

TRUTH

Change Agents in the Church

John Isaac Edwards

We have some in the body of Christ who are trying to affect change in the church. The winds of change are blowing, brethren, and we must be warned, lest we find ourselves being pulled under by the swirling waters of apostasy all around us.

THE NAME OF THE CHURCH

Some seem to think the name “church of Christ” has such a stigma to it that they are undergoing a name change. Signs that used to read, “The church of Christ meets here” are changed to say, “Christians meet here.” Some churches that have been recognized as the church of Christ for many years are dropping the name of Christ and are just called the church at _____. Paul was not ashamed to say, “churches of Christ” in Romans 16:16. Why would we, as the Lord’s people, not want to be associated with Christ. Christ built the church (Matt. 16:18) and purchased it with his own blood (Acts 20:28). Thus, the church belongs to Christ. Why not just call the church what it is — the church of Christ? However, if a group of people are not going to respect the authority of Christ in all things, they would do us a favor if they would change their name or put up a message, “This is not the church of Christ.”

THE KIND OF PREACHING BEING DONE

Have you noticed a shift in the kind of preaching being done by some among

us? Sermons are being preached from pulpits across the country that in no way conform to the New Testament pattern of gospel preaching, and sadder still, “people love to have it so” (Jer. 5:31). Instead of sermons that “reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment to come” (John 16:8; Acts 24:25), we hear emotional stories and comical punch lines. Many are out-of-balance in their preaching, as more sermons are preached on grace than law, the goodness of God than severity of God, the blessings of obedience than curses of disobedience, and glories of heaven than horrors of hell. It is

being said that we ought not call names from the pulpit or in our writings, when God, the prophets, Christ, and the apostles all identified those in error. Are we better than they? Preaching on How To Establish and Apply Bible Authority, Bible Baptism, The One True Church, Why We Sing and Don’t Play, and such like are rarely heard anymore. Sermons are being preached that could be preached without offense in any denomination in town. When such preaching is allowed to continue, it won’t be long until you will see no difference in that church and the denominations,

see Change Agents on p. 534

*“And ye shall
know the truth,
and the truth
shall make
you free”
(John 8:32).*

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It Doesn't Have To Be This Way

Mike Willis

The daily newspapers bring accounts of terrible criminal acts. A seven-year-old girl is kidnapped and held for \$150,000 ransom; she escapes her captors by gnawing through the duct tape with which they bound her. Another young girl in California was not so fortunate. She was abducted, raped, and murdered. A sixteen-year-old girl who went jogging in a state park nearby is still missing. Several years ago, Susan Smith drove her children into a lake to drown them in order to free her so she could marry her new boy friend who did not want the responsibility of fatherhood.



Random shootings occur rather frequently. Whether we read of an upset teenager who goes into his school and starts shooting his classmates, an upset postal worker who takes revenge on his supervisor, or a father who is being deprived of seeing his children by his estranged wife, all too frequently the newspapers report the killings of innocent people by emotionally upset individuals. The story of the emotionally deranged mother in Houston, Texas who murdered her five children is haunting, not just to Houston, but to all of America.

Incidents of public fraud are committed by greedy millionaire executives who steal funds from their companies at the expense of investors. From the fraudulent accounting methods used by Enron which led to their bankruptcy to the WorldCom bankruptcy, Americans are wondering how endemic to the publicly owned companies is the accounting practice which deceives investors by hiding corporate debt. Wall Street is reeling in reaction to the loss of confidence in these companies.

Then we have the problem of terrorists who think they can best serve Allah by killing thousands of innocent American citizens. Of course, America also has its own home grown terrorists such as Timothy McVeigh.

As we witness these horrible acts, we, who are older, look back to the society in which we grew up and recall that this is not the way America used to be. And, I might add, this is not the way it has to be. We have a moral crisis in America that permeates this society from the prison yards to the corporate see "It Doesn't . . ." on p. 535

From An Old Preacher's Journal

(A Sad, Sad Occasion)

Raymond Harris

(Note: The article below was first printed in The Contender, published by the East Florence church of Christ, in Florence, Alabama. The date was July 1975. To this day I cannot read back over the article without tears coming to my eyes. The young man's parents are still living, now up in years. They were never the same; they never recovered from losing their only son!)

ONE OF THE SADDEST THINGS I HAVE EVER SEEN

Yes, I would like to share with you one of the most touching, saddest things I have ever seen. The occasion was the funeral of a young man twenty years of age. He was the son of a dear brother and sister in Christ. The young man had been struck by a car while riding a motorcycle. He lay critically injured for seven days and finally on the eighth day his life slipped away.

The boy was an only child and the apple of his parents' eye. For twenty years they had heaped love and affection upon this their beloved son.

The young man was evidently well known and well liked by his contemporaries, as a large percentage of those present for the funeral were young people.

As you might expect, I found the parents overwhelmed with grief. The father sat in a daze. He sat for long periods of time with his face buried in his hands. The mother had wept till the tears would no longer come. She sat limp, leaning on the shoulder of a loved one.

The funeral service proceeded in the usual way with a group from the church singing some songs, a reading, a prayer, and a short address by the local evangelist. At the conclusion of the service, those present were allowed to view the deceased one last time. In due time I found myself moving toward the casket. As I stepped forward for one last look, the father, with a quiet but firm voice, called my name and motioned for me to come to him. I stopped before his chair and he said, "Raymond, when everyone but the family is out, I want to say a prayer at the casket." There was still a number of people solemnly and methodically making their way from the chapel. When the last row of non-relatives was dismissed, I stepped back to the father's chair.

continued on next page

Change Agents in the Church

John Isaac Edwardsfront page

It Doesn't Have To Be This Way

Mike Willis 2

From An Old Preacher's Journal

Raymond Harris..... 3

"I've Been Loafing as an Elder"

Bill Banowsky 4

Where We Have Been — Where Are We Now — Where Are We Go- ing (11)

Bill Cavender..... 6

". . . and He Died"

Lewis Willis..... 9

Introduction to Frank Smith's Ar- ticles on "The Gospel"

Ron Halbrook 11

The Gospel: What It Is and What It Demands

Frank L. Smith..... 12

Pondering Death

Joe R. Price..... 15

A Challenge — Youth Forums — Ladies' Day

Olen Holderby 16

Calling Evil "Good" and Good "Evil"

Harry Osborne..... 19

Modesty - Should Clothing Cover Our Thighs?

Arnold Thompson..... 21

I said, "Tell me again exactly what you want to do." The father repeated, "When everyone but the relatives are out, I want to lead a prayer." I replied, "Do you think you can do it?" He answered, "I can."

I went directly to the undertaker and explained the father's request. With remarkable finesse and quickness he asked the pallbearers to step out of the room and called the family together before the casket. The father then folded his hands, bowed his head over the body of his dead son and prayed thus: "Our father, we thank you for letting us have this boy for twenty years. We thank you for all the joy, happiness and pleasure that he has brought into our lives. We are so thankful dear God, for the love that he gave to us and for all that we meant to each other. But now. Father, we can go no further, we can do no more. Oh dear Father, we pray, we hope we did all that could be done. Father, we know he is in the hands of a just God. Oh, Father, we know you are true and must be true to yourself. Father, do what you can for our boy. He has gone from us and we can no longer see him. Oh God, help him anyway you can. And now Father, forgive us of our sins. Give us the strength and

courage to go on. And, help us Father, help us to walk in your way that we may overcome the world and be allowed to come and be with you eternally. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen."

The father then turned to walk away. Three steps later his knees buckled and he fell to the floor. Three strong men lifted him back to his feet and assisted him to the car.

The mother, past crying, gasped for breath and could no longer stand alone.

As the last of the family passed out of the door, the undertaker swiftly closed the casket and gave directions for the removal of the flowers. I turned away and wept as I have not wept in a long, long time. Truly, it was one of the saddest things I have ever seen. You see, the boy was not a Christian!

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"I've Been Loafing as an Elder"

William Banowsky
Lubbock, Texas

"I've been loafing as an elder" was the public confession made recently by a Dallas elder as he responded to the invitation during a church worship service. Since public confession is usually reserved for a select group of "black sheep," the brethren who witnessed the confession of one of their bishops were quickened and inspired. It occurs to me that the item of most particular significance is the very wording of his confession — "I've been loafing as an elder."

The confession seems to imply that the eldership is not an office to be held, as many regard it, but a work to be done. Not an honor but a function. Hence, an elder may meet all technical qualifications, he may lead a morally circumspect life, and he may faithfully preside over the administrative affairs of the congregation, and still fall far short. There is yet a greater work to be done and a nobler function to be fulfilled — "for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account" (Heb. 13:7). What an awesome task. Little wonder that confession for falling short is occasionally needed. May God bless that Dallas elder.

Via Broadway Bulletin, Truth Magazine VIII:12, 20 (September 1964)

Where We Have Been — Where Are We Now — Where Are We Going (11)

a verbatim account of the division in 2001 in the Madison, Tennessee church of Christ, as reported in the January 2002, *Christian Chronicle*. Also a letter from Steve North, son of Ira North, in the February 2002 issue of that paper, disputing the *Chronicle's* version of this “church split,” was reproduced verbatim. Steve North had left the Madison church.

We who have lived in the mid-state area of Tennessee and south central area of Kentucky in the past several years, and who have access to the daily newspaper in Nashville, *The Tennessean*, and who receive our television news from the Nashville stations, have been acquainted with this very public church division. The account in the January 2002, *Christian Chronicle* follows, in essential similarities, the versions of the brethren's troubles as reported in the news' programs on television and in the newspaper. I am greatly surprised that *The Christian Chronicle* would chronicle this congregation's troubles, giving this problem and division in this prominent church greater publicity among brethren, broadcasting it into a much wider area than ever it had at the time, and immediately thereafter.

This division in this “multi-faceted, multi-programmed, mega-church,” this “legendary” church which “went from being a typical congregation to being what some considered our flagship . . . it was the largest congregation in churches of Christ,” is worthy of attention, thought, of a comparison with the doctrine of Christ in the Testament, and the learning of vital lessons regarding abiding in the revealed truth of God (2 John 9-11). Also one can see and learn the ultimate

end of believing and following the wisdom, programs, and personalities of men, when, at the same time, one is claiming to follow the will of God in the Testament and is giving “lip-service” to the name of Jesus Christ. This church in Madison did exactly the latter with Ira North during his 30 or so years as their preacher and leader. It lost its identity as “a restoration church” (as Steve North opined in February 2002, that it was in danger of doing). Long before 2001, it had already lost its way!

Two thoughts are suggested in the above quotes from *The Christian Chronicle*, January 2002. What is a “typical congregation”? This is what the Madison church once was, according to this report. Under “bigger-than-life Ira North,” it became a “multi-faceted, multi-programmed, mega-church,” a “flagship” church.

A “typical church” is a church of the Lord which follows the pattern of divinely revealed truth in the Testament, the members understanding that Jesus built the church, that it is his church, and that the church exists as evidence of the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose in Jesus Christ to save lost sinners (Heb. 8:5; Matt. 16:16-18; Eph. 1:22-23; 3:8-12). The “typical congregation” is a body of faithful, penitent, baptized believers who, having heard the gospel of Christ, have obeyed that gospel from the heart, are washed and cleansed in the blood of Jesus our Savior, and are God's children by faith, when baptized into Jesus Christ (Acts 2:37-41; 22:16; 18:8; Rom. 6:3-7, 16-18; 5:9; Rev. 1:5; Gal. 3:26-29). They “continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). Each one in the congregation worships the Father in heaven through Jesus Christ in spirit and

in truth, meeting as a family every Lord's day for worship (1 Tim. 2:1-6; John 4:23-24; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17-34). They sing, they pray, they eat the Lord's supper together, they teach the word of God, and they give generously and willingly of their prosperity into the common treasury (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Acts 20:7; 2:42; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). They are dedicated to earnestly contending "for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). They are cleansed, sanctified, and justified people who are determined to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, living soberly, righteously and godly in this present evil world (1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Pet. 2:11-12; Tit. 2:11-12; Gal. 1:4). They are redeemed souls who make every effort to teach their families, friends, neighbors, and associates the truth of the gospel, hopeful that those people might also obey the gospel (Eph. 6:1-4; Acts 8:1-4, 5-12; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; 2 Tim. 2:2).

In times past, now gone forever into eternity, never to be recalled nor reclaimed, the church in Madison was "a typical congregation." The gospel was preached plainly and sincerely without fear or favor of men, scriptural worship was engaged in, men were sent out to preach in other areas of the USA and overseas, the people had an excellent reputation for godly living and sobriety in spirit, the work of the Lord prospered, and many lost souls were saved. Those of us who visited their services when they had gospel meetings, and who received and read their "church bulletin" back in the late forties and early fifties, were edified and encouraged. I want to ask all who read these words: What more could you ask for, what more would you want in a church of the Lord? When a church is growing in numbers and spirituality, in worship and in work, in interest and in scriptural organization, and in love for brethren and the Lord, what more should a church of Christ, patterned after the New Testament, do and be?

Brethren, led by Ira North, established a personality cult in that congregation, sidetracked the gospel of Christ and the church into spurious paths, hi-jacked divine wisdom with human wisdom, lost sight of Jesus and his atoning blood, built a man-made "mega-church," and raised up two generations of people who were untaught in the Scriptures, who were not rooted and grounded in the right ways of the Lord. The elders and the people still in the Madison church, and those who left, are generations which "knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for (spiritual) Israel" (Judg. 2:8-15). Those older folks in that church, who could remember past and better days in the service of Jesus Christ, would not contend for the truth against innovations and departures from the faith, contended not for the past history of that church, and did not teach gospel truths to the younger ones. The older generation, back in the forties and fifties, in that congregation, sat and stood silently by, held their peace, stifled their consciences and convictions, acquiesced in the changes, promotions, and

programs which were introduced, and tolerated the actors, entertainers, celebrities, sports notables, etc., who were continually paraded through the services, to entertain, "draw a crowd," and boost attendance. And the younger ones grew up, and now are the leaders, thinking that "a mega, multi-faceted, multi-programmed church" is the eternal kingdom of God, what God planned and purposed in and through Jesus Christ (Dan. 2:44; Isa. 9:6-7; 2:2-3; Eph. 3:8-12; Matt. 16:18). Long ago the Madison church ceased to be a "typical church," patterned after the outlines, instructions, and designs of a New Testament congregation shown in the Holy Scriptures.

And what is a "mega-church, a multi-faceted church, a multi-programmed church?" Well, you have to look at the Madison church of Christ, or "Reverend" John Hagee's "Cornerstone Church" in San Antonio, Texas, or other large denominational churches. You do not read about such churches in the New Testament. These humanly-devised "mega-churches" are all "big business" enterprises, corporate conglomerations, man-made multifaceted agencies, traveling under a cloak and guise of religion. These giant imitation churches deceive the hearts of the simple, the untaught. People join them, participate in them, give their time and money to them, and are convinced they are doing great works for the Lord. Such falsely disguised operations with a religious facade bear no resemblance to anything described and authorized in the New Testament.

The web site of the Madison church (<http://www.madisoncofc.org/Ministry%20Team/business.htm>) tells us that "Jerry Sherrill" is the "Business Administrator" for the Madison Church of Christ. (Where do you read of this office and officer in the New Testament?) "Jerry resides in Madison, TN . . . Jerry has served the Madison Church since Feb. 1971, first as Minister of Visitation and, since 1984, serves as Business Administrator. He was appointed Deacon in 1979. Jerry attended University of Tennessee and Vanderbilt University. His primary role is working with budgets of over 42 committees of the church. He is active in the community and has served on the Board of Directors of the Madison Chamber of Commerce, Madison-Goodlettsville Rotary Club, Ira and Avon North Christian Loan Fund and is active in the National Church Business Administrators Association."

The web site further tells us that "Keith Lancaster" is the "Worship and Music Minister." "Keith began his ministry with Madison on November 22, 1998. He claims Paris, TN, as his home town. Keith has a degree in ministry and has been involved in music ministry for the past 23 years. He is the founder and chairman of Acappella Ministries and producer of the singing group, ACAPPELLA. While he continues to manage and produce this male quartet, he has been conducting worship seminars for churches around the world. Keith is a song writer as well."

This, and other information, can be found on Madison's web site. A "mega-church, multi-faceted, multi-programmed church" is what Madison is. How much this division, with some 1,000 to 1,500 people leaving over a period of time, has hurt their work and programs I have no idea. But can you imagine people claiming to be a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, having such concepts, programs, practices, and officials to oversee their over 42 committees and attendant programs?

I suppose that the church in Jerusalem would be a "mega-church" to these folks. The church began with "about three thousand souls" and soon "the number of men was about five thousand" (Acts 2:41, 4:4). And that evidently did not count the women! That's a larger number than Madison church ever had, even with Pat Boone, Johnny Cash, etc., to "draw a crowd." A "mega-church" indeed! I can just hear the Holy Spirit endowed apostles of Jesus saying that "we must have these 42 committees and programs in place and operational very quickly with so many converts. We will appoint Barnabas as the 'Business Administrator,' and Ananias and Sapphira as chairman and chairwoman (politically correct, you understand) over the various benevolent and missionary committees, and the loan funds! The former lame man, now healed and whole, can be our 'Minister of Worship and Music,' as he has not ceased to sing and shout the praises of God since his healing (Acts 3:8-11). And our brother Agabus, the prophet, can be our representative to the churches and to the National Church Business Administrators Association to explain our 42 programs and to coordinate our work and efforts with other mega-churches!" (Acts 11:27-30).

What a sad state of affairs modern churches of Christ have come to in this lost, sinful world! The church, which our God and Father in heaven designed and revealed for our salvation here and hereafter, is turned into a farce. Churches of Christ, which in the first century preached the gospel to the lost, edified the members, and cared for their needy when necessary, carried the gospel into all the world (Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20; Col. 1:23; Eph. 4:1-16). How simple is the work, organization, and purpose of the church revealed in the New Testament. How complex is the work, organization and purpose of modern churches

of Christ, with their committees and administrators, which bear little, if any, resemblance to the pattern in the New Testament. Truly, money, and the love of money, and what money will buy, and the self-aggrandizement money brings to promoters who have it or who can beg for it and obtain it, is an astounding phenomenon in modern America and in churches of Christ, and in the man-made religious bodies about us. No wonder Jesus preached the gospel to the poor and the poor heard him gladly! (Mark 12:37; Matt. 11:5; Luke 4:18; 7:22; 14:21; Jas. 2:1-6). The gospel flourishes now, and churches are multiplied, in those countries and areas of this present world which are less affluent (Example: the Philippines)!

This division in the Madison church was prompted by a younger, more worldly-oriented segment of the church desiring "a contemporary worship service" on Sundays. The elders allowed the "contemporary service" to begin and to meet "in the church's basement fellowship hall." This "service" was added to the already two "traditional" Sunday morning services. This new "contemporary service" quickly outgrew its quarters. The elders decided to move the "contemporary service" upstairs into the auditorium and have it "replace the second traditional Sunday morning service." The Sunday this change began, people began "walking out," and the conflict escalated. A full-fledged division was occurring!

What are "contemporary worship services"? Such descriptions are relatively new in churches of Christ. "Contemporary" means "belonging to and corresponding with the events, circumstances, and needs of the present time." The present generation in the churches, reared in a materialistic, non-authoritative, hedonistic environment, and lacking sound and solid doctrinal teaching from the sacred Scriptures by parents and older brethren, desire and demand new songs, new prayers, new "ways and manners of worship" which appeal to the emotions, feelings, the "sensitivities and inner selves of the worshipers." Thus you have the jumpy, jivey, bee-bopping, foot-stomping, hand-clapping, noisy, swaying types of songs, the choirs, quartets, "praise teams," instruments of music, rock bands, women song leaders, women leading in prayers, women praying and serving the Lord's supper; "spontaneous outbursts and expressions of praise as worshipers are suddenly and momentarily moved in spirit"; very casual dressing for worship; "more self-expression in spontaneous speaking from the heart" and "less sermonizing which preaches down to the worshipers." How much and how many of the various facets of "contemporary worship" the Madison folks were engaging in at the time of the division is unclear. But one thing is for sure: It will not cease and will only become more prevalent and pronounced as time passes. Madison has crossed the Rubicon and there will be no turning back!



“... and He Died”

Baseball legend, Ted Williams, died recently. He is being memorialized and eulogized several times each day on news and sports broadcasts in our country. His good and great accomplishments, as well as many incidents not so good and great, are being heralded. Stan “the Man” Musial, another baseball great, called Williams “the greatest hitter of all time.” Major league baseball will now honor Williams by naming the yearly All-Star game’s Most Valuable Player trophy the “Ted Williams Trophy.”

However, soon after the accolades started being broadcast, another event came to the attention of the national press. With little else to fill 24-hour news broadcasts, reporters across the country jumped on the latest revelation. Ted William’s son had his father’s body frozen in a cryonics lab. His half-sister, in an interview, said the son suggested that someone would pay a lot of money to buy some of Ted’s DNA!

Thus, with only 23 hours and 57 minutes left to “fill” in the daily news broadcasts, reporters turned to cryogenics for their stories. This is the part of these events that captured

my attention.

At a cryonics lab in Arizona, people are paying \$100,000 to have their dead bodies frozen and \$50,000 to have their heads frozen. Why? One man who was interviewed said he was spending the money in the hopes that scientists will be able to bring him back to life again in 200 or so years, and he will enjoy the excitement of a second life. In fact, he said cryogenics was his attempt at attaining immortality. My thought was, these are people who have more dollars than sense. These events were on my mind as I wrote this article.

THE POINT?

The Bible tells us Adam lived 930 years, “and he died” (Gen. 5:5). Seth lived 912 years, “and he died” (5:7). Enos lived 905 years, “and he died” (5:10). The same fact of death is revealed about Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah (Gen 5; 9:20). People live, *and then die!*

Note the testimony of God’s Word on this subject:

So what do you do in such travesties and tragedies among brethren? It seems that it never occurred to them to go back and “Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls” (Jer. 6:16). It has been years, if ever, since these brethren have even heard that there are “old paths.” It never dawned on them to go back to the Testament, lay aside and cease all of their man-made programs, get themselves a preacher who will “preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:1-8), appoint elders who are qualified to “feed” and “tend” the flock of God (Acts 20:28-31; 1 Pet. 5:1-4), fire their “Business Administrator,” shut down their “contemporary worship services,” and turn the clock of departures backwards for fifty years and be what their forebears were.

Instead, the elders send for “Larry Sullivan of the Straus Institute For Dispute Resolution, Pepperdine University” to come to Madison, make visits, interview members, and pronounce his findings and judgments. He was not able to help them. Feelings were so strong, the division so deep, the alienations so final, his efforts were fruitless. Such “far out” behavior of elders, in seeking such methods to help and/or solve a church problem, defies description and demands no further comments from me. Anyone with a sample smattering of scriptural knowledge can understand the foolishness and futility of such solutions to “church problems.” When brethren know no better than this, and when “there is not a wise man among you? No, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?” (1 Cor. 6:5), then the

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Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not (Job 14:1-2).

The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away . . . So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom (Ps. 90:10, 12).

My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass (Ps. 102:11).

As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more (Ps. 103:15-16).

But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away (Jas. 1:10).

For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you (1 Pet. 1:24-25).

Perhaps the most definite, direct statement about death is found in the book of Hebrews. Note what the Holy Spirit inspired the writer to record: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). In this Scripture we are told: (1) Death is pronounced upon man; (2) Judgment by God will follow death; (3) Death happens "once."

The victims of the cryonics industry are gambling on

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the hope that the Bible is wrong about death. They hope to buy another life, even immortality.

THERE IS A SECOND DEATH

Unfortunately, for those deceived by the hopes of cryogenics, the *second death does not follow the second life!*

The Hebrew writer said man dies once, then he is judged. When Judgment Day comes, all will be raised: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which *all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth*; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29).

"The resurrection of damnation" is the banishment of man's soul into Hell, where it will experience eternal, unending punishment. That destiny is said to be "the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:14). The very next expression states: "This is *the second death.*"

Again, the word of God emphasizes this same message in another passage. Consider it: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in *the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death*" (Rev. 21:8). This is bad news for the wicked! I heard reporters say Ted Williams was known for his cursing, his three marriages, and numerous other "funny" but wicked things. Hell is prepared by Almighty God for people just like that.

The sports world has remembered and laughed at these examples of unrighteous conduct. Ted's son is counting on people being dumb enough to buy some of the legend's DNA so they can be a future Ted Williams. I assume they wish to be a successful baseball player, rather than a proud, boastful sinner.

I have a better idea. It does not cost you \$100,000, nor do you have to be frozen in a lab somewhere. Here it is: While the wicked are being punished in Hell, the righteous will be basking in the glory of Heaven. "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13). How much does Heaven cost? It cost Jesus his blood on the cross. It costs us obedience: "And being made perfect, he (Jesus) became the author of eternal salvation *unto all them that obey him*" (Heb. 5:9). We will gladly help you be saved. Just speak up!

491 E. Woodsdale, Akron, Ohio 44301

Introduction to Frank Smith's Articles on "The Gospel"

Frank L. Smith was born at Kaufman, Texas on September 7, 1913 and died at Alabaster, Alabama on March 13, 1977. Brother Smith did the work of a full-time evangelist in Texas, Oklahoma, and Alabama. He was best known for his seventeen and a half years of labor with the Huffman Church of Christ in Birmingham, Alabama, which ended on January 2, 1977. His work with the Alabaster church lasted only three months before his untimely death. His godly wife was a great asset to his work in the kingdom of God.

During the years of division over institutionalism and the social gospel, brother Smith's voice gave the clear, clarion call of the restoration plea, "Let us speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where it is silent." When I was a teenager, he held gospel meetings for the sound church in Belle Glade, Florida, where I grew up. I can still see and hear him as he preached in the community building where we met for a time, as he forcefully rebuked the spirit of those who try "to help God out" with their innovations such as denominationalism, sprinkling for baptism, instrumental music in worship, centralization through human institutions and sponsoring churches, and the social gospel. His preaching and writing reflected the scriptural balance of kindness and courtesy along with courage and great plainness of speech. He spoke "the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15).

Brother Smith effectively edited a bulletin entitled *Truth and News* which I read and benefitted from for many years. Though he is dead, his articles still speak "the truth in love," including three articles on "The Gospel" published March 1, 8, and 15, 1972 as "The Gospel: What It Is and What It Demands," "Faith and the Gospel," and "Grace and the Gospel."

Sad to say, the present generation has known the Smith name through the writing and preaching of his son F. Lagard, who promotes compromise and liberalism and who regards his parents' stand as legalism. While professing discomfort at the march of many churches of Christ back to denominationalism, he echoes the phrases and

arguments of denominationalism. His speech on "Sodom's Second Coming" at the Pepperdine University Lectures in 1994 protested "the 'grace only' messages of this week," but he made it very clear that he would not return to "the so-called non-cooperation anti group" because of "the legalism among them." He regretted that his mother will "go to her grave a legalist."

No, brother and sister Smith did not embrace legalism. They embraced the remedial system which is full of God's love, wisdom, and forgiveness. This remedial message is called "the gospel of Christ," and it will save everyone who puts his faith in it (Rom. 1:16-17). This faith is not mere mental assent but includes mental assent, trust, and obedience (Rom. 1:5; 16:26). We do not expect heaven based on the perfection of our lives, or based on some plan or provision of our own making, but we come to God as sinners seeking forgiveness by faith in the perfect sacrifice offered by Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:23-26).

This saving faith includes our willingness to submit to the divine conditions of pardon (faith, repentance, and baptism) and our willingness to learn from Christ "all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:18-20). This saving faith includes a healthy balance between, *on the one hand*, our recognition of weaknesses, dangers, and the need to grow and improve our service to God, and, *on the other hand*, our confidence in the promises of God (1 Cor. 9:27; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; 1 Pet. 1:3-9). While Lagard protests the "grace only" messages of his liberal brethren in transition to complete denominationalism, he himself does not understand "the word of the truth of the gospel," "the grace of God in truth" (Col. 1:5-6). His protests against denominational concepts of grace are muted by his concessions to those very concepts. His concessions and compromises explain why he is where he is.

Meanwhile, the words of brother Frank Smith clearly set forth the truth of the gospel of Christ. Brother Smith lived, preached, and died by faith in this remedial message which is God's power unto salvation. The gospel brother Smith

The Gospel: What It Is and What It Demands

Ecumenicalism (one world religion/one church/unity in differences) is the burning desire of many people of our day. Denominations have merged in recent years looking to this end. The World Council of Churches seeks diligently to promote the ecumenical church at most any price. Even the political atmosphere tends in the direction of such an end. And our activist society preaches “love” as an all-embracing attitude not only toward races and nationalities but toward criminals and moral reprobates as well. “What the world needs now, is love, sweet love,” the folk singers wail.

If founded upon God’s truth and righteousness, nothing could be more desirable. But the “love every body” of Martin Luther King, Jr. and others is not the “love of God” set forth in the Scriptures which demands the keeping of his commandments. The “fellowship” or unity-in-diversity is surely not the “speak the same things” demanded as we endeavor to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3, 1 Cor. 1:10). God rebuked Israel as they tried to worship him with offerings but rebelled in sin as they indulged themselves in violations of other parts of his law: “Can two walk together except they are agreed”

proclaimed is as true today as it was in the first century and in 1972. These articles demonstrate that he was “set for the defense of the gospel” (Phil. 1:17). Our spirits will be refreshed, our convictions confirmed, and our courage strengthened as we read and reread these articles. Like worthy men who have gone before us, let us live, preach, defend, and die by faith in the gospel of Christ as “the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16).

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(Amos 3:3).

And the Lord’s church has not been unaffected by this popular thinking of the world. A number have been led to believe we should not draw any lines of fellowship against “any person who has been immersed upon the basis of his sincere faith in Jesus as God’s son and his Lord,” regardless of what he may believe or practice about the church, worship, work, organization, or many times about morals. Some make the gospel a message only about the Sonship of Christ and baptism but separate it from doctrine. They reason once saved this way, other things don’t matter, such as organization, instrumental music, speaking in tongues, social drinking, verbal inspiration, etc. Some claim, “There is a sphere where sin is not imputed to the sinner and that sphere is ‘in Christ.’” And the man “in Christ” is saved by God’s grace not by his own wisdom. He is righteous, not because he “is right” on every issue, but because he is right about Jesus Christ and seeks to obey him. We would remind that Jesus said, “Not everyone that sayeth, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father” (Matt. 7:21, 22). These had served in the name of Jesus but were rejected.

So these reason that the *gospel* is only the “good news” about Jesus and salvation and does not include doctrinal matters of worship and service as taught in the epistles. As long as men are united on the *gospel* then they are righteous, and it doesn’t matter if they are “right” or not on doctrinal teaching and practice. We deny this comes from the New Testament.

The *gospel* is not limited to the “good news” of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection and our primary obedience and salvation in him. Paul wrote to the *saints* in Rome that he was ready to preach the *gospel* to you in Rome (1:15). He had written this epistle boldly to them about Christian living and service urging submission to the “law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (8:2) because he was ministering the *gospel* to them (1:15, 16). In 2 Corinthians

9:12-13 Paul speaks of giving for relief of the saints as proof of obedience to the *gospel*. In the Galatian letter, the segregation of Gentiles was “not according to the truth of the gospel” (2:14).

In the great commission as given by Mark (16:15-16) the *gospel* was to be preached to all. But in Matthew’s parallel passage the apostles were to teach, make disciples, baptizing all nations, then teach them to observe all things Jesus had commanded (28:19-20). These surely are the same — the *gospel* of Mark and the teachings both before and after baptism in Matthew.

In John 1:5 Jesus taught, “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth . . . and burned” (v. 6). “If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ask what ye will and it shall be done” (v. 7), and “if you keep my commandments you will abide in my love” (v.10). These branches were already “in Christ,” the immersed believer now, but they must continue to keep his word, all his commandments, or they would be cut off and cast into the fire. This is an obligation beyond belief and baptism that puts one “in Christ.” Paul called these commands sound doctrine, according to the *gospel* in 1 Timothy 1:10-11. This is what John referred to in 2 John 9-11. “He that goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ (his words, his commands) hath not God.” We cannot fellowship nor bid godspeed to any teacher who goes beyond what Jesus taught! (1 Tim. 4:1-4).

Jesus used similar language in Mark 8:35-38, “Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the *gospel*’s, shall save it” but “Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my

words . . . the son of man shall also be ashamed of him when he cometh.” Here “the gospel” is put for “my words” in the next verse. So what Jesus taught about the kingdom, church, personal living — all his words both personal and inspired in the apostles make up the gospel. More than faith in his deity and baptism are necessary to keep one “in Christ” and fruitful unto eternal life. The only way one can be “right” is by what the apostles wrote as they were inspired to know the whole truth as Jesus promised. (John 16:13, 14). This is “bound upon earth, for it was bound in heaven, loosed upon earth for it had been loosed in heaven” (Matt. 18:18).

This is the only basis for unity. “Can two walk together except they agree?” Only when we speak the same things (1 Cor. 1:10) and when those things are what the apostles taught us from Christ. “He that knoweth God heareth us,” John wrote.

Those who do not hear the apostles on organization, worship, work of the church, and all doctrinal matters are not of God (1 John 4:6). All doctrine rests upon the fact that Jesus died and rose from the grave, that having been tried and proven, he received all authority. To those who walk amiss, who start out but become ensnared in sin, the last state become worse. Sin is imputed to those who become Christians when they transgress. The thanksgiving we can rejoice in is the forgiveness we can have when we repent and pray God for forgiveness (Acts 8:22). Jesus is our advocate when we sin (1 John 2:1).

From Truth and News, Huffman Church of Christ, Birmingham, Alabama, March 1, 1972.

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by Earle E. Cairns

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Pondering Death



The word of God teaches us the value of pondering death: “Better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, For that is the end of all men; And the living will take it to heart” (Eccl. 7:2).

A fatal automobile crash in front of the church building last Wednesday night during our Bible classes is a sobering reminder that death comes to us all. While our sympathy is extended to the

family and friends of the deceased, we are reminded of the lessons we can take from this tragedy.

Death is described as a house to which man is brought (Job 30:23). It is an appointment all the living shall keep (Job 30:23; Heb. 9:27). Nobody, whether rich or poor, wise or foolish, shall escape it (Ps. 89:48; Eccl. 9:2).

God created man a dual creature. We are both flesh (dust) and spirit (immortal). Death returns the flesh to dust and the spirit to God (Gen. 3:19; Eccl. 12:7). Death is a separation of the body and the spirit (Jas. 2:26).

These are some of God’s truth about death; now, what should we learn from death?

We should learn the frailty of life. “Lord, make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am” (Ps. 39:4). Whether you are young or old, you are not more powerful than death. “What man can live and not see death? Can he deliver his life from the power of the grave” (Ps. 89:48)? “No one has power over the spirit to retain the spirit, and no one has power in the day of death” (Eccl. 8:8). Youth does not make you invincible, and old age does not inoculate you from harm. The man who died in the car accident was 24 years old — a life ahead of him, vanquished in a moment. Life is a precious gift — do not neglect it (Eccl. 3:12-13,

22; 11:9-12:1, 13-14).

We should learn that we need to get right with God, now! God graciously gives us time and opportunity to learn and obey him to avoid eternal death for our sins (Rom. 3:23; 6:23; 2:3-4; 2 Pet. 3:9). But the certainty and suddenness of death convinces us to believe and obey him *now* (2 Cor. 6:2; Heb. 3:7-8). In view of death, today is the day you should repent of every sin and obey Jesus Christ.

We should learn that we must be teaching the gospel to the lost. Death ends one’s opportunity to hear the gospel, believe and obey it, and thus be saved (Mark 16:15-16). We preach the gospel to the living because after death comes judgment (Heb. 9:27). To die without Christ is to die without hope (1 Thess. 4:13). Thus knowing “the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Cor. 5:11; Heb. 12:28-29).

We should learn the love of God in Christ Jesus. God so loved the world that he gave his Son to die on a cross to save us from eternal death (John 3:14-16). Although the flesh dies, the spirit of the Christian is renewed daily in anticipation of eternal glory (2 Cor. 4:16-18; Rom. 5:1-2). Without fear, those who love God eagerly await the advantages death brings (Heb. 2:14-15; Phil. 1:21-23; 3:20; 2 Tim. 4:8).

Life, at best, is brief and uncertain, so live it wisely, doing the will of God (Jas. 4:13-15).

Are you ready to meet the Lord in judgment (Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 5:10)? Are you ready to die?

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Death is not a period but a comma in the story of life.

A Challenge — Youth Forums — Ladies' Day

**May God help us
all to hold to
his truth as we work
our way through the
maze of error, in
teaching and practice,
with which we are
confronted in these
“perilous times”
(2 Tim. 3:1).**

(Editor's Note: *The following article by brother Holderby addresses a subject that needs to be addressed. Several older preachers have spoken to me about youth lectureships and women's lectureships, both those sponsored by churches and those sponsored by a group of individuals outside the purview of the local church. My primary concern has been to the speakers and topics used in youth lectureships. Brother Holderby and some other older, respected preachers are expressing other concerns. Brother Holderby is an honorable man who has given fifty or more years to the preaching of the gospel. His article is written with a kindly tone and is deserving of one's consideration. We hope that this article will provoke serious thought about these subjects without creating dissension and division.*)

These two activities have become rather popular in recent years. I believe them both to be in violation of Scripture, thus in error. This is the reason, and the only reason, for my challenge.

I do not wish to be misunderstood, so I explain what I mean by “challenge.” I am not challenging anyone for a public debate whether oral or written, though such debate could be helpful. I am challenging any who practice one or both these activities

to produce, in writing, why they believe the practice to be scriptural. I hope you will write for publication, but if you prefer to write something just for my eyes, I would be happy to receive it. And, I would reply in kind if desired.

YOUTH FORUMS

It would seem necessary to explain exactly to what I refer. The advertising, which comes across my desk, offer this activity under different names: Youth Forums, Youth Camps, Youth Meetings, etc. Some limit the activity to a certain age of youth and others do not.

To avoid misunderstanding further explanation should be offered. I am not talking about what individuals may get together and do for the young people, not involving any one congregation. I am speaking of that which is planned by a local church and overseen by that local church (with or without elders). Nor am I talking about what a local church may choose to do for its own local youth, even though there are dangers here.

Of what, then, am I speaking? I am speaking of multi-church and multi-state youth gatherings. These youth, from various and many churches are under the oversight of the one local church for a period of time — usually one or two days and nights.

There are a few questions, which I offer to those who practice or participate in these youth gatherings: (1) How do you justify, from Scripture, the segregation of any particular group from the whole for such activities? (2) Where did Jesus or his apostles ever practice such? (3) Where is the Scripture for an eldership to oversee a portion of any congregation, other than where they are, for any length of time? (4) If such oversight is right for one day, why not for 30 days, or 90 days, or a year?

In addition, there is the question of provided recreation. Yes, I know that some say, "Individuals provide the recreation, not the church." I offer to you the same advice which I heard brother Gailen Evans offer recently in preaching on another subject, "Now, brethren, let us just be honest about this!" Who obtained those individuals to provide recreation? How did they get involved in the matter in the first place? Was it not the elders that did so? How many young people do you think you would have if you did not provide this recreation? In spite of your insistence to the contrary, how many of these young people will go home thinking that the church provided that recreation? What kind of seeds does this sow? Does this provide the right or wrong impression?

Brethren, please do not appeal to the "good" which you think you are doing! That will not prove the practice to be right! Anything, which is right, can be proven right by the Scripture. Listen to it, "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21). I have always been willing to offer scriptural proof for my teaching and practice, but my practice is not under question at this time. Your practice, brethren, is under question; and the obligation weighs heavily upon you. If you comply with this scriptural injunction, you will prove your practice by the Scripture or you will forsake it. To say that you have no obligation to me to prove anything begs the question. It seems that you

feel an obligation to the youth of other congregations. Why not to me?

Some, no doubt, will say, "But, look at all the good teaching we are doing." Could we not say the same for the Missionary Society? Would this make the Missionary Society right? Neither does it make your practice right! Can't we see that?

In general, those to whom I talked try to argue such activity is parallel to a gospel meeting. Again, I plead for honesty! Where have we observed a gospel meeting which is planned for only one segment of the congregation? When have we had people register, ahead of time, for attendance at a gospel meeting? When have health permits been required for those attending a gospel meeting? When and where have we had individuals to plan recreation for those attending a gospel meeting? The very fact that these exist plainly shows that a parallel does not exist. Such a claim may sound good to some, but it simply is not true that a parallel exists between a gospel meeting and the youth gatherings.

Brethren, what kind of impression are we leaving with our young people? Once some young people who had attended one of the youth forums visited where I was preaching. We talked about such gatherings, and I asked some of them, "If it was not for the fact that you might meet a young person of the opposite sex, whom you might date, would you have gone to this meeting? The answer came quickly, "No!" Are we running a dating service without knowing it? A shrug of the shoulders is not a sufficient answer to such questions.

Brethren, if you already have the proof that the youth forum is scriptural, please share such proof with us. If you do not have such proof, please make an effort to do so. If you cannot prove by the Scripture that it is right, surely you can see that you must forsake it now. Now, brethren, whatever you might say about me will

not prove your practice to be right. That can be done by, and only by, the proper application of God's word! Will you do it?

LADIES' DAY

This also comes to us under different names: Ladies' Retreat, Ladies' Day, Ladies' Bible Study Day, etc. Whatever the name, there are things about the activity that do not agree with the Scripture, the Word of the Almighty. Much of what I have said in regards to the youth gatherings may be equally applied to the ladies' gatherings. Again, I wish to stress that I am speaking, in this article, only of such gatherings which are under the oversight of a local church, not about what individuals may get together and do, separate and apart from any local church.

I would like to remind those involved in this practice that they are obligated to prove the practice to be right (1 Thess. 5:21). If it is right, you can prove it by God's word. If you cannot prove it to be right by God's word, you must forsake it in order to be right with God. God himself ordained the works for the church (Eph. 2:10), and the gospel furnishes us unto every one of those good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3). Have we forgotten that, if it is not in the gospel, it is not good? Where in the gospel is this ladies' activity given? Book, chapter, and verse, please! Did Jesus or his apostles practice such? Where is the command? The example? Or, a necessary inference? This is a multi-church ladies gathering; placing all under the one eldership for a short period of time. Where is the scriptural authority for this? How can this be right for a short period of time and be wrong for a long period of time?

Brethren, I am not trying to embarrass you or to push you into a corner. My desire is to help, not hinder. Keep in mind that you cannot justify your practice by the good which you think is being done. Only the Scripture can prove a thing to be right!

Should you think this activity

is parallel to a gospel meeting, please consider this: (1) When did we start asking for a RSVP for those attending a gospel meeting? (2) When did we start registering people who attend a gospel meeting? (3) When did we begin having lady preachers, even for a day, or for an hour, for gospel meetings? The very fact that these differences exist clearly show there is no parallel between this activity and a gospel meeting. The teaching being done for the ladies is not under question in this article; the arrangement itself is what is being questioned. The Missionary Society does some good teaching, but that does not prove the Missionary Society to be right. Except for the entertainment in the youth forums, the ladies day and the youth forums are parallel, but neither are parallel to a gospel meeting. I know of no evidence which shows either of these activities to be authorized by Scripture. If you have such evidence, please share it with us.

Now, brethren, I wish to share with you a portion of a letter which I have on my desk before me. It was written by some elders to their congregation and this congregation is less than an hour's drive from my front door. Here are the quotes:

Women make up a significant portion of our worship team. They now teach and co-teach co-ed adult classes. They serve as ministry leaders and coordinators. We have women who are both small group leaders and assistant leaders. Women have been in public presentations, dramatic programs, making announcements, recognition programs and the reading of scripture in our Sunday morning worship services. Their participation in small group discussions and chain-prayers has been strongly encouraged by our eldership.

In addition to these roles, it is our intention to, in the near future, begin using women to serve the communion emblems, to preside at the communion table and lead public prayers during our regular worship services. We have no intention of expanding that role any further than this. Additionally, we have no intention of installing women as elders at _____, or using a woman in the role of pulpit minister.

Read the above quote carefully. How did they get that way? Did it happen overnight? Let the same elders tell

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us, in another quote from the same letter, "We recognize that the congregation's thinking on this subject has been evolving for the past several years." Yes, it took years, but step by step it's getting there! And, they express their intent to go further.

I cannot believe that those who are practicing the "Ladies' Day" activities want to go that far! You assert, "We would never permit that to happen!" I do not doubt your intent at all, but the fact is that you are opening the door. Maybe not in your generation, but what about the one to come? I have been told by some concerned with both the youth forums and ladies' day activities that the suggestion for such did not come from the elders. Rather, it came from some of the youth (for the youth forums) and some of the ladies (for their activities). Makes one wonder just who is running these congregations. I am not ready to charge, as some do, that the ladies suggesting such have been "bitten" by the feminist movement bug. However, I would insist that such activities do provide an avenue of entrance for the feminist leanings. Brethren, once that influence is begun, you will not be able to peacefully stop it. It will be as the above quotes clearly show!

Simply said, brethren, I see both of these activities as steps toward apostasy. Sow to the wind and we reap the whirlwind. If any of you wish to offer written defense of either of these practices, I will personally request brother Mike Willis to carry it in *Truth Magazine*, then I or others may comment on what you have to say. Or, if you prefer to write something just for my eyes, I would be happy to receive it and would reply in kind if desired. Truth has nothing to fear! If you cannot prove your practice by God's word, I plead with you to discontinue the same.

In this article I have not identified any one congregation involved in either of these activities. Even though that can be done, I do not feel it necessary at this point. I ran this article by several gospel preachers, for their comment, before publishing it. I do not plan to say more on these activities until you have had ample opportunity to consider and respond to what I have said — perhaps two or three months after this publication. I have no way of knowing whether or not you read *Truth Magazine*, so I am ordering and sending copies to about two dozen places or people. It is my prayer that you will honestly consider what I have said and sincerely evaluate these practices in the revealing light of Scripture.

May God help us all to hold to his truth as we work our way through the maze of error, in teaching and practice, with which we are confronted in these "perilous times" (2 Tim. 3:1).

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Calling Evil “Good” and Good “Evil”



For many years, our society has embarked upon a journey intended to redefine values. We live in an age of rapidly changing concepts concerning numerous things, not the least of which is its moral standards. The degree of that change is almost beyond belief to those who remember societal values from forty years ago or more. The moral decay of our time is promoted in everything from education to entertainment. Moral depravity of every kind

has been lauded in an attempt to make ungodliness the norm of conduct.

Such activity has been represented as good, loving, wholesome, progressive, a right of freedom and part of a *chic* lifestyle. At the same time, every effort has been made to paint those living according to the righteous standards of God as evil, mean-spirited, unloving, old-fashioned, judgmental, intolerant and the source of modern woes. The constant drone of this 40-plus-year propaganda campaign has had its effect in making immorality common. As evidence, note the following statistics:

- 85% of American teenagers have sex at least occasionally before marriage.
- 55% of high school students have sexual intercourse during their high school years.
- About every 10 seconds a teenager becomes sexually active for the first time (7742 per day on average).
- 10% of all 15 to 19 year-old females become pregnant each year (2795 per day).
- Studies on the prevalence of adultery by at least one spouse vary in estimating its effect ranging from 50 to 80% of all marriages.

When this country began, it was common to put one convicted of sexual activity outside of marriage in stocks

as the object of public condemnation. Today, however, laws against such behavior are widely scorned even among most people professing to be “religious.” In the vast majority of states, it is no longer possible to specify “adultery” as the cause for a divorce due to the “No-Fault” divorce laws in this country. It is truly incredible that our laws have gone from upholding moral standards to protecting those guilty of immorality in only a few generations!

Instead of such statistics causing concern, they are used by some to herald the “progress” of our society into a more “broad-minded” enlightenment. Our humanistic media takes every opportunity to advance such activity. The television talk shows seem to leave no stone unturned in their search for more and more outlandishly promiscuous behavior which they urge us to “accept.” Homosexuality, adultery, and every form of fornication are winked at and applauded in movies, songs, and literature. Public schools are being used to inculcate this tolerance of ungodliness from the earliest grade levels. The redefinition of “good” and “evil” is progressing at an alarming rate.

ATTEMPTS AT REDEFINITION IN BIBLE TIMES

In Israelite history, a similar attempt to redefine morality took place. God showed his lack of tolerance for such by saying, “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).

God declared that he would not change the standard. Proverbs 17:15 gives the following warning: “He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, both of them alike are an abomination to the Lord.”

Clearly, God is not swayed to accept or tolerate changes in his instruction regarding morality regardless of public or media opinion. He has always condemned sexual activity outside of marriage whether premarital or extramarital (Heb. 13:4; 1 Thess. 4:3-7; 1 Cor. 6:15-20; Exod. 20:14; Lev. 20:10-21; 18:20).

The problem with our age is that we have been deceived by the humanist pitch which aims at reversing the moral

Their sophisticated, progressive air will not sway the Almighty. His standard has been conclusively revealed in his word. It is not changed by attempts at human redefinition.

APPLYING THE PRINCIPLE AMONG US

To this point, those who are members of the body of Christ would “amen” the principles stated and decry the worldly efforts to tolerate immorality. But could some of our own brethren be a part of the problem? Is it possible that those identified as members of churches of Christ could be assisting this effort to call evil “good” and call good “evil”? Sadly, such efforts are present among us.

standards commanded by God. They want us to believe it is moral to be immoral and immoral to be moral! The Bible urges us not to accept that lie.

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither *fornicators*, nor idolaters, nor *adulterers*, nor *homosexuals*, nor *sodomites*, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

But *fornication* and all uncleanness or covetous-ness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; . . . For this you know, that no *fornicator*, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience (Eph. 5:3-6).

But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and *fornicators*, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death (Rev. 21:8).

Those who claim to believe in God and the Bible as his word will reject modern attempts to redefine morality. Those who reject God and his word will one day stand before him in judgment to answer for such opposition.

Some of our brethren have sought to redefine “adultery” and God’s marriage law to the point that they tolerate adultery. Matthew 19:9 clearly teaches that one may not put away a spouse and marry another, while that first spouse lives, except in the case where the putting away was for the cause of fornication. That law applies to both saint and alien sinner. It is not nullified by baptism. It is not altered by the edicts of man. No amount of attempted redefinition schemes to call evil “good” will change the facts. Neither will the truth be changed by attempts to portray as “evil” those who teach the good.

Some brethren would not think of redefining God’s law by overtly calling evil “good” and good “evil,” but they do the same thing by silently tolerating cases of fornication and adultery. The case of 1 Corinthians 5 clearly teaches that a local church cannot silently tolerate immorality in its midst. Ephesians 5 clearly teaches that individual Christians cannot silently tolerate immorality in others.

Despite that clear teaching, it is a sad fact that some congregations even in this area tolerate those living in adultery to be accepted among them. It is also a sad fact that some families and friends turn a blind eye to adultery and fornication in order to sustain their relationships whether due to ties of a physical, social, or monetary nature.

In over 25 years of preaching, I have seen that “a little leaven leavens the whole lump” even as God said. The church that tolerates a little adultery will have more immorality. The family that tolerates adultery in adults will find their children engaged in fornication in years to come. The elders and preachers vilified as hard-hearted and unforgiving will not be able to help then. Why? Because their good was maligned as “evil” when they upheld truth and the redefined leaven of evil is left unimpeded.

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McGarvey’s Sermons

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Modesty — Should Clothing Cover Our Thighs?

Modesty has to do with an inner decorum and orderliness, which is expressed by outward conduct including how we dress. It also has to do with moderation. Most Christians would answer the title question, “Yes” at first glance. But when we learn that the thigh extends to the knee some will perhaps have second thoughts. Should the thighs be fully covered or is partially covered acceptable to God? Many Christians wear dresses and shorts above the knee. Some wear clothing well above the knee. New Testament writers did not command specific dress codes for Christians or record examples of proper attire. No scriptural statements directly address skirt length, shorts, breast exposure (male or female), or revealing swimsuits. This means God expects us to use our minds to rightly divide Scripture and then come to an understanding of Jehovah’s expectations for modest dress. However, he does give us definite spiritual guidelines, which test man’s commitment to righteousness with respect to exposing our bodies for public view.

Now we will examine some Bible statements relating to modesty, nakedness, and bodily adornment. The New Testament tells us that there are parts of the body that are not to be publicly observed. “Our unpresentable parts have greater modesty” (1 Cor. 12:23, NKJV). Actions by the apostle Peter reveal one example of modesty. “Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it)” (John 21:7, NKJV). “For he had removed it” is literally “for he was naked” in the original Greek. In *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, “naked” signifies (a) “unclothed” (Mark 14:52), (b) “scantily or poorly clad” (Matt 25:36, 38, 43, 44; Acts 19:16), (c) “with torn garments” (Jas. 2:15), (d) “clad in the undergarment only” (the outer being laid aside, John 21:7).

The apostle Paul writes to Timothy of modesty and moderation declaring in 1 Timothy 2: 9-10, “In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or

gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.” Even though nakedness is not mentioned in 1 Timothy 2, the practice of improperly showing off the body by how we adorn ourselves is clearly rebuked. Christians professing godliness will avoid nakedness resulting from improperly showing off bare bodies.

Now let us examine the relationship between thigh and nakedness in Old Testament times. In Isaiah 47:1-3, the Holy Spirit gives Christians insight about uncovered thighs and shame. Babylon was humiliated on account of her cruelty, particularly to God’s people. In Isaiah 47 we see the resulting prophetic doom for Babylonian abuse of conquered peoples. We read in Isaiah 47:2 (NKJV): “Take off the skirt, uncover the thigh.” “Your nakedness shall be uncovered, yes, your shame will be seen” (v. 3). In the context of “uncover the thigh” we see in verses 2 and 3 the words “nakedness” and “shame.” Previously in Isaiah 46: 12, Isaiah calls Babylon “stubborn-hearted, who are far from righteousness.” In chapter 47 verse 15 he tells them, “No one shall save you.”

To further show that thighs are considered private parts, we refer the reader to two Scriptures: Genesis 24:1-3 and 47:28-31. Both these Scriptures demonstrate the seriousness of giving testimony (swearing) by putting the hand under the thigh. Testimony comes from the original Latin word *testis* meaning “witness.” Then look up the meaning of the word *testis*. The *Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary* explains: “Oaths could be taken with symbolic gestures such as raising the hand (Gen. 14:22; Dan. 12:7; Rev 10:5-6) or touching the sex organs (Gen. 24:2; 47:29), possibly symbolizing a person’s life and power.” Note that Nelson’s dictionary defines thigh as “The part of the leg between the knee and the hip” and also says; “Hebrews sometimes used the word thigh as a euphemism for sexual organs.”

(continued bottom of next page)

Modesty relating to thighs of Old Testament priests was

“Change Agents” continued from front page

around them. You just mark that down! Nothing will weaken the church more than weak preaching.

WHAT WE CALL THINGS

Our motto has been to “call Bible things by Bible names.” Many are getting away from that. A preacher told me that he refused to be bound by “creedal phrases of the restoration movement,” as he called it, and that’s scary! Churches are not distinctive as they once were, as they use denominational terms to express themselves. This reminds me of when the children of Israel “spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews’ language” (Neh. 13:24). Why can we not be content to just use Bible language?

THE ROLE OF WOMEN

The woman’s role in the church is being expanded beyond the scope of scriptural authority. Women are included in decision-making business meetings and are even being put in positions of leadership in the church. When we point out passages like 1 Timothy 2:11-12 and talk about God’s place for women, we are told that we are being demeaning and degrading to women.

THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH

A move toward “a more contemporary style” of worship is being seen in many places. We are beginning to witness hand-clapping and waving creep in the assemblies of the saints. The instrument of music is making its way in as well, and the Lord just said to “sing” (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

ATTITUDE TOWARD FALSE TEACHERS

I see a change in attitude of many toward who a false teacher is and how to deal with false teachers. A false teacher is being redefined from one who teaches something contrary to sound doctrine to one who has impure motives and is of corrupt character. We are encouraged to receive

clearly commanded. “And you shall make for them linen trousers to cover their nakedness; they shall reach from the waist to the thighs” (Exod. 28:42, NKJV). Thighs, being a private part, required covering when the priests were serving at the altar. What should our attitude toward nakedness be since we are Christ’s priests? Old Testament Scriptures make obvious that human thighs have qualities that caused the Holy Spirit to consider exposed thighs as nakedness during Moses and Isaiah’s lifetimes. Has that principle changed under the New Covenant? Where does Christ’s gospel refute the private nature of human thighs.

Good men have preached their hearts out on this subject for many years. Brother Connie Adams has demonstrated

men who teach things the Bible does not teach as they are honest and sincere, when the Scriptures teach otherwise (Rom. 16:17; 2 John 9-11). When we identify a man by name, document his false teaching, and expose it in the light of truth, we are falsely accused of biting and devouring.

FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship is being extended to those who teach false doctrine and practice immorality. Brethren are receiving into their fellowship folks out of denominations, like the Christian Church, without them being “baptized into the one body” (1 Cor. 12:13). When brethren think there are Christians in denominations and extend the right hand of fellowship to those in denominationalism, they will soon take on the characteristics of the denominations around them. Just wait and see!

THE WAY WE LOOK AT THE BIBLE

Instead of appealing to direct statement or command, apostolic example, and necessary inference to establish scriptural authority for a thing as the apostles did in Acts 15, we are hearing things like, “purpose, principle, and precedent,” as a cry is made for a new way of interpreting the Scriptures.

Brethren, just let the church be the church as God designed it, Christ built it, and the Holy Spirit revealed it. These changing times call for Christians everywhere to “search the scriptures” (Acts 17:30), “try the spirits” (1 John 4:1), and “prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. 5:21). Remember, the word of God does not change, but “endureth forever” (1 Pet. 1:25).

115 N. Brandywine Ct., Salem, Indiana 47167



in meetings the folly of immodest dress by coming from the pulpit to sit on the communion table and cross his legs. He makes the point that while we are sitting, our modesty is still a serious concern. Many Christians ignore this teaching and go on dressing as they please with the apparent approval of some Christians. And Isaiah says, “No one shall save you.” Their individual repentance is the only answer. Christians must remember whom they represent when they dress for public outings.

602 W. Townley Ave., Phoenix, Arizona 85051, dt32@juno.com

“It Doesn’t” from the **brotherhood** page 2 of Congress.

THE WAY IT WAS IN AMERICA

I celebrated my 55th birthday three days before writing this editorial. I am not so old as are some of our senior writers — like Lewis Willis, Connie W. Adams, Weldon Warnock, Bill Cavender, and several others, but I have enough years under my belt and have lost enough hair from the top of my head to speak about the changes that have occurred in American society.

I grew up in a society that was significantly different than what ours is today. When my family left home to go to church (or anywhere else), we did not set the burglar alarm and dead bolt the doors to our house; rather, we left the wooden door open (so the house could stay cool from a breeze passing through) and let the screen door slam shut behind us. When we drove to town on Saturday, we parked the car with all the windows down so it would not be so hot when we got back in it. And the ranchers who had 30-30 rifles hanging in their gun racks in the back window of their pickups saw no need to roll up the windows and lock the doors. Theft was so rare in those days that one could generally trust his fellow man.

One wasn’t afraid to pick up a hitchhiker as he drove to town. As a matter of fact, one felt he had not shown moral decency if he drove by his fellow man and did not pick him up.

Children were raised by the natural mother and daddy. Divorce was almost unheard of. In the little community in which I was raised, I only knew one family in the community who had been divorced. Mother and Daddy looked upon their divorcing as a sign of moral looseness and would not allow us to play with the children from this broken home unless we played at our house. A few years later, one of my cousins needed to divorce his immoral wife. The process of obtaining a divorce was long and drawn out; the courts tried to get the couple to work through their problems and keep the family intact.

Abortion was a crime. Homosexuality was practiced by some moral reprobates, but they hid their immoral behavior from the world because their sin was so repugnant to those who lived in that society. When a young girl showed up “in a motherly way,” she embarrassed and disgraced her family. Frequently, the family was so embarrassed by her fornication that the young woman moved out of the community until the baby was born.

A murder was big news! Usually it occurred at the “beer joint” where moral degenerates hung out and, more likely than not, it involved a fight over a woman. We did not have drive by shootings, people walking into the post office and indiscriminately shooting whomever they wished. We did

not need metal detectors at school; after all, what use is a metal detector in stopping spit wads?

Gambling was a crime. A school might have a raffle, but many church-going people abstained from participating in it because of conscience. To think that gambling might be legalized and the state operate gambling was unheard of in those days.

When I went to school, each morning began with the principal reading a Scripture over the intercom and saying a short prayer. We would all stand and say the “Pledge of Allegiance” to the flag. We had discipline in our schools. Those who resisted the teacher’s authority found himself on the receiving end of a paddle. Daddy had this two-for-one deal with the teacher. If I got a spanking at school, I got another one at home. No one in the community ever thought about suing the school or teacher because his child got a spanking. Why Mom and Dad knew Mrs. Womack and Mrs. Daniels too well to believe that either would intentionally abuse us. And, if we got an undeserved swat or two, they told us to think about it terms of the number of times we needed a swat or two and did not get it. It all sort of worked out so that justice was reasonably administered.

Our society was racially segregated and the black population in our country suffered in ways I cannot fully appreciate. I grew up in the deep south with little appreciation for the civil rights leaders who called for equality for all Americans. I could only see the agitation and racial riots these leaders created, not the social injustices that needed correction.

These days were not without sin and sinners. And, I do not want to paint them in unrealistic idyllic colors. Yes there were fornicators, wife beaters, drunkards, and murderers in those days. But, there were a whole lot less of them. Yes, we were sinners in need of the redeeming grace of God, the same as is true today.

A REFUSAL TO HAVE GOD IN THEIR KNOWLEDGE

In the 1960s a social revolution occurred in America. I was too young to understand it at the time, but I distinctly remember it. My family was shocked by Woodstock. The pot-smoking fornicators openly defied religious and moral customs of that day. And the news media, who generally were sympathetic to the hippies, reacted negatively to any effort to police the crowd. The movement rejected the moral values of the Christian ethic and openly defied traditional morality. Removing prayer from the public schools was only the outward expression of a more systemic problem: America was casting aside God’s word as a moral standard by which to live.

The wave of the future was clearly moving toward a new ethic in America. The new ethic had the sympathy of

the press and was in control of the educational establishment. The left also controlled Hollywood, the TV and movie industry. The music business promoted singers who pushed the limits of moral values. Using the propaganda instruments at their control, those clamoring for liberation from puritanical values began the process of change in America.

In 1973, abortion was legalized by a leftist Supreme Court in the infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision. We were told that abortion would prevent child abuse because all of the children would be wanted children. It didn't prevent child abuse; the problem has mushroomed since then. Prayer was removed from the public schools. Divorce and remarriage reforms created the "no-fault" divorce. After all, children deserve to be in a "happy home," we were told.

What transpired in the 1960s and 1970s in America was the rejection of the Christian ethical system, just as it is described in Romans 1.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 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. 1:18-23).

Like many ancient civilizations, America refused to have God in their knowledge. Professing themselves to be wise, our leaders became fools by thinking they knew better than God regarding how to create a great society.

THE FRUITS OF REJECTING GOD

Thirty to forty years have passed. Young people today are reaping what my generation and those who are a few years older than me sowed. And, what we are reaping sounds remarkably similar to what God said would occur in a society that refused to "have God in their knowledge" (Rom. 1:28).

Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of

the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them (Rom. 1:24-32).

Hosea described those who made the same kind of choice in his day as he spoke about the changes that came in his society saying, "For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind" (8:7). The 1960s generation sowed the seeds of moral rebellion by casting God out of our society. As we enter the twenty-first century, we are beginning the harvest of the decision to cast aside Christian values as the moral standard on which this country is based. We are much nearer the beginning than the end of this harvest.

We are witnessing incidents in America that portend the break down of society. These public acts of violence remind me of the last days of the judges when everyone did that which was right in his own eyes (Judg. 17:6; 21:25). Those incidents occurred in Israel to manifest Israel's need for a restraining force in the centralized government of the king. The people of Dan relocated from the south to the north. In the course of their move they stole a man's idol and his priest. This story is told to describe the religious condition of Israel (Judg. 18). The next story (chap. 19-20) tells of a man whose wife "played the whore" against him. In the kindness of his heart, the man goes to his father-in-law's house and takes her back as his wife. On his return home, he stops in Gibeah of Benjamin to spend the night. The men of Gibeah take his wife and gang rape her all night. She dies on the doorstep of the house in which the man is staying. The man takes his dead wife home, cuts his wife in twelve pieces, and sends one piece to each of the twelve tribes, rousing the tribes to punish the wicked men of Gibeah. The Benjamites rally to Gibeah to prevent the punishment of the men of Gibeah. A civil war breaks out that nearly destroys the tribe of Benjamin.

Reading the stories of serial rapist/murderers and the gangs controlling various sections of the inner cities makes me think of the breakdown of the moral society in Israel that led to their civil war. How near are we to the brink of the breakdown of our society?

CONCLUSION: IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY

The purpose of this article is to tell the younger generation in this country that our society does not have to be

the way it is. It can be different. Indeed, it was different before America made a conscious decision to cast aside God and his word.

Righteousness and peace can be restored to America and the solution and manner in which it can be restored is simple. Let us repent of our rejection of God. Like Daniel, let us pray to God saying,

O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; Neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the

law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice. And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly (Dan. 9:4-15).

After such a prayer, then let us meekly accept the Lordship of God over our lives and resolve to obey his word, thus creating a society governed by the moral principles revealed in the Bible. As these principles of righteousness are restored, our society will become a safer place to live. Our children will be raised by their natural mother and father and not have to face the emotional traumas of divorce and carry the psychological baggage that leads them to destroy their own homes. For the sake of our children and grandchildren, let us turn back to God.

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Field Reports



India Gospel Report

Foy Vinson, David Hurst, and I recently returned from India where we were engaged in the gospel work of teaching and preaching the word of God. We split up and taught Bible classes for Indian gospel preachers in various locations in Andhra Pradesh, South India. We would teach these Bible classes Monday through Friday in one place and then go to another location for other preachers. The classes were taught during the day and gospel preaching took place at night in various villages in the area. We taught classes ranging in size from



30 to 35 gospel preachers — sometimes more. A total of more than 200 Indian gospel preachers were in our Bible classes. Materials used in the studies were provided for the preachers in their own language. Also, in the nightly gospel meetings, as a result of the gospel preaching, 329 precious souls were baptized into Christ. Most of the gospel meetings had very large numbers of people in attendance — some gatherings had numbers running well into the hundreds. On several occasions, we had two translators for the lessons. One stood on one side and another translator stood on the other side of the speaker. This was near the border of Karnataka State and Andhra Pradesh State. Most of the states in India have their own language.

The interest in the gospel is still very high in India. The results there call to mind the reports of gospel meetings in this country of many years ago in another generation. One can read the old reports of extended gospel meeting where dozens of people were baptized into Christ. This is unheard of today



in the USA. But it used to be that way. The point is that India may someday become as materialistic and uninterested in the gospel as most in the USA are today. But they are not there yet, and we can have tremendous crowds of people turn out to hear the gospel night after night. We have spoken to crowds of over a thousand people, eager to hear what we have to say. How long this will continue, I do not know. But I am willing to continue to go to India teaching and preaching the gospel of Christ as long as the door is open and good brethren will continue to help me.


We have written several gospel tracts for India and have had them translated into several of the Indian languages. We printed eight of these gospel tracts in the Telugu and Hindi languages. There were 5,000 printed in each language for a total of 80,000 gospel tracts. We printed 50 songbooks of 52 pages each for the brethren. The gospel preachers in India wrote most of the songs in this songbook. We also purchased 1120 Holy Bibles in the Telugu and Hindi languages for the poor saints. In addition to this, \$500 (to each) was given to brethren T. Wilfred and I.S. Deenadayal for them to publish a gospel paper and distribute it in the villages. The total cost of these tracts, songbooks, Bibles, and gospel literature was

\$7000. This was made possible by good brethren here in the USA. I am only able to do this as interested individuals and churches continue to make it possible.

As most of you know, we had to postpone our trip last September to this spring. God willing, I will try to get back into my schedule of work by returning to India this September. A number of preachers were not able to benefit from Bible classes with them as we did not have sufficient time this trip. We hope to have the Bible classes with these additional gospel preachers this September, God willing.

We certainly are watching the situation between Pakistan and India. We are aware of the tensions there between the two countries. We have good brethren in India keeping us abreast of developments within the nation.

If you have questions or desire to help us with this gospel work, please feel free to contact me. [John Humphries, 8705 Wooded Glen Rd., Louisville, KY 40220](mailto:John.Humphries@woodedglen.com) or call 502-499-9942.

Quips & Quotes

Churches Started by Herald of Truth

"In Bill Cavender's reminiscences he expressed doubt that any church was the result of the Herald of Truth. Ironically, the largest conservative church in the Northeast is one. In the spring of 1953, Emmanuel Luxardo, a Baptist who was preaching for the East Side Presbyterian Church in Newark, New Jersey, heard the program and was made to consider his spiritual condition. He investigated by contacting the church of Christ in Fair Lawn. After studying with the preacher, he was baptized into Christ.

Considering this an opportunity to begin a work in the largest city in New Jersey, Bill Reeves, Luxardo, and others began a church in Newark in the summer of 1953. When they couldn't buy property in Newark in 1955, they purchased a building at 169 Main St. in East Orange. Looking back, I now consider this providential.

"This Bill Reeves (now deceased) was definitely in the institutional camp for the church in East Orange sent money to one of the orphan homes. Had he remained with the church it would likely have gone that way. In April of 1956 the church asked Bill to leave. This had nothing to do with 'the issues.' The Castleberry church in Ft. Worth, Texas had supported preachers in New Jersey including East Orange. The brethren in New Jersey asked Castleberry to help find a preacher to move to East Orange. This too was providential. In September they sent

Gene Lyles with full support. Gene stayed until 1959. His work was very significant. It was his teaching that set the church firmly on a path of conservative independence from which it has not moved.

"In 1964 the Main St. property was taken by the state of New Jersey for a new highway, but again God's providence led to the present, more desirable property at 18 Ridgewood Ave., East Orange. I worked with the church in East Orange on three occasions for a total of 29½ years until my semi-retirement at the beginning of 2002. Gene's work made it much easier for me when I began my first work in 1959. I doubt if the Herald of Truth knew this story or would admit it if they did." **B.G. Echols, 1044 Ridge Rd., Shippensburg, PA 17257.**

Answering Religious Error

John Isaac Edwards has published a new workbook entitled Answering Religious Error. It is designed to be used as a Bible class study book. It is very attractively printed and answers a host of contemporary denominational beliefs and doctrines. The material is presented in a well organized arrangement which concentrates on simple answers to complex doctrinal errors. If one judges that the Lord's people are neglecting doctrines that enable our members to distinguish between the Lord's church and denominationalism, this book is an excellent tool for your Bible class to study. You may order the book from Truth Bookstore. Its price is \$3.95.

Back in Print: W.W. Otey, Contender For The Faith

I am pleased to report that the grandson of W.W. Otey, Bill Phipps, from Wichita, Kansas has reprinted in paperback form, W.W. Otey, Contender For The Faith. The biography of brother Otey was written by my brother Cecil Willis. This biography of brother Otey emphasizes the doctrinal issues which the churches faced in the early twentieth century rather than approaching the history of the church through the social-sources-of-division approach to the conflicts as presented by Reinhold Niehbur's book The Social Sources of Denominationalism (1929) and applied to the restoration movement by Ed Harrell in The Social Sources of Division in the Disciples of Christ 1865-1900 (1973). One walks with Otey through the controversy over instrumental music and missionary societies (which led to the Otey-Briney Debate) on through the appeal by G.C. Brewer to have churches support colleges from their treasury. The book is available through Truth Bookstore at 1-800-428-0121.

I recently received an advertisement entitled "Help St. Augustine's Home." The ad proceeds to state that St. Augustine is conducting a raffle of a PT Cruiser at \$100 per ticket. The raffle is a fund raising program for Little Sisters of the Poor, which is a

Catholic charity. The insignia shows a cross with a circle inside and inside the circle is a shock of wheat. The Logo of the Little Sisters of the Poor has special significance: "The cross symbolizes our vocation as followers of Christ. The circle signifies the universal dimension of our mission. The wheat symbolizes old age as the time of life's harvest. It also symbolizes the Eucharist, source of charity and summit of our prayer."

Let's look at this more carefully. A religious charity is resorting to gambling as a fund raising device. Gambling has only recently been legal in Indiana, but it certainly is not righteous. The charity is using the tools of the Devil to finance its "good works." If one can use one tool of the Devil, why not other tools? Could they operate a house of prostitution to finance their good works? What about pushing illegal drugs? Or could they produce alcohol such as Christian Brothers Wines?

Herod's Stadium

"During construction of the Galei Akinneret Hotel at Tiberias, on the Sea of Galilee, Israeli archaeologists discovered a 12,000-year-old stadium. According to the first-century Jewish historian Josephus, Romans used the stadium not only for races and gatherings, but also to imprison and execute Jews who lost a battle against the Romans on the Sea of Galilee in A.D. 67. First-century Jews resented Herod Antipas for building the city over a Jewish graveyard, so Jesus may never have visited Tiberias (though it was visible from Capernaum). Nevertheless, says Paul L. Maier, professor of ancient history at Western Michigan University, 'Anything from the first century is a very significant discovery'" (Christianity Today [August 5, 2002], 14).

Southern Baptists Blast TNIV

"The Southern Baptist Convention questioned the integrity of the Today's New International Version New Testament at the denomination's annual meeting in St. Louis on June 11-12. In the convention's resolution, Southern Baptists expressed 'profound disappointment with the international Bible Society and Zonderan Publishing House for this inaccurate translation of God's inspired Scripture' and said the denomination cannot recommend its use.

". . . Critics accuse TNIV translators of erasing gender-specific details . . . in the original language by frequently using they or them instead of he or him and obscuring references to father, son, and brother in passages about people. In references to God or Jesus, the TNIV uses he, father, and son. Critics say the TNIV inserts English words into the text whose meaning does not appear in the original languages'" (Christianity Today [August 5, 2002], 17).

