



Vol. XLII                      No. 15  
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## Pro-choice?

### Choosing Right is More Important Than Right to Choose

Randy Blackaby

The ancient prophet Isaiah, speaking of the evils of his day, described our own when he wrote, “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil; who put darkness for light and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter” (Isa. 5:20).

What better words to describe the “pro-choice” advocates of today, who avoid admitting the evil of their bloody practices by cloaking the issue in terms of freedom, choice and the “good” to be gained by parents who don’t want the responsibility of a child to raise?

The cutting, chopping, dissection and sucking to death of tiny lives is not described for the evil that it is — murder — but in terms that generate feelings of good.

Sadly, a huge number of Americans have succumbed to this reverse logic and have become virtually blinded to reality — a reality that sees millions of infants slaughtered each year.

But those who defend such practices under the “pro-choice” banner are selective in their use of this logic.

If moral issues such as murder and sexual practice are wholly matters of individual choice, why do we hire police to protect us? If a man wants to kill us, why not be consistently pro-choice and allow him to do what he deems best for him?

If there are no righteous standards for sexuality, why do we condemn incestuous fathers and pedophiles and rapists?

This dilemma has not escaped those who would excuse the murder of infants. So, they have redefined life and tried to legally establish that a  
*see “Pro-choice” on p. 472*

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# Divination in America

Vol. XLII August 6, 1998 No. 15

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Mike Willis

An article in the April 20, 1998 issue of one of America's most popular newspapers, the *USA Today*, charted the change in Americans' belief between 1976 and 1998 about the following items:

Things Believed	1976	1998
Spiritualism	12%	52%
Faith healing	10%	45%
Astrology	17%	37%
UFOs	24%	30%
Reincarnation	9%	25%
Fortune Telling	4%	14%

Though these figures mildly surprised me, I began to think of several news accounts that confirmed these findings. Nancy Reagan consulted her astrologist on a regular basis. Hillary Clinton had seances with Eleanor Roosevelt. Psychics advertise on TV with costly phone numbers. Astrology charts are sold at many grocery check-out counters. Some police departments occasionally turn to psychics to help solve crime.

These figures show a rise in pagan beliefs in our society as do the changes in moral standards accepted in such areas as the following: abortion, euthanasia, divorce and remarriage, homosexuality, and gambling. The sociologists tell us that we live in a post-Christian America and these trends confirm their assessments.

The rise in superstition is directly tied to the rejection of the revealed faith. Paul wrote,

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things (Rom. 1:21-23).

As Americans become so impressed with their own wisdom and learn-  
*see "Divination" on p. 472*

# A Few Helpful “Don’ts”

Daniel H. King

In speaking to other people about our faith, all of us stumble at different times. It is difficult to do it well, but all of us can do it. All it takes is a small amount of effort and a little conscious effort at trying to do it right. Brother Otis Gatewood published his book *You Can Do Personal Work* in 1945. In his book, he wrote a chapter called, “What We Should Not Do.” He introduced the chapter with this important thought: “If we can learn what not to do and say, half of our battle is won. The idea that the truth offends most people is not true. Our unwise statements and unbearable attitudes offend far more than truth. Most people want the truth and will welcome it if it is presented correctly” (45).

Of course, brother Gatewood wrote in a very different time than our own, but what he says is still mostly correct. No one wants to be wrong. None of our friends or neighbors wants to be lost. Not a single one of them desires to stand before the Judge of all the earth and be told, “Depart from me . . .” (Matt. 7:23). They want to go to heaven. Many of them want to please God and someday be with the Savior. So, why cannot we say the necessary things to help them along their way to that goal?

Sometimes, as brother Gatewood says, our own foolish words and unhealthy attitudes get in the way. We can do better. Let me summarize a few of the points which are made so forcefully in this chapter of Gatewood’s little handbook on soul-saving and personal work:

*1. Don’t begin with criticism.* If we are not careful, we will become so accustomed to “skinning the sects” that we think the first task in teaching others is in showing our prospect where his religion is all wrong. Christ taught positively at first, then moved on to offer his criticisms at a later time (see Luke 4:21; Matt. 23:1ff). In both of Paul’s most critical letters to churches, Romans and 1 Corinthians, the apostle began with commendation, then worked his way toward condemnation: “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you, always in my prayers . . .” (Rom. 1:8-9); “I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus; that in everything ye were enriched in him, in all utterance and all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:4-7). The Lord and his apostles seemed always to be able to find some commendable thing to say about people before they began to expose their faults or answer their objections. We ought to do likewise.

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2. *Don't act superior.* On this point I shall quote brother Gatewood, "I don't know a more egotistical group of people in all the earth than some of us members of the church of Christ. We think we know more than other people, and anybody who is not a member of the church of Christ is just plain dumb, ignorant, or dishonest. We think we are right and everybody else wrong. Now this may be true, but we do not have to be so haughty and boastful about it" (49). The Bible says that the Christian ought to "esteem others better than himself" (Phil. 2:3); and, "For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3). We must be humble in our approach!

3. *Don't be dogmatic.* If I am right about a thing, yet act so dogmatic and radical about it, I will kill the effectiveness of what I say. If I have come to be considered a person who is dogmatic about everything, who goes to extremes on most every subject, then most every statement I make will be taken with a grain of salt. Scripture says the Christian should be seen in precisely the opposite way: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one" (Col. 4:6). People should hear our words as generally pleasant, and only on those matters which are critical to the cause of Christ ought we to "lay it on the line" and "take no prisoners." Then, folks will be ready to respect this side of our character as evidence of conviction and profound faith, rather than more of the same dogmatism and radicalism.

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4. *Don't be ashamed to admit you do not know the answer.* Whether about the Bible or religion in general, there are many things which are surrounded by mystery. So, do not make the mistake of giving people the impression that you are a "know-it-all." No one likes such a person. And, this will take the pressure off you, as well. You should not be afraid to say, "I don't know the answer to that question. But I am sure that if I spend a little time studying, that the Bible will provide the answer. Let's talk about that next time."

5. *Don't always try to answer everything the other person says.* It is not compromising to admit that the other fellow is right when he happens to be correct about something. When someone says something that is true, commend him for it, and if possible, offer the scriptural justification for his point. It shows that you are trying to be objective and honest, and willing to admit it when he is right. Concentrate on just a few important things, not every point which the other person brings up. Many matters are not worth arguing about; some, on the other hand, are basic and fundamental to an understanding of many other things. Learn to draw a distinction between the things that matter and the things that do not. Talk about the important ones, and put off the insignificant ones till another time. If you never get around to them, what have you missed?

6. *Don't do all the talking.* The Bible warns against this human trait: "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath . . ." (Jas. 1:19). Those who monopolize a conversation lose their audience! Don't be a "motor-mouth"!

7. *Don't use too many passages of Scripture.* It is much better to talk about a few Scriptures than a long list. Why? Because the mind can only retain a few things at once. If you only teach one passage, and get the message of that one across, you may prove very successful indeed. Philip concentrated on just two verses of Isaiah's prophecy about the Messiah in his conversion of the Ethiopian treasurer (Acts 8:32-35; Isa. 53:7-8). Yet, he led him to the Lord and baptized him that same day!

8. *Don't get angry.* Anger is the surest confession of defeat for a personal worker. Always remain under control, calm and considerate of others. It is a sure sign of Christian character. Brother Gatewood pointed out: "I have always found that kindness carries as much weight in the heated discussion as logical arguments" (57). The Bible says that "love suffereth long and is kind" (1 Cor. 13:4). Don't get mad!

Don't go out and do any of these things. But do go out and try to speak to someone about the Lord.

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# Immersed in Christ

Tom Hamilton

Twice the Bible describes Christians as having been “baptized into Christ” (Rom. 6:3-6; Gal. 3:27). However, due to all of the theological baggage the word “baptism” has acquired, especially because the word is not even really translated in our English Bibles, it is easy for many of us to miss the point of this concept.

As noted elsewhere, the word “baptize” really means “immerse” in the NT. If we substitute this more accurate term in both Romans 6 and Galatians 3, we would read “immersed into Christ.” As long as one speaks in abstract theological terms like “baptized into Christ,” we can read such passages with little feeling or conviction. But when we actually ponder the implications of our being immersed in Christ, our perspective can’t help but change.

Clearly, when I think of myself as “immersed in Christ,” I must picture my life as so completely given over to him that it is taken up into himself. He surrounds me, penetrates my being, and becomes my new realm of existence. In particular, let’s consider what these two passages say about it.

In Romans 6:3-5 we read, “Or do you not know that all of us who have been immersed into Christ have been immersed into His death? Therefore, we have been buried with Him through immersion into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, we shall certainly be also in the likeness of His resurrection.”

Here we find Paul emphasizing that the giving over of our lives to God in becoming completely immersed in Christ involves death. This death involves a commitment to the things of God and a renunciation of the things of this world. This definitive break with the world is made at the point of genuine repentance. We are now dead to sin and our old way of life. The life immersed in Christ must

have nothing to do with the contamination of sin. Every time one is genuinely immersed into Christ, that “baptism” is a funeral.

Next, we read in Galatians 3:27, “For all of you who were immersed into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” Here Paul emphasizes the resulting life of one who is immersed into Christ. Paul pictures the resulting immersed condition in terms of clothing which we wear or is wrapped around us. Everywhere we go, we take Christ with us, we show him to the world, and our life is hidden in him. On the other hand, we would be naked and vulnerable without him.

So often we are concerned about our physical appearance and which clothes we should wear, because it affects how other people see us. How much more so ought we to be concerned about how we appear to the world spiritually — so immersed in Christ that we are clothed with him, his purity, his character, his sacrificial life.

This whole idea of being immersed in Christ is what we acknowledge each Lord’s day in the partaking of the communion meal. We remind ourselves of the commitment we made to Christ when we were immersed into him. We promised to die to all sin, and we committed ourselves to living his life, not our own. The imagery of taking his body and blood into ourselves is yet another way of emphasizing our life is hidden in him and his life becomes our life, his spirit lives in our bodies, his blood flows through our veins.

How genuinely is your life hidden in Christ? Have you truly died to sin and clothed yourself with Jesus? Are you completely immersed in him or are there any parts sticking out?

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*From In Christ, February 1998*



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# A Great Harvest of Souls Continues in the Philippines

In recent years, the Philippine Islands have been among the most fruitful fields in the world for gospel preaching. Jesus said, “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few” (Matt. 9:37). The great harvest of which Jesus spoke began in Palestine but soon moved to other parts of the world. The gospel spread like wildfire in the 1800s in America — gospel papers regularly carried the reports of dozens of baptisms from place to place. While there is still a harvest of souls here in the U.S., and we need to work as hard as we can here, the harvest is more bountiful in places like the Philippines, and we need to work as hard as we can to help harvest souls in such places! “The laborers are few.”

Through the joint efforts of the Filipino brethren along with Jim McDonald, Andy Alexander, and Ron Halbrook, over 300 people were baptized into Christ during our recent preaching trip (March 27-May 4). New churches began and established churches grew stronger. The three of us left Houston, Texas together on March 27, and Andy returned to the U.S. on April 13, Jim on April 28, and Ron on May 4. This was Jim’s tenth trip to the Philippines, Ron’s second, and Andy’s first. We traveled and preached together at times, went separate directions at times, and worked in perfect harmony at all times. “God gave the increase. . . . For we are laborers together with God” (1 Cor. 3:6, 9).

## Who Are the Philippine People?

Of the 7,100 islands in the Philippines, about 800 are inhabited and only about a dozen are of significant size. This archipelago stretches 1,500 miles north to south and 600 miles east to west. The Philippine Republic approximates the size of Italy. The weather is tropical since the location is only between 5 and 22 degrees north of the equator. The earliest known inhabitants likely came from the neighboring island of Borneo; their descendants are called Philippine Pygmies or Negritos. Other ancient immigrants came from Malaysia, Indonesia, India, China, and Japan. Arab traders long plied the Philippine Islands and finally in the 1300s-1400s Muslim invaders established

sultanates on the southwest islands of Sulu and Mindanao. The Philippines became a Spanish colony in the 1500s, but came under U.S. control as a result of the Spanish-American War of 1898. Commonwealth status was granted by the U.S. in 1935 and full independence in 1946. The Philippines is celebrating 100 years of freedom in 1998.

In religion, the Philippine Republic is officially Roman Catholic. While Catholicism is most widespread, we at times encounter the primitive and idolatrous practice of ancestor worship, Eastern religions, Islam, most U.S. denominations, and indigenous denominations. Filipinos are naturally friendly and hospitable, and are typically very cordial toward Americans. There is a deep hunger to learn more about the Bible, though the average Filipino does not own a Bible. Opportunities to teach God’s word abound on every hand.

Eighty dialects have been identified in the Philippine Islands, but English is taught as a second language in the schools. They often communicate across dialects by using English. Filipinos understand enough English that we most often simply preach a full lesson in English, and then someone who speaks the local dialect may “summarize” the lesson and fill in gaps where he thinks the audience might not have grasped certain points. When we speak to the tribal peoples who speak less English, the sermons are translated.

## From Luzon to Palawan

Our work began on the island of **Luzon**. Our plane landed in Manila on Saturday night (March 28), where **Ben Cruz** was our host and where a group of brethren greeted us. Sunday found us preaching separately at half a dozen places in Manila and within a 2-3 hour drive of Manila. Metro Manila has a population of 10 million people, so there is always much work waiting to be done there. Ben and a half dozen other men conduct a very effective radio program on a strong station for an hour and a half every Saturday. The format includes preaching and call-in ques-

tions. They are also doing effective work in the prisons for men and women. Andy preached in the maximum security ward to men imprisoned for life.

Monday we flew southwest to **Palawan**, one of the poorest of the islands. March 31 we conducted an all-day lectureship at Puerto Princesa City, where **Fred Agbisit** preaches and where **William Lagan** lives. William concentrates his efforts among the minorities in the outlying areas. The minorities, or tribal peoples, are at the bottom of the economic ladder in a third world economy, but their hearts are open to the gospel. As is typical, about 40 preachers attended this all-day study, and a number of women joined the audience. Denominational preachers studying with our brethren often attend such gatherings.

Wednesday, April 1, we visited seven churches on Palawan, and at least eleven others had wanted us to come. Palawan is a long, narrow island and this sweep carried us many miles from Puerto Princesa City, which is centrally located, along the eastern coastline down to the Brooke's Point region. There are 24 congregations scattered along this line of travel, including nine churches among the minorities in the mountains. In appreciation for our visit to the tribal people where **Samson Dalit** preaches, a blowgun which shoots a poisonous dart for hunting was presented to us. **Platon Mabunga**, who preaches for the Seaside church of Christ, traveled with us in the Brooke's Point region. We met ladies in the churches at Puerto Princesa City, Seaside, and elsewhere who avidly teach God's word to the children and who plead for any kind of teaching materials. Often, these requests are made with tears.

On Palawan, we began to hear more about the 8-9 month drought which has severely afflicted the Philippines. Filipinos call it "the El Nino effect." The effects could be seen in the dry, hard, baked appearance of the fields and surrounding terrain. There were many pleas for relief, and we shared what benevolence funds we could, but this did not make a dent in the need. The help we gave was made possible by the generosity of brethren all around the U.S. who entrusted funds to us for this very purpose. From that time until now, we have discussed what could be done to provide at least some relief to our suffering brethren.

There are only two churches north of Puerto Princesa City, in a region stretching for many miles. A radio program from one of Puerto Princesa's stations could reach all the island's population of one million souls, extending the gospel northward. Is someone interested in helping provide the needed funds?

#### **From Cebu to Negros Oriental and Mindanao**

Next, we flew to Cebu City on the island of **Cebu**, where a lecture hall was rented for the lessons presented April 2-3. Another 35-40 preachers were present for these studies,

which included morning, afternoon, and evening sessions. Area brethren attended at night, filling the hall. Question periods and open forums are effective teaching tools in these sessions. **Jonathan Carino**, who supports himself in the insurance business, freely gave of his time to help us get around in Cebu City and make our travel connections. It was also a pleasure to be with his father, **Ramon**, and to discuss spiritual matters with this aged soldier of the cross. **Cipriano Carpentaro** of Manila, who preaches for the church in Cagayan de Oro City (Mindanao), joined us in Cebu. He summarized and translated for us there, and continued with Andy and Ron on the next leg of their trip.

On Saturday, April 4, Jim proceeded to the island of **Mindanao**, while Cipriano accompanied Andy and Ron via ferry to the island of **Negros**. In southern Mindanao, Jim preached at Cagayan de Oro City and studied with a liberal preacher there. He then proceeded to Pagadian City where he held another well-attended lectureship, working with **Jun Apatan** and **Ramon Carino**. Cipriano, Andy, and Ron spent April 4-9 in the Negros Oriental region (southeastern part of Negros). They worked with **Josue Abueva** at Dumaguete City, then he took them on to Santa Catalina and Bayawan. **Hepilito Flores** works with the latter church, where lectures were held the last two days with overflow crowds including a mixed audience of gospel preachers and alien sinners. Loud speakers carried the messages throughout the neighborhood and people stood in the street listening to the lessons. Exchanges with two men from the Worldwide Church of God denomination helped us to project the gospel with even greater clarity.

Josue had been studying with a District Evangelist for the Methodist Church named **Asingcreto Cabugnason**, who came to hear us speak on Monday for the brethren in Santa Catalina where he also lives. He invited us to preach in the Methodist Church across town on Tuesday, which we did. That night he brought all his family together to study with us, and seven of them were baptized including Asingcreto. He is now teaching the truth to the three Methodist churches which he had established, and also teaching other Methodist preachers under his influence. The Methodist Church in Santa Catalina is now the church of Christ, and all the brethren in town have joined hands to meet there.

As the second week of our trip was ending, five islands had been visited by our combined efforts and about 70 souls had already obeyed the gospel. Much work remained to be done and the three of us worked in separate areas for a time. April 10-12 Andy labored on **Luzon** with **Lordy Salunga** near Tarlac, Tarlac and at Angles City, then flew back to the U.S. from Manila on Monday. Those same three days, Ron was on the island of **Mindanao**, working with **Juanita Balbin** in Davao City. On Sunday Jim and Ron reunited briefly and then parted ways, Jim going to General Santos City to work with **Johnny** and **Jesse Julom**. **Emileo Luma-**

pay of Toril and others have been working with these men, who are converts from the Alliance denomination. Many souls are being saved in that region. While Jim worked in General Santos, Ron went on to Digas to work with **Julie Notarte**. Julie knows of only one Moslem convert but has been studying with a Moslem man (Tony Ariz) who shows much promise. Tony had already exchanged the gun in his tote bag for a Bible given by Julie, and he heard Ron's three gospel sermons on the 13th (his first time to enter a meeting place of our brethren).

Julie took Ron on an arduous, 3-hour trip into the mountains to preach by a river near Arakan, where 150 tribal people had gathered, including saints and sinners. We carried official papers authorizing this trip into the mountains and we were accompanied by an armed soldier of the Philippine army. On that day, 57 souls heard the word gladly and were baptized. This harvest abounds to the account mostly of the faithful Filipino brethren who make so many sacrifices to work among the tribal peoples.

### VBS in the Shadow of a Volcano

Next, Julie took Ron on the breathtaking journey up, up, up into Mt. Apo National Park to the little community of Kapatagan, in sight of Mt. Apo, an active volcano rising 9,690 feet high (the highest point in all the Philippines). Steam from sulfur springs can be seen near the crest of the crater in the distance. Jim arrived later that same day and we spent April 16-19 in the bamboo home of **Leopoldo Sarmiento**, who preaches for the church there while helping to support himself by toiling in the fields. This gentle brother and his good wife gave of their best in every way to make our stay as comfortable as possible. Brethren Balbin, Notarte, and others were diligent fellow-laborers in this Vacation Bible School attended by 130 high school and college students, along with 50 visiting preachers, plus other brethren and sinners — over 200 gathered for intense Bible studies conducted morning, afternoon, and night. Jim had seen 37 baptized during his tour of Mindanao and we saw another 38 precious souls baptized at the VBS. The students' questions during the open forums were very perceptive.

We studied in the open air, sheltered from the sun only by canvas sheets overhead fastened to poles. Smoke from open fires for cooking burned our eyes, noses, and throats at times. Devoted women toiled ceaselessly preparing rice with side servings of chicken, pork, or fish and perhaps some vegetable. People slept in the nearby church building, private homes, or most in a community center. Their beds were thin mats laid on the ground or the concrete floors of the community hall, and simple wool blankets kept them warm in the cool mountain air. Students walked 20 minutes to take splash baths at mountain springs at 5:30 AM, while we splashed water from a barrel provided in the outhouse or "comfort room" a few yards from the house where we

stayed. This water and cooking water were hauled in five gallon containers on a cart with wooden wheels pulled by a carabao (water buffalo). Folks in the States would call our experience "roughing it," but this is an ordinary way of life for many Filipinos, and they accept their lot without the whining and complaining which might be heard in the U.S.

### Back to Luzon and the U.S.

On Sunday afternoon (April 19), Julie took Jim and Ron back to Digas, and the next day we traveled back to Davao City to catch a plane back to Manila on Luzon. No plane seats were available for the next day's travel because political candidates are given priority, but the quick thinking of Ben Cruz provided us a taxi with an excellent driver. On the 21st, we rode twelve hard hours to **Tuguegarao** in the Cagayan region, where we were graciously received by **Rody Gumpad**. We had hoped to meet with eight other dear brethren, but, alas, our travel difficulties caused us to miss them by one day. The Metro Tuguegarao church building was filled for the services and sermons the next day. This church has elders, who seem to be quite competent. Several were baptized. We taped a TV program with Rody. Though radio is still the most popular media in the Philippines, TV is spreading.

There is much discussion in this region — as throughout the Philippines — about false doctrines relating to divorce and remarriage, and whether the Bible contains "old" and "new" testaments or just "one covenant" regarding salvation. Many questions are being studied regarding grace, faith, and the proper basis of fellowship. Do Bible concepts of grace, faith, and fellowship include brethren promoting error on instrumental music, institutional liberalism, premillennialism, the one-cup doctrine, the no-located-preacher doctrine ("mutual edification"), divorce-remarriage theories, and the one-covenant theory? We showed that the Bible answers with a resounding, "No," but these questions are stirring throughout the islands.

Two brethren widely known and appreciated for their good work in the Philippines in past years are at the heart of this controversy. The false teaching done by Jim Puterbaugh approving eating blood, on divorce-remarriage, and regarding the "one covenant" has intersected with false concepts of grace, faith, and fellowship. Wallace Little has promoted and defended much of this teaching (see his exchanges with J.T. Smith, *Gospel Truths*, May 1997 and May 1998). These errors hold the potential of doing great damage to the cause of Christ in the Philippines, as elsewhere. Because these themes have received sufficient attention in gospel papers in recent years, we will not review them in detail here. In the context of the Philippines, suffice it to say that we do not believe Filipino brethren by and large will embrace these errors, though the danger is real and some damage has occurred. Everywhere these questions are being discussed,



we urge patient study and urge that brethren focus on what the text of Scripture teaches rather than upon personal ties and friendships (1 Cor. 4:6).

On April 23-24, we traversed extreme northern Luzon as we traveled through northern Cagayan and the edge of Kalinga, then on into Ilocos Norte. Several churches were visited along the way, including one at Santa Marcela made up of Negrito people who have been forced down from the mountains by hard times and economic necessity. Some lack adequate clothing and their privations are evident in their appearance, but their joy in the Lord was even more evident as several were baptized in the briny backwaters of the nearby ocean!

Friday, April 24, we arrived at **Sinait** in Ilocos Sur, where **Matt Sibayan, Sr.** and **Matt, Jr.** work together with the Kitipunan church and others in the area. Many were gathered for the sermons preached on that day and a dozen were baptized. **Egdon Sabio, Paul Mangrubang, Rolando Azurin,** and other good men are diligently preaching the gospel of Christ and harvesting souls for the Lord. A number of the women are devoted to teaching the children. About 100 churches exist in this region and these brethren are characterized notably by “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1-6). The next day we spoke to about 200 souls gathered at **Escoda** where **Vic Domingo** preaches. On Sunday Jim and Ron went their separate ways, speaking at several appointments. Ron preached five times, including twice at **Dingras** where **Jun Macusi** lives — once before the church meeting in his home and once before the one-cup group meeting just down the road in a church building which Jun originally helped build. **Remiego Bayaca** preaches for the latter group but has seen the error of his way. He opened the door for me to address the one-cup error and to appeal for the two groups to reunite, which now appears likely to happen (and may have happened by the time this appears in print).

Matt, Sr. works with the church in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte. These brethren are in the process of erecting what will be one of the nicest buildings in the Philippines. Construction continues little by little as the funds become available. There are some professional people in this church and they are proudly using mostly their own funds. Individuals in the U.S. could help this effort along. Matt started preaching for this church from its beginning in 1972. It has met in nine different temporary locations within a 5-mile radius through the years. Matt is a converted Pentecostal preacher, has real ability, and has been a stable and stabilizing influence in Laoag City and the surrounding areas. The fruit of his labors along with other faithful men is evident in this region: There are over 3,000 Christians in about 100 congregations with some 65 preachers. Matt is 60 years old (as of September 14, 1998) and still going strong in spite of health problems suffered by his wife and himself.

On the 27th-28th we traveled to San Fernando (where we saw **Bert Enostacion**) and on to Bagio City, where we checked on the progress in the printing of song books in Philippine dialects. The next day Jim flew back to the U.S. and Ben Cruz took Ron to Tagaytay City (2-3 hours from Manila) for a planned two-day lectureship with 40-50 brethren who had gathered there. The brethren ended up studying among themselves as Ron never was able to address them. Instead, he had opportunities to speak in a denominational building with the preacher present and then to preach again in the open air in nearby **Amodao** with people gathered on and around a porch area of a house. Filipino brethren have been preaching in this area for six years and finally, now, a breakthrough occurred: Sixteen announced their desire to be baptized as a result of preaching here the evening of the 29th and again the morning of the 30th. **Allan Deleon**, a young preacher trained under Ben Cruz in Manila, immediately offered himself as willing to work with this new church.

### Results and Reflections

In all, over 300 baptisms resulted from our five weeks of joint labors with Filipino brethren. *These men do the day-in-and-day-out teaching that makes it possible for us to join hands with them to bring in the sheaves of ripened grain.* Denominational preachers are willing to listen and study with open minds — many of them are converted. While this season of harvest is possible, we must pray for God to send forth laborers and we must be willing to enter the harvest and work with all of our hearts. If gospel preachers will arouse themselves and put their hands to this work, good churches and godly brethren will rise up to help us go — and local churches here in the U.S. will grow in strength and zeal even for the local work through such spiritual exercise. Brethren, we *can* and we *must* do more than we have done in the past to spread the gospel *throughout the world.* Knowing that only few ultimately will obey the gospel does not excuse us from laboring to spread it, but rather we must work with our whole hearts to find those few precious souls! We must lift up our eyes to see the need and lift up our hands to work as never before (John 4:35-38).

*Our own faith, hope, and love grow stronger when we see the faith, hope, and love of our Filipino brethren.* They make sacrifices that most of us have never known, just to accomplish the simplest of tasks in serving the Lord. Their hospitality, their willing spirit, their unselfishness, and their tireless zeal lift up our hearts and help us to become better servants of the Lord. Their life is characterized by many hardships, but rather than murmur and complain, they simply press on in the work of God’s kingdom.

We can never relieve all their hardships, and they do not expect us to, but sometimes they are “pressed out of measure” by devastating storms, life-threatening droughts,

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# When Did We Stop Thinking?

Lewis Willis

Most of us tolerate every form and expression of wickedness that people of the world practice. We do not want or appreciate the evil that worldly people practice, but there seems to be so very little that we can do about it. So, we no longer preach against the overflowing unrighteousness which is engulfing us. We just “hang on” as we hope for better days, knowing that worldly people act that way.

However, *is it not time that we become concerned about ourselves?* We have been bombarded with so much evil that we seem to have decided to start thinking and acting like the world around us. On television, in movies, in magazines and newspapers, on the job, even at the grocery store we scarcely blink at what we see and hear.

We are inundated with sex, violence, profanity and animal-like behavior. There is no place to go to escape it, so we have decided to accept it. Or, so it seems. Preachers used to preach against it, Bible class teachers regularly taught against it, and parents staunchly refused to allow their children to act like worldly-minded people. *But not any more.* It is frequently difficult to tell the devoted Christian from the infidel. The way some Christians dress, the places they go, the way they talk, and the way they act is not markedly different from the ways of the most ungodly. Furthermore, we do not seem to be terribly upset about it. At least we are not doing much to change our conduct.

Let me give you some illustrations. Not long ago I saw a very dedicated young Christian mother out mowing her lawn

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and insects or rodents eating up their crops (2 Cor. 1:8). God hears their cries at such times, and he teaches us to hear them too.

Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth (1 John 3:16-18).

With this in mind, upon our return to the U.S. we immediately began to inform brethren of the nine month drought which had destroyed so much of the Philippine crops. An April newspaper account reported 50 confirmed deaths from starvation and bad water resulting from the El Nino, just on the island of Mindanao alone! In desperation, some have eaten wild yams which are poisonous, and died — including at least one gospel preacher who died this way while we were there. Our own brethren are suffering, starving, and dying as this article is being written

(May 1998). If rains started today, it still would be three to four months before rice, corn, and other crops could mature and be harvested.

Because of this extreme situation, Jim and Ron determined to return as messengers of churches and individuals for a short trip devoted to delivering benevolence to some of the neediest areas, June 29-July 9. Upon returning, we will be able to give reports and further information to those who may wish to follow up on the condition of our dear brethren in the Philippines. Let us “remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

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in shorts that were at least eight inches above her knee. Not many days later a young lady who claims to be a Christian came to the church building with a non-Christian friend in what can only be described as the shortest of short-shorts. I recently attended service at another church and a young father with two or three children was in attendance wearing shorts.

*When did we stop thinking?* Have shorts become modest apparel in the last few years? Did I perhaps miss the decree that they were acceptable apparel for Christians? I wonder where I was when it was decided that such skimpy clothing is appropriate for both shopping and worship!

No, brethren, the rules did not change. *We did!* We have accepted into our own lives the sin running rampant in our country. We, the blood-bought people and family of God are running around everywhere dressed immodestly, and we don't even seem to care!

It has been said many times before, but I would say it again, "Where would you start cutting on a pair of shorts to make them immodest?" How are Christian parents going to convince their children that they must dress modestly? Especially, when the parents themselves run around all over town — even to the worship of the church in what can most charitably be described as *questionable* apparel! It's sad to think that they are not even going to try to teach their children about modesty. How can they without condemning themselves? Few people would have the courage to admit to their children that they have been wrong about this matter all these years.

Paul wrote to Timothy, instructing "That women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness (a sense of shame; modesty) and sobriety (sound judgment)" (1 Tim. 2:9). The verse still says the same thing, doesn't it? Interestingly, I went back and checked the meanings of *modest*, *shamefacedness* and *sobriety* in both English and Greek, and the definitions are the same as they used to be. I then checked several well-respected commentaries on these matters and they still say the same things. The attire of people should be expressive of a sense of shame and good common sense, shrinking from trespassing the boundaries of propriety, not exhibiting their bodies in such a way as to produce lust.

If the Scripture, the words themselves, and respected commentaries haven't changed on the subject of modesty, what do you suppose changed? Is it possible that *we* have changed; from a scriptural conduct, to one that is unscriptural? Is it not evident that we have failed to keep the influences of the world out of our lives?

Some are even going to say, "Well, it just doesn't make that much difference — I don't know what he is so upset about." That being the case, allow me to inform those who

want to engage in such conduct of an obligation bearing heavily upon them. Twice the apostle Paul required it: (1) "*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good*" (1 Thess. 5:21); and (2) "*Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord*" (Eph. 5:10). You have a responsibility before God to *prove that he accepts* wearing of scanty attire in public and in the worship of the church. If you can't prove it, you had better not do it. The *burden of proof* lies with those who practice such things. It is not my obligation to prove you can't!

In the days of Jeremiah (627-586 B.C.) the Jews — even Jerusalem — had abandoned the conduct that God required. Jerusalem became as a fountain, casting out her wickedness. God said, "Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee . . . To whom shall I speak, and give warning . . . they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach . . . For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness . . . Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, *they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush*: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them *they shall be cast down*, saith the Lord" (Jer. 6:1-15).

Some in the church of 1998 are not a great deal different than Israel was in Jeremiah's day. We don't blush at much anymore. It is harder and harder to embarrass some Christians. Being seen in public half naked surely does not cause them to blush.

*Is it not time we stop and think?* Jeremiah called Israel to return to truth and right. He said, "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." They should have listened, "But they said, We will not walk therein" (v. 16). When we are called to turn away from our worldly conduct, and return to modesty and appropriate behavior, will we say, "We will not walk therein?" *When did we stop thinking?* Isn't it about time we started thinking again and teaching the truth on this matter?

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## All The Women of the Bible

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# What Caused the Great Division of the Nineteen Fifties and Sixties?

W. R. Jones

I write as one who was there. I begin with a historical look at the last 55 years. Preachers like N.B. Hardeman, Foy Wallace, Jr. and H. Leo Boles, to name a few, were in their prime. They were more in the limelight, but in the background there were thousands of faithful preachers who quietly went about kingdom business with little notice. The religious census of 1926 reported there were 433,000 members in churches of Christ. Others estimated the number at a half-million. There had been great prosperity in the 1920s, but this was followed by a horrible depression of the thirties. I lived through part of it and I can assure you first hand, it was bad. You may be surprised to learn that during these hard years churches of Christ enjoyed solid growth and development. Across the South, North, and West parts of our country the gospel spread at a rapid pace. Gospel preachers were aggressive and the strongholds of error were challenged and met on every hand. Great numbers were being baptized. As a young preacher I baptized as many as 22 in one meeting. People were hungry for the simple gospel. Then came the automobile, radio, airplanes, and later TV. All these assisted in a greater spread of the message of Truth across our fair land. It was a thrilling time to be a Christian.

It was a period of harmony and unity among the churches. Following the great division of churches of Christ from the digressive Christian churches there was significant doctrinal harmony. Brethren rallied together for a common cause, the cause of Truth. When, for example, the premillennial issue invaded the churches we were confronted with a very divisive issue. I was quite young, but I remember it was a very vocal and visible disagreement, and yet, when it was over very little damage had been done to the churches. Do you know why? Brethren stood up and fought for the Truth. Foy Wallace, Jr. led the fight and did a lot to stamp out this false doctrine that dethrones Christ as king. This unity during that period can be seen by the fact that many

widely publicized and well attended debates were conducted. Many debates were held with Baptist opponents and others with representatives of the Christian churches over the matter of instruments of music in the worship. Many overtures of so-called unity were made by Christian churches, but there was almost a total rejection by united brethren toward this spirit of compromise. During those days there was a kind of distinctive, no-nonsense preaching. Not many preachers were trying to be entertainers and both preachers and members were generally known as “people of the Book.” Materialism was low, spirituality high.

Following World War II, the church enjoyed a tremendous growth, especially in urban areas. Prosperity was increasing and times were changing. Many Christians began to climb the economic and educational ladder. Nice and even fancy buildings began to appear and for good or for bad the churches were moving “across the tracks.” With increased prosperity, “liberalism” began to show its ugly head. Liberalism is an “attitude” and that makes it hard to get a handle on. Liberalism is a “loose attitude” toward the Divine Constitution. The only way we could deal with it was to deal with its “symptoms,” which will be named further in this article.

How could our brethren fall for liberalism? Several things are involved, but a very important one is the tendency to transfer authority from the Book to the church. The following became a popular way of thinking. (1) The church of Christ is the Lord’s church (no problem). (2) The church of Christ has the truth (sounds pretty good). (3) Therefore, what is taught and practiced in churches of Christ is right (a dangerous way of reasoning). Things were being accepted as scriptural because the churches were doing them and not because that was what the New Testament taught. This is an attempt to transfer “authority” from the Book to the belief and practice of the churches and that is extremely

dangerous regardless of how good it may sound.

Institutionalism was knocking at our door. Prior to Pearl Harbor several colleges operated by brethren had quietly been accepting church contributions. In 1938, G.C. Brewer was reported to have said at an Abilene Christian College Lectureship that a church which did not have the college in its budget had the wrong preacher. A decade later, N.B. Hardeman (President of Freed Hardeman College) and others, revived the controversy in a public attempt to attract financial support from church treasuries. Even before the G.I.s returned home in 1945 churches were awakening to a great need to spread the gospel here and elsewhere. Many soldiers had taught the word across the seas and they were urging us to send preachers into these countries. Zeal is wonderful, but it began to get out of control and many brethren were embracing most anything that would spread the word. The end began to overshadow the means in the minds of many Christians. Spurred on by this unbridled zeal to bring the world to Christ, the churches were flooded with appeals to support cooperative works in Germany, Italy, and Japan. In the beginning these efforts were primarily among churches in Texas and Tennessee.

Institutions (colleges, orphan homes, homes for the aged, etc.) soon grew to more than thirty. We should remember, these things had not always existed. The first orphan home was Tennessee Orphan Home in 1909, Potter's Orphanage 1914, Boles Home 1927, and Tipton Home in 1928. Added to all these projects was a national radio (later TV) program called the Herald of Truth. All these innovations were calling for the collective action of churches. This quickly brought about the sponsoring church arrangement which called for many churches to send contributions to some sponsoring church and her elders that they might oversee some mission on the behalf of contributing churches. One would think these brethren didn't know 1 Peter 5:1-2 was in the divine text.

A conflict of minds. After exercising considerable patience, some good and respected brethren began to seriously question these practices. More and more good brethren were being pushed against the wall by these zealous out-of-control promoters. A "quarantine" program was started by the *Gospel Advocate* and imposed by many churches. This produced a tremendous tension between the boosters of the new projects and those who opposed them. At first, I was very enthused about these innovations. Fortunately I had been well taught on "how to establish authority" from God's word. I had an honest heart and a deep respect for the Scripture. At the end of a great Herald of Truth rally, a preacher friend asked me how I would justify that arrangement from the New Testament.

When my preacher friend asked me where I would go in the New Testament to find authority for the sponsoring

church organization it took to produce the Herald of Truth, I responded with these brilliant words: "What kind of a nut are you, don't you want to spread the gospel?" My next dumb statement was, "You know it is scriptural or these brethren wouldn't be advocating it." Fortunately, I decided to research the word and in so doing I saw the truth and took a stand. This caused me to be "quarantined." I was dismissed from my work, my support terminated, and I had twelve meetings canceled within two weeks, all because I spoke against sinful innovations.

### Confusion about the Real Issues

One sad aspect of the conflict was that many brethren were confused about the issues because of emotionalism. (1) Opposition to churches contributing to human institutions was pictured as "they hate little orphans." (2) Opposition to sponsoring churches and sponsoring elderships was portrayed as "They don't believe in mission work." Teaching that the responsibility of the church out of its treasury in benevolence is limited to "saints only" was translated as, "They don't believe in helping a neighbor." Opposition to fellowship halls was made to mean, "They are against brethren having a good time with one another." None of these "false charges" was ever true, but many fell for them and were blinded to the truth.

The real issues were: (1) The right of churches to contribute to human institutions, (2) the sponsoring church arrangement, and (3) church benevolence to aliens. In 1960 I met Henry McCaghren at Baytown, Texas in a six-night debate on these three issues. Between 650 and 800 people were in attendance each evening. Elmer Moore moderated for me and much good was accomplished. As time passed another issue, "the social gospel" started making inroads and grew rapidly. Just take a look about you today and you will realized how far this practice has taken brethren who embraced the digression. I personally, never dreamed it could happen. IT HAS!

Who caused the division? It was not the brethren who stood with the word of God and gave a "thus saith the Lord." It was caused by those who pressed unauthorized practices upon us. Practices we couldn't (1) share in, (2) share with, (3) nor give a share to. Conviction in these matters of faith forced us into a separation. Today, we are still trying to maintain God's plan. Our brethren who embraced liberalism to various degrees, have moved further away from the truth. It is sad, but true. Our plea toward them continues: Come back *totally* to the solid truth!

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*From The Messenger, Decker Prairie Church of Christ, September 15, 1996*



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# The Memphis Meeting And Related Matters

Dick Blackford

**“I know when this program was first announced a few years ago, I had a great deal of misgivings about it — just the very idea of it. I could envision a great concentration of power at the hands of a single eldership . . . It’s very easy for one congregation to go astray and when such power is concentrated in one it would have influence to a great many others . . .”**

The *Herald of Truth* (H.O.T.) has divided the brotherhood twice. The first time was over the sponsoring church concept of the organizational structure of the church. Most major apostasies have come through a corruption of the organization of the church (Catholic Church, Missionary Society, Sponsoring Church). The second time, it divided promoters of the program who endorsed the sponsoring church concept. Soft preaching on the program and doctrinal error in the Highland church was the reason the second time, as well as politics in the power structure at the top (firing of E.R. Harper, etc.). The sponsoring church bit the hand of those who were feeding it. Some of its most avid promoters reaped the whirlwind, especially those who defended it in debate (E.R. Harper, Guy Woods, G.K. Wallace, Alan Highers).

In recent months, Garland Elkins wrote a series of 22 articles titled “One Grape At A Time” in the *Yokefellow* (a publication of the Memphis School Of Preaching. Knight Arnold Road congregation is the sponsoring church) in which he rehashed a meeting conducted on September 10, 1973 at the Getwell Church Of Christ in Memphis. The meeting was to discuss the *Herald of Truth* and lasted between 10-13 hours. Elkins was chairman of the meeting and preacher at Getwell.

Approximately 200 elders and preachers from all over the country came to discuss this “brotherhood” project.

## **The Pyramid Structure**

Denominational projects that originate in the minds of men, such as corruptions in organizational structure, usually have one thing in common. They become so big and powerful that nobody can stop them. The pyramid structure places power at the top over which the rank and file have no control, except to disassociate themselves. In the '70s when the hierarchy of the Presbyterian Church decided to contribute \$10,000 to the Angela Davis (a communist) Defense Fund, many at the bottom of the pyramid opposed it but were powerless to stop it. Other church hierarchies have made decisions on such things as ordaining homosexual preachers and members expressed disapproval but were powerless to stop it. Those who supported the televangelists had similar problems because of the pyramid structure. The same thing happened regarding the H.O.T. and the hierarchy involved in the “sponsoring church.” Those who opposed it at the Memphis Meeting were unable to stop it. It is still going on 25 years later.

Many conservative brethren had argued that the H.O.T. was more than a program of a local church. That

it had its own offices, mail permit, workshops, representatives, etc. This was ridiculed by the liberal brethren who promoted it. Some finally (perhaps unwittingly) admitted it. Consider this admission from the editor of *Contending For The Faith* (July 1973). “Do you recall just a few years ago, when some of us used to ponder whatever would happen to the churches of Christ if the forces of error should ever get control of the HERALD OF TRUTH?” (Why the capital letters for H.O.T. but not for churches of Christ? Why worry about this any more than one would worry about forces of error gaining control in any one of thousands of local churches?, db). I can just hear the anti-coop-erationists rising up as one man to chide ‘I told you so;’ however, brethren, it no longer is ‘unthinkable’ . . . as from March 26, 1973 with the firing of E.R. Harper, NOT by the Highland elders but by the HERALD OF TRUTH RADIO AND TELEVISION COMMITTEE, . . .” (Ira Rice).

Rice’s admission showed what we had been saying for so long, that while the H.O.T. had ties to Highland it was a separate organization. Yes, as history will show and as Rice admitted, we told you so but you wouldn’t listen. Ironically, after noting several signs all was not well at Highland, Rice says, “You just can’t warn SOME folks because they refuse to be warned!” Say what? In the Memphis Meeting he also asked, “I want to know who is paid top salary at the Herald of Truth? Who gets the most money? . . . We’d like to know the top five men, the top five salaries” (Sec. I, 33). That answer was never given but it shows Rice regarded the H.O.T. as an entity in itself.

Consider this statement from Thomas B. Warren, “I know when this program was first announced a few years ago, I had a great deal of misgivings about it — just the very idea of it. I could envision a great concentration of power at the hands

of a single eldership . . . It’s very easy for one congregation to go astray and when such power is concentrated in one it would have influence to a great many others . . .” (Sec. I, 40). Also, this statement from Alan Highers, “In every liberal takeover in denominationalism the means has been through gaining control of the influential institutions, . . . This, then, is what the Herald of Truth controversy really means” (Sec. III, 2). Warren recognized that the Highland elders constituted a concentration of power that was out of the ordinary. Why the alarm? Wasn’t this Highland’s work as E.R. Harper told us in the Harper-Tant Debate? Weren’t they just another local autonomous congregation? Where did brethren get the right to concentrate such power in one local eldership? Not from the Bible. Unwittingly, Warren was admitting they had become more than local elders. While Highers probably did not intend to refer to the H.O.T. as an institution, this is what he said, and he recognized it as an “influential institution,” something extraordinary. Highland became a “super” church as they assumed (not assigned) oversight of a national program, a “brotherhood” project. Where did those who gave Highland such power get that right? Who had the right to make plans for the “brotherhood”? The only way elders can be over a “brotherhood” project is if they are “brotherhood” elders, something the Lord did not ordain (1 Pet. 5:2). Such authority is usurped. All who consented are partakers of their sin. There is no reason why problems in one local congregation should have caused such widespread discussion, division, and a gathering of preachers and elders from “the four corners of the earth,” except that the church had more power and influence given to them through an unscriptural combine known as “the sponsoring church.”

### **An Unscriptural Plea**

In the Memphis Meeting, a Highland elder said: “We plead with you to allow us to continue to pray and work with this problem” (Art Haddox,

Sec. I, 2). Can you imagine the elders in the local congregation where you worship traveling a thousand miles to plead with preachers and elders who have assembled from congregations all over the nation to let them continue a work overseen by your local independent, self-governing congregation and its elders? If so, you have too big an imagination. But it can be imagined if you are engaged in something unscriptural. Imagine them pleading with brethren a thousand miles away to let them continue their Bible class program!

### **Moving The H.O.T. To Another Eldership**

Consider these statements: “It may be that before this work is able to continue . . . that it may have to be under the leadership and sponsorship of some other congregation. That may be the solution” (Alan Highers, Sec. II, 28). “I’m not trying to kill the Herald of Truth, but it ought to be moved from Highland to a good sound eldership . . .” “The present eldership must go or the program is dead . . . I want to see it under a strong eldership if we have to move it to Memphis or Nashville, Tennessee (AMEN, from audience, db)” (Frank Cawyer, former Highland elder, Sec. I, 14, Sec. II, 64). “I want the program saved if it means moving the oversight to a strong, knowledgeable, efficient eldership . . .” (James D. Willeford, one of the founders of the H.O.T., Sec. II, 52). “Maybe this ministry should be transferred to an eldership that is more capable of coping with the unusual pressures that come . . . You see, if there is no Highland church, there isn’t any Herald of Truth unless its first transferred” (Lynn Anderson, a Highland preacher, Sec. II, 74,75). “But if not, that the program can be . . . given to some other congregations” (Garland Elkins, Sec. II, 72).

Can a group of elders and preachers from all over the country meet a thousand miles away from your local congregation to discuss moving part of your congregation’s work? If

**The only way elders can be over a “brotherhood” project is if they are “brotherhood” elders, something the Lord did not ordain (1 Pet. 5:2). Such authority is usurped.**

they can, the congregation must be involved in something unscriptural because New Testament congregations were ruled by the elders “among you” (1 Pet. 5:2; Acts 20:28). What group of men has the right to come together to discuss moving part of another congregation’s work? Who gave them that right? Not the Lord.

They assumed it. These brethren would have loved to have moved the H.O.T. since they considered it part of their work, but they had surrendered the oversight of that part of their work! This shows Highland had exclusive control. It was the work of many churches controlled by one. It was unscriptural centralized agency, as Roy Cogdill proved in the Cogdill-Woods Debate.

#### **Joint Elders’ Meetings**

In discussing a campaign in the Hurst-Bedford (Texas) area in which Lynn Anderson was to speak, Ed Sanders of Harding College said, “I have been asked by the elders of the four congregations that were involved in this campaign to act as director of the campaign . . . And we asked Lynn to come . . . and the elders of the four congregations that were interested in the campaign met in the conference room of the Pipe Line Road church in Hurst with Lynn, . . . It was the consensus of those elders that here was a man who was safe to use for this particular job” (Sec. II, 68, 69). As most Christians will remember from the Jule Miller filmstrips, the formation of the Roman Catholic Church began by an elder from each congregation meeting together as a unit from which decisions were made. This was the *seed*, a corruption in the organization of the church. In principle it would make no difference whether one or all the elders from several congregations met, the *seed* for the beginning of an unscriptural organization is there. Given time, as in the case of the Catholic Church and the Disciples of Christ (Christian Church), and one will have no trouble seeing where the apostasy began.

#### **Great Swelling Words For A Human Institution**

One of the men at the Memphis Meeting said it “. . . was one of the most important gatherings of brethren which has

been conducted in this generation” (i, Introduction). He went on to say “brother Baxter (Batsell Barrett Baxter, db) said earlier that today might determine whether or not the Herald Of Truth program would live or die. But you know brethren, really the survival of the church is involved in this too” (AMEN. That’s right . . . from audience) (Sec. I, 32). If no one learned the truth that the “sponsoring church” is an unscriptural institution, then the meeting was not that important regardless of how much self-importance its participants may have claimed. But, imagine it! The *survival of the church depends upon a project that originated in the minds of men and had its beginning on February 3, 1952!* That is grandstanding at its worst. How about if the church where I labor has a meeting of influential preachers and elders from all over the nation to determine whether part of the work of your home congregation lives or dies? The only way such meetings could take place or that we could begin to think the survival of the church depends on the outcome of such meetings is if the churches are involved in some unscriptural organization. These statements demonstrate how the “sponsoring church” destroys the autonomy of both the contributing churches and the “sponsoring church” as well — a denominational concept. It is what happens in an unscriptural pyramid. Who would make such a wild statement that the survival of the church was dependent on a meeting that originated in the minds of men to discuss a project that originated in the minds of men? Garland Elkins, chairman of the meeting, present co-editor of *Yokefellow* and dean of public relations at Memphis School of Preaching.

#### **What The Scriptures Teach**

The scriptures teach that elders are to “tend the flock of God which is among you” (1 Pet.5:2). They are to “take heed . . . to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers . . . I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you . . .” (Acts 20:28, 29). Which flock was that? It was the local flock at Ephesus. Those elders were over the evangelism, edification, discipline, resources, etc., of the flock “among you.” What part of any of that can they delegate to another eldership? None, and remain self-governing and independent. The congregations represented by men in the Memphis Meeting could not control what was being done with their money. They had surrendered their oversight, much to their surprise. They could not move the Herald of Truth to another eldership nor could they stop it. But consider this statement: “. . .If I believe any part of the Bible, I believe the part . . . that teaches a congregation is autonomous” (Ed Sanders, Sec. II, 72). These brethren honor autonomy with their lips but their practice is far from it.

#### **Was Jerusalem a “Sponsoring Church?”**

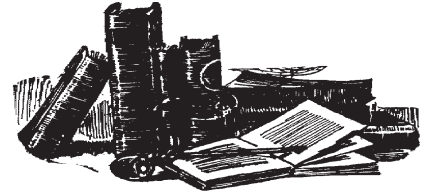
We have been told that what Highland and other “sponsoring churches” are doing is no different than when



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brethren sent to Jerusalem when they were in want (1 Cor.16:1, 2; 2 Cor. 8, 9). First, Jerusalem was a destitute church. They became that way through no fault of their own. (Did Highland become destitute through no fault of their own? No, they were one of the largest and wealthiest congregations in America.) The only situation in the Bible in which one church donated funds to another was when it became destitute through circumstances beyond its control. This does not describe Highland, Sycamore in Cookeville, Knight Arnold Road in Memphis, nor any other "sponsoring church" today. Second, Jerusalem was the target of the need (it was for needy saints in that congregation) and not a funnel which filtered funds back to various parts of the country. Third, Jerusalem did not launch a massive campaign to solicit funds from churches at large as does

Highland, Sycamore, or Knight Arnold Road. Fourth, Jerusalem's want was in benevolence. Highland's, Sycamore's and Knight Arnold's want is not. They may "want," but they are not "in want." Fifth, Jerusalem's need was peculiarly theirs. Sponsoring churches' wants of today are no more theirs exclusively than any other congregation's. God has not assigned national or world obligations to one congregation alone. All congregations have equal duty to evangelize according to their ability, but no congregation has the right to assume and oversee the evangelistic work of several churches. Sixth, Jerusalem's case is in the Bible. These others are not.

A church is in "want" when it lacks the means of self-maintenance, not when it assumes national or world

obligations beyond its ability. When a church, through no fault of its own, became dependent, other churches acted independently in their effort to restore that church to an independent status, that there might be equality (not equal in funds and members but equal in freedom from want). This is the only condition under which one church received funds from another. Can you imagine preachers and elders from Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth calling a meeting to discuss moving part of Jerusalem's work to another eldership? Can you imagine them saying that such a meeting might determine the survival of the church? If congregations were truly independent, even if one entire eldership becomes corrupt it need not effect any other congregation in the world.

#### **“Non-cooperation Brethren”**

Elkins says, “The non-cooperation brethren cannot rightfully rejoice that we are now having to oppose liberalism within the ranks of the Lord's people . . .” Then referring to a discussion of Ketchersidism which took place in *Truth Magazine* and *The Gospel Guardian*, he said, “Obviously, cooperation did not produce liberalism or compromise among them for neither group advocates cooperation” (iv, Introduction). Rice said, “I can just hear the anti-cooperationists rising up as one man to say ‘I told you so.’” Because we believe in only one kind of cooperation (direct and independent, Phil. 4:15-18), Elkins calls us “non-cooperation brethren” and says we do not “advocate cooperation.” Both Elkins and Rice are old enough to know they are willfully misrepresenting us. Since both believe in only one kind of music (vocal) should they be called “non-music brethren” or “anti-music brethren”? Since they believe in only one baptism, should they be called “non-baptism brethren” or “anti-baptismists”? Should we accuse them of not “advocating baptism”? Since they believe in only one God, should they be called “non-God brethren” or “anti-Godists” or of not “advocating God”? To refer to us as “non-cooperation” brethren is a misrepresentation. It is unfair and prejudicial. We do believe in cooperation and couldn't have said it better than W.E. Brightwell, David Lipscomb, J.C. McQuiddy, F.B. Syrgley, and others.

#### **W.E. Brightwell:**

I submit this proposition. Any individual Christian, or group of individuals, smaller than a local congregation, or any group of individuals or churches larger than a local church, or any individual church itself that begins thinking in terms of what the whole brotherhood should do, and goes or sends somebody to the churches to see that they do it, and acts as an agent or agency through which the brotherhood does it, thereby constitutes itself full-grown, blow-in-the-bottle, fourteen-karat missionary society of the deepest dye! There is no way on earth to whitewash it. There is no city of refuge where he may hide from God's displeasure. To call it something else, or to leave it

**J.C. McQuiddy: “. . . there is no scriptural authority for one church controlling and directing the funds of other churches. . .”**

unnamed, is a mere technical dodge. It is not condemned because it is similar to a missionary society, but because it violates the same fundamental principle the society violates — namely, the initiative and autonomy of the local congregation (*Gospel Advocate*, Dec. 20, 1934).

David Lipscomb (objecting to an attempt to establish a sponsoring church at Henderson, TN in 1910):

Now what was that but the organization of a society in the elders of this church? The church elders at Henderson constitute a board to collect and pay out the money and control the evangelist for the brethren of West Tennessee . . . All meetings of churches or officers of churches to combine more power than a single church possesses are wrong . . . But for one or more to direct what and how all the churches shall work, or to take charge of their men and money and use it, is to assume the authority God has given to each church. . .

#### **J.C. McQuiddy:**

. . . there is no scriptural authority for one church controlling and directing the funds of other churches. . .

#### **F.B. Syrgley:**

The agency system of collecting funds from many churches, even if it is done under some eldership, is without authority, . . . The greatest objection to the whole scheme is that it is not in the New Testament” (*Gospel Advocate*, November 1, 1934). Similar quotes from men who preached in the 1930s (before the H.O.T. was invented) could be produced from such men as E.R. Harper, Foy Wallace, Jr., F.B. Shepherd, H. Leo Boles, etc.

A variety of factors may be involved that lead to liberalism. However, there is a connection between the “no pattern” theory that many promoters of institutionalism were preaching in 1950s and 1960s and present attempts to restructure the church. The Getwell church (where brother Elkins used to preach) helped circulate the tract by A.C. Pullias titled “Where There Is No Pattern.” Saying, “there is no pattern” in the work of the church is a step away from saying there is no pattern in the worship of the church. This was the path followed by the Christian Church and is also the path being followed by many institutional brethren.

#### **Preaching Funerals**

In a recent article, Alan Highers tried to preach the fu-

neral of churches who oppose the liberalism of “sponsoring churches” and church supported benevolent institutions and other forms of liberalism practiced by brother Highers and his associates. After discussing the prejudicial proposition A.C. Grider debated in the 1960s he said, “The influence of the movement failed. It has never been able to exert a significant presence since that time, and most members of the church today are not even aware that such a movement exists.” This was reminiscent of a similar attempt to preach our funeral by Thomas Warren in 1971. It is wishful thinking rather than fact. While no one is doing all that should be done to spread the gospel, conservative churches exist in all 50 states and in at least 40 foreign countries. In most areas where debates have been conducted conservative churches are stronger. When brethren are allowed to hear both sides of an issue and truth is given an equal opportunity with error, truth shines brightest. This may be the reason some church members are not aware that there are brethren standing for the truth against institutionalism. They are kept in the dark and not allowed to be exposed to the truth. This seems to be the reason institutional brethren have never been willing to defend their practices in Memphis.

Highers also preaches the funeral of those who have moved farther to the left than he is. “*Image Magazine* is no more . . . It is interesting to note that most of the left-wing papers . . . in the brotherhood have fallen by the wayside. *Wineskins* stands practically alone . . . There are just not enough ‘hard-core’ liberals in the church to support two magazines . . .” (*Spiritual Sword*, Oct. 1997, 47).

Brother Highers must enjoy preaching funerals for he comes close to preaching the funeral of the middle-of-the-road movement that he is part of. “Brethren we are in the fight of our lives for the truth of the gospel, yet many well-meaning and well intentioned brethren are asleep at the battle-stations” (Sec. III, 1). Speaking of the Nashville Jubilee he says, “Why do substantial publications such as

the *Gospel Advocate* (the “Old Reliable,” db) and *Christian Chronicle* never utter a word of criticism regarding this program . . . Where is the watchman now upon the wall of Zion . . . My deepest concern is not that these false teachings are being promulgated . . . but rather it is in the fact that there is scarcely a word of opposition being heard (emphasis mine, db) throughout our great brotherhood from those in positions of power, influence, and responsibility! . . . There ought to be a groundswell of horrified opposition sounding forth from pulpits, church bulletins, brotherhood journals, and even by Bible professors on every college campus. Where is the outrage? Where are the voices crying in the wilderness? ‘Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?’ (Lam. 1:12)” (SS, Oct. 1997). That doesn’t sound too good for brethren who favor institutionalism. They have lost most of their colleges, journals, and big sponsoring churches to liberalism. One of their number, a recent speaker at an appreciation dinner at the Memphis School of Preaching, said, “Well, here it goes again! I can remember about 35 or 40 years ago, when almost every week we heard of a new congregation being established. What a turn around! Now, almost every week I hear of another congregation going out of business” (Guss Eoff, *Magnolia Messenger*, Jan/Feb. 1998).

The sad truth is there are people all over the world who have never heard of either of our “movements” (as brother Highers calls them). The Tennessee Orphan Home (1909) and the Herald of Truth (1952) both had their beginning in this century — over 1900 years away from the New Testament. If these brethren would give up their innovations, we could be united again and we could preach the gospel to a lost world in a way that it hasn’t been preached in a long time.

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# Walking In The Fear Of God (1)

Donnie V. Rader

One of the most impressive concepts in the Bible is that of walking in the fear of God. The more I study and see how that expression (“the fear of God”) is used, the more determined I am to encourage others to walk in the fear of the Lord.

Fear has to be taught (Deut. 4:10; 14:23; Ps. 34:11). It is not casually absorbed. If one fears God, he has been taught to fear. Thus, if our children are going to walk in the fear of God, it will be because we have taught them.

I find myself using that expression more and more to describe those who are truly dedicated to God. I am very selective in my use of that expression. I do not use it to describe everyone who has been baptized or attends church all of the time. Not all of those who are members where we worship are walking in the fear of God. Sometimes when we are trying to figure out why someone doesn't live as he should and do better than he is doing, it would do us well to not make excuses and simply conclude that he *doesn't fear God!*

Our objective in this study is two-fold: (1) Help us to walk in the fear of God, (2) to challenge us to deeper study on the concept of fear.

## Examples Of Those Who Feared God

Some in the Bible either described themselves or were described by God as standing in fear of God. When Abraham was about to slay his son as God had instructed, he was stopped by an angel saying, “Now I know that you fear God” (Gen. 22:12). Joseph told his brothers, “Do this and live, for I fear God” (Gen. 42:18). Jonah told those aboard the ship he was on, “I fear the Lord” (Jonah 1:9). Nehemiah described the remnant that returned as “Your servants who desire to fear Your name” (Neh. 1:11). Later in the book he describes Hananiah the leader of the citadel as “a faithful man and feared God more than many” (Neh. 7:2).

This does not mean that only those whose names are associated with the term “fear” are those that feared God.

The Bible is filled with examples of those who feared God, but other terms were used to describe their faithfulness.

## Purpose And Summation Of Life

Solomon sought the answer to the question of the purpose of life. After finding the emptiness of wealth, pleasure, and wisdom, he concluded, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all” (Eccl. 12:13). The same writer said that we should be in the fear of God all day long (Prov. 23:17). God placed man on earth to fear him and keep his commandments. That means everything else is secondary to that. Our purpose and function in life is not to work and make a living. We work and make a living so we can live and serve God with fear.

Since the above is true, then if we fail to fear God we have failed in life. If fearing God is our purpose in life, then when we don't fear our life has no purpose. If we don't teach our children to fear God, then we have failed miserably as parents.

## Those Who Fear God Please God

Peter said, “But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him” (Acts 10:35). The familiar promise that the Lord's eyes are over the righteous and his ear are open to their prayers (1 Pet. 3:12) was quoted from Psalm 34:15 which is a description of the blessing that those who fear God (v. 9) receive.

## What Fear Means

Some have a limited concept of the fear of God. Some may think that fear only involves being afraid of God. Others may think that sense of fear has no part in the service of God. However, the fear of God is like a coin: it has two sides. While those two sides are different, they also are inseparable. It involves:

1. *Being afraid of displeasing God.* When Saul and Samuel were gathering men to go to battle, they took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces and sent messengers

out, each carrying a bloody piece of meat. Their message was, "Whoever does not go out with Saul and Samuel to battle, so it shall be done to his oxen." What reaction would you have had? I would have been afraid not to. The text says, "And the fear of the Lord fell on the people, and they came out with one consent" (1 Sam. 11:7). Thus, they feared God in the sense that they were afraid not to do what they were told.

The Lord says that he will look on the one who "trembles at My word" (Isa. 66:2). David said, "My flesh trembles for fear of You, And I am afraid of Your judgments" (Ps. 119:120). We ought to tremble in our boots at the thought of doing the things that displease God.

Paul said that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:31). The reason is "our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29).

One who can knowingly do wrong and not be bothered at all obviously doesn't fear God.

2. *Respect and awe of God.* When Jesus raised the son of the widow of Nain, fear came upon the people (Luke 7:16). There is no indication that they were afraid of anything. Rather, "They glorified God, saying, 'A great prophet has risen up among us,' and 'God has visited His people'" (v. 16). Their fear was that of awe, homage and respect.

When Jonah said he feared God, he explained saying, "I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and dry land" (Jonah 1:9). He stood in awe and wonder of God.

Moses instructed the people to "fear this glorious and awesome name, The Lord Your God . . ." (Deut. 28:58).

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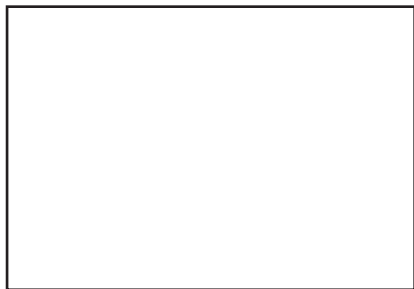
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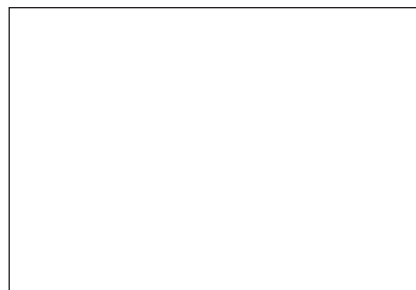
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# Thinking About the Family (4)

Greg Litmer

There are few things that are as pleasant to behold as a well behaved child who is in subjection to his parents. I am not talking about a perfect child because I have never met one. I am talking about boys and girls who run and play, who have to be rebuked sometimes, who may test their parents and push the limit every now and again, normal kids who are just growing up. At the same time few things are as distasteful and unpleasant to behold as a child who is in charge of his mom and dad: mouthy, disrespectful, disobedient, insolent, and in control. This is just another way that we can “sin against the child.”

One of the vital parental responsibilities is to teach their children respect for authority. That begins in the home from the earliest days of the child. One of the Ten Commandments given by God through Moses to the children of Israel was, “Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee” (Exod. 20:12). The charge to teach this command of God, as well as all of the others, is given to the parents (Deut. 6:6-7; Eph. 6:4). The very first authority figures that a child comes in contact with are its parents. A failure to instill a proper respect for authority on that most basic of levels will result in trouble with other forms of authority later on, including a respect for the authority of God.

It is not a sign of love on the part of the parents to allow their children to speak to them in a disrespectful manner. It is not a sign of love to allow children to blatantly disobey parental commands without having to pay the consequences of such disobedience. Several passages from the book of Proverbs emphasize this fact. For instance, Proverbs 13:24, “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.” The parents who refuse to punish a child for blatant disobedience and disrespect do their child a great injustice, and are indeed guilty of “sinning against the child.”

Why are some adolescents, living in their parents’ home, allowed to decide if they will come to worship services or not? I have heard all of the supposed reasons for this, but

none of them holds water. (a) “I don’t want my child to end up hating religion.” Yet, these same parents make their children go to school because they know that it is best for them. (b) “My child just won’t get out of bed on Sunday morning.” I always want to ask those parents, “Were you ever in the military?” They certainly had a way to get a disrespectful, lazy soldier out of bed. (c) “Why force them to go if they don’t want to be there?” Because God has given the responsibility for the spiritual upbringing of the child to the parents. Who would you rather offend, God or your child? Who knows better what is good for them, God and parents, or a teenage child?

There must be no mistake about it. God has placed the parents in charge, not the children, and the husband is to be the head of the house! There are willful children, about that there is no doubt. But as parents we must let them know that our will is stronger. It is so distasteful to see parents manipulated by their children like puppets on a string. It is sinful to allow that to happen!

God has clearly revealed to us how he feels about indulgent parents who allow their children to run roughshod over them and neglect their responsibilities in this area. Remember Eli and his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas? In 1 Samuel 12-14, we find, “In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever.” Eli was punished for letting his sons misbehave and not restraining them. And let us not forget that the sons were punished too. Hophni and Phinehas died in one day as punishment from God.

A child who grows to follow the way of righteousness generally does not happen by accident. It takes work by dedicated parents who love the Lord and love their children.

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# It Takes The Negative And The Positive

Johnie Edwards

Contrary to the thinking of many today, it takes both negative and positive preaching and teaching to get the job done! A careful reading of the Bible will indicate that God requires both negative and positive teaching.

## **Thou Shalt And Thou Shalt Not**

From God's first instruction to man to the end of New Testament teaching, God has put his instructions in the form of "Thou Shalt" and "Thou Shalt Not." The first man had positive things to do: "And the Lord God took the man, and put him in the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it" (Gen. 2:15). Then came the negative instructions: "But the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). A reading of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:1-17 will show us that God divided these commandments into two parts. Some positive things to be done, like, "Honor thy father and thy mother. . ." (Exod.

20:12); and then some things were of a negative nature. "Thou shalt not steal" (Exod. 20:15). A lot of preachers need to re-study this concept today.

## **God's Instruction to Jeremiah**

When God gave instructions to his prophet Jeremiah, he uttered, "See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant" (Jer. 1:10). As God called upon Jeremiah to deliver a fiery message, he divided the message into the negative and the positive. God used six terms in his message to Jeremiah. Four of these terms were of a negative nature: "root out, pluck up, destroy and throw down." Then God used two terms to suggest the positive aspect of the message: "Build and to plant." This is the same process we need to use in teaching the truth and dealing with error. We have far too many preachers who want to "accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative," to borrow some words of an old song. Four to two, may not be such a bad idea in gospel preaching!

## **To A Young Gospel Preacher**

More evidence for the need of balanced preaching can be seen in Paul's advice to the young gospel preacher, Timothy. "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). Two elements of Timothy's preaching were of a negative sort and one was of a positive view. Two to one! So both the negative and the positive type of preaching is necessary to carry out the Lord's orders. Preachers who are too timid to preach both negative and positive sermons ought not be preaching.

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Let's close with the words of Solomon from Proverbs 23:15-25. He wrote, "My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine. Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things. Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long. For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off. Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way. Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags. Harken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old. Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding. The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad and she that bare thee shall rejoice."

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## “Pro-choice” continued from front page

person isn't a person until near birth. If a doctor aborts the fetus it isn't a person, but if an angry husband punches his wife and kills the fetus, he's guilty of murder. Pro-choice logic is nothing if not inconsistent.

Abortionists also have argued that as long as the baby is in the womb it is a part of the mother and thus within her prerogative to amputate, disembowel, or excise. The fetus is treated like a fingernail that is clipped and discarded.

But all this must be done by ignoring the fact that the baby in the womb is genetically and, in many ways, metabolically distinct from the mother. For instance, how can a male child with a different blood type being pumped by a different heart under the direction of a different brain be called a part of a woman's body?

Also ignored in the pro-choice rhetoric is the factual difference between *ability* to make a choice and the *right* to make a choice. God has given us all the ability to make wrong choices, but the guidance to make right ones. I have the ability to choose to pick up a gun and shoot you, but I don't have the legal or moral right.

Joshua, the successor to Moses as leader of ancient Israel, put the choice issue before his people thousands of years ago. He said, "Choose you this day whom you will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15). The choice issue is no different today.

Moses had set a similar choice before his people, as recorded in Deuteronomy 30:19. Moses wasn't talking about abortion, but the words are hauntingly meaningful in the abortion debate. He said, "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live."

Don't be fooled by perverted terminology. Those who favor "abortion rights" need to be more concerned about choosing right than their right to choose.

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3515 Christopher Dr., Kokomo, Indiana 46902

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## “Divination” continued from page 2

ing, too sophisticated to believe in an Almighty, Eternal God who sacrificed his Son on the cross of Calvary for the remission of man's sins, and who revealed his perfect will to mankind through the Holy Spirit in an inspired Bible, they become more gullible to such things as extra sensory perception, seances, astrologists, spiritists, yoga, etc. Christians may wonder what the Bible says about such phenomena.

## The Teachings of the Bible About Spiritualism

Divination and magic are attempts to contact supernatural powers to determine answers to questions hidden to humans and usually involving the future. Karen Joines explained,

The ancient Babylonians and Assyrians employed several methods. The Babylonians commonly used hepatoscopy, divination by the liver. The liver of a sacrificial animal by virtue of being considered the seat of life could be observed carefully by specially trained priests to determine the future activities of the gods. For this purpose the priests underwent ceremonial cleansings in preparing to interpret the livers which had carefully been divided into zones, each containing its own secrets. This was done before action was taken on any matter of real gravity. Clay models of animal livers apparently used as instructional tools in teaching the science of hepatoscopy appear in archaeological sites in Babylonia and in Palestine (Karen Joines, *Holman Dictionary of the Bible*).

Resorting to these pagan means of learning the future was condemned in Scripture. Consider the following texts:

1. *Leviticus 20:27*. "A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them." The things condemned in this text are:

a. *One that hath a familiar spirit (NIV or NRSV: medium)*. The word **כֹּזֵב** means "a spirit of divination, or necromancy. . . a necromancer, one who calls up spirits to learn of them the future" (Davidson, *Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* 50-51). In Brown, Driver, and Briggs' *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (hereafter BDB) the word is defined as "necromancer." The English word "necromancer" is derived from *necros*, the Greek word for "dead" and *manteia*, the Greek word for "divination." The word means "one who claims to foretell the future through alleged communication with the dead."

b. *Wizard (NIV or NRSV: spiritist)*. The word **יִדְעֵי** is from the root of the verb that means "to know" and is defined as "wizard, soothsayer, . . . spirit of divination" (298). BDB defines the term as "prop. either as *knowing*, *wise* [acquainted with secrets of unseen world]" (396).

2. *Leviticus 20:6*. "And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people." One who turns aside to these is guilty of spiritual adultery. He has gone "a whoring" (from **וַיִּזְנֶה**, "to commit fornication") after other gods.

3. *Leviticus 19:31*. "Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them:



I am the Lord your God.” One who turns aside to these things “defiles” himself.

4. *Exodus 22:18*. “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.” The one who is a “witch” (a female sorcerer) was to be punished with death. The word **שִׁבְעָה** means “to practice magic, use witchcraft” (Davidson 396; BDB 506).

5. *Deuteronomy 18:10-12*. “There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee.” This passage forbids the following practices:

a. *Using divination*. The verb **נִחַן** means “to divine, spoken esp. of false prophets” (Davidson 663); “practice divination” (BDB 890). The cognate noun means “divination.” The word “divination” means “the act or practice of trying to foretell future events or the unknown by occult means” (Webster).

b. *An observer of times* (NIV: *socery*; NRSV: *is a soothsayer*). The verb **נָחַן** means “to cloud, bring a cloud . . . Poel. . . to divine, by the clouds or perh. the sky generally” (Davidson 607). BDB suggest several possible etymologies, but defines the word as “practice soothsaying” (778). A “soothsayer” is “one who predicts or pretends to foretell the future” (Webster).

c. *Enchanter* (NIV: *interprets omens*; NRSV: *augur*). The root meaning of **שָׁחַן** is “serpent.” The word evolved in meaning to mean “divination by serpents. . . to use enchantment, divination; . . . to perceive, observe” (Davidson 545). BDB define the word to mean “practice divination, divine, observe signs” (639).

d. *Witch* (NIV: *engages in witchcraft*; NRSV: *sorcerer*). For definition see “no. 4” above.

e. *Charmer* (NIV and NRSV: *casts spells*). The verb **קָבַח** means “to be bound, joined together, to consociate; to charm, bind with a spell” (Davidson 246). BDB defines the word to mean “unite, be joined, tie a magic knot or spell, charm” (287). The noun is used in this context for “incantation” or “spell.” When a witch joins together something such as sticking a pin in a doll to creating pain in someone, he is doing the thing here described. Some charms used are magic charms sewn as wristbands (Ezek. 13:18 NIV) to ward off evil spirits and diseases (cf. Isa. 3:20) or other items designed to protect a person from some supposed evil (cf. the modern use of crosses, good luck charms [rabbit’s foot, horseshoe, etc.]). Snake charmers exercised power in the community because they knew “magic words” or “magic acts” to prevent poisonous snakes from harming

people. The psalmist compared the wicked to deaf snakes who were immune to such charmers (Ps. 58:4-5). The “enchanters” (NASB, NIV, NRSV) are listed among community leaders the prophet condemned (Isa. 3:3).

f. *Consulter with familiar spirits* (NIV: *a medium*; NRSV: *consults ghosts*). See on “1.a.” above.

g. *Wizard* (NIV: *spiritist*; NRSV: *one who consults spirits*). See “1.b.” above.

h. *Necromancer* (NIV: *one who consults with the dead*; NRSV: *who seeks oracles from the dead*). The words in Hebrew are **אֱלֹהֵי הַמָּוֹת**. The verb **שָׁחַן** is used in this context to mean “to ask, inquire, especially to inquire of or consult an oracle” (154). The most familiar example of a necromancer is the “witch of Endor (see 1 Sam. 28:7-9). The “witch of Endor” was one who called up the dead (see “1.a.” above) to learn the future.

Wicked kings not only tolerated these practices but also consulted such mediums (2 Kings 21:6; 2 Chron. 33:6). Righteous kings expelled those practicing these things from the land. Saul initially destroyed such people and eventually went to the witch of En-dor (1 Sam. 28:3, 8-19). Josiah destroyed them as a part of his reforms (2 Kings 23:24). Isaiah showed that one departed from God to the degree that he sought those practicing these arts (Isa. 8:19). He directed men to the law and testimonies rather than for the living to seek direction from those who are dead!

### Why Men Resort To These Practices

Men who believe God’s revelation will listen to these divine warnings to stay away from these practices of the occult. Men turn to these things when they have (a) Lost confidence in divine revelation (otherwise they would believe what it says about the impotency of such things) and (b) Rejected divine revelation (cf. why Saul turned aside to the witch of En-dor. Saul had rejected God’s revelation to walk in his own ways. When he sought divine help, God did not answer, so in his desperation, he turned aside to the witch of En-dor [1 Sam. 28:3-6]).

The Scriptures describe how those who profess to be wise become “fools” as they follow their own reasoning (Rom. 1:21-23). The more human wisdom men profess to have as shown by their rejecting the revealed word, the more foolish they become in following such things as ESP, parapsychology, UFOs, the psychic network, spiritists, and astrologists. There is a direct correlation between infidelity and superstition.

The growing phenomena of Americans turning to seances, spiritists, astrologists, psychics, those claiming to have ESP, and such like things is an indication of the rejection of the biblical message. These phenomena are condemned by God as false religion used by the Devil to deceive the hearts of men.

## Preachers Needed

**Exton, Pennsylvania:** The church in Exton, Pennsylvania is looking for a full-time preacher. Attendance averages 65-70. The congregation will be able to provide a substantial portion of support, although some additional outside support may be required. Exton is located in Chester County and is approximately 30 miles west of Philadelphia. If interested, call Phil Smith (717-768-3714), or Jerry Carson (610-793-2441). Inquiries may also be mailed to Exton church of Christ, 217 N. Whitford Rd., Exton, PA 19341.

**Albany, Georgia:** The church in Albany is looking for a full-time preacher. Albany is located in southwest Georgia, 176 miles south of Atlanta. The population is over 100,000. There is a large military base there. The church there is an old congregation dating back into the early '60s. The membership has gone up and down with people moving in and out. They have experienced a downturn in the size of the congregation in the last two years. Their present average is about six in worship each Sunday. They owe nothing on the building and can offer some support and can possibly help arrange some support from others. If interested, contact Clif Dennis at 912-436-9754.

## Church Directory Corrections

Work is being done on the next revision of the *Directory of Churches* which the Guardian of Truth Foundation publishes. Over the years, a directory can become outdated by a number of things, such as the post office changing one's address, a church relocating, a change in phone number, etc. We would like to update our directory and need your help. Will you check your entry in the church directory to verify its accuracy? If changes need to be made, please contact us. Also, we would like to add a second contact telephone number to our directory. Brethren are complaining that they call the number given and get no answer because no one is at the building until service time, a time too late for them to travel to the services. Consequently, we would like to have a second contact phone number so that traveling brethren can locate someone to find out how to locate the building, what time services begin, and other pertinent information.

To enable you to make these changes with the least inconvenience to you, we ask that you call our toll-free number: 1-800-633-3216 at the C E I Bookstore.



### Unbound Volumes

I have several unbound volumes of a number of periodicals published by brethren. Most of these are complete though some have one or two issues missing. Included in this list are:

*Truth Magazine*, Vols. 5, 7-24  
*Guardian of Truth*, Vols. 25-41  
*Preceptor*, Vols. 21-38  
*The Examiner*, Vols. 1-8  
*Gospel Guardian*, Vols. 15-32  
*Vanguard*, Vols. 1-10

I would sell these for a reasonable price. If anyone is interested, they may contact me for more specific information. They are in the Megafile box type files making it possible to put them on a book shelf in an attractive manner. **Owen H. Thomas, 329 Tomlinson Run Ch. Rd., Georgetown, PA 15043, 724-573-0642.**

### William J. Bennett

"There is nothing more influential in a child's life than the moral power of quiet example. For children to take morality seriously they must see adults take morality seriously" ("The Book of Virtues," *Reader's Digest* [February 1996], 47).

### '90s a "Stabilization Period" For Families, Census Bureau Says

"... The percentage of single-parent families doubled from 1970 to 1990, from 6 percent to 12 percent of all families, she said. From 1990 to 1997, it has increased less than 2 percentage points.

"You can point to a stabilization of divorce rates since the late 1980s or so," said Casper, saying divorce 'was fueling part of the increase in single-parent families.' Indeed, the divorce rate per 1,000 people was 4.1 in 1995, down from 4.7 in 1990 and 5.0 in 1985.

"On the other hand, she noted that births to single women have continued to increase. About 32.6 percent of births in 1994 were to single mothers, up from 26.6 percent in 1990.

"Overall, 35.7 percent of all families in 1997 were married couples with children younger than 18. While that was down from 37.1 percent in 1990, the rate of decline was slowing. By comparison, 41.7 percent of households in 1980 were married couples with children and in 1970, the share was 49.5 percent.

"The share was 50.8 percent in 1957, when *Leave It to Beaver* went on the air, and it was up to 51.5 percent by 1963 when the Cleavers left the regular airwaves for syndication" (*The Indianapolis Star* [May 28, 1998], A6).

**Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen**

"Nothing is more destined to create deep-seated anxieties in people than the false assumption that life should be free from anxieties" (*The Reader's Digest* [November 1994], 212).

**David J. Wolfe**

"An old saying has it that there are three things we should not discuss in polite company: sex, politics and religion. We don't follow this advice when it comes to sex and politics. Sexuality, especially in the context of relationships, is an everyday topic of conversation. Office and national politics are discussed constantly. The third theme alone is missing.

"Next time you're at a party, try siding up to someone, drink in hand, and ask, 'So what do you think about God, anyway?' You will quickly find yourself alone. Everyone has his or her own ideas about God, we are told. But that is equally true of sex and politics. The truth seems to be that

most of us have lost the knack for talking about the deepest issues of life. This lack impoverishes our conversation and, ultimately, our lives as well" (*Teaching Your Children About God*, via *The Reader's Digest* [November 1994], 212).

**Gays Are Sinners and Need Help, Lott Says**

"Washington — Homosexuality is a sin, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott said Monday, and gay people should be assisted in dealing with it 'just like alcohol . . . or sex addiction . . . or kleptomaniacs.'

"Lott was immediately criticized by an official of the nation's largest lesbian and gay political organization, who accused him of being captive to conservative groups.

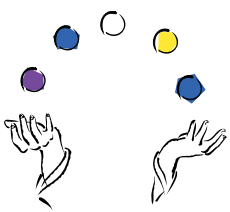
"The Mississippi Republican made the remarks while taping an interview for *The Armstrong Williams Show*, a cable TV program. The interview probably will be aired this week, Williams said.

"When Williams asked Lott if he believed homosexuality is a sin, the senator replied: 'Yeah, it is.'

"'You should still love that person,' Lott added. 'You should not try to mistreat them or treat them as outcasts. You should try to show them a way to deal with that problem, just like alcohol . . . or sex addiction . . . or kleptomaniacs.

"'There are all kinds of problems, addictions, difficulties, experiences of things that are wrong, but you should try to work with that person to learn to control that problem'" (*The Indianapolis Star* [June 16, 1998], A14).

"Imagine life as a game in which you are juggling some five balls in the air. You name them — work, family, health, friends, and spirit — and you're keeping all of these in the air. You will soon understand that work is a rubber ball. If you drop it, it will bounce back.



But the other four balls — family, health, friends, and spirit — are made of glass. If you drop one of these, they will be irrevocably scuffed, marked, nicked, damaged or even shattered. They will never be the same. You must understand that and strive for balance in your life."

— Larry Hafley

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