which are second person plural (covering all within the scope of the command). Those "all" included the brethren in the church at Ephesus, later, those who would read the epistle, and those of us today who are in the body of Christ. God *commanded all to sing*. The reciprocal reflexive pronoun translated "one to another" (ASV), further shows the action to be congregational; that is, all saints assembled to worship God were to sing "one to another." Can brother Phillips understand the difference between "all" (congregational singing), "some" (a choir, quartet, etc.) and "one" (a solo)? Can he see the difference between "singing" and "playing"? Anyone who can see a "church service" in Luke 15, *when it is not there*, should be able to see something so plainly presented in Ephesians 5:18-21.

He commended the singing (?) group ACCAPELLE and Jeff Walling because of their ability to draw crowds and said, "Who cares what they are coming for. It's what they get after they are there." I thought the important thing was to do the will

of the Father (Mat. 7:21). Are we authorized to employ *any* means to get people in our services? Does the end justify the means? Shall we use unscriptural “groups” and false teachers to bring people to Christ? In his conclusion, he said, “Do not restrict our people.” Well, God placed the restrictions where He wanted them. Who are we to change the boundaries He has placed (2 John 9-11)?

COMPROMISE AND DISCORD

God denounces discord. He decries “he that soweth discord among brethren” as one of the things He hates (Pro. 6:16-19). Jesus prayed for unity among the believers (John 17:20-21). I have received calls and letters from a number of states where the church-changers have sown discord and division. They have troubled the church and brought problems where there was peace. Much like the “Crossroaders” of past years, they seek to work from within. That is the approach that allows them to do the most harm. They claim a majority, but are clearly in the minority. The Jubilee ad for 1993 showed only a small percentage of congregations in the Nashville area in support of it.

Interestingly, they preach unity while sowing discord. An article in *The Tennessean*, July 7, 1989, entitled “Minister urges unity in Churches of Christ,” reported on a speech by Mike Cope of Searcy, Arkansas, Jubilee speaker. “Churches of Christ should put aside doctrinal differences and behave like ‘porcupines in November,’ warming up to each other even if it hurts, an Arkansas minister told 2,500 fellow Christians yesterday.” “Without referring to particular controversies, Cope said: ‘It’s time to overlook discrepancies here and there’ and be about the business of building up families and reaching out to lonely people. He suggested that uniform agreement on every issue is not possible or even desirable.”

In the Lord’s church, there has been room in the realm of opinion; that is, in matters of option, we have liberty. However, in matters of faith, there must be unity. Concerning the “doctrinal differences” of which brother Cope spoke, who shall decide which doctrines we shall give up or compromise? Shall he? To whom shall we go (cf. John 6:66-69)? Paul said Christians are to “...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). Now, if one comes unto us with another doctrine; that is, another Gospel, what shall we do (Gal. 1:6-10)? “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11). John, inspired apostle, recorded: “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 9-11).

In an article entitled “Road may fork for Churches of Christ,” *The Tennessean*, July 5, 1992, Rubel Shelly was quoted as saying at Jubilee ‘92, “We are at a juncture in history where the church should listen to the unchurched about what they’re telling us about us.” Since when did we have to listen to the “unchurched” to learn how we are to believe, worship or live as Christians. I left that when I left Methodism and do not **intend**

to return to it. Why not go to God’s word for the answers? After encouraging brethren to study Whoopi Goldberg’s character in *Sister Act*, he said, “The message of the plot is a lesson that this fellowship, which holds fast to its traditional beginnings, must learn—or face a continuous loss of membership.” Numbers!?! As for me, I had rather worship with thirty who are faithful than three thousand who are not.

Shelly continues, “We are so isolated. We don’t know what’s happening, we don’t go out and get our hands dirty.” Rubel must speak for himself. How dare he speak for others who are working, sacrificing, seeking to bring men to Christ? He says, concerning some who did not agree with a “musical group’s performance,” “We have to get past our fears and hangups...We’re going to feel uncomfortable, not because it’s wrong, but because it is different. I’m willing to feel a little uncomfortable if it means reaching someone.” Does that mean the end justifies the means? Should we alienate the faithful who feel “uncomfortable” because they know it is wrong, to please the unfaithful who do not recognize the difference in the “different”? Are we to accept Rubel’s explanation just because he said so? Does evil become good because someone says so? “Different” is wrong, if “different” from what God has authorized.

COMPROMISE AND DECEIT

Deceit is Satan’s tool out on loan to the churchchangers. God admonishes: “Provide things honest in the sight of all men” (Rom. 12:17). Some, in their rush for change, practice duplicity. In so doing, they get farther from the truth and from God. “But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Tim. 3:13). Ephesians 4:14 says: “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”

In view of that, consider this. In an open letter to the brotherhood, dated December 18, 1989, brother Don McWhorter reported what had happened at the Jubilee in 1989, where sister Jane McWhorter, his wife, spoke. She reported attending two sessions where sister Nila Sherrill spoke. “Men were in that audience at both sessions. They were publicly welcomed to the sessions by sister Sherrill. The first session, on the first day of JUBILEE, had two of the Madison elders present during the entire lecture. Sister Sherrill introduced them to the audience and asked one of them to lead a prayer. (Yet brother Bryan said the elders did not know any even tried to attend a class taught by a woman until 13 days after JUBILEE had ended.) When Jane asked sister Sherrill if it “bothered” her for men to be present at her lectures, she answered that it did not and that she considered it an honor that men would attend. She added that she believed the biggest change the church would undergo in the next ten years would be the role of women in the work of the church. Sister Sherrill is a member of the Madison teaching staff and her husband was a member of the committee that planned JUBILEE.”

When the Madison elders were asked about sister Peggy Goldtrap’s being asked to fill in for brother Mike Mazzalongo and speak to a mixed assembly, they denied it happened. Yet, when sister Goldtrap was contacted, she confirmed, “...that she did indeed speak to audiences composed of both men and women

and furthermore she was asked to fill in for brother Mike Mazzalongo...(she) felt she was fulfilling the wishes of the Madison elders and saw nothing unscriptural about either action.”

The Madison brethren deny what happened. “Letters with the signatures of W.F. Ruhl and Steve Flatt have been circulated in which as an answer of the question, ‘Did women teach where men were present?’ the answer was short and to the point: ‘No.’” They laid the charges to “rumors” and “isolated incidents.” Sister McWhorter “will testify that some seven or eight men were asked to leave the day the ‘one isolated incident occurred’ and that at least a dozen men were asked to leave the class on each of the two days following.” “The same letter states that no woman was asked to take a man’s place as a teacher. Instead, they contend, a woman could not appear and a man was asked to take her place. Again, this was supposed to be the basis of a rumor that it was otherwise.” Sister Goldtrap, on Madison’s teaching staff, said she spoke in a brother’s place.

“They should have known what happened among their own staff at JUBILEE without even having to ask. The matter of women teaching men could be documented by listening to tapes of the women speakers who greeted the men in their audiences. However, for some strange reason, friends of mine were told when they ordered the tapes that those tapes had been withdrawn from circulation with the explanation that ‘technical problems’ ruined all the tapes by women speakers.”

Concerning sister Evans’ singing a solo and leading singing at the Jubilee, various answers were offered from its not being “a part of the official service,” to, “the Madison elders would not defend it and would have given a large sum of money had it not happened,” to, it “took the elders by surprise and certainly was not a planned event.”

Brother McWhorter concludes: “...I charge and have given irrefutable proof that the Madison elders are guilty of unscriptural actions and practices in regard to Jubilee. They had publicly stated that they intend neither to repent nor to discuss these actions further. I call upon you as a brotherhood, in view of Bible teaching on purity of teaching and practice and love of the truth, to do what is scriptural. You must decide what is right and wrong and who is right and wrong.”

Quite often those who advocate change/compromise claim to have been misunderstood or misquoted or misrepresented. They deny charges as rumors and as isolated incidents for which they are not responsible. When caught up with concerning some error, they say, “No, that is not what I/we meant. I was misunderstood. That is not what happened.” That excuse will not work forever. Back where I grew up in Alabama, we called that lying.

In an article by Ray Waddle, “Churches’ lectures counter ‘heretical’ Jubilee teachings,” *The Tennessean*, Sep. 9, 1992, Rubel again speaks. He said the Robertson County lectureship (which countered the heretical Jubilee teaching) “represents a noisy ‘extreme rightwing’ in the Church of Christ fellowship that is slowly dying because it fears healthy change.” Well, that sounds like a bad bunch of folks, does it not? But, they will soon be gone. Shelly continues, “I love those people, but I’m convinced they’re unwilling to perceive that it’s a different world from the 1950s.” That sounds like people- who are old, out of

date, backward, out of touch and behind the times. Surely, any right thinking person would not want to be associated with poor, pitiable people like that. Now, where does Rubel get such insight? Does that description fit you? Does it fit the congregations of which you are aware? Surely, there must be a lot of them out there, for Rubel says so.

He goes on, “No one in Jubilee is suggesting that we move away from Christ and Scripture. We are only urging that Jesus and Scripture be related to this time and place and not to a generation past.” We, in giving the benefit of the doubt, could wish Rubel were unaware of what others have done, but is he? Can he, with a straight face, affirm those in Jubilee are holding to Christ and Scripture? The article continues: “Shelly said none of the Jubilee organizers, himself included, has advocated moving away from the a cappella model of worship music, and he said no woman at Jubilee led a class that included men.” Someone is not telling the truth, brethren. “Shelly said he is too busy trying to ‘exalt Christ’ by organizing relief and food supplies to the coastal victims of Hurricane Andrew to take time to debate the issues of the Robertson County lectureship.”

Brother Shelly is so busy trying to exalt Christ, he recently was the featured speaker at the New Life Christian Church in Columbia, Tennessee, for their “New Life Men’s Advance,” with “Worship Lead By The ‘New Life Praise Band.’ Cost: \$15.00” (from their advertisement).

Romans 16:17-18 states: “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. *For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple*” (emph. mine, BL).

COMPROMISE AND DESPITE

2 Timothy 3:3 speaks of those who would be “despisers of those that are good.” In I Corinthians 11:22, Paul, in asking a question concerning improper attitudes and actions, said: “...despise ye the church of God...?” The church-changers often speak with great disdain of the little, dying, conservative churches. They call the church of Christ, the *Church of Christ* with obvious denominational implications and delineation between the two. Some, and we say this with sadness, yet with gratitude that they no longer bring reproach, have changed their name to something like “Christian Fellowship,” “Christian Center,” or, “Community Church,” instead of the church of Christ.

In “Jubilee not traditional enough for some,” *Nashville Banner*, October 14, 1991, “The leaders of the popular Church of Christ Jubilee ...are departing from traditional Church of Christ beliefs, some conservative members are charging. The criticism comes in the September issue of *Contending for the Faith*, published monthly by the Bellview Church of Christ of Pensacola, Fla. The 16 page edition focuses primarily on Jubilee ‘91” Shelly is quoted as saying: “I don’t read that type of material ...There is a small and declining right-wing group (in the Churches of Christ) that feels compelled to revile most anything that attempts to be in touch with contemporary needs. Their loyalty is to a narrow set of traditions that are neither biblical or Christlike.” What hard words! One could almost say

they were unloving, perhaps, even hateful and reviling. They might be construed as judgmental and condemning. They could even be divisive. But, that is not all.

“There is a narrow sectarian spirit that some people identify as ‘the traditional Church of Christ’ that I have no interest in perpetuating. The narrowness of that tradition is not biblical, it is divisive, judgmental and often downright hateful, and I don’t want any part of that,” Rubel says. A passage comes to mind when our “liberal” brethren hatefully hate those whom they accuse of being hateful and unrighteously judge those whom they judge as judging: “And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye” (Mat. 7:3-5).

Brother Gayle Napier (Harpeth Hills), Jubilee speaker, said at David Lipscomb University, “The more conservative the church, the more incest you have in families.” Ray Waddle in “Conservative churches may foster incest, panel says,” *The Tennessean*, reported, “Rigidly conservative churches attract power-addicted preachers and encourage incest and pornography at home because they too often teach distortions about sex, a Church of Christ panel said yesterday.” Napier said, “We’ve so distorted the concept of ‘headship’ and ‘submission’ that we’ve produced a pathological family model.” Pathological means altered or abnormal. “There’s one socially approved place for power addicts besides the home, and that’s the pulpit,” he continued. Gary Wilson, another panelist explained, “Pornography is the way Christians have affairs,” giving as the reason, “We don’t know grace and mercy.” When one digests the above, if, indeed, he can stomach it, he will find the following line of reasoning: Conservative churches (1) teach error concerning the role of husbands and wives; (2) teach error concerning sex; (3) teach error concerning grace and mercy; and, (4) approve of power addiction in the home and the pulpit. Conclusions drawn from the above are: Conservative churches (1) foster incest; (2) produce abnormal families; (3) drive many Christians to pornography or sometimes homosexuality; and, (4) have power-addicted ministers and elders.

How do you think these brethren feel about “conservative” churches? Do they bring despoise upon them? Where is the proof supporting these serious charges? If these charges could be proved, surely “conservative” churches should cease to exist! No, these charges are the products of fertile imaginations, prejudice and convenience. Yet, they were made very lovingly, were they not? Having been associated with “conservative” churches for over twenty years, I think I have a little insight into what “conservative” churches teach and practice and I deny these baseless, ridiculously silly and malicious charges and resent and repudiate the broadside aimed at God’s faithful.

Brother Mac Lynn, David Lipscomb University professor,

in, “Church of Christ dilemma: Stay with basics, change with society?”; *The Tennessean*, July 17, 1991, was said to believe “the decline (in membership in churches of Christ) in Tennessee is due partly to the large number of older congregations, some of which are overseen by authoritarian elders and are ‘less open’ to young people.” Who is at fault, brother Lynn? Older congregations and authoritarian elders. So, the answer to church growth is very simple, is it not? We need new churches and elders with no authority. Hmmmmm. He continues, “If younger people don’t join, these churches are positioning themselves against growth ...” Who is at fault? Churches that position themselves against growth by not getting young people to join. Surely, Mac knows better than talking about one’s *joining* the church (Acts 2:47). Could it be that young people position themselves against salvation by not submitting their will to Christ’s? That could affect church growth, could it not? “Lynn said Churches of Christ have always claimed not to be a denomination or separate church group, ‘but the more we insist on not changing, the more we look separate and sectarian.’” Let Mac speak for himself. God calls upon His children to be separate (2 Cor. 6:17).

The call for change demands finding fault with faithful brethren, condemning them as old-fogey, set against growth, hateful, hung up on tradition, power-addicted, sexually abnormal, sectarian, extreme right-wingers.

COMPROMISE, DISGRACE AND DEATH

Those who call for change/compromise are not “celebrating Christian living,” but are destroying faith, hope and life for themselves and those whom they influence. It continues to be true that, “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). One’s being happy, excited, having “flat-out fun” or “celebrating a party” will not make their misguided, rebellious actions acceptable to God (cf. Exo. 32). Not only do they lose, but they bring disgrace upon the body of Christ, either by openly reviling it or by their unholy attitudes and actions while claiming to be a member of it. The result of their call for change? The world laughs at the blood-bought body of Christ. Ample proof has been presented from newspaper articles to confirm this. Satan rejoices. He does not fear the religions of men, for he controls them. He fears the Lord’s church; thus, when he sees it assaulted, reproached and divided, he rejoices.

The call for change is not valid. It is a call for compromise; thus, destruction. It involves departure, discord, deceit and despoise and brings disgrace and death. Wise men shall reject the church-changers call, not because they reject positive change, but because they discern the destructive, negative changes for which our brethren call.

We take no pleasure in exposing error, but we must do so. We call upon all our brethren to live for Christ (Phi. 1:21); preach the word (2 Tim. 4:2); defend the Gospel (Phi. 1:17); continue stedfastly (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 15:58) and mark those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine you have learned, and avoid them (Rom. 16:17).

Changes In The Church Of Christ

Nineteenth Annual Bellview Lectures

June 11-15, 1994

Saturday, June 11

- 7:00 P.M. What Is The Church Of Christ? Jerry Martin
8:00 P.M. Does The Church Of Christ
Need To Change? Winfred Clark

Sunday, June 12

- 9:00 A.M. The Call For Change: Is It Valid?
Bobby Liddell
10:00 A.M. Changes In Morals: The Decline
Of Moral Values James Rogers
Lunch Break
2:00 P.M. Changing Views On The Inspiration
And Interpretation Of The Bible Stanley Ryan
3:00 P.M. Changes Influenced By Christian
Education Clifford Newell, Jr.
4:00 P.M. Changes In Morals: Changing Views
On Marriage Stephen P. Waller
Dinner Break
7:00 P.M. Changes In Preaching: Ethics For
Preachers Curtis A. Cates
8:00 P.M. Is The Church Of Christ Subject To
Changes In Culture? Terry Hightower

Monday, June 13

- 9:00 A.M. A History Of Change In The Church
Of Christ Paul Vaughn
10:00 A.M. How Effective Bible Study Promotes
And Prevents Change Roy Deaver
11:00 A.M. Changes In Preaching: What Shall We
Preach? Eddie Whitten
Lunch Break
2:00 P.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Love
John Stewart
3:00 P.M. Changes In Worship: Special Music
Flavil Nichols
3:45 P.M. Open Forum Discussion On
Special Music
Dinner Break
7:00 P.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Fellowship
Garland Elkins
8:00 P.M. The Gospel Of Christ Is Unchanged
And Unchanging Dub McClish

Tuesday, June 14

- 9:00 A.M. Changes In Preaching: The Role Of
The Preacher Noah Hackworth
10:00 A.M. How Effective Bible Study Promotes
And Prevents Change Roy Deaver
11:00 A.M. Changes Influenced By Brotherhood
Publications Waymon Swain
Lunch Break
2:00 P.M. Changes In Preaching: Motivation To
Preach David Brown
3:00 P.M. Changes In Morals: Questions About
Homosexuality H. A. (Buster) Dobbs
3:45 P.M. Open Forum Discussion On Homosexuality
Dinner Break
7:00 P.M. Changes In Worship: Feelings Over Faith
Joe Gilmore
8:00 P.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Baptism
Lindell Mitchell

Wednesday, June 15

- 9:00 A.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Church
Growth David Courington
10:00 A.M. How Effective Bible Study Promotes
And Prevents Change Roy Deaver
11:00 A.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Truth
Garry Brantley
Lunch Break
2:00 P.M. Changes In Worship: Is All We Do
Worship? Garry Barnes
3:00 P.M. Agents And Tools Of Change Wayne Coats
3:45 P.M. Open Forum Discussion On Agents
And Tools Of Change
Dinner Break
7:00 P.M. Changes In Worship: The Role Of Women
Fred Davis
8:00 P.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Pure Religion
Guss Eoff

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BOBBY LIDDELL, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXIII

June 1994

Number 6

Changing Attitudes Toward Church Growth

David Courington

Church growth is a popular subject and one that needs much study. I am glad to be invited to discuss some aspects of it. I do not claim to be an “expert” on the subject. One young preacher was introduced as being a warm speaker, a model preacher, and an expert in his subject. By the time he got home, he had begun to gloat and told his wife and small daughter how he had been introduced. The unpretentious little girl asked, “What does that mean, Daddy?” Wanting to teach his daughter a lesson, he said, “Well, let’s look it up.” He looked up warm and it said, “Not so hot.” He proceeded to look up “model” and it said, “a small imitation of the real thing.” Then he turned to expert. He did not know how to spell that and he thought it was two words, so he looked up “ex” and it said, “a has been.” Then he turned to “spurt” and it said, “a big drip.” In fact, we do not need an expert, but we need to study every subject from the Book of books. It will tell us things the experts have not thought of yet.

GROWTH IS A NATURALLY OCCURRING PROCESS

A child grows when he gets the proper exercise, nutrition and care. Church growth should be much the same. There is not some magic, some secret formula, some mystical trick to growth. To state the obvious: when men are converted to Christ, rooted and grounded in the truth so that they will remain converted, and, they in turn go out to convert others, the church will grow. This is the simple, Bible formula for church growth in any age. While this is simple, it is not seen by many.

Abuses Are Occurring

A recent church growth seminar schedule had about 30 different sessions, and only one on converting the lost. A large church in Alabama printed in their bulletin their goals for the year: “New Members—200,” “Baptisms—50.” Their goal was to grow by 200 members but to have 50 baptisms. How can this be? It does not add up to me. Furthermore, it seems that a church with over 1,000 members could see there was something wrong, either with their arithmetic or their

goal. To have 50 baptisms would be like a church of 100 baptizing 5. My question is, where would the other 150 come from and how would they be persuaded to come? I think most of us already know the answer.

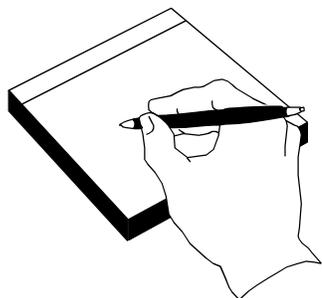
In fact, some churches in our brotherhood are growing at the expense of other congregations. I would be afraid to face God knowing I had lifted one finger to try to make one congregation of the church of our Lord grow at the expense of another. This is not growth in a real sense, but a mere juggling of the books. Workers in some companies have tried to fool the owners by juggling the books, moving money around from one account to another and moving stock around to make it look like they are turning a profit when in reality they are not. God is an owner who will not be fooled. If the church is to grow, it must be through converting the lost to Jesus Christ. We must not seek to grow by sheep stealing, by number crunching nor by making excuses. We will only grow when we are honest with God and ourselves. Habakkuk 2:6 speaks of the man who will be destroyed because he “Increaseth that which is not his.” Is not that what is happening in many cases?

Numerical Increase Was Great In The Church

Notice: “And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women” (Acts 5:14). “And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith” (6:7). “And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily” (16:5). There were several reasons for this that we shall see later.

While great growth is desirable, a strong warning needs to be made. *While numerical growth was great in the early church, numerical increase is not a sign of God’s approval nor is the lack of numerical increase necessarily a sign that God disapproves of a church.*

Some say, “This is the largest church in the brotherhood—let’s imitate them for God is (Continued on Page 4)



Notes From The Editor

**Bobby
Liddell**

Communication

Communication is the transmission of information, thoughts or feelings so that they are satisfactorily received or understood. Communication is a two-way street involving both those who transmit the information, thoughts or feelings and those who receive and understand that which has been transmitted. Our world depends on accurate and adequate communication for the proper functioning of everyday life.

Correct communication will prevent many problems. Myra H. Hill went to Singapore in the late 1960s to work with Four Seas Bible College. One day, she went into a beauty shop to have her hair styled, but the beautician could not speak English, only Chinese, and sister Myra could not speak Chinese! After exhausting efforts to communicate verbally, sister Hill pointed to her hair. The beautician smiled, nodded knowingly and went to work dyeing sister Hill's hair the darkest black possible. That was not what sister Hill wanted. Even worse, it was the color the streetwalkers used and was recognized as a sign of their business! Lack of communication can certainly cause problems.

An elderly couple, married for many years, sat upon the porch, gently rocking. Pleasantly contemplating their life together, the sterling character of his wife and how much she had meant to him for so long, the old gentleman turned to her and said loudly, "I'm proud of you." Being hard of hearing, she misunderstood his praise and snapped back, "Well, I'm tired of you, too!" While he had properly spoken that which he intended to communicate, her reception was inaccurate. Communication involves the proper reception and understanding of that which is communicated.

Proper communication is even more important concerning matters of spiritual significance. Christians must be able to communicate with each other. Paul knew how important it was for brethren to stay in touch. His inspired epistle to the Colossians contained personal greetings, by which brethren communicated their care for one another. Paul said he sent Tychicus to tell the Colossians how he was doing (4:7). Tychicus would also inquire of the

Colossians how they were doing (v. 8). With him, "Onesimus...shall make known unto you all things which are done here" (v. 9). Aristarchus, Marcus, Justus, and Epaphras all sent their greetings to the Colossian brethren (vv. 10-12). How good it must have been for them to hear from these brethren, to know they were well and to know of their concern and love for them. Note what is said of Epaphras: "who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis" (vv. 12-13). That must have made them happy to hear such good news.

Paul continued: "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you" (v.14). Then, the inspired apostle told the Colossian brethren to communicate to others: "Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house. And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it" (vv. 15-17).

Paul beseeched the Colossians to pray for him and his fellowlaborers in their work for Christ. "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak" (vv. 2-4). We communicate to God by means of prayer. Paul said Epaphras was, "always labouring fervently for you in prayers" (v. 12).

Christ has communicated His instructions to His church to carry His Gospel to the world (Mark 16:15-16; Mat. 28:18-20). That requires communication. His disciples must transmit the Good News and the world must hear, understand and obey for the Gospel to have the proper effect; that is, to bring them to salvation. Paul wanted an open door to communicate the Gospel to the lost. How could the Colossians help? They could not all be where Paul was, and preach like Paul did, but they could pray for him and for the work. As Christians, they desired that all men hear the Gospel and obey it to be saved.

The Holy Spirit directed Paul to write how we communicate by the way we walk and talk (vv. 5-6). Finally, Paul closed the Colossian epistle with: "The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen" (v. 18).

God communicates to man through His inspired word. We communicate to God through prayer. Let us communicate our care for one another in Christ, and let us be busy transmitting the glorious Gospel to the world that all who will might receive and understand.

Changes In The Church Of Christ

Nineteenth Annual Bellview Lectures

June 11-15, 1994

Saturday, June 11

- 7:00 P.M. What Is The Church Of Christ?
Jerry Martin
- 8:00 P.M. Does The Church Of Christ
Need To Change? Winfred Clark

Sunday, June 12

- 9:00 A.M. The Call For Change: Is It Valid?
Bobby Liddell
- 10:00 A.M. Changes In Morals: The Decline
Of Moral Values James Rogers
- Lunch Break*
- 2:00 P.M. Changing Views On The Inspiration
And Interpretation Of The Bible
Stanley Ryan
- 3:00 P.M. Changes Influenced By Christian
Education Clifford Newell, Jr.
- 4:00 P.M. Changes In Morals: Changing Views
On Marriage Stephen P. Waller
- Dinner Break*
- 7:00 P.M. Changes In Preaching: Ethics For
Preachers Curtis A. Cates
- 8:00 P.M. Is The Church Of Christ Subject To
Changes In Culture? Terry Hightower

Monday, June 13

- 9:00 A.M. A History Of Change In The Church
Of Christ Paul Vaughn
- 10:00 A.M. How Effective Bible Study Promotes
And Prevents Change Roy Deaver
- 11:00 A.M. Changes In Preaching: What Shall We
Preach? Eddie Whitten
- Lunch Break*
- 2:00 P.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Love
John Stewart
- 3:00 P.M. Changes In Worship: Special Music
Flavil Nichols
- 3:45 P.M. Open Forum Discussion On
Special Music
- Dinner Break*
- 7:00 P.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Fellowship
Garland Elkins
- 8:00 P.M. The Gospel Of Christ Is Unchanged
And Unchanging Dub McClish

Tuesday, June 14

- 9:00 A.M. Changes In Preaching: The Role Of
The Preacher Noah Hackworth
- 10:00 A.M. How Effective Bible Study Promotes
And Prevents Change Roy Deaver
- 11:00 A.M. Changes Influenced By Brotherhood
Publications Waymon Swain
- Lunch Break*
- 2:00 P.M. Changes In Preaching: Motivation To
Preach David Brown
- 3:00 P.M. Changes In Morals: Questions About
Homosexuality H. A. (Buster) Dobbs
- 3:45 P.M. Open Forum Discussion
On Homosexuality
- Dinner Break*
- 7:00 P.M. Changes In Worship: Feelings Over Faith
Joe Gilmore
- 8:00 P.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Baptism
Lindell Mitchell

Wednesday, June 15

- 9:00 A.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Church
Growth David Courington
- 10:00 A.M. How Effective Bible Study Promotes
And Prevents Change Roy Deaver
- 11:00 A.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Truth
Garry Brantley
- Lunch Break*
- 2:00 P.M. Changes In Worship: Is All We Do
Worship? Garry Barnes
- 3:00 P.M. Agents And Tools Of Change
Wayne Coats
- 3:45 P.M. Open Forum Discussion On Agents
And Tools Of Change
- Dinner Break*
- 7:00 P.M. Changes In Worship: The Role Of Women
Fred Davis
- 8:00 P.M. Changing Attitudes Toward Pure Religion
Guss Eoff

Hardbound book, Video and Audio tapes available.

(Continued from Page 1) blessing them and they must be doing what is right.” Some have even said this of various denominations and have paid to go to seminars to find out how they have grown. We should not be duped into turning to so called “church growth experts” who are not even members of the Lord’s church. If I want to know how the church can grow, I want to hear from someone who can tell me how God in His word has said to do it. One might be able to adopt some good methods of reaching the lost from men, but he had better make sure that they are methods that will meet with God’s approval. I repeat, numerical growth is not a sign of God’s approval. Have you thought carefully about the parable of the tares? The tares grew as well as the wheat. Our Lord said, “Let both grow *together* until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn” (Mat. 13:30, emph. DC). A church could be nothing more than a church full of tares. All growth is not good, just like a tumor growing inside a body makes it swell, so tares can make a church swell, but it is unhealthy growth.

Another text to consider is Isaiah 5:1-7. God said he did all that was necessary to grow a great vineyard, but it brought forth sour grapes. Churches today can be large bodies of wild grapes. The church at Sardis had a name that they lived, but were dead (Rev. 3:1). Psalm 49, likewise, shows prosperity may not be a sign of God’s approval. Verse 18 says: “Though while he lived he blessed his soul: *and men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself*” (emph. DC).

Neither personal prosperity nor congregational prosperity is, necessarily, a sign of the approval of God. The Psalmist said, “Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches” (Psa. 73:12). We often quote Hosea 4:6, but we need to also consider verse 7, “*As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame*” (emph. DC). Again, increase is not, necessarily, a sign of God’s approval.

Church growth is sometimes cyclical, with a period of famine coming just before a period of plenty. Lack of growth might precede a great victory. If you are discouraged because the church where you are is not growing, do not be. Just work harder to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Habakkuk said: “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places...” (Hab. 3:17-19). This is as it is in most any endeavor. In war, dark days often come just before victory. In medicine, a patient often gets worse just before getting better. In business,

sometimes the darkest days precede the best.

What Conclusions Can Be Drawn From This?

1. The church might not be growing and still be pleasing to God, but we must make sure that we are doing what God’s word says to do.

2. The church might be growing, but might not be pleasing to God, so, too, we must make sure that we are doing what God has commanded us to do.

3. The church and its members will not be judged by numerical success, but by faithfulness in works.

We often study the seven churches of Asia and notice their successes and failures, but perhaps we have overlooked the fact that God told every one of those churches the same thing.

1. To Ephesus: “I know thy works...do the first works” (Rev. 2:2,5).

2. To Smyrna: “I know thy works” (Rev. 2:9).

3. To Pergamos: “I know thy works” (Rev. 2:13).

4. To Thyatira: “I know thy works and thy worksand he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations” (Rev. 2:19,26).

5. To Sardis: “I know thy works that thou has a name that thou livest, and art dead” (Rev. 3 :1).

6. To Philadelphia: “I know thy works...Because thou has kept the word of my patience” (Rev. 3:8-10).

7. To Laodicea: “I know thy works...Be zealous therefore and repent” (Rev. 3:14-22).

Clearly, it is by our works that we will be judged, not by our results.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO TODAY TO MAKE THE CHURCH GROW?

The work of the church has not changed It is still to evangelize the world The church’s mission and Jesus’ mission are one and the same. “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). Evangelizing is done by preaching the gospel. Jesus said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16). The early church carried this charge out by teaching publicly and from house to house (Acts 20:20). The early disciples were saved to save, taught to teach—they shared their faith. In Acts 8:1-4, even facing severe persecution, they taught. Verse 4 says: “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.”

In order to make sure we are doing what the Lord has commanded us, we might ask ourselves some questions.

1. How long has it been since you personally made an effort to teach what you have been taught?

2. When have you tried to set up a Bible study with someone?

3. When was the last time you brought up the Bible in

conversation with your friends, neighbors, co-workers, or family?

ONE REASON THE CHURCH GREW—THEY WERE NOT ASHAMED OF THE FAITH

Paul said, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:16-17).

We also help to spread the gospel through edification, benevolence and living the life of Christ, but brethren, it boils down to this, we need to teach and practice the gospel of our Lord and leave it to God to give the increase. Paul said: “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God *gave the increase*” (1 Cor. 3:6; cf. vv. 7-9, emph. DC).

If the question is, “Is the church growing?” we are asking the wrong question. If the question is, “Am I doing the will of the Lord everyday as revealed in the Bible?” then we are on the right track to doing what we are here to do; that is, to please God and bring glory to Him through His church (Eph. 3:21). To continue our study, let us go to Matthew 13 to see some lessons on the growth of God’s kingdom.

THERE ARE THREE KEY INGREDIENTS FOR CHURCH GROWTH

From the parable in Matthew 13:3-9, we see:

1. *There must be the proper seed* Luke’s account says, “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11). Whenever one was added to the church in the accounts in Acts, there was the preaching of the word of God. Here are a few examples: “But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words” (Acts 2:14). “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:36-37). “Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand” (Acts 4:4). “And daily in the temple, and in every house; they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ” (Acts 5:42). “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). “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” (Acts 8:12). “And they, ‘When they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans” (Acts 8:25)’

Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him (Acts 8:35-38).

And we could go on and on, but get the point: the church cannot grow and the lost cannot be saved unless the word is preached, either privately or publicly. The early church grew by unity, benevolence, and great works, but all of this would have failed if not for a verbal proclamation of the word. In some places today, men have substituted smooth words, fancy buildings, attractive social church programs, programs that deal with felt needs, multitudes of youth workers and have done everything but the one thing that will work, to try to get the church to grow, and that one thing is to publicly and privately teach the word of God.

2. *There must be someone (the sower) to plant the seed* That should be you and me. Not just preachers, elders, Bible class teachers, but every Christian doing their part. The early church took the gospel with them as they went (Acts 8:4). If you cannot teach a class, teach by giving a tract. If you cannot speak to a friend about the church, write a letter. If you cannot write a letter, make a phone call and invite one to church with you or set up a Bible study for someone else to teach. Everyone needs to do their part as a sower of the seed.

Are you doing your part? Be honest. What Jesus said in Matthew 9 is still true: “*The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest*” (emph. DC).

3. *The soil must be the right kind of soil for the church to grow.* This is one of the problems that we have today that we can do little about. There is much worldliness, but that is not our problem. Sowing the seed is. We must look harder to find those interested in the gospel of Christ. The parable in Matthew 13 (and Luke 8) shows there is both good and bad soil. In this text, we also see three hindrances to church growth.

THERE ARE THREE HINDRANCES TO CHURCH GROWTH

1. *The Devil.* He takes away the word. However, the power of God is greater than that of the Devil.

2. *Temptation.* But we must remember: “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted -above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10:13).

3. *The cares of this world.* We must continue to try to get men to see that all of the worldly pleasures put together are not worthy to be compared with the salvation offered by God. Jesus’ question is vital, “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what

shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mat. 16:26).

THE POTENTIAL FOR CHURCH GROWTH

In Matthew 13, we also see the potential for church growth. This is what can happen to the kingdom if the seed is sown and God gives the increase. The potential is unlimited. We ought to get excited about that. "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof" (Mat. 13:31-32).

We ought not to be satisfied with the growth of a congregation no matter what the size, whether we have 100 or 1000. Brethren, when our work seems hard and the growth seems small, we must remember that the value of being in the church is the greatest thing in the world. We have the product that the whole world wants: peace with self and God, salvation, and eternal life. Again look at Matthew 13, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of

great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (Mat. 13:44-46).

CONCLUSION

Finally, we must remember the terrible consequences of the church not growing and the world being lost. In Matthew 13:47-50, we read, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

If you are not a faithful part of the Lord's body, I cannot help but believe that you would want to be if you knew enough about it. If you know that Jesus is the Christ, that He died for your sins, that you should repent of sins, then you can be baptized into Him now and become a member of the body of Christ.

P.O. Box 160 Mulga, AL 35118

The above article was condensed from the manuscript David prepared for the 1994 Bellview Lectureship on "Changes In The Church Of Christ."

For Your Information

Northridge Church Of Christ Third Annual Firm Foundation Lectureship

"The Home As God Would Have It" will be the theme June 5-9, 1994, for the lectures conducted at the Northridge building. Faithful brethren from across the nation will speak on this important topic. Contact Fred Davis, Lectureship Director, Northridge Church of Christ, 2211 Needmore Road, Dayton, OH 45414 or phone (513) 274-6801 for more information.

Houston College Of The Bible Lectures

"The Church Enters The Twenty-First Century" is the topic under consideration June 19-22 at the Spring Church of Christ facility. Lectures will be throughout the day, Sunday through Wednesday with thirty well-known speakers. Classes for ladies will be held on Monday and Tuesday. Contact David P. Brown, Director for more information. Spring Church of Christ, P.O. Box 39, Spring, TX 77383. For information regarding housing, call (713) 443-3864.

Types And Shadows

W. Gaddys Roy has published a new book which should be of interest to all Bible students. Types and Shadows may be ordered for \$5.50 (softback) from the author at 2031 Highway 31 North, Deatsville, AL

36022. Along with brother Roy's other books: **Sermon Outlines on the Parables of Jesus** (\$5.50, softback), and **Sermon Outlines on the Miracles of Jesus** (\$10.50, hardback, revised edition), you may order the just reprinted Lectures on the Holy Spirit by Gus Nichols (\$12.50, hardback).

"I Speak Concerning Christ And The Church"

Howell Bigham, author of Footsteps of a Firm Faith, sermon outlines on the book of James, has published a fine outline book of forty sermons entitled "**I Speak Concerning Christ and the Church.**" Cost is \$4.50 (includes postage). Contact Howell at P.O. Box 3092, Muscle Shoals, AL 35622.

A C U: "Changing The Unchangeable Gospel Of Christ"

The Central Arizona Church of Christ, with the help of faithful brethren, has prepared this free booklet concerning the departures - at Abilene Christian University. They, and we, regret the need for the book. Darrell Broking, the church's evangelist, has done a fine job in compiling this material. Order from Central Arizona Church of Christ, P.O. Box 12421, Casa Grande, AZ 85230-2421.

Matters of THE Faith

A new journal, **Matters of THE Faith**, edited by Lester Kamp, is now available. Brother Kamp is a faithful preacher of the Gospel and excellent editor. We are encouraged to see another sound paper put forth by our brethren and commend it wholeheartedly to you. Subscriptions are free. Write: **Matters of THE Faith**, Cedar Bayou Church of Christ, 3601 North Highway 146, Baytown, TX 77520.

Needed: Faithful Preacher In Iron Mountain, Michigan

Brethren from the Iron Mountain Church of Christ read Jerry Martin's article, "Mission Work From A Personal Perspective," in the February, 1994 issue of DEFENDER and were encouraged about the possibilities of someone like Jerry coming to work with them.

Iron Mountain is nestled in the tourist region of the upper peninsula of Michigan, about 100 miles north of Green Bay, Wisconsin. The church, established nine years ago, is made up of four committed families in a city of 15,000. They are pleading for an experienced, dedicated and self-motivated evangelist to help them. They write: "The depths of our treasures are hidden in the rich blessings of our 10 youths whose ages range from 17 to 6...Our fervent desire is to send their roots deep into the Word of God and to spiritually equip them for His service." They continue, "We need someone purposed in heart and determined in will to sound forth it, all its purity and distinctiveness the preciousness of the redeeming blood of our Savior and thereby our strength." "As we endeavour to build up our youth under a God-conscious canopy and reach out to this area in defense of the gospel in the spirit of obedience, we turn our need to you at this time also for faithful mission oriented congregations willing to financially support and help carry on to completion the good work that was begun."

If you are interested in helping our brethren in Iron Mountain, you may contact them at: Iron Mountain Church of Christ, 316 East Hughitt Street, Iron Mountain, MI 49801 or call (906) 639-2448.

Obituary

The church was saddened this week to learn of the death of one of our most valuable members, brother Someone Else. His passing will create a vacancy that will be difficult to fill. Someone Else has done most of the work of the church for many years. Someone Else did far more than most of the other members. Whenever a need arose, Someone Else was always the first one mentioned.

Whenever a class needed a teacher, a meeting needed attending, a job needed to be done—his name was always on everyone's lips. I can hear it now, "Let Someone Else do it."

Someone Else was among our greatest givers to the work of the church. In fact, whenever there was a financial need, his name was always mentioned. Or, it was simply assumed that Someone Else would make up the difference.

Now, Someone Else is gone. Who will pitch in to do the things he always did? If you, perchance, are now asked to pitch in and do some of the things Someone Else has always done, please do not reply, "Let Someone Else do it." Now, we need you.

Via *Beacon Of Truth*, Palacios, TX

Scriptural Worship

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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

I must **Hear** the Gospel (Rom. 10:17)

I must **Believe** in Christ (John 8:24)

I must **Repent** of sin (Acts 2:38)

I must **Confess** my faith in Christ (Mat. 10:32)

I must be **Baptized** (Mark 16:15-16)

I must continue **Faithfully** (Rev. 2:10)

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

BOBBY LIDDELL, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXIII

July 1994

Number 7

The Pure Gospel of Christ

Bobby Liddell

Purity is important! Would you knowingly drink water that was almost pure, but which contained a small percentage of poison? If, at a restaurant, they informed you their food was almost pure, but a small percentage was recycled from the garbage, would you remain and eat? If the television news issued a bulletin that the local chemical plant had an accident and the air now contained a small percentage of poisonous gas would you feel safe to venture outside? If your spouse were almost always faithful, maintaining the purity of your relationship except for one day in the year, would you simply excuse the one day of impurity?

The gospel is, literally, the “good news.” It must be pure or else it ceases to be good news. Surely, you want the pure gospel, do you not? However, when man changes the gospel, he perverts it, and it is no longer pure. Man cannot improve the good news revealed from God. He can only pervert it if he seeks to change it. That was the problem facing the churches in Galatia when Judaizing teachers tried to bind on them the keeping of the Old Law. Paul’s inspired epistle addressed the sad situation.

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. 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. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. 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

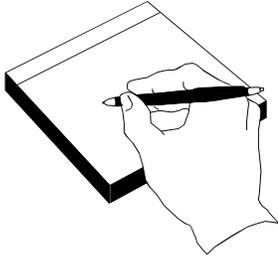
Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:6-12).

THE GOSPEL MAY BE PERVERTED BY MEN

How? Whenever men add to, take from, substitute for or modify in any way the inspired word of the gospel, they pervert it. To pervert means to change to something of a different and opposing nature. God unquestionably condemns such (Rev. 22:18-19). Some may pervert the gospel who would vehemently deny they so do. Is it not a perversion of the gospel to take away from the once for all revealed word of Christ? If one preached truth on every subject he preached, yet refused to preach some truth, would not that also be a perversion? Paul told the Ephesian elders: “Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:26-27).

Preacher friend, we help no one when we do not tell them the whole truth and nothing but the truth. If one is in adultery, how does our refusing to preach the truth on that subject help them? If they are lost outside of Christ, how does our refusal to tell them they are lost and in need of salvation help them? If one is teaching error, how does our refusal to address that error help? A changed gospel is “another gospel”; that is, a perverted gospel, regardless of what the change might be. A perverted gospel is soul-damning regardless of who might be the perverter. Sadly, some excuse departures from the pure gospel on the part of those who are known, influential, in high position or who, in the past,

(Continued on Page 3)



Notes From The Editor

Bobby Liddell

EDITOR TO BEGIN WORK WITH MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING

The elders of the Knight Arnold Church of Christ, Memphis, Tennessee, oversee the work of the Memphis School of Preaching. As a graduate of the school, I look upon the two years I studied there as the best, most demanding and most beneficial years of my life. I appreciate, beyond my ability to express, the instruction I received and the instructors, whom I respect so highly and without whom I would not be where I am today.

I am indeed thankful for the foresight and the sacrifice of the good brethren at Knight Arnold who made it possible for me to attend. With support from our home congregation, Adamsville, Alabama, and from the good brethren at Sixth Avenue in Jasper, Alabama, Joan and I, with Tony (seven months old at the time) began our two-year course of study.

Through the years, I have continued to support the school in every way I could. I have encouraged men, who wanted to have the best possible preparation to preach, to attend MSOP. Four men from Bellview began their studies there last year. (There are other fine preacher training schools, which I encourage and support, but I am somewhat partial to MSOP). The future looks bright for the school and I rejoice to think of the great positive impact it shall have on the future of the Lord's church by its faithfully training men to "Preach the word."

The Knight Arnold elders and the school's Director, Curtis Cates, have asked me to be a part of that future by accepting a position as Dean of Admissions and instructor. I have accepted and we will be moving August 1, 1994. Going to Memphis means leaving Bellview, one of the greatest congregations in the brotherhood, and, I am convinced, the hardest working congregation of its size anywhere.

My work at Bellview has been most satisfying. We have not had one problem since I began the work here on May 1, 1988. Everyone has been kinder to us than we could have asked, supporting our preaching of the truth, our work in every area of endeavor for the cause of Christ and our needs in splendid fashion: We could not ask for better, stronger, more compassionate elders than the men who serve in that capacity at Bellview. The elders and I have been, and are now, in one accord in Christ. My family and I thank God for them and hope you appreciate them as much as we do.

It has been a great blessing and my pleasure to have served as Editor of DEFENDER. I hope the paper has been helpful to you, its readers, and that our work, through it, has helped bring lost ones to Christ and has encouraged and strengthened the children of God. We have sought to uphold the truth and oppose error. We have sounded warnings as needed and, yet, have tried to deal fairly in all cases. I shall truly miss the editorship, for even with its demands and difficulties, it gave great hope and satisfaction.

Thanks to all who have written such kind and encouraging letters, over the years, about DEFENDER. Many of you have made contributions to the printing and mailing expense. These costs are substantial and we have appreciated so much your help with them. We are glad to be able to send out DEFENDER subscription free.

The Bellview elders will select a good man to follow me. I know that without even knowing, as of this writing, who that man shall be. I know, too, that you will support him in his work as you have me. I will certainly help in any way I can to make the transition smooth for the new preacher and his family. That is the only way it should be and that is the way it shall be.

We leave Bellview with mixed emotions. The opportunity to work with such a fine congregation and its godly elders, direct the Annual Lectureship, edit the Lectureship book, edit DEFENDER and The Beacon and be involved with the mission work, evangelism and educational works of the church has been such a blessing. We go to Memphis with hope and eager anticipation. We have dedicated ourselves to doing the best we can and the most we can for the cause of Christ, and we trust the opportunity before us will enable us to do just that—by training men who will go out and preach the soul-saving gospel to others.

Thanks, brethren. May God bless us all in Christ.

Continued from Page 1

have gained respectability. Notice, the Holy Spirit revealed an apostle, angel or any man who preached another gospel was accursed.

The Heavenly Father commands men to hear His Son: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Mat. 17:5). His Son, the Christ, speaks to us through His inspired New Testament. By His words, we shall be judged (John 12:48); thus, by His words, the pure gospel, we must live.

What is the result of a perverted gospel? Most certainly, changing the truth will please some men (Gal. 1:10). Millions rejoice in the false hope of the doctrines and commandments of men. Obviously, purity of the message does not mean popularity with the majority (Mat. 7:13-14). However, Paul said following "another gospel" removes one from grace (Gal. 1:6). He continued in saying those who pervert the gospel "trouble you" (1:7). Is that what we want?

THE PURE GOSPEL MUST BE PREACHED BY MEN

Men should preach the pure gospel because so doing pleases God (Gal. 1:10). As our Savior commanded His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel (Mark 16:15-16), so we must do if we would be His obedient servants (Rom. 6:16-18). Only by the gospel message does one hear how to avail himself of the salvation so freely offered by God's matchless grace (Rom. 10:17). Paul said: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). How can men so nonchalantly preach something different? This writer stands convinced at least some of those who are preaching a perverted gospel do so knowingly. They are not ignorant of the truth, but either lack the courage to preach it or have betrayed the King of kings and have sold their own souls for worldly gain.

When men preach the pure gospel, they preach the purity of the Savior, "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). None other could have sufficed as the sinless sacrifice for man's sins.

When men preach the pure gospel, they preach the wonderful story of His pure love. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love" (John 15:9).

When men preach the pure gospel, they preach the glorious beauty of a pure Heaven. There, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4). No impurity nor impure one shall enter Heaven, but only those who "do His commandments" and; thus, "are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27; 22:14).

When men preach the pure gospel, they preach the purified heart of those who hear and heed Christ's message (Acts 15:9; 1 Pet. 1:22). One need not expect a pure heart by obeying an impure gospel.

Those who claim to be gospel preachers must preach the gospel, in its purity, regardless of whether men like or not (Gal. 1:10). Gospel preachers need not and must not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16). Rather, let us: "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 shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4:2-4). Those who claim to be gospel preachers, yet who have preached to scratch men's "itching ears" must cease their sin, go to God for forgiveness and, if they continue to preach, preach only the pure word of God.

PREACHING THE PURE GOSPEL PERSUADES MEN

One might ask for proof for such a declaration. The proof is to be found at the beginning, in Jerusalem, when the gospel was first preached in its fullness.

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41):

"Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (2:47).

"Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand" (4:4).

"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common" (4:32).

"And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (5:14).

“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied...” (5:42-6:1).

“And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith” (6:7).

Why would such happen? Men heard the truth preached (John 17:17; 8:31-32). The message of the Prince of life was not perverted, but pure. Its faithful proclaimers presented only one way to salvation, through Jesus (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

Men who seek truth shall be persuaded by the preaching of the pure gospel. That it may be “hard” shall not prevent them (John 6:66-69). That it may be contrary to what they believed before shall not dissuade them (Acts 17:11). That it may be contrary to the belief of the majority shall not hinder them in their belief and obedience (Mat. 7:13-14).

PREACHING THE PURE GOSPEL PLEASES GOD

Men please God when they submit to His will, and do so in preaching the pure gospel. Those who preach “another gospel”; i.e., a perverted gospel are pretenders to God’s throne. They say, in essence, “Move over, God. Let me sit with you on the throne. I have a ‘gospel’ too.”

We dare neither preach the wisdom of men nor change, in any way, the message of God. Paul penned: “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21).

There is only one way of salvation; only one way to become a Christian; only one way to be added to the Lord’s church; and, only one way of hope for eternal life (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; Tit. 1:2). That one way is revealed in the good news of Jesus Christ—the pure gospel.

CONCLUSION

Does the preaching of the pure gospel please you? Surely, it does. Do you really want some perverted, impure, defiled, different gospel that will rob you of grace and trouble you? Certainly, you do not.

Now, for the most important question of your life? Will you hear the pure gospel of Christ and obey Him today? We shall be more than happy to assist you.

Did God Approve Of Rahab’s Lie?

Allen Webster

Joshua sent two spies into Jericho before he launched an offensive against Canaan and this first walled city. The men lodged in a harlot’s house named Rahab, and their presence was made known to the king. He sent men to Rahab to take them. In the meantime, she hid them on the roof under some stalks of flax. She lied to the king’s men saying that they had left already. The soldiers went on a wild goose chase.

Some see this as a Bible example of an acceptable lie. The situationalists (those who believe that morality is dictated by circumstance) often point to Joshua 2 as a proof-text. Is it ever right to tell a lie? What about lying to a criminal in order to protect your family? What about doctors who lie to patients in order to lift their spirits? What of a reporter uncovering an important story? What about ambassadors and presidential press secretaries trying to keep something from reaching public (and thus potentially, enemy) ears? Do these people have the right to lie?

First, one who believes the Bible must admit that it teaches that it is always wrong to lie (Eph. 4:25; Col. 3:9). Just as there are no exceptions to the adultery commandment, there are none for God’s command to not lie (cf. Exo. 20:14,16).

Second, Rahab lied, true, but God never complimented this action. She was a heathen, not yet even converted to Judaism, though indications are that she later was. She had faith in God because of what she had heard about Israel’s victories, but it was an imperfect faith. She evidently had no access to God’s law. She was saved in *spite* of her lying, and not *because of* it. She was also a prostitute, but this text does not authorize such activity.

Third, each of the aforementioned situations has an alternative (cf. 1 Cor. 10:13). In the case of an attacker, we can protect ourselves without lying. A physician has no right to withhold from a patient the truth about his condition. He needs to be able to make his own decisions in light of the truth. Even if it is a terminal illness, he needs to be able to dispose of his properties, write a will, and settle his affairs with man and God. Truthfulness must never be a mask for cruelty and used to deny hope (cf. Eph. 4:15); yet hope built on lies is no hope at

all. There may be a period of time when all the truth is not revealed, but that is not lying. Lying may seem easier than telling the truth, but it is not right.

A government employee does not have to reveal everything he knows to the public. He should explain that certain questions can only be answered after a crisis is over. Mature citizens understand. A nation whose leaders want to keep its citizens' confidence must tell the truth.

A Bulgarian proverb states: "You are permitted in time of great danger to walk with the devil until you have crossed the bridge." There are too many American "Bulgarians"! When a lie is more convenient, they "walk with the devil." And that is just what they are doing, for one cannot walk with God and lie at the same time. Rahab is a good example for us, but not because of her lie.

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MOTIVATING ADULT STUDENTS

Bobby Liddell

Motivation means encouragement to move (motive from motus). The root word indicates action. Thus, to motivate is to encourage one to become active, to move. Adult students are different from children in many ways; therefore, what motivates adults differs from what motivates children. Just as one can see the difference in college and kindergarten, he should see the difference in motivating adults and children.

MOTIVATION THROUGH CLASS SETTINGS

Class settings should set a tone suitable for learning. The classroom should be neat and functional with appropriate seating, lighting and equipment. While the classroom need not be austere, neither should it become a lounge. Necessary comfort without distractions is the key. Adults should understand the class expects all to be punctual. The teacher should expect learning to take place and should show that. Bible study is serious and requires sober-mindedness, but not stuffiness. Make the class setting such that people will want to come to class.

The class setting involves a standard of conduct. Set proper boundaries—within which the teacher also stays. If a student steps outside the boundaries, gently remind them of the limits. Threats, shouting and angry exchanges have no place in the classroom (or elsewhere). If all behave as Christians, the teacher should

never have to go beyond the gentle reminder. If one seems bent on causing a disturbance, the teacher may have to go to them in an effort to solve the problem.

Treat others as you would have them treat you. That means the teacher will not humiliate or embarrass another. He will not slight them or make demeaning personal remarks. He will not boast of himself or put down others. He will handle with care the egos of others. In a Bible class are friends and brethren who are interested in working together. The wise teacher will recognize the different levels of ability and of knowledge and will encourage and instruct all.

Motivate adult students to want to be in class.

MOTIVATION THROUGH CURRICULUM SELECTION

The choice of curriculum is of critical importance. At Bellview, we have adopted a five-year plan to insure variety and a wide range of studies. Some curriculum is not suitable for every age group. Instructions on dating, entering marriage and beginning a home will prove of little use to those in the over 60 class.

The main concern in choosing curriculum is: "Does it teach the truth?" Remember, this is a Bible class. In it, one should expect to learn what the Bible teaches—not

what some false teacher teaches, or what some denominational preacher teaches.

Curriculum should be challenging, not simplistic or boring. While the Bible is deep, yet that which is essential to our salvation and Christian living is understandable. The curriculum should present information that is attainable. Philosophical and theological jargon may be impressive, but what the student needs is something he can use. He needs the meat of the word, but not something over his head and beyond his ability. The Bible teacher provides the adult student with tools he can use everyday. He helps the student to know how to use those tools and wants him to leave each class with something that will help him live for Christ and bring others to the Savior.

Motivate adult students to want to study the class material.

MOTIVATION THROUGH EXAMPLE

The teacher cannot successfully teach what he will not live. He must show he cares for all from the greatest to the least. Someone said: "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." He must show he has Bible knowledge. How can one teach what he does not know? He must be consistent; else, he shall lose the respect of his class.

Motivate the adult student to want to follow the teacher's good example.

MOTIVATION THROUGH INSTRUCTION

Teach the Bible. Teach so students will want the benefits and blessings offered them by God. Take them from where they are to where they need to be. Make Bible class something they will eagerly anticipate. Set goals, but do not try to achieve them with gimmicks. There is a place for humor, but use humor with care. Use illustrations the student can grasp. Jesus did and He was the greatest teacher of all time.

Use a variety of teaching methods, different materials and approaches. Encourage interaction, questions and comments. Probe the class with thought provoking questions that they might learn without pain by giving their own answers. Finally, make instruction practical. If your subject is the cross of Christ, what does the cross mean for me?

Motivate the adult student that he will want to know more.

MOTIVATION THROUGH COOPERATION

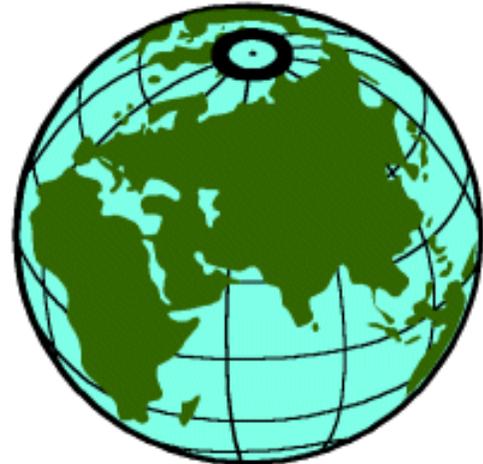
For a Bible class program to work, all must work together. The elders, preachers, teachers, families and

individuals must all cooperate. A motivated Bible class will not happen without a motivated church (and vice-versa).

Motivate adult students to want to be a part of a group that works together for the cause of Christ.

In conclusion: motivate adult students to want to be in class, to study and to learn how to live and to teach others how to live for Christ.

IT'S A BIG WORLD!



**WILL YOU HELP
TAKE THE
GOSPEL TO IT?
(MARK 16:15)**

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FRIDAY, AUGUST 26

**7:00 P.M. MISSION REPORTS
7:30 P.M. “THE GOSPEL IS FOR ALL”**

BARRY GRIDER

SATURDAY, AUGUST 27

**9:00 A.M. “THE MEDIA’S ROLE IN TAKING THE GOSPEL TO ALL”
10:00 A.M. “THE GOSPEL IS FOR INDIA”
11:00 A.M. “THE GOSPEL IS FOR THE CARIBBEAN”
2:00 P.M. LUNCH SERVED BY THE KNIGHT ARNOLD LADIES
1:00 P.M. PANEL DISCUSSION: ED CROOKSHANK—MODERATOR;
PANEL OF MISSIONARIES
5:00 P.M. MISSION APPRECIATION DINNER HONORING W. F. AND BETTY PARKER**

**JIM DEARMAN
FRANK FAIRCLOTH
EUGENE JENKINS**

SPEAKER: JOHN GRUBB

**7:00 P.M. MISSION REPORTS
7:30 P.M. “THE GOSPEL IS FOR ALL RACES”**

JOHN SHANNON

SUNDAY, AUGUST 28

**9:30 A.M. ‘THE GOSPEL IS FOR THOSE IN PRISON’
10:30 A.M. ‘THE GOSPEL IS FOR BOTSWANA’
6:00 P. M. ‘THE GOSPEL IS FOR NEW ZEALAND’**

**W. F. PARKER
JEFF SPENCER
KEVIN MOORE**

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

BOBBY LIDDELL, EDITOR

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“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXIII

August 1994

Number 8

PRAISE THE LORD ON THE HIGH SOUNDING “BRASS ENSEMBLE”

J. E. Choate

BACKGROUND

On the evening of April 10, the Woodmont Hills church of Christ, the Woodmont Christian Church, the Woodmont Baptist Church, Calvary United Methodist Church, the Covenant Presbyterian Church, St. Paul Southern Methodist Church, and the Trinity Methodist Church participated in a joint fraternal “Post Easter Celebration” service. [Rubel Shelly provoked a laugh at the expense of the conservative churches of Christ who think everybody is going to hell but them.] Brother Shelly preached the “celebration” sermon—“The Resurrection: Does It Make a Difference?”

The meeting takes on a magnitude of historical significance for the churches of Christ. This is the church committed “to speaking where the Bible speaks, and doing Bible things in a Bible way.” This is a matter of deep abiding faith in the Bible as God’s Word. The members are committed to restoring the faith and practices of the apostolic church. They honestly believe that sectarian division among Christian believers is wrong.

It is a matter of recorded history that by 1890 the majority of the Christian Churches north of Tennessee had endorsed organized societies and instrumental music. The Christian Church leaders in the northern regions were confident that the innovations could be introduced into the southern churches by using similar strategies which had been successful in Kentucky and beyond. The Christian Missionary Society was organized in 1848, and the melodeon had found its way into the Midway, Kentucky, Christian Church by 1860.

Most of the opposition to the innovations in the northern churches had largely subsided by 1890. The Digressives then moved south into Nashville, Tennessee. The move of the Digressives into Tennessee was carefully orchestrated.

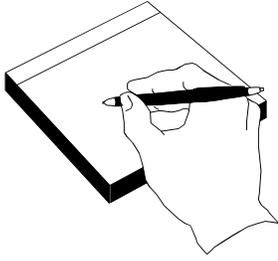
It was through fortuitous circumstances that the Woodland Street Christian Church in East Nashville became the control center for the invasion of churches of Christ across Tennessee. As a result of this interest, the Tennessee Home Missionary Society was organized February 11, 1889, in the Woodland Street Christian Church.

The first fruits of this endeavor was the official organization on October 6, 1890, of the Tennessee Christian Missionary Convention in Chattanooga, Tennessee. David Lipscomb attended the meetings, and he remarked “with no anticipation of changing the current affairs.”

Following close on the heels of the event, E. G. Sewell, an elder in the Woodland Street fellowship, left with a small band of twenty members and established on October 16, 1890, the Tenth Street church of Christ, which was destined to become the mother church of numerous churches thereafter.

Dr. Herman Norton, a preeminent Restoration church historian and author of *Tennessee Christians*, wrote that these two October dates mark the time for the division of the Christian Church and the churches of Christ in Tennessee. This writer suggests that the date, April 10, 1994, will mark the beginning of a major

(Continued on Page 3)



Notes From The Editor Bobby Liddell

MICHAEL HATCHER TO BEGIN WORK WITH BELLVIEW

The Bellview elders have asked Michael Hatcher, of Burkburnett, Texas, to work with the congregation following the August 1 departure of Bobby Liddell to become Dean of Admissions and instructor at the Memphis School of Preaching.

Michael was born on November 27, 1952, in Pensacola, Florida to William C. (Bill), a gospel preacher, and Peggy Hatcher. He was brought up in Texas and Florida. Michael is married to the former Karen S. Savage of Trenton, Texas, and they have two sons, William Andrew and Daniel Michael.

Michael graduated from Harding College in 1976 with a B.A. degree in Bible. While attending college, he served as preacher with the church of Christ in Griffithville, Arkansas. Other congregations he has served include Trenton, Texas, and Calera, Oklahoma. He has been working with the Burkburnett Church of Christ, Burkburnett, Texas, where he has been for the last nine years.

As a preacher for over twenty years, Michael has been active in preaching and spreading the Gospel of Christ. He has directed the North Texas Lectureship, has written a weekly newspaper article since 1987, writes for various brotherhood publications, speaks at lectureships, conducts gospel meetings, and has been a guest speaker on various radio and television programs.

He is on the Advisory Staff of *Firm Foundation* and was the Associate Editor of the *Shield Of Faith* from 1989 to 1992. Michael has taught at Texomaland School of Biblical Studies, Denison, Texas. He was the educational director at the State Street Church of Christ, Bristol, Virginia, and participated in a Preacher Internship Program at the West Side Church of Christ, Muskogee, Oklahoma.

He is presently engaged in a written debate with an atheist concerning "numerical contradictions" in the Bible. He had an oral debate July 25-26, 1994, with a Baptist preacher, Bob Ross concerning instrumental music in worship to God.

The Bellview congregation is looking forward to the arrival of the Hatcher's and to their working together with the saints at Bellview.

We commend them to you and pray for them much success in their service to God.

NEW COMMENTARY ON ROMANS

A New Commentary On Romans by Robin W. Haley is based on the 1901 ASV. In it, Robin has outlined the book of Romans for convenience and structured study, with sections on current issues and challenges. At the end of each chapter is a "We Have Learned" summary. You may obtain your copy by sending six dollars to the author at 912 E. Teresa, Sapulpa, OK 74066. Phone (918) 224-4376.

SINGING WITH GRACE WORKSHOPS

Because of the overwhelming national response to the music fundamentals video, "Singing With Grace," Burt Jones will begin, January, 1995, once again conducting singing fundamentals workshops. This will be a mission work under the oversight of the elders of the Millersburg Church of Christ, Millersburg, Ohio, where brother Jones has labored for the past four years.

During 1990, under the oversight of the elders at Knight Arnold Road, Memphis, TN, he conducted workshops in twenty-four states and Canada.

Jones will be available to conduct three-day workshops beginning January, 1995. Although this is a mission work with congregations of all sizes, without regard to their ability to pay, support for the expenses of this work will be greatly appreciated. If you are considering an excellent work as a part of your 1995 budget, your contribution on a one-time or a monthly basis would be deeply appreciated. Earmark checks for "Singing With Grace" and send to the address below.

Workshops are now being scheduled for 1995. Avoid any delay by writing for available dates and details to: "Singing With Grace," % Elders, Millersburg Church of Christ, 926 E. Jackson, Millersburg, OH 44654. BL

(Continued from Page 1) division in the ranks of the conservative and liberal ranks of the churches of Christ.

This date may very well mark the beginning of the third Restoration denominational church which we will call (for the time being) the “New Age” Church-of-Christ. The area churches are already divided into the “Jubilee” and “anti-Jubilee” churches.

The Digressives were elated with their initial successes in Tennessee. The second meeting of the Tennessee Christian Missionary Convention was on October 13, 14, 1891, in the Woodland Street Christian Church. J. H. Garrison, editor of the *Christian-Evangelist*, was the principal speaker. Garrison understood the significance of the occasion. He wrote, “The *Advocate* has been a great power in Tennessee and were it sympathetic with cooperation would sweep the state.”

During the third year of the invasion, The General Missionary Convention was slated to meet October 18, 1892, in the Vine Street Christian Church. The “big guns” came down for the occasion, whose featured speaker was John W. McGarvey. Lipscomb observed that “quite a number of those who looked favorably on the society went away disgusted.” One brother commented that the convention was held in Lipscomb’s home county as a challenge and an affront to him. He concluded their intent was “to snap their fingers and shake their fist in the face of the man ...who more than anyone else exposed their sophistries.”

In the twenty year period (1890-1910), the Digressives relentlessly pursued their objectives across Tennessee. The Newbern, Tennessee, lawsuit and the establishment of the church of Christ in Henderson, Tennessee (1902-1905), marked the growing division in the Tennessee churches. The United States Religious Census of 1906 recognized on its own that there existed two separate Restoration fellowships in Tennessee--the Christian Church and the Church of Christ.

Despite endless rebuffs and defeats, the Digressives were relentless in pursuit of their elusive goals. The passage of another ten years (1910-1929) demonstrated to the Digressives that theirs was a lost cause in Tennessee. This fact was signaled by two stunning successes of the churches of Christ in Nashville--the Hardeman Tabernacle meetings (1922) and the Boswell-Hardeman Debate (1923).

John B. Cowden, elder in the Vine Street Christian Church, was compelled to admit that they had lost in their bid to win over the churches. He said they have declared that we are a separate and distinct people and

will no longer have anything to do with us; and there is nothing left to do but to fall in with them or fall out with them.

THE THIRD HISTORIC OCCASION

Church historians may very well mark April 10, 1994, as the time when Rubel Shelly and the Woodmont Hills church of Christ drove successfully the first dividing wedge into the body of the churches of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee. Some of Shelly’s influential supporters and disturbers of the peace in the churches are now due for special attention.

What is so strange about the Post Easter Celebration is that Rubel Shelly holds in such low esteem his brethren of yesterday who furnished him with pulpits and provided the financial support while he pursued the Vanderbilt doctorate. Brother Shelly, do you not have any conscience, a sense of shame, and a modicum of gratitude that you would now hold up these brethren to ridicule? It is so strange that he would mount the pulpit of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to continue his assault on the conservative churches of Christ.

Brother Shelly describes the post Easter service as a small beginning for what many of us have dreamed and prayed about for years. He writes in his church bulletin that this meeting is not an affirmation of “open fellowship.” Brother Shelly was effusive in his endorsement of the celebration service. No doubt church historians will place him in the same company with the likes of Leroy Garrett and Don Finto.

THE GREEN HILLS COMMUNITY SERVICE “PROGRAM”

Brother Shelly writes in his church bulletin: “You can be sure that someone will misrepresent the event.” Brother Shelly, there is no need for anyone to misrepresent the event. I presume to describe the order of the events in order of their performance with the program in hand. The writer was present.

“The Gathering” of the worshippers sang great traditional hymns of the church. The congregational singing was accompanied by the Woodmont Baptist Church brass ensemble. Piano and organ music also provided background music. The “Call to Worship” was delivered by the senior pastor of the. Woodmont Christian Church. “Special Music” was provided superbly acappella by the Covenant Presbyterian choir.

The “Responsive Reading” was Psalm 150 which enjoined the praising of God with all kinds of high sounding instruments. [The use of holy water, incense, and a rosary would have added excitement and drama to

the occasion. Shelly could have rendered the sublime ridiculous by sacrificing a chicken according to Levitical kosher law in lieu of holding up the churches of Christ for ridicule.]

A selection was performed by a group of lovely children of the Woodmont Baptist "Young Musician's Choir." The reading of 1 Corinthians 15:19-25 set the tone for the post Easter sermon delivered by brother Shelly. The post Easter service closed with the hymn, "Leaning on the Everlasting Arm."

SUMMARY CONCLUSION

This writer tries to observe the social amenities of a civilized society, and I defend the freedom of religious expression under the Constitution. I share ideas with good professional friends at the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, the Southern Baptist Convention, the resident Greek Orthodox priests, et al., for accurate and truthful documentation. I have good relations with these people because they sense I am not out to "flimflam" them a la *mode* Rubel Shelly. I would covet the opportunity to converse with brother Shelly to dissuade him from further abuses of the churches of Christ.

Yokefellow Co-editors (Curtis A. Cates and Garland Elkins) Note:

First, Rubel Shelly spoke at a recent Pentecostal convention at Christ's Church, Nashville, April 13, 1994 [incidentally, Robert Schuller spoke to the same group that evening], and brother Shelly stated, among other things, 1. that L. H. Hardwick, the local Pentecostal preacher, is a "godly man, a man whose heart belongs to the Lord, and whose life has given him great glory," 2. "I want to encourage your ministries, and I want to revel in the encouragement that has already

come to mind of being able to be here," 3. "I...I don't know if there is yellow journalism anywhere except in the churches of Christ; I suspect none of you have [sic.] had experience of that," 4. "Dead men can't climb ladders, folks. Salvation is by grace. By grace through faith, not of anything we do." Shelly bashed, belittled, and ridiculed the Lord's church grievously [Quotations are directly from the tape of brother Shelly's speech].

Second, Shelly covertly, most inappropriately, and without approval by the host distributed a "Jubilee Fact Sheet" at a recent Nashville preacher's luncheon hosted by 20th Century Christian, June 13, 1994, charging a "Nashville author" with telling nine lies about Jubilee. We are confident that the "Nashville author" [widely thought by those who were present and by others who have heard about it to be a reference to brother J. E. Choate (Ph.D., Vanderbilt University, author, and long-time Lipscomb professor)] is fully capable of refuting these spurious charges--and will!

Third, Shelly was the speaker at the Ross Road Church of Christ, Memphis, Wednesday evening, June 14, 1994, in spite of protestations from both some members of the Ross Road congregation and from some of the other Memphis area congregations.

Fourth, Shelly persists in being leader of the Jubilee, the roster of speakers being composed of a veritable "who's who" of liberals.

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Yokefellow

Memphis School of Preaching
Knight Arnold Church of Christ
4400 Knight Arnold Road
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"COME AND SEE" NEARS 1 MILLION MARK

The tremendous tract, "Come And See," fast approaches the production of its one millionth copy. Brother Garland Elkins authored the tract as a means of introducing the Lord's church to the lost by inviting people to "Come And See."

First copyrighted in 1971, it recently went through its twenty-seventh printing bringing the total of copies printed to 900,000.

When one considers the content of the tract, he better understands its widespread use and proven

effectiveness. Many churches have used it in door-knocking campaigns and other evangelistic efforts. We, at Bellview, have used it several times in our evangelistic outreach packets. Some churches have ordered thousands of copies and have sent them throughout their cities. If you have not used it, you should certainly consider doing so.

Tracts may be ordered from: Garland Elkins
1190 Estate Drive
Memphis, TN 38119

DOES GOD AUTHORIZE SOLOISTS AND CHOIRS IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP?

Bobby Liddell

Sadly, some preachers, of whom Rubel Shelly appears in the forefront, are advocating the use of soloists and choirs, or “special music,” in the worship assembly. They claim, of course, authority from God to so do. Even sadder, many brethren have swallowed their false doctrines. Yet, they have not proved, nor can they prove, from God’s word, the arguments they have advanced. They have simply gone to the old denominational boneyard and have dragged up a few rotting corpses of man-made doctrine upon which they have put new clothes. Having propped a moldering corpse beside them, they move its hands and speak through its mouth and proclaim, “Change. The church must change. Listen to us, and we will show you the way of change.”

Concisely stated, God either: (1) authorizes soloists and choirs in Christian worship; or, (2) He does not. This is very simple and these are the only two possibilities. If it is God’s will that Christians worship Him through the use of soloists and choirs, their use is necessary and not optional; thus, it must follow that it is sinful not to have them. If it is not God’s will, it must follow that it is sinful to have them. Again, these are the only two possibilities. Brother Shelly understands the force of the above. He should know the importance of the why and the how of doing what we do in worship to God (John 4:24).

God, in the New Testament, authorizes singing (Mat. 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12; James 5:13). In corporate worship, God commands all His children to sing in praise to Him (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). God does not authorize playing a mechanical instrument of music in Christian worship. He did not just say, “Make music,” nor, “Make vocal music,” nor, “Make ‘special’ music.” God said, “Sing.”

Ephesians 5:18-21 is a definitive passage on the subject. In the Greek, there are two present passive imperative, second person plural verbs which mean, when translated literally: “be not drunk,” and, “be filled” (*Berry’s Interlinear*, p. 509). Five participles follow (speaking, singing, making melody, giving thanks and submitting yourselves), the first four of

which are present active (imperative sense) and the last of which is present passive (imperative sense). All are second person plural. These participles bear direct relation to the two verbs and show the way in which the orders of the two verbs are to be followed.

Please note these two important points from the above. First, the imperative mood, “...is the mood which expresses action which is to be realized by the exercise of the will of one person upon that of another” (*Summers*, p. 112) and, “The imperative mood is used in commands” (*Machen*, p. 180). Second, the second person plural construction involves all to whom the passage pertains; that is, all the saints at Ephesus (Eph. 1:1). Thus, the inevitable conclusion must be that all the saints at Ephesus were commanded to sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs in worship to God. If all the saints were **commanded** to sing, how could one (a soloist) or some (a choir) fulfill that requirement? Surely, we can understand the difference between one, some and all.

Another important point is that of the reciprocity mandated by the reciprocal reflexive pronoun found in, “Speaking one to another” (Eph. 5:19, ASV). Reciprocity indicates an action in which all join collectively and emphasizes, “...the idea of corporate unity” (*Lightfoot*, Colossians and Philemon, p. 221). Shelly, himself, said: “In Ephesians 5:19, for example, the singing is clearly being done by people in association with others. Thus the command to ‘speak to one another’ is found. In order for mutual edification to occur by congregational or antiphonal singing, there has to be some sort of corporate entity” (*Sing His Praise!*, p. 58). Since God has: (1) commanded; (2) all the saints; (3) to sing; (4) one to another in corporate unity, neither a soloist nor a choir could do that which God has revealed to be His will in Christian worship (by His commanding all the saints to sing together in praise to Him in the assembly). **Therefore, from the Scriptures, we must conclude God does not authorize soloists and choirs in Christian worship.**

We understand this fact will make absolutely no difference to some, for it does not coincide with their desires for change to something new, different and

entertaining. Those who have set their hearts on being like their religious neighbors and who are willing to twist God's holy word to salve their consciences in so doing, have not pioneered new ground in elitist scholarship. Long ago, inspiration recorded: "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13). Rubel's "new cart" of "special music" has the same problem of that new cart in David's day (1 Chr. 13:7); namely, it is not after the due order--it is not authorized by God (15:13). If it is not according to God's will, it is not God's plan and all the sincerity and good intentions in the world will not make it so. Neither will the blustering posturing of self-promotion or the smirking sarcasm aimed at the righteous, by those who seek to intimidate others to follow them, make it so. Such men become Satan's stools in his efforts to destroy the Lord's people. These false

teachers, having put forth their hand in disobedient disregard to God's will, face spiritual death just as surely as Uzza died on that day.

Dear friends, one does not have to have a Ph.D. to understand God's will concerning Christian worship. For some, including Shelly, it is an obvious hindrance to themselves and to those who hear them. Please observe carefully: "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17). We can understand the Lord's will. His will is that when the saints assemble, all His children are to sing one to another in worship to Him. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). We plead with all to return to God and follow His way.

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BOBBY LIDDELL, EDITOR

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Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXIII

September, 1994

Number 9

Bait And Switch

Burt Jones

I remember an afternoon years ago while reading the newspaper an advertisement caught my eye. The farther I read the better the message sounded. How could they offer something *that* good for such a low price? It was a considerably better bargain than any other I had seen for the same product. I promptly drove to this place of business, approached the salesman with my newspaper advertisement in hand and stated, *“I want that!”* Now, dear reader, I implore you to guess what that salesman, honest-appearing, and with eyes fixed on mine, replied, *“Well, we advertised that item, but we don’t have exactly that. Let me show you what we do have at a slightly higher price.”*

I instantly realized that I had been the latest victim of a scam know as the *“bait-and-switch.”*

I had been innocently drawn into a deceitful ploy used by unscrupulous types since time immemorial. The object of this strategy is to turn an unsuspecting person or group from that which is promised or stated to something counterfeit, something unguine or substitutionary.

We have only to go to the first chapter of Genesis before we run headlong into the first recorded bait-and-switch in history. *“...Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil”* (Gen. 3:4-5). Sister Eve fell into a deceitful trap even worse than the *standard* bait-and-switch. The devil here used the dreaded REVERSE bait-and-switch, *“...Then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods...”* (v. 5). You see, there had already been a *“NOT”* placed in the devil’s

tale in verse four with the first inspired record of a lie. Now Eve was being *“switched”* from what she knew was correct to something which would have consequences stretching across the centuries to judgment day.

The Bait-and-Switch of Denominationalism

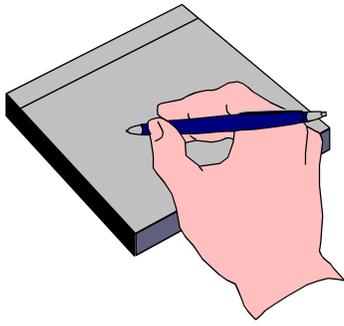
Denominationalism (all 2,054 divisions of it) would have you believe that what *they* advertise is soul-saving truth. Denominationalism is, by its very nature, divisive. Divisiveness is sin! Without exception, man-made religious organizations will bait you with a more palatable *“truth”* and later switch you to something for which you will pay a dear premium.

Some of the means employed to lead you into their fold are: The Bait-and-Switch of **ANOTHER WAY**. Even though Jesus plainly said to Thomas, *“...I am the way...”* (John 14:6), these fraudulent fakers attempt to turn all-too-gullible souls to **THEIR** way.

The woman with an issue of blood (Mark 5:25-34) had *“...suffered many things of many physicians...”* (v. 26), but none of the doctors could help. Can you imagine the frustration and torment felt by this timid soul? *“Maybe this month will be better than last month.”* But healing never came. After these earthly physicians had tried their remedies without success and had depleted the woman of all her substance, she turned to Jesus — **THE WAY!** Following closely the trickery of **ANOTHER WAY** is the slicker, subtly packaged ploy of the Bait-and-Switch known as **DO BETTER**. This salesperson says to the sinner, *“Just try to do better in the future than you*

(Continued on Page 3)

Notes From The Editor



**Michael
Hatcher**

As the new editor of *Defender* I would like to think back for a few moments. Brother William S. Cline began this publication 23 years ago. Brother Cline wrote, "The design of this paper is to *exalt* New Testament Christianity. To do so we must *oppose* false doctrine and false teachers." The *Defender* has been faithful in doing this for 23 years under various editors. As I begin, it will be my intention of continuing the good work of the previous years.

To "exalt New Testament Christianity" one must exalt **God**. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him" (Psa. 89:7). We must reverence and exalt God. We must exalt Him for who He is. He is Jehovah, the Almighty God. "And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted" (Isa. 12:4). "That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth" (Psa. 83:18). We must exalt God for what He has done. He is the Creator of the universe and man (Gen. 1). He also is the sustainer of life. We must exalt Him. "For thou, LORD, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods" (Psa. 97:9).

We must also exalt the **Son of God**, Jesus of Nazareth who is the Christ. Jesus is the one who has all authority. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Mat. 28:18). He is the ruler of the universe. "Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15). We will not have any article that would denigrate our Lord. We will not be calling the mother of Jesus a "sexually questionable" woman. We will not have any article to question the authority, honor or kingship of our Master and Lord Jesus Christ.

We must exalt **God's Word**, the Bible. The Bible is all authoritative. The New Testament will judge us on the day of judgment. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). The apostles, guided by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (John 14:25-26; 16:12-13; Eph. 3:4-5), wrote that word in the New Testament. Thus, those books of the New Testament will judge us in the last day. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. 20:12). There are many today who deny the plenary verbal inspiration of the Bible. It is our duty to defend and oppose all those who would cast a disparaging light upon the Bible.

In exalting New Testament Christianity we must exalt the **church**. It is impossible to separate Christ from the church. When Saul of Tarsus was persecuting the church, Jesus accused Saul of persecuting Him. "And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" (Acts 9:4-5). The church is a glorious institution because God planned it from eternity (Eph. 3:10-11), the prophets prophesied of it, Christ established it (Mat. 16:18), Christ died for it (Acts 20:28), and He is the head of it (Eph. 1:22-23). God adds all the saved to the church (Acts 2:41-47) and Jesus will save those who are members of the church (Eph. 5:23-27). No article that presents the church in a demeaning manner will find its way into the pages of this publication.

It is also our duty to oppose all false ways. Our Lord warned of wolves coming in sheep's clothing (Mat. 7:15). Thus, we must try the spirits (1 John 4:1) to see if they are from God. In trying the spirits we must also warn the brethren both of the false doctrines and the false teachers, which will include naming names when necessary.

We appreciate the support brethren have given this paper in the past, and pray your continued support as we strive to carry on in the good work of our predecessors. I would like to thank brother Bobby Liddell in the encouragement he has given me and in making this a smooth transition. I look forward to working many years with the good elders of this congregation and as editor of *Defender*. We also value those who have written for *Defender* in the past and solicit articles from faithful men in the future.

(Continued from Page 1) have in the past and that will be acceptable to God. After all, no one is perfect." Extending this form of logic, here is a man who is trusted by a large corporation. He steals one hundred thousand dollars. Management discovers his dishonesty and offers him a deal. "We are going to let you keep your job, but try to do better." The man followed their instruction and DID better. The next time he stole only fifty thousand dollars. HE DID BETTER! Last week you drank a *case* of beer. This week you drink only a *six-pack*. You are doing better! Does this sound ridiculous? Before you laugh, this logic is sounder than that held by many within the Body of Christ. Brethren, either you are for God or you are against God. You cannot serve both God and mammon.

There is the Bait-and-Switch of **GOOD ENOUGH**. You are baited with the phrase, "You are a good person. You are honest. You harm no one. You are good enough!" But after this deluder leaves, you have an unsettling feeling that he did not help you. Have you ever noticed that you can tell just how far away from God a person is by the number of times they tell you how good they are? The nearer to God a person is, the more he or she can see their sins. Isaiah said to God, "...Woe is me! For I am undone; I am a man of unclean lips..." (Isa. 6:5). Peter said, "...Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8). These good men did NOT say "Oh well. I'm good enough. The Lord will understand." Dear reader, no man is ever good enough to be saved. We strive faithfully as best we are able with His Word as our guide, not *switched* by that futile thinking that we are good enough in simply measuring our lives with those around us. From the bait-and-switch of GOOD ENOUGH, to its condemning companion, **NO HELL**, man continues in his gullibility. Someone baits you with the statement, "Don't worry. There is no such place as hell. There is no punishment for a sinner. We have a merciful God. He is not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. 3:9)." You are *switched* into believing that you can dismiss the reality of hell taught in the Bible because you do not like it. Our Lord said, "Blessed are they that do His commandments that they might have a right to the tree of life..." (Rev. 22:14). Hell is a scriptural fact. The combined thoughts of your entire life will not fill that pit nor

block hell's gate.

As we continue down the low road that leadeth to damnation we happen upon the bait-and-switch of **AGNOSTICISM**. The bait in this sad and short-sighted sophistry consists of falling victim to the wisdom of men. Earthly intellect lures unsuspecting souls into the web of one who holds the view that any ultimate reality (i.e., GOD) is unknown and probably unknowable. The switch is away from Paul's confidence in having stated, "...for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12), to the weak and spineless grasping at straws of the agnostic in saying, "I don't know if there is a God or not. I don't know whether or not there is a soul. I don't know if there is an eternal life." Friend, this writer is abiding on the opposite end of the spectrum from the AGnostic. I am a firm believer in the spiritual truths found in the New Testament. More specifically, where the AGnostic does not know whether God or things spiritual and eternal even exist, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, not powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39).

Finally, and the most pitiable of all souls, is that victim of the cruelest bait-and-switch of all. He is that delirious dupe, the **ATHEIST**. He is baited by the devil into saying, "There is no God." He is then switched by the prince of this world giving him false assurance that he need not be troubled about the future or about eternity, because this bon vivant epicureanism is all that he has:

Brethren, "...evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13).

I am tired of politically correct religions that even unbelievers do not feel embarrassed to join.

I am tired of 1994 efforts to force a counterfeit kingdom of God on an unregenerate society.

I am tired of professors who *bait* intelligent young students with worldly intellect and then *switch* them into doubting every miracle in the Word of God.

I am tired of the new morality, situation ethics, existentialism, and the latest liberal aberrations out of certain congregations of what *used* to be the church of

Christ in Nashville and Abilene. I could not care less about these pseudo-sophisticate fads that change as do women's fashions, and by which spiritual adolescents are carried away by every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14).

I am tired of those who continually spout off how tired they are of things, therefore, let me proffer certain things in which I believe and of which I am **not** tired.

I believe that the Bible is the infallible, inerrant Word of God. I do not understand it all, but I stand on it. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and I believe that He rose bodily from the grave. I believe that His church, the church of Christ, is made up of those twice-born souls, who, after a faithful life, will be whisked into glory with the redeemed of all ages. I believe there is a heaven. I will not be baited to

accept some other reward, nor will I be switched to some exegetical sleight-of-hand attempting to change that fact.

Brethren, our greatest hindrance in the church of The Firstborn is not our badness, but our goodness—the good that is not good enough, willing to be switched to some gaudy spiritual surrogate. "...Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees..." (Mat. 5:20). Well, now, that righteousness was pretty good. They regularly worshipped and tithed and lived sanctified lives, but they were baited by the devil with preeminence and switched to an eternity in hell because they were building on an improper foundation.

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11).

Thou shalt not be baited and switched!

926 East Jackson Street Millersburg, OH 44654

GIVE ME THAT OLD TIME RELIGION

W. Gaddys Roy

There is an old song, "Give me that Old Time Religion." I am not speaking of that song. Some lines in that song are good and scriptural, but some lines are unscriptural. One statement in the song, "It was good for the prophet Daniel and it is good enough for me," is unscriptural. Daniel lived under the Old Testament which was given to the Jews. That religion was nailed to the cross when Christ was crucified (Col. 2:14-16). Under that religion the priests were of the tribe of Levi. I want Jesus as my high priest, and He is of the tribe of Judah. "The priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change of law" (Heb. 7:12). While, I do not want the religion of Daniel, I do want the religion that Daniel spoke of when he interpreted King Nebuchadnezzar's dream. In King Nebuchadnezzar's dream he saw a great image, its head was of gold. Its arms and breast were of silver. Its belly and thighs were of brass. Its legs were iron, and its feet were part of iron and part of clay. He saw a stone cut out without hands, and it smote the image on its feet, and the image was broken in pieces and carried away as the chaff of the summers threshing floor. The stone that smote the image became a mountain and filled the whole earth (Dan. 2:31-34). Daniel's interpretation of the dream was that the head of gold represented the Babylonian Kingdom of which Nebuchadnezzar was king. Daniel said that the image represented three other kingdoms that were to follow,

and each kingdom would be inferior to the preceding kingdom as silver is inferior to gold, and as brass is inferior to silver, and as iron is inferior to brass (Dan. 2:36-40). These kingdoms were the Babylonian Kingdom, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Alexandrian Kingdom, and the Roman Empire. The stone that broke the image in pieces and filled the earth is the church or the kingdom of God which was set up during the Roman Empire (Dan. 2:44). That is the "Old Time Religion that I Want."

Joel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah spoke of that religion and said that it would be in "the last days." Joel said the pouring out of the Holy Spirit would be without distinction of race, sex, or age (Joel 2:28). Isaiah saw the house of the Lord exalted above the hills (Isa. 2:2-3). Therefore, the church would be the greatest of all institutions. Jeremiah saw that in "the last days" God's people would be governed by a new covenant or law (Jer. 31:31-34). "The last days" began on Pentecost in A.D. 33 (Acts 2:16-17). That was the beginning of the church, which is the kingdom of God, and that is the "Old Time Religion that I Want." Under this religion, Christ is king and priest at the same time (Zec. 6:12-13). If Jesus is not my king now, He could not be my priest now, and I would have no one through whom to pray. Those who believe that Jesus is to set up His Kingdom in the future, though they pray, have no one to pray through.

I want that "Old Time Religion" where the Word of God is preached (2 Tim. 4:2). The Word of God is powerful (Heb. 4:12). I do not want a religion where preachers preach human creeds, their feelings, or dreams. Jeremiah said, "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully..." (Jer. 23:28).

"Give Me That Old Time Religion" which teaches that people are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9). Jesus was telling the apostles how to tell people to be saved by grace (Mark 16:15-16). Peter told the people on Pentecost how to be saved by grace through faith (Acts 2:36-41). The Galatians were saved by grace through faith. The reason was their faith led them to be baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:26-27). God has only one way to save people and that is by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 1:16).

I want that religion where people worship in *spirit* and in *truth* (John 4:24). For one to worship God in *spirit* his heart must be in the worship. To worship God one must do what God has said to do in worship (John 17:17). The church in the New Testament met on the first day of the week. That was true of the church at Troas (Acts 20:7). It was true of the churches of Galatia and Corinth (1 Cor. 16:1-2). Jesus had promised to meet with His disciples and eat the Lord's Supper (Mat. 26:26-29; Luke 22:29-30; Mark 14:25). I would not want or have a religion where they omitted the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week. Those who forsake the worship, including the Lord's Supper, on the first day of the week are in danger of hell fire (Heb. 10:24-30). The Lord's Supper looks back to our Lord's tragic death on the cross, and it also looks forward to His glorious coming (1 Cor. 11:26). The day on which we eat the Lord's Supper commemorates the day that Jesus arose from the dead and brought life and immortality to Light (Mark 16:9).

I want that "Old Time Religion" that wears the name, and only the name that God said He would give (Isa. 62:2). The only name by which God's people are called in the New Testament that is new is the name Christian (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16). Any other name, or any name added to the name Christian would be an addition to the word of God, and those doing so would not be abiding in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11).

I want that "Old Time Religion" that unites people. We can all be united on the Bible but not on human creeds (John 17:20-21; 1 Cor. 1:10-17; Psa.

133:1). Yes, "Give me that Old Time Religion" that began on Pentecost in A.D. 33. All can be united and please God in that religion.

2031 Highway 31 North Deatsville, AL 36022

NEWS RELEASE:

THIRTEENTH ANNUAL DENTON LECTURES PLANNED

The Pearl Street Church of Christ in Denton, Texas will host its thirteenth major annual lectureship November 13-17, 1994. The **THIRTEENTH ANNUAL DENTON LECTURES** will be devoted to a study of the books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. A wide variety of material will be covered by 35 outstanding speakers from all parts of the nation, delivering 35 lectures. The aim of this lecture series is to provide fundamental and sound Biblical teaching to edify all who attend and who will have access to the lectures through the audio and video tapes and the book of the lectures. Another major aim of the lectures is to help combat and expose religious error both within and without the church. The lectureship book (cir. 500 pages) will be a fitting companion to those of previous years (in order of their occurrence, *Studies in 1 Corinthians*, *Studies in Hebrews*, *Studies in the Revelation*, *Studies in Acts*, *Studies in Galatians*, *Studies in 1, 2, 3 John*, *Studies in 1, 2 Thessalonians and Philemon*, *Studies in 2 Corinthians*, *Studies in James*, *Studies in 1, 2 Samuel*, *Studies in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther*, and *Studies in 1, 2 Kings and 1, 2 Chronicles*.)

A daily "Discussion Forum" (Monday-Thursday) will feature controversial subjects. The subjects this year will be "Is God Concerned Only with the 'Core' or the 'Bull's Eye' of His Law?", "Where and When Shall We Draw the Line of Fellowship?", "What Does Biblical Love Include and Not Include?", and "How Shall the People of God Be Identified?" After a lecture on each of these subjects on their respective days, questions from the audience will be encouraged. This year's speakers will be Tim Ayers, Bob Berard, David Brown, Ken Butterworth, Curtis Cates, Gary Colley, Darrell Conley, Mac Deaver, Roy C. Deaver, Robert Dodson, Garland Elkins, Noah Hackworth, Robin Haley, Ronnie Hayes, Terry Hightower, Howard Horton, Lester Kamp, Bobby Liddell, Bob McAnally, Dub McClish, Joseph Meador, James Meadows, Lindell Mitchell, Keith Mosher, Goebel Music, Tim Nichols, James Rogers. Paul Sain, Gary

Summers, Robert R. Taylor, Tom Wacaster, Thomas Warren, Marvin Weir, Jesse Whitlock, and Eddie Whitten.

Exhibit space is available for both commercial and non-commercial interests, subject to invitation and/or approval by the Pearl Street elders. Housing in the homes of local Christians will be provided as long

as it lasts. Several major motels are located in Denton. Hookups (including a dump station) for travel trailers and motor homes will be provided on the church parking lot by advance registration. For further information, you may write to the Church of Christ, 312 Pearl St., Denton, TX 76201, or call the McClishes at 817/387-1429.

THE “WRETCHED MAN” OF ROMANS CHAPTER SEVEN

Romans 7:24

Larry D. Mathis

Paul’s Epistle to the Romans is a difficult book to understand. Romans 7:14-25 is considered to be one of the more difficult sections—the focal point being that of the identity of Paul’s “Wretched Man.”

Of whom does the Apostle speak? Does he here describe (1) the unregenerate man; (2) the Jew under the Law of Moses; (3) the discord which ruled his own life, as a Pharisee, while he served under Judaism; or (4) the “inner-struggle” that goes on in the life of the Christian; the war between the flesh and the spirit?

We are confident Paul was not describing the condition of a Christian “struggling with sin in his life”; and that, it is incorrect and absurd to so interpret this text. A close examination reveals that this entire chapter (Romans 7), is a discussion of the Law of Moses. We offer the following brief outline.

In this chapter Paul shows that (1) All Christians are dead to the Law of Moses by the body of Christ, and that, the Mosaic Law has absolutely no rule over them whatsoever (7:1-6); (2) The Law of Moses was not a bad law; it was not a sorry law; it was not sinful, but rather, it was “holy, and just, and good”; a law that brought the knowledge of sin (7:7-13); but (3) The Mosaic Law was powerless to save and actually left man in a miserable, “wretched,” servile condition (7:14-25).

In this section (7:14-25), Paul describes an individual who is (1) carnal; (2) sold under sin; (3) a servant or slave of sin; (4) an individual who is indwelt by sin; (5) one who is captive to the law of sin and death; (6) an individual who has the law of sin in his members; (7) one who is living in a body of death; (8) a “WRETCHED MAN”; (9) one who is crying out for deliverance; and (10) an individual who sees Jesus Christ as the one and only solution to his dilemma.

As one writer put it, “Are such words as these any

fit comment of any child of God who has been redeemed by the blood of Christ? To use Paul’s words, God forbid! To refer these words to Paul’s status as a Christian, or to the status of any other Christian, is to torture the Word of God. Such a construction upon these words approaches blasphemy. Paul had just finished saying that Christians are ‘dead to sin’ and ‘alive unto God’ in Christ Jesus (6:11); and to apply these words to Christians is to contradict what had just been stated...the conflict noted in the following verses resulted, not from any Christian experience whatever, but from the tragic efforts of truly noble souls (of whom Paul himself was numbered) who had diligently sought to please God under the old institution....He (Paul, LDM) was speaking of the fruitless struggle of souls under the law of Moses who, despite their efforts, found no justification thereunder” (Coffman, Romans, Pgs. 261-263).

CONCLUSION

All of Romans chapter seven involves a discussion of the Law of Moses. In 7:14-25, Paul describes the “wretched,” miserable condition of an individual who is out of Christ but under the Law of Moses (Judaism). Here is the picture of an individual attempting to keep that system perfectly. It is altogether possible that Paul is describing his own struggle, as a Pharisee, to keep Mosaic legislation before he became a Christian.

The section does not describe the Christian but Romans chapter eight does and there is a bold contrast indeed—“Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord....There is therefore NOW no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. 7:24-25; 8:1).

1200 Cleary Ave. Metairie, LA 70001

NEW DIRECTOR NAMED FOR KIEV BIBLE INSTITUTE

Jim E. Waldron

On August first, Roger Campbell became director of the Kiev Bible Institute. KBI is the work of the Centre church of Christ in Kiev, Ukraine. This congregation, which was begun September 1, 1991, had an average attendance May - July this year of 145. It meets in the auditorium of the Kiev Pedagogical Institute in the center of Kiev. Two other congregations have been started through the efforts of the Centre church. The Bible Institute, which was begun in September 1992, meets on the campus of Kiev Poly Technical Institute. The stateside sponsor is the Avondale church in Atlanta, Georgia. Many others contribute toward this work. The school held its first graduation on July 17th with 10 students receiving diplomas—seven women and three men. A third year program is provided for men. Student preachers are this summer helping with the work in four congregations. Women graduates will be teaching Bible in the public schools of Kiev. Jim Waldron, who served as director of KBI during its first two years, stepped down at the end of July. About 75, all faithful Christians, are expected for the Fall term. Those who have been Christians for at least one year from all over the old Soviet Union are eligible to attend. Support for a married man, \$50.00 per month and \$25.00 for a single, is provided by the church.

The men of the Centre church selected Campbell as Waldron's replacement the first Sunday in July and the Avondale elders, on that basis, appointed him to the work of director. His own sponsor is the Viva Drive church in Truman, Arkansas. Roger was born to Robert and Janice Campbell on March 23, 1956, in Crawfordsville. Roger obeyed the gospel in March 1977, and, through the influence of the late Bill Cline, enrolled in 1979 in the Bellview School of Preaching

in Pensacola, Florida. While there he preached for the Brentwood church. He graduated from Bellview in 1981 and continued to preach for Brentwood until August 1982. Roger is married to the former Donna Fouts, who is also from Crawfordsville. Together with their two young sons, Caleb and Jacob, they moved to Taiwan in November 1982. A daughter, Reagan, was born there in July, 1983. The Campbells moved from Taiwan to Kiev in August 1993. Donna, beside guiding her household, last year taught, two courses for the women of the Bible Institute, and managed the church office in Kiev. Even though it has been a very busy year for the two of them, Roger, who speaks Chinese fluently, has done well in his studies of Russian, and was able to deliver his first sermon in that language on Sunday July 17th. Each week Roger holds a class for students from mainland China, who are in Kiev for business and higher education.

P.O. BOX 171 Kiev, Ukraine 252 001

New School

Classes for the **West Virginia School of Preaching** began August 29 with five full-time students. Emanuel Daugherty serves as director of the school. The faculty consist of Wirt Cook, Denver Cooper, Charles Pugh III, W. Terry Varner and D. Gene West. Two of the five students are still in need of support. If anyone can help with their support please contact Emanuel Daugherty at P.O. Box 785, Moundsville, West Virginia 26041. They are also in need of other items (books, chairs, desks, etc.) for the school.

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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
20 Emory Drive
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Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXIII

October, 1994

Number 10

RESPECT FOR BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

Sometime during the seventh century before Christ the great prophet of God, Jeremiah wrote:

Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD. They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you (Jer. 23:16-17).

The sin of exalting human wisdom above the authority of God is ancient (Gen. 3:6), continued in Jeremiah's day, and is widespread among God's people (as well as the world) today. One often hears the statement, "Scholars are agreed on this subject." The response to "scholars are agreed" by those who hold to biblical authority in matters of faith and practice needs to be a resounding—"So what!" Any kind of approach to the Bible that sets man or his education above the Word of God is a poisonous activity: "And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another" (1 Cor. 4:6). What are some of the ways that man shows his disrespect for God's Word?

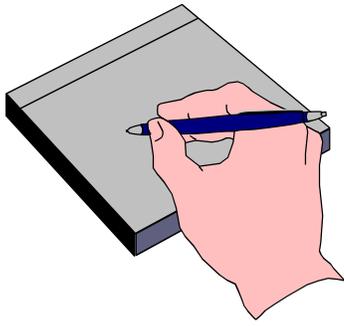
HUMANISM

Those who find authority for their faith in man's achievements opt for the speculative approach to religion and not a "thus saith the Lord." The *Encyclopedia of American Religions* (Second Edition, ed. J. Gordon Melton) lists the "American Humanist Association" as a religion and reports that it is an outgrowth of a movement in the 1920's that became "anti-theist" (p. 675). The *A Humanist Manifesto* (I) of 1933 listed John

Dewey among the eleven authors. Dewey had much to do with the direction of the atheistic education of American youth and the manifesto to which he signed his name called for a "...radical change in religious perspectives" (*Ibid.*). Religion was seen by the humanist as a tool for realizing the highest values in life. The leading advocate today of this anti-God, anti-Bible religion is Paul Kurtz who formerly edited the *Humanist* and is currently head of Prometheus Books, the major American publisher of humanist literature.

The impact of humanism on the minds of Americans and also on the minds of professed Christians is enormous. One example of the impression "natural religion" or humanism has can be seen in the attitudes in this country and even among some Christians toward the terrible disease AIDS. Since it is held that man is the highest ideal, and that man is no more than matter in motion (per evolution, which is atheistic humanism dressed in scientific robes), then man can solve all of his problems with research and technological control of his environment. Modern society is demanding that massive research be done to find "salvation" from AIDS. Rather than respect God's Word, which condemns homosexual activity (Rom. 1:27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11), humanistic society today is being educated to practice "safe" fornication by the use of contraceptive devices and thus continues its immoral, anti-God lifestyle. Respect for God's Word would solve the AIDS problem in a generation. There would be no premarital sex and one man would live with one woman for life (Mat. 19:1-12). There would be no disgusting liaisons of men with men and women with women. Families would be

(Continued On Page 3)



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Authority

The word authority means the power or right to give commands, enforce obedience, take action, or make final decisions; jurisdiction. There is authority in any aspect of life. Without something or someone in authority, chaos would reign.

God has supreme authority. Because He is the creator of the universe including man, He has supreme authority. He teaches this lesson to Jeremiah and the Israelites in Jeremiah 18 under the figure of the potter. The potter working with the clay, however the clay was marred in the hands of the potter, so he makes it again as it pleased him. God's conclusion is, "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel" (Jer. 18:6). Paul also uses this figure in Romans 9:20-21.

The authority God possesses by right of creation, He has given to His Son, Jesus. "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18). Paul states that Jesus has the preeminence, the prestige, prominence, power in all things. Religiously, we *must* hear Christ (cf. Mat. 17:5; Acts 3:22-23; Heb. 12:25).

The words of Christ will judge us on the last day. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). Those words have been recorded for us in the Bible. Thus, it is the Bible which will judge us on the last day. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. 20:12). Paul would state, "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel"

(Rom. 2:16). On that last great day, God's Word will be placed on one side of the scales and our lives on the other. Those individuals, whose lives have measured up to the standard of the Scriptures will receive an eternal reward with God in heaven. Those lives not measuring up to the words of Christ will go into everlasting torment (2 The. 1:6-9).

However, some are not content to live within the commands of Christ. They need to remember the severity of God. "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" (Rom. 11:22). We will only receive God's goodness *if* we continue in the Christ's words. When we fail to remain within the Bible's teaching, we no longer are a part of God. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9).

Many people will change or alter God's Word. They need to know that God will not stand for such. "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Rev. 22:18-19). If any individual, or even if an angel should change God's Word he will be eternally cut off from God, "anathema" (Gal. 1:6-9).

Yet, man continues to change God's revealed Word. Men have changed the church of God (Acts 20:28). They teach contrary doctrines to God's revealed plan of salvation. They have come up with doctrines such as salvation by grace only or salvation by faith only (without any acts of obedience). Man teaches that baptism has nothing to do with salvation contrary to Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38 and others. Men have changed the worship of Christ's church. Some do not partake of the Lord's Supper upon the first day of every week (Acts 20:7), but will take of it monthly, quarterly, annually while others will take of it upon days other than the first day of the week. Most have added mechanical instrumental music, choirs and choruses to the worship of the church which is without Bible authority. Many have altered the work of the church. They have made the church into a social institution delving into politics and providing recreation and entertainment for people. The Scripture teaches the work of the church is spiritual, the saving of souls, not physical and social. Let us learn to respect God's Word to do all that God says and only what God says.

(Continued From Page 1)

strong and children would be allowed to grow in healthy environments. Sin would be labeled as sin and men would be called on to repent not research!

EXISTENTIALISM

The existentialist (per Spinoza and Hegel, see *An Introduction to Existentialism*, Robert G. Olson; Dover Publications, 1962), views one object and one object only as eternal—nature. Nature was the cause of itself and is the totality of all that exists. Since the “totality of what is” has the characteristic of immutability (i.e., “...all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation,” 2 Pet. 3:4—the sin of the scoffer), it follows, according to the existentialist, that whatever happens in life occurs out of necessity. There are no accidents and man should accept and even wish that things take place as they do. All mental disturbances such as fear, envy, regret, anger, etc. are caused because man wants things differently from what they are and man must learn his place in the order of necessary things. Individuals are but “moments” in an ever synthesizing history and the “Absolute” is but the sum of all these evolutionary movements. Man is going nowhere in a desperate adventure just as is a dog; the only difference being that man knows it.

Existentialism disrespect God’s authority basically by arguing that man has no choice in his existence. (The English existentialist, John Stuart Mills, when confronted with this problem of lack of choice remarked that it is still better to be an unhappy Socrates than a contented pig.) Existentialism denies man’s eternal nature (Mat. 16:24) and mocks the reason for the appearance of the Christ to bring “...life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

This philosophy of the “existent now” denies any absolute truths and makes every action of man subjective or relative. The doctrine of situation ethics grows out of an existential background and such doctrine is condemned by the Bible (Jud. 21:25; 1 Cor. 14:37). Those who are attempting to accommodate biblical doctrine with denominational teaching, or evolutionary thinking, or fatalism (such as those who see existentialism in Jesus’ requirement not to love the world) have made subjective that which is supposed to be absolute: “But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Mat. 4:4).

A further dilution of respect for God’s Word is seen when the doctrine that man is necessarily helpless

to change life is brought into Christianity. (The early advocates of this existential theory were Augustine and Pascal.) The false philosophy of man’s utter depravity without the grace of God denies even a need for the Bible! If man cannot understand enough to choose God, why the written word at all! All “man is helpless” teachings (i.e., Calvinism) among denominations and among churches of Christ are daughters and sons of existentialism and have no place in the thinking of Christians who respect God’s Word. The Bible is replete with the instructions that man can and even **must** choose his way in life and eternity (Jos. 24:15; Mat. 11:28-30; et al).

Doctrines of special revelation or the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, emotionalism, following a law of the heart, or any internal methods of authority are existential and not biblical. It is passingly sad that many in churches of Christ have apostatized from objective truth and even would split the body of Christ with the existential sword.

RESPECT FOR GOD’S SILENCE

Of the myriad ways man shows disrespect for the Bible and thus for God (Psa. 138:2), none is more prevalent than the argument from silence. Rebellious man will often argue that if the Bible does not specifically forbid a thing then it is perfectly correct to practice said “thing” in religion and life. Man will use the argument from silence when it suits him. Such as the father who instructs his children to “play in the front yard” and then disciplines them for going into the street. Should not the children argue, “Well, Father, you did not say we could not go into the street!” But, when it comes to religion, many “fathers” are a lot more arrogant than those fictional children just mentioned. Man will allow almost everything in religion by foolishly stating that there is not specific prohibition in the Bible concerning the practice.

When Eve gullibly ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and when Adam deliberately partook, an era of “I’ll be my own boss” entered the world of man (Gen. 3). Since that terrible moment in the garden of Eden, man has wanted to be his own decider as to that which is good and that which is evil. Phrases such as, “I don’t see anything wrong with this,” and “Surely God would not be displeased with this activity,” have abounded in religious circles. Men ask for the source of the specific prohibition in the Bible against a priesthood-laity organization, instrumental music in worship, choirs in worship, candles, beads, disciplers, gambling, danc-

ing, social drinking, denominational churches, Lord's supper on Saturday, ad infinitum. Such men never seem to grasp the idea that when God authorizes a given activity in worship or practice or organization **all other activities are forbidden**. God did not say one could not use an instrument in worship. God did say to sing (Eph. 5:19). The command to sing must be respected just as the child must respect his father's positive command to play in the front yard.

A formidable illustration of how God authorizes from silence is Hebrews 7:14. In that text the writer is arguing that Christ could never be a priest on earth. Why? Because Christ is from the tribe of Judah and God positively commanded that the Levitical tribe would be priests. Did God forbid those from the tribe of Judah to be in the priesthood? Yes! But how did God forbid them? Listen to the Hebrews writer: "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses **SPAKE NOTHING** concerning priesthood" (Heb.

7:14; emp. KM). God never specifically said nor caused to be written a prohibition against anyone from the tribe of Judah being a priest. But God did not want anyone from Judah to be in the priesthood. How did God state his wishes? God gave the positive command and thus eliminated all other activities concerning priesthood. The silence of God is one of the greatest tests for determining respect for the Bible.

CONCLUSION

Atheists have always said there is no God (Psa. 14:1). Existentialists have ever argued that man is hopeless, helpless, and without choice in the matter. The rebellious have always wanted the knowledge of good and evil for self. And these three basic teachings are the soils out of which much if not all of the disrespect for God and His Word grows. Those who believe there is a God in heaven will want to arm themselves against these corrupt, vain thoughts of men.

4688 DeSoto Road Walls, MS 38680

THE BLOOD OF JEZREEL

Jerry Moffitt

What we are now going to study is an interpretation of Bible passages which are set forth to discredit God and ultimately the Bible. It is an actual argument used by skeptics which would make God seem capricious and unfair. Let us look at some background.

Recall 1 Kings 21. Ahab desires Naboth's vineyard, which is in Jezreel, but Naboth will neither trade it nor sell it. Ahab pouts, so Jezebel determines to get the vineyard for him. She sets up false witnesses to lie and proclaim that Naboth cursed God and the King. They proclaim their lies and Naboth is stoned to death at Jezreel. The word of Jehovah comes to Elijah, and he finds Ahab at the vineyard. Among other things, Elijah says to him, "...In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine" (1 Kings 21:19). Ahab put on sackcloth and rent his garments, and fasted and went softly. So God told Elijah to tell Ahab that the evil he planned for his house would not happen in his day but in the days of his son (1 Kings 21:29).

After the death of Ahab, Joram is reigning in Israel, recovering from wounds in Jezreel (2 Kings 9). But Elijah sent a prophet to Jehu in Ramoth-gilead with a message that Jehu was anointed King and should, according to prophecy, "...smite the house of Ahab..."

(2 Kings 9:7). Jehu kills Joram and casts him in the portion of the field of Naboth in Jezreel. Then Jehu kills Jezebel and seventy sons of Ahab. These sons are in Jezreel, and the elders, at Jehu's command, cut off their heads and put them in two heaps at the entrance of the gate (2 Kings 10:8). Next, Jehu slaughters the worshippers of Baal. Then the text says, "And Jehovah said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in my heart, thy sons of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel" (2 Kings 10:30). Jehu's heirs do reign over Israel unto the fourth generation. Zechariah, the fourth generation, is slain by Shallum (2 Kings 15:10). The problem with all this, according to skeptics, is found in Hosea 1:4. "Jehovah said unto him [Hosea, on the birth of his son] call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease" (Hos. 1:4).

The problem is, why would God punish Jehu's house because of what Jehu did to Ahab's house at Jezreel? Did not God praise Jehu for what Jehu did? Did he not say Jehu had done well and executed that which was right in God's eyes (2 Kings 10:30)? Now why

should Jehovah bring the blood of Jezreel on the house of Jehu? Skeptics believe they have uncovered a gold mine here. Either God changed his mind about Jehu's deeds or He went back on His word, or He lied when He said Jehu had done well, or the Bible simply has a contradiction. Commentaries treat this in various ways, none found, of which this writer has read, which seem satisfactory. For example, some argue that Jehu did according to the will of God in slaughtering Ahab's house, but the blood of Jezreel is brought on the house of Jehu because Jehu did the command from a greedy and selfish motive. So punishment is visited on the house of Jehu because Jehu did not do it because he respected God and His Word, but because he was ambitious. The text never brings this out and the idea seems obviously an attempt to solve a difficulty. That attempt seems to this writer to be without support.

In approaching the problem, it is obvious that a figure of speech is used, i.e., "the blood of Jezreel." What is "the blood of Jezreel" which will be visited on the house of Jehu? It is true that Jehu shed blood in Jezreel. He seemed ready to shed blood everywhere he went, but I am convinced that he really did it because he had a zeal for Jehovah (2 Kings 10:16-17). But is this what is meant by the blood of Jezreel? Was other blood shed there? Well, of course Ahab and Jezebel shed blood there. They shed the blood of Naboth. Naboth is called the Jezreelite (1 Kings 21:6). However, the question would obviously arise, if the blood of Jezreel refers to the blood Ahab shed, why would the house of Jehu be punished for what Ahab had done? Why would God visit wrath on Zechariah, the fourth son of Jehu, because of what Jezebel and Ahab did? I would suggest that "the blood of Jezreel" is a figure. Further, I believe that the figure is a synecdoche. Bear with a few technical discussions before we give Bible examples and then apply them to our case under discussion. A synecdoche is the exchange of one idea for an associated idea. Internally there is some kind of associated concept or idea which the two have in common. In a synecdoche you can have the genus put for a species or the species put for the genus, or you may have the whole put for the part or the part for the whole. Under synecdoche of the species you may have a species put for the whole genus, one example or specimen put for all kinds of associated ideas. In a synecdoche of the species words of a limited and of a special sense can be used with a wider or more universal meaning. "Brethren" can stand

for all relations and "sons" can stand for posterity. In a synecdoche the particular can be put to represent the universal. "Apollos" is put for any teacher and "wife" and "man" can stand for all wives and all men (1 Cor. 3:6; 1 Cor. 7:16). "Bread" can stand for any type of food and "corn" for any type for grain. "Blood" can stand for murder or simply for guilt (Deu. 19:12; Lev. 20:9).

Along that line, "Waterloo" can stand for any defeat suffered by any individual and not simply stand for the defeat of Napoleon. John Doe met his Waterloo. The "sin of Cain" can refer to the sin anyone commits when he harms his own brother. You have the specific stand universally for any sin with similar associations. "Don't be a Jonah," some say.

Let me give some more examples where words of a limited and special sense are used with a universal meaning. "Man" is used for both sexes (Psa. 1:1). "Fathers" are put for all who lived before them (Psa. 22:4-5). "Commandment" is put for all the doctrines. Peter said, "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they had known it, to turn from the Holy commandment delivered unto them" (2 Pet. 2:21).

This writer believes that "the blood of Jezreel" is a synecdoche. Specifically, it is the blood of an innocent which Ahab shed. But it was famous, as was the punishment that went with it. It is the species put for the genus. The guilt of one example of shedding innocent blood is put for all such examples. It is a limited and special sense used with a wider or more universal meaning. As "brethren" can stand for all relations and "sons" can stand for posterity, so "the blood of Jezreel," i.e., the "guilt Ahab bore" can stand for guiltiness in general, and can be applied by the figure of synecdoche to Zechariah and his reign. Remember, "blood" by the figure of synecdoche can stand for guilt (Lev. 20:9; Acts 20:26). So that's it.

It is my judgment that the "inerrancy" issue will break upon the churches of Christ with a fury one day. Already skeptics are attacking the Bible with their eye on our people, our preachers, and our children. No matter what we may think concerning the "blood of Jezreel," this writer would recommend a study of figures of speech used in the Bible. It is surprising how many alleged contradictions and incongruities are answered by figures of speech. Think about it.

2009 Wildcat Drive Portland, Texas 78374

THIRTEENTH ANNUAL DENTON LECTURES

NOVEMBER 13-17, 1994

STUDIES IN JOSHUA, JUDGES, AND RUTH

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13

9:00 AM	Ronnie Hayes	Joshua, Judges, and Ruth—An Introduction
10:00 AM	Dub McClish	Great lessons from the Life of Joshua, the Conqueror of Canaan
11:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	Paul Sain	Abimelech, Tola, and Jair—Years of Violence, Idolatry, and Evil (Jud. 9:1-10:18)
3:00 PM	Keith Mosher, Sr.	The Land Promise to the Israelite and Premillennial Theory
4:00 PM	Howard R. Horton	Joshua's Farewell Addresses and Death (Jos. 23:1-24:33)
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	Goebel Music	Further Apostasy, Decay, and Anarchy In Israel (Jud. 17:1-18:31)
8:00 PM	Noah Hackworth	The Conquest of Canaan Begins—The Fall of Jericho (Jos. 6:1-27)

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14

9:00 AM	Jesse Whitlock	The Latter Exploits of Samson (Jud. 15:1-16:31)
10:00 AM	Bob McAnally	Difficult Passages In Joshua, Judges, and Ruth: (How can we explain the lie Rahab told to protect the spies, apparently without rebuke or correction from God (Jos. 2:4-6)? Why was Achan's family killed, when Achan was the transgressor (Jos. 7:24-26)? How did God cause the sun and moon to stand still (remember that the alleged "missing day" discovered by a computer operator several years ago was a hoax [Jos. 10:12-14])?)
11:00 AM	Thomas B. Warren	The Question of Authority for Our Behavior (Jud. 17:6)
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	Tom Wacaster	Israel Under Jephthah, Ibban, Elon, and Abdon (Jud. 11:1-12:15)
3:00 PM	Discussion Forum	Where and When Shall We Draw the Line of Fellowship?
3:45 PM	Robert R. Taylor, Jr.	Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	Bobby Liddell	Naomi Returns home, Accompanied by Ruth (Ruth 1:1-2:23)
8:00 PM	Bob Berard	The Marriage of Boaz and Ruth (Ruth 3:1-4:22)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15

9:00 AM	Gary Colley	God's Commission to Joshua and Rahab's Protection of the Spies (Jos. 1:1-2:24)
10:00 AM	Robert Dodson	Israel Crosses the Jordan and Keeps the Passover (Jos. 3:1-5:15)
11:00 AM	Ken Butterworth	The Heinous Crime of the Men of Gibeah and Its Retribution (Jud. 19:1-21:25)
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	Tim Ayers	The Early Period After the Death of Joshua (Jud. 1:1-2:23)
3:00 PM	Discussion Forum	What Does Biblical Love Include and Not Include?
3:45 PM	Garland Elkins	Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	James Meadows	The Special Cities; the Trans-Jordan Tribe Return (Jos. 20:1-22:34)
8:00 PM	Lindell Mitchell	The Folly and Tragedy of Subjectivism

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16

9:00 AM	Tim Nichols	The Earliest Judges and Their Exploits (Jud. 3:1-5:31)
10:00 AM	Robin Haley	Difficult passages In Joshua, Judges, and Ruth: Did God actually bless Micah because of his idolatrous priest (Jud. 17:12-13) and did He speak through Micah's priest (18:5-31)? Why did God tell Israel twice to fight against Benjamin and then allow Israel to be slaughtered (Jud.20:18-27)? Is it right to accuse God of bringing heartache and misfortune upon us (Ruth 1:19-20)? Did Ruth and Boaz commit fornication when she joined him at his threshingfloor, as liberals (e.g., Andre Resner) allege (Ruth 3:3-14)? The Judgeship of Gideon, a "Mighty Man of Valour" (Jud. 6:1-8:35)
11:00 AM	Roy C. Deaver	The Allotment of the Land by Tribes (Jos. 13:1-19:51)
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	David Brown	How Shall the People of God Be Identified?
3:00 PM	Discussion Form	Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
3:45 PM	Mac Deaver	
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	Lester Kamp	Achan's Sin and Execution—Defeat Followed by Victory at Ai (Jos. 7:1-8:35)
8:00 PM	Gary Summers	The Third Generation Apostasy Syndrome

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17

9:00 AM	Joseph Meador	Gibeon Deceives Joshua and Israel Subdues Southern Canaan (Jos. 9:1-10:43)
10:00 AM	Terry Hightower	Difficult Passages: Is "situation ethics" set forth as honorable and approved of God (e.g., Rahab's lie to protect the spies [Jos. 2:4-5]; Ehud's treachery against Eglon [Jud. 3:15-23]; Jael's treachery against Sisera [Jud. 4:18-21; 5:24-27])? Is God a Being of cruelty and brutality, lacking mercy and compassion, since He ordered Israel to exterminate all of the Canaanites, including women, the elderly, and the children (e.g., Jos. 6:21; 8:2, 25-26; 10:28-40; 11:8-22; Jud. 1:4-5; et al.)?
11:00 AM	Eddie Whitten	Israel Subdues Northern Canaan and the Conquests Summarized (Jos. 11:1-12:24)
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	James Rogers	Difficult Passages in Joshua, Judges, and Ruth: How was it proper for Deborah, being a woman, to be a judge in Israel (Jud. 4:4)? How did Jephthah fulfill his vow? Does God require us to keep our word when it might destroy someone else (Jud. 11:30-40)? Who was the "angel of Jehovah" and the "angel of God" who appeared to Manoah (Jud. 13:3-23)? How can we reconcile the foolish, violent, and sometimes evil course of the life of Samson (Jud.14:1-16:16) with his being mentioned as a hero of faith (Heb.11:32)?
3:00 PM	Discussion Forum	Is God Concerned Only with the "Core" or the "Bull's Eye" of His Law?
3:45 PM	Curtis Cates	Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	Marvin Weir	The Early Exploits of Samson (Jud. 13:1-14:20)
8:00 PM	Darrell Conley	Joshua, Judges, and Ruth—A Summary

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WAITING FOR THE PROMISED LAND

Shan Jackson

Year after year, generation after generation the children of Israel waited in Egyptian captivity for a deliverer. During this time they were forced to live as servants and slaves, but still they waited because they believed in God as Father and Protector. They were a proud people with a history of greatness in their veins. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob reminded them of this greatness but serving others as slaves was not welcomed by the children of the great God. Sustained by the promises God made to their fathers they continued to wait for the promise land. Sustained on hope for a new and better life. A life with joy instead of pain was with them during their trying times. They waited for nearly nine generations for God to remember their plight and God did remember them and sent Moses to demand of Pharaoh to "Let my people go." For them the promised land did not come cheaply, but their wait was worth it in the end.

Today we too wait for a promised land. A land flowing with spiritual milk and honey. A land that is fairer than day. A land where we can see Jesus as He really is, the Son who replaces the sun in a Christian's sky. For Jesus is a promised land, not a place but a blessed plan. We too must wait. Wait as servants for the Master. Wait as a people with greatness in our veins. Wait as a people who still believe that God will protect and provide. Sustained through the promises of God through Jesus that, "...I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5).

We have waited for nearly 2,000 years for God to remember us in our plight and God will remember. Also, for us, our promise land will not come cheaply, but like Israel, our wait will be worth it.

My friends and brethren, we know that God has a plan for our lives. But like Israel had to wait, and as

Jesus also waited, we too must wait. Though His delay in coming has covered many years, He will return. "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again..." (John 14:3). So said our Lord before He ascended home. If we are "faithful unto death" (Rev. 2:10) we will receive His "crown of life" and forever live with Him in the glorious by and by. We too must wait.

In God's wisdom, He realized the plan for Christ's life. He saw the work that needed to be accomplished and the place for Christ to fill. God's plan was for Christ to build God's kingdom. This called for Christ to establish His church, His body upon the earth. But this church, this body of believers, was simply a place of waiting until the Lord returns. In His church must all believers and followers align. Just as there is no salvation without Christ (Acts 4:12), there is no salvation without the church (Eph. 5:23-27). Such is God's design. The church too must wait for His return.

Waiting is never easy. How slowly the days prior to Christmas go for children and slow also the days of waiting for the Christian. Wait we must. So fill your days with labor in the vineyard of the Lord and be secure in the fact that your wait will not be in vain (1 Cor. 15:58). God can only use our life when we place it in His hands.

P.O. Box 904 Palacios, TX 77465

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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

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Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXIII

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Number 11

Is A Changed Church Demanded For The Twenty First Century?

Michael Hatcher

INTRODUCTION

It will be the purpose of this lecture to prove that the answer to the above question is yes. Many are now proclaiming the need of the church to change and they are leading the way of change within the Lord's church. In a brochure of a seminar entitled, *A Church That Connects* sent out by the Hope Network with a subtitle, *A Seminar On: Connecting With A Changing Culture, Strategies For Outreach, Assimilation, Renewal, and Contemporary Approaches To Worship* a seminar by Jeff Nelson and Lynn Anderson (both of Preston Road Church Of Christ in Dallas Texas) the statement is made, "Come and network hope with creative dreamers and change agents from church of Christ." In the brochure of their "all new seminar" *A Church That Connects II* they say, "A brand new seminar on connecting with a changing culture, member assimilation, and contemporary approaches to encountering God in true worship." In the first brochure Rubel Shelly gives his seal of approval on this seminar. Rubel Shelly is one of those change agents as is evidenced in his statement, "My children will not stay with the church I grew up in. They will not be a part of an irrelevance."¹

CHANGE DEMANDED

Recently Rubel Shelly and Randall J. Harris (a professor at David Lipscomb University) co-authored a book demanding change. Notice some statements from this book.

Continuing the workings of business, education, and other social functions on the old models we have used cannot succeed: we still have not realized this truism widely enough to make needed changes....Is there either the need or theological warrant for ongoing change in the church? Our answer is affirmative to both elements of this question....We propose an ecclesiology that is oriented more toward the future than the past for ultimate significance in God's eternal purpose. The church will not arrive at its goal within historical events.²

Just to note, the word ecclesiology means a study of the church. According to them the church will not reach its goal within historical events. However, the death of Jesus upon the

cross for the sins of mankind is a historical event. The virgin birth of our Savior into this world is a historical event. (Possibly this is why Rubel Shelly can publish an article attacking the virgin birth of Jesus, "Christmas at Matthew's House" in *Wineskins*.) The establishment of the church is a historical event. As we continue in their book to chapter one entitled *The Freedom To Change* we notice some more statements. They state the immutability of God, but then notice what they say.

The church, however, is different. It does not possess the immutability of divine personality. Nor does it have the unalterable quality of propositional truth....The church does change. Moreover, it needs to change.³

As we read on in this first chapter we are met with these further statements.

For the corporate body of Christ, there is no historical prototype of the church for duplication. The kingdom of God is yet to come in its ultimate form. In all its instantiations, the church has been (and is) flawed...Unlike our perfect God or his inscripturated Word, the church is *not* immutable.⁴

Under the section heading *A God of Newness*, notice these further statements.

The God of the Bible is always a God of new things. Through the Old Testament prophets, he promised a new name (Isa. 62:2), a new covenant (Jer. 31:31), a new spirit (Ezek. 11:19), and a new heart (Ezek. 36:26)...Change and newness did not end with his arrival. *The wine is still fermenting*....The wine is the bubbling, churning gospel. It is the ever-arriving-yet-never-fully-realized-on-Earth kingdom of God.⁵

At this time I will not discuss these statements, only showing they are calling for a change within the church. The major question we are faced with is, what type of change are they demanding.

If all they meant by the need for the church to change is that we as individual Christians need to change, need to be more spiritually minded; then this would not be a problem. We could all agree that all Christians need to strive for greater spirituality in their lives. However, this is not what is

meant. If what they meant was simply a change in matters of option (instead of matters of obligation) then again no one would object. Although in some matters of option the reason we do it the way we do is that it is most expedient. However this is not what they mean when they speak of changing the church. What they mean is that we must change the essential elements of the church. The reason is they do not believe in the church. “The church has never existed,” we are not the “true church — an arrogant claim....The church has never existed except in the Father’s mind.”⁶ Thus they would write, “We have no interest in building a first-century church.”⁷

PREREQUISITE FOR CHANGE

The basic requirement for change is to develop a disrespect for the Word of God. They must deny the objective nature of God’s Word. “The idea of adhering to the Written Word is noble, but it is fraught with as many problems as there are people viewing the Word.”⁸ Thus, the Bible means one thing to one person and something else (possibly contradictory) to someone else. The New Hermeneutic that has arisen within the past few years has as its basis a rejection of any pattern found within the Scriptures. “We reject a rigid ‘pattern theology.’...It (Scripture - mh) certainly does not present an absolute blueprint for building a church.”⁹ We might add that if the Scriptures do not present a blueprint for a church, then nothing does. That is why they do not believe the church has ever existed.

All this leads to the conclusion that the Scriptures have absolutely no power. “Plugging into any part of the scriptures, except the Gospels, expecting there to find power, is like plugging an electric motor into a reflection of a power outlet.”¹⁰ Paul was mistaken when he wrote that the gospel was God’s power to save (Rom. 1:16). What he wrote (by inspiration) had only an illusion of power, but there was no power.

WHAT THEY WISH TO CHANGE

Worship Must Change

These “change agents” are not satisfied with the simple worship of the New Testament. It is too dull and boring for the modern man. “The tired, uninspiring event called worship in our churches must give way to an exhilarating experience of God that simultaneously exhibits and nurtures life in the worshippers.”¹¹ What is meant by these statements?

We must change the music of the church. Congregational singing is no longer satisfactory for these “change agents.” We must bring in special music. The bulletin for Woodmont Hills church where Rubel Shelly preaches speaks of how their “chorus continues to grow and to improve, and you continue to express appreciation for the contribution they make to our worship atmosphere. Some of us admitted to feeling a bit uncomfortable the first time or two the group sang in our assembly.”¹²

My subject here is to talk about, primarily about, the use of choruses in the worship—the worship itself. Minter Lane congregation at Abilene does use them—has for about 2

years now....We’re changing—Minter Lane congregation is not alone in using choruses in the worship service. There are others that are doing this around here. In Houston there are two or three that are using a chorus in the worship service. On the West Coast—there are about four or five congregations that are doing this. It is a very slow moving thing. The people in the Eastern part of the United States are slower to change. I’m very sad to say, because they seem to be a bit more conservative.¹³

We see the change in the proliferation of groups that make their voices sound like instruments of music. The most notable example of this is the apostate group “Acappella.” Along with this has been the slow acceptance of instrumental music in worship to God. For something like this to happen, there must first be the failure of preachers to preach against the sin of instrumental music. “My commitment is to God’s word and doing things as effectively and Biblically as I can. For that reason I don’t go around the country preaching against instrumental music.”¹⁴ Then there will be those who teach we are wrong concerning instrumental music.

Only a carefully refined “quarry-exegesis,” having nothing to do with the heart and essence of the Gospel, can argue for a cappella music only, while insisting that instrumental music is in fact sinful. True exegesis will not support our long-held tradition. The outcome of our ingenious ‘mining’ creates a host of problems for us. Among them the worst and most obvious include: needless division in the body of Jesus Christ...an unfortunate squelching of gifted people in the church, who find no outlet for their God-given abilities to minister...an unbearable pseudo-spirituality before other Christians who do not employ our ‘pick and shovel’ methods of interpretation.¹⁵

The Scriptures make it clear that in worship to God we are to practice congregational singing. “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19). “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). These verses teach that the action taking place is reciprocal action (I am singing to you while you are singing to me). It also specifies the type of vocal music that is taking place. It is not just vocal music but it must be a vocal music that is speaking and that teaches and admonishes. This eliminates whistling, humming, or making our voices sound like instruments of music. These “change agents” are going to change the music of the Lord’s church to suit themselves in spite of what God’s Word says.

A change must take place in the Lord’s Supper. There are those who have changed the partaking of the Lord’s Supper to anytime during the week. The Bible teaches us to partake of the bread and fruit of the vine on the first day of the week. “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). Concerning the breaking of bread we see when they did this. “And upon the first day of the week,

when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight” (Acts 20:7). The purpose of their coming together upon the first day of the week (Sunday) was to partake of the Lord’s Supper. Yet those who seek change within the church have changed the day (from the first day of the week) to other days. First they changed it to Thursday nights. Now they will partake of the Lord’s Supper on any day of the week. Brethren, we simply do not have authority for any day other than Sunday. Now some are also trying to make the Lord’s Supper nothing more than a common meal. This was part of the problem in Corinth that Paul, by inspiration, tried to correct.

A change must take place in who leads in worship. These “change agents” have succumbed to the femi-nazi movement and intend to have women taking leadership roles within the Lord’s church.

You want to talk about the issue of the 90’s. There are Bible majors at Abilene Christian and Lubbock Christian who are female. They don’t know what they are going to do yet with their Bible major. But they are female....In one youth group represented by somebody sitting in this section there is a woman, a teenager in that youth group, that wants to be able to preach in some fashion to men and women when she gets older. You want to kick her out?...the bottom line is that in the 1990’s diversity is the only game in town, folks.... Recently, the Herald Of Truth had a conference on family. Nine hundred people came to the Dallas area. One of the sessions, in which all the participants, nine hundred men and women came, the speaker was a woman with a Ph.D. And though she had a topic related to family, let me tell you what she did, *she preached*. And she was dynamite!¹⁶

Many are now getting the woman into the pulpit. It will not be long until they ascend to the eldership. Many are now urging women to be placed into the deaconry (supposedly 1 Timothy 3:11 gives the qualifications of women deacons and Phebe is an example of one; Romans 16:1).

This movement starts slowly. First, there are the “little things” like passing the Lord’s Supper and collection plates. It then progresses to women leading prayers in mixed groups (generally starts in devotionals, then slowly proceeds to the assembly). They ignore Paul’s statement by inspiration, “I will therefore that men (Greek *aner* male as opposed to the female) pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting” (1 Tim. 2:8).

After conditioning the people they can then move the woman into the pulpit. Often this starts with “dramatic presentations.” “But what about a dramatic presentation by 15 men and women that communicates the will of God.”¹⁷ This is an attempt to condition people to accept women in the pulpit and in leadership roles. God teaches a woman’s true role by the apostle Paul. “Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands

at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church” (1 Cor. 14:34-35). Paul also teaches, “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence” (1 Tim. 2:11-12). These “change agents” will degrade and demean Paul, but it remains God’s Word, not Paul’s. These words are not simply the traditions of the time. God bases the woman’s role, not upon the traditions and customs of man, but upon two eternal principles. “For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (1 Tim. 2:13-14). Still these “change agents” are determined to give in to the femi-nazies of our day to bring women into leadership roles within the church.

This also brings another area within the worship of the church that these “change agents” wish to change. *The preaching of the church must change.* They wish to change from the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ to “dramatic presentations.” “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight” (Acts 20:7). Instead of Paul preaching to them, they would have Paul and others presenting a dramatic presentation unto them. The 44th Oklahoma Christian Lectureship (Jan. 23-26, 1994) had for one of the ladies’ classes a “dramatic presentation developed by Tommie Jo Walker, Edmond, Okla., and Jo Anne North, Oklahoma City.” Possibly this is the way for these “change agents” to escape preaching the Word (2 Tim. 4:2), which they refuse to do anyway. Many are now telling their personal testimony and witnessing instead of preaching the gospel. One “preacher” claimed that we have forgotten half the gospel. He went on to explain that we have preached the gospel that changes lives but have failed to preach the gospel of the changed life. According to this we are to get away from “book, chapter and verse” preaching to individuals telling their “experiences” of how God changed their lives.

Work Of The Church Must Change

Within the past few decades we have observed a slow change taking place in the work the church does from spiritual matters to the physical. The appeal has been changed from spiritual to physical. In that physical, the appeal is to meet man’s *felt* needs. This is often expressed as “meeting the needs of man.” This is not meeting man’s spiritual needs, the saving gospel of Jesus Christ, but what man thinks he needs. Rubel Shelly is quoted as saying, “We are at a juncture in history where the church should listen to the un-church about what they’re telling us about us.”¹⁸ What could the “un-church” tell us about the saving power of Christ? What is the result of this philosophy? Instead of preaching Christ crucified (1 Cor. 1:23), the church puts on seminars on how to manage money, or how to cope with

stress, overcoming depression or worry, dealing with death, and other such matters.

This desire to meet the needs of man has also led congregations to build gymnasiums and provide recreation for the youth in particular. There is no longer a burning desire to teach God's Word to young people. Instead we hire "youth directors" to take the kids to "six flags" or on ski trips. Instead of learning the Bible and the principles of service to others they learn what the church and others are to do for them.

The church's mission has always been spiritual, not physical. "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36). Jesus summed up His mission and the mission of the church when He said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). This spiritual mission manifests itself in three ways. The church must preach the gospel to the lost (Mat. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). The church must edify and build up those who have been saved (Acts 20:32; Eph. 4:11-16). This spiritual mission will also manifest itself in benevolent works (meeting the physical necessities of people) of the church (Acts 20:35; Gal. 6:10; Jas. 1:27).

Terms Of Entrance Into The Church Must Change

When I attended Harding College in the 1970's, I can remember sitting under the feet of Jimmy Allen as he taught that one does not have to understand everything concerning baptism to be scripturally baptized. He never went on to say that one must understand that baptism is for the remission of sins. From the friendly confines of the classrooms others began openly teaching this doctrine. "Surely there are individuals in practically all the denominations known today who have learned of Jesus, looked to him in sincere faith, turned away from their conscious rebellions against his will, and embraced him as Savior through their immersion in his name."¹⁹ After sufficient indoctrination brother Allen produces a book advocating his teaching. "It is my belief that the New Testament teaches when a penitent believer in the crucified and risen Savior is immersed in water to fulfill righteousness or obey God, the Lord forgives his past or alien sins (although he may not know that sins are remitted or that the Holy Spirit is given at the time)."²⁰

In spite of what brother Allen believes no one can obey God without doing what God says for the purpose for which God says to do it. God teaches that baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), salvation (Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21), to wash away sins (Acts 22:16), to put us into Christ where salvation is (Rom. 6:3; 2 Tim. 2:10). God uses other expressions, but they all refer to the same purpose. These are not different purposes. There is one purpose for baptism expressed different ways. One must understand that purpose

and do the action (be baptized) for the reason God gives. If one is baptized for another reason (simply to obey God) they have not obeyed God.

We also have those who have accepted and now advocating the denominational doctrine of salvation by grace only. "I have preached and believed, I believe deeply that the New Testament teaches that salvation is a free gift of God period. You are saved by grace alone."²¹ The "change agent," Rubel Shelly, would then write an article that he has refused to defend concerning grace only. "It is a scandalous and outrageous lie to teach that salvation arises from human activity. We do not contribute one whit to our salvation."²² This one article caused such a fervor that others tried to come to Rubel's aid. One person was Denny Boultinghouse, editor of *Image* magazine. "Are we saved 100% by the grace of God? Yes...Our salvation is completely by grace. We contribute nothing to our salvation."²³

We do not want to denigrate God's grace in any way. We are saved by the grace of God. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Tit. 2:11; see also Eph. 2:8-9; Heb. 2:9). However, God's saving grace does not exclude man's obedient response to God's grace/commands. "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9; see also Eph. 2:8; Rom. 6:17-18; 1 Pet. 1:22-23).

Fellowship Of The Church Must Change

These "change agents" are not content to remain within the fellowship of the Lord's church. They are intent on broadening the fellowship of the church to include Satan's churches (denominations). This movement began by trying to promote unity with those who went out from us because they were not of us (1 John 2:19). There was first a Restoration "summit" with 50 men from the church and 50 men from the Christian Church denomination. The purpose of this "summit" was to promote unity between the two groups. This "summit" took place in Joplin, Missouri, in 1984. In making a report of this "summit," Rubel Shelly stresses how the two groups can work together.

1. Brethren of goodwill can continue to meet, study the Word, and draw closer to God and one another...2. Meaningful exchange can take place between the two groups of believers....It would be wonderful to worship together and to have some pulpit exchange....3. We can cooperate in many ways to represent Christ before a community...We need to speak on each other's lectureships...We need to exchange speakers.²⁴

However, these "change agents" were not content to simply fellowship the Christian Church denomination. They wish to fellowship anyone who acknowledges Jesus as God's Son. "There are sincere, knowledgeable, devout Christians scattered among all the various denominations."²⁵

But assume for just a moment the crazy concept that there may be some folks out in the world who, honest to goodness, love Jesus with all their heart, who would want to give him anything they have in their hands, but for whatever reason

they are not fellowshipping in a building that says, "Church Of Christ" on it. Now, just free your mind up for that bizarre possibility. Now, can you say with me, "that we may be one?"...Jesus asks that we would throw a calf rope around all of those who just believe in him, and pray, and work, for the unity of all believers.²⁶

Because of this thinking, some are practicing this type of fellowship. "I don't know about you but I hope Billy Graham gets some response when he preaches behind the Iron Curtain. I really do."²⁷ Walt Leaver (the minister of the Antioch Church Of Christ, one of the sponsors of the Nashville Jubilee) spoke at a five-day revival at the Donelson Presbyterian Church, June 11-15, 1990 along with four denominational preachers. Notice what the winner of the Young Alumnus Award from Abilene Christian University in 1991, Max Lucado, said at the end of a lesson at the First Presbyterian Church in San Antonio, TX., March 20, 1991. "And Father, if my intercession is worth anything, I ask, of God, let your blessings be upon these wonderful people! Be with Reverend Zbinden. Bless his great work. Bless his associates and his secretaries. Bless those stalwart families of this congregation that you know and they know, and let this church really be a church built on Jesus Christ." He has also co-authored a book entitled *Christ In Easter A Family Celebration Of Holy Week* with Charles Colson, Billy Graham and Joni Eareckson Tada. *Contending For The Faith* recently documented a joint worship service between the Magnolia Church Of Christ and the North Wood United Methodist Church.²⁸ Many other examples could be given, however these are sufficient to show that these "change agents" wish to change the fellowship of the Lord's church to include those of Satan's household. Brethren, things are not getting better. At the 1990 Tulsa Soul Winning Workshop, Don DeWelt said, "As a direct result of the Forums, we are involved in cooperative efforts and they are increasing." This should be of no surprise to those who know the truth of God's Word. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13). We must learn God's principle of separation.

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

When we fellowship with those who do not teach the truth (the doctrine of Christ), then we become partakers of their evil. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the

doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 9-11).

WHY WE MUST NOT CHANGE

God Does Not Change

God said through the prophet Malachi, "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal. 3:6). When Balak asked Balaam to curse the children of Israel, God gave Balaam a message for Balak. "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Num. 23:19). Later the prophet Samuel would tell King Saul of God's enduring nature. "And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent" (1 Sam. 15:29). James reveals God's nature as unchanging. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (Jas. 1:17). God's basic nature does not change. The principles by which God acts have always been the same. The principles God used during the Old Testament are the same principles by which He acts during the New Testament. While the specific details of the Old Testament are no longer binding, the principles are still binding because God's nature does not change.

Christ Does Not Change

With the realization of the above principle concerning God, we learn that the same is true with Jesus Christ since He is also Jehovah God. The Scriptures also reveal that He does not change. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). Earlier the same writer compares the decaying nature of the universe with the unchanging nature of Jesus. "And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail" (Heb. 1:12).

God's Word Does Not Change

Since God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) does not change, His Word does not change. Jesus reveals, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Mat. 24:35). Consider also Peter's statement concerning the Gospel. "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Pet. 1:25). Thus, the Psalmist declares, "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psa. 119:89).

Since God's Word is settled in heaven and does not change, then we cannot add to that Word, take anything away from that Word, or substitute anything for that unchangeable Word. We do not have the right to alter what God has said. Notice a few passages of Scripture that emphasize this point. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you,

neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you” (Deu. 4:2). “Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Pro. 30:6). “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. 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. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:6-9). “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9). “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Rev. 22:18-19). While these do not exhaust the list of Scriptures emphasizing this point, these are sufficient to see that God demands that we respect His Word, and not change or alter it in any way. The changes that these “change agents” wish to make, is an attempt to change God’s Word. They, as we have documented, do not simply wish to change area’s that God has left to the option of man. They wish to change area’s of obligation.

The Church Cannot Change

Here is the real crux of the matter. Can the church change? Our answer to this question is, **NO!!!** The answer of the change agents is yes (see documentation above). They will even admit the above propositions that God does not change, that Jesus does not change and God’s Word does not change. However, when they come to the church, they will say it must change. We say that that conclusion is false. Notice the foundational elements of the church. “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11). The first foundational element of the church is Jesus Christ. If Jesus Christ does not change, then the church cannot change. Jesus Christ does not change, therefore the church cannot change. Second, the church is founded upon God’s Word. “That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Eph. 5:26). If God’s Word does not change, then the church cannot change. God’s Word does not change, therefore the church cannot change.

When we consider the things these “change agents” wish to change, we observe that they are things in which God has given specific command. God authorized the terms of entrance (the plan of salvation) into the church. These terms cannot and do not change. God ordained the worship of the

church (congregational singing, prayer to the Father through Christ, preaching of God’s Word, partaking of the Lord’s Supper upon the first day of the week, and giving of our means as God has prospered us). This worship cannot and does not change. God established the organization with each congregation (elders overseeing the church with deacons as special servants) cannot and does not change. The work the Lord commanded the church to do (saving souls, by preaching to the lost, edifying the saved and benevolence) cannot and does not change. Yet, these are the very items these “change agents” are changing. In making these changes they no longer are the Lord’s church, they have established their own church. We plead with them to repent. If they will not repent, we urge them to get out and let everyone know they are no longer associated with or belong to the church of Christ.

CONCLUSION

We face dangers in the Lord’s church today. Those “change agents” seemingly are working overtime to change the Lord’s church. However, the Lord’s church does not change. They are deceivers and sadly they are deceiving many today by their pleasing sound. “For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Rom. 16:18). Many are following their pernicious ways. “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.” (2 Pet. 2:1-2). However, if we are to be saved, we must follow the old paths set forth in God’s Word “Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein” (Jer. 6:16).

Note: Endnotes available upon request.



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MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

CHANGE, CHANGE, CHANGE...

William M. Hurley

As the decade of the 1990's is now well on it's way I believe it will be remembered as the decade of change. Americans are obsessed with thoughts of change. Politically the nation overwhelmingly swept one President out and another in mainly out of a need for change. Socially, economically, morally Americans have insisted on change. Some brethren in the church in the last several years have been stirring the brotherhood with thoughts of change as well. We hear from some of our most prominent writers, preachers, and teachers that we must change or risk becoming obsolete in an ever changing society around us. Does the church need to change?

SOME THINGS CAN NOT CHANGE

The Bible makes clear that there are a number of unchangeables in the gospel. The Bible teaches plainly that there are just as many true churches as there are true Gods, one each. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all..." (Eph. 4:4-6). This text also reveals unto us the fact that we have one Lord, Jesus Christ; we do not need a change here, we all agree, yet, if we are not afraid to teach this "one" then we should not hesitate to preach one baptism, or the doctrine of one church. To do anything else would cause us to be ashamed of the gospel (Rom. 1:16). Other unchangeables would include God's teachings against women serving as preachers, elders or deacons (1 Tim. 2:12), and against the use of the instrument (piano, organ, etc.) (Col. 3:16) in the worship of the New Testament church.

SOME THINGS THAT CAN CHANGE

One of the reasons for change that is produced by brethren, is the lack of zeal and unemotional qualities displayed in worship services. All Christians should frown on "dead" worship services and poor singing. I admit that too many of us look like we have been weaned on sour pickles rather than redeemed believers at the worship. These things can and should be addressed and corrected. Our prayers in worship should be improved, our reverence for the Lord's Supper should be improved, even our singing needs improvement. But the bottom line is a need for a renewal of our attitudes and spirituality. It is not the way we worship that needs change, it's how we worship that needs reexamination. The truth of the matter is, if we change God's decrees concerning our worship services we cease being the church of Christ.

Joshua, TX

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¹Sermon delivered by Rubel Shelly at Missouri Street Church Of Christ, West Memphis, AR., April 20-21, 1990.

²Rubel Shelly and Randall J. Harris, *The Second Incarnation: A Theology for the 21st Century Church* (West Monroe, Louisiana: Howard Publishing Co., 1992), pp. xiv, xv, xvii.

³ibid., p.3.

⁴ibid., pp.6,7.

⁵ibid., pp. 10,11.

⁶Shelly, Sermon West Memphis, AR.

⁷Shelly, Harris, p.37.

⁸James S. Woodroof, *The Church in Transition* (Searcy, Arkansas: The Bible House, 1990), p. 36.

⁹Shelly, Harris, pp. 31,36.

¹⁰Woodroof, p.34.

¹¹Shelly, Harris, p. 13.

¹²Shelly, Woodmont Hills Church Bulletin, July 19, 1989.

¹³Jack Boyd of the ACU Music Department in a meeting with a group of elders on Nov. 6,1988, as recorded by James Bills.

¹⁴Jeff Walling sermon at Ozark Christian College, Joplin Mo., 1987.

¹⁵Larry James, *Tradition or Truth?* in Monthly Newsletter for Richardson East Church of Christ, Oct. 25, 1989.

¹⁶Randy Mayeux lesson 21st Annual Youth Minister's Seminar, sponsored by Lubbock Christian University, Oct. 16-19,1989. (Note: Randy Mayeux is no longer associated with the churches of Christ.)

¹⁷Shelly, Harris, p. 9.

¹⁸Carrie Ferguson, "Road May Fork for Churches Of Christ," *The Tennessean*, 5 July 1992, sec. B, p. 3.

¹⁹Rubel Shelly, *I Just Want To Be A Christian* (1984), p. 126.

²⁰Jimmy Allen, *Rebaptism*, (1991), p. 39.

²¹Mayeux.

²²Rubel Shelly, "Arbeit Macht Frei" *Love Lines* (Woodmont Hills church bulletin), 31 Oct. 1990, p. 3.

²³Denny Boultinghouse, "100% Grace," *Image*, Dec. 1991, p.

²⁴Rubel Shelly, cassette tape "Restoration Summit Report" Ashwood Church of Christ, Aug. 12, 1984.

²⁵Rubel Shelly, Sermon Centerville, Tn. 1983.

²⁶Jeff Walling, sermon 1990 Tulsa Soul Winning Workshop on the Lord's prayer for unity in John 17.

²⁷Mayeux.

²⁸*Contending For The Faith*, November 1993, p. 1-6.