



Statistics, as well as misery index, show need to return to God’s pattern.

American Families

Randy Blackaby

Homosexual marriages are the hot topic in the news these days. The sexual revolution of the 1960s, divorce, living together without marriage, and feminist agenda have taken a back seat as the American family comes under its newest assault.

Loud voices today call for further changes in the image of the “traditional” family. By “traditional” they refer to the divinely ordained, biblically outlined principle of a man and a woman marrying for life and both producing and rearing children in this environment.

Every alteration of this pattern is justified as a “right” of free people. That is largely a political argument, which will be left for others to discuss.

But let’s consider these changes from a more practical point of view. Here’s the question: Does changing the traditional or biblical model for the family produce better or poorer results? Do the changes

create good or evil?

In his book on American families, *The Broken Hearth*, William J. Bennett gives us the following statistics, which may help us answer the questions posed.



Since 1960, divorce rates have grown from 1 in 4 marriages, to 1 in 2.

In 1974, for the first time, divorce replaced death as the principle cause of family dissolution.

In 1994, for the first times in American history, more than one half of all firstborn children were born out of wedlock.

Among teenage mothers today — more than three-fourths have their babies out of wedlock.

In 15 of the nation’s largest cities, more than 90% of births are to unwed mothers.

As of 1998, one third of children live see “Family” on p. 312

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— Subscription Rates —

\$24.00 Per Year

Single Copies — \$2.00 each

Foreign Subscriptions — \$25.00

— Bulk Rates —

\$1.75 per subscription per month

Manuscripts should be sent to Mike Willis, 6567 Kings Ct., Avon, IN 46123, (317) 272-6520. E-mail: mike.willis1@attglobal.net

Subscriptions, renewals and other correspondence should be sent to Truth Magazine, P.O. Box 9670, Bowling Green, KY 42102.

Book orders should be sent to Truth Bookstore, P.O. Box 9670, Bowling Green, KY 42102. Phone: 1-800-428-0121.

Web Address: www.truthmagazine.com
Postmaster: Send change of address to P.O. Box 9670, Bowling Green, KY 42102.

Truth Magazine (ISSN 1538-0793) is published twice a month by Guardian of Truth Foundation, P.O. Box 9670, Bowling Green, KY 42102. Postage paid at Bowling Green, KY and additional mailing offices.

In the Hands of Fallible Men

Mike Willis



In the providence of God, the Lord committed many great works to the hands of fallible men. From the beginning of creation, God committed to mankind charge over all the earth. Moses wrote,

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth (Gen. 1:26).

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth (Gen. 1:28).

Because of the exalted role assigned to man, the Psalmist wrote,

O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!
Who hast set thy glory above the heavens.
Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies,
that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.
When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
and the son of man, that thou visitest him?
For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels,
and hast crowned him with glory and honour.
Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands;
thou hast put all things under his feet:
All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;
The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea,
and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.
O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! (Ps. 8:1-9).

After placing Adam in the Garden of Eden, he committed to him the care of the Garden. He said, “And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it” (Gen. 2:15).

God knew that the men to whom he committed these responsibilities were

see "Fallible Men" on p. 312

In Much Wisdom Is Much Grief

Connie W. Adams

In Ecclesiastes, the Preacher grapples with the meaning of life. In the first six chapters he *explores* life. In this section he raises the questions which men have pondered through time. If that were all of the book, we would be left with pessimism. In the last six chapters he *explains* what to do with life so that it is rich, full, and happy. The wise man himself pursued life with vigor and curiosity. He gave himself to many things in seeking what was good for man to do “under heaven all the days of his life.” When life is viewed only “under the sun” with no fear of God who formed the sun and fashioned all life under it, it is a perplexing puzzle. Only when it is viewed from the fear of the Lord does it have meaning and purpose.

The first pursuit was *wisdom*. He succeeded admirably in gaining that. He said, “I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge” (Eccl. 1:16). In verse 18 he reached the conclusion all must reach who seek wisdom “under the sun” but ignore him who reigns *above* the sun. “For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.” Why is that so?

Paul also addressed the issue of human wisdom unaided by divine revelation. “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21). The philosophers of Greece reached as high as human reason would allow in trying to unravel the mysteries of life, and came away empty. Indeed, God made “foolish the wisdom of this world” (1 Cor. 1:20). All of this was to the end that “no flesh should glory in his presence” (1 Cor. 1:29). “For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness” (1 Cor. 3:19). But what man’s eye could not see, what his ear could not hear, and what had not entered his heart, God “revealed . . . by his Spirit” which searched the deep things of God, which man, unaided by divine revelation, could not do (1 Cor. 2:8-13).

Many professing themselves to be wise have become fools (Rom 1:21). It is the fool who said in his heart “there is no God” (Ps. 14:1). All two hundred sixty-one names signed to *Humanist Manifesto II* were of those the world would consider wise. Many of them were educators. Some were theologians. Some were scientists. All were well educated. Yet these bright people signed their names to a document which said “no Deity will save
continued on next page

American Families	
Randy Blackaby.....	front page
In the Hands of Fallible Men	
Mike Willis	2
In Much Wisdom Is Much Grief	
Connie W. Adams	3
Observations and Experiences Regarding Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage (4)	
Bill Cavender.....	6
What Are We Gonna Do?	
David McPherson	9
A Tribute to Dad	
Marc W. Gibson.....	10
Those Persecuting Printers	
Irvin Himmel	12
“Captain Kangaroo” and Children	
Johnie Edwards.....	14
Gay Marriage and Homosexuality	
Tim Haile.....	16
Are You Part of the International Churches of Christ?	
David Dann.....	18
They Couldn’t Restrain Themselves Even Though Watched and Warned	
Jay Horsley	20
Incident at Indy	
Aaron Erhardt	22
“Enter Ye In by the Narrow Gate . . .”	
Jim McDonald	23

us; we must save ourselves.” “We can discover no divine purpose of providence for the human species.” “There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body.” Human wisdom has left them with no idea as to where they came from, why they are here and what destiny awaits them beyond the grave. In this “wisdom” there is much grief. In a vain attempt to find “the good life, here and now” they ignored the only true good there is in life. Their approach caters to the flesh. It encourages sensuality, gratification for the moment, and leaves those caught in this web full of emptiness.

It is tragic that so many young people have been caught in this trap. Many are awed at the worldly knowledge of highly acclaimed educators who ridicule the word of God and poke fun at lives ordered after divine revelation. It is at this point that many have lost their way. At first, they revel in their newfound “freedom.” Some are willing to burn all bridges behind them, including the instruction of godly parents, preachers, and elders. This happens thousands of times every year on university campuses across America. The grief of bewildered and disappointed parents is inexpressible.

Men of great scientific wisdom have left us with much grief. The splitting of the atom created a weapon which ended one war but which holds the world hostage against the fear of more wars. Civilized nations hold their breath hoping some mad man will not gain access to such destructive forces.

The industrial world has made great advances. But along with these have come all sorts of problems. We have chemicals to kill insects on vegetables but some men of wisdom tell us if we eat this produce we will get cancer. Debates have raged over whether city water supplies should be fluoridated. The by-products of industry produce toxic waste. What are we going to do with it? Bury it? But where? Who wants it? Dump it in the sea? What about the fish? Well, burn it! What of the smoke? We have to breath, you

know. We are really wise! The Preacher was right: “in much wisdom is much grief.”

In the church of our Lord, the problem of human wisdom is equally grievous. When men have forgotten that “it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps,” untold grief has been the result. The divisions of the religious world bear evidence of that. In the church of the Lord, one division has followed another because some have been unwilling to “walk in the old paths.” They have “hewn out cisterns that can hold no water,” “sought out many inventions,” and tried to improve on the infinite wisdom of God. Men never try to improve on divine wisdom until they have first lost confidence in it. The social gospel, with all its trappings, blossoms only where men have lost faith in the power of the gospel to save the lost. Men never invented missionary societies and sponsoring churches until they first lost faith in the all-sufficiency of the local church to do the work God gave it. In such “wisdom” (?) there has been much grief. Churches have been divided. Hearts have been broken. Families have been torn apart. Life-long friendships have been ended. And for what? To gratify man’s passion to replace divine wisdom with human wisdom.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Ps. 110:10). Wisdom which did not descend from above is “earthly, sensual, devilish” but that wisdom “that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (Jas. 3:13-17).

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:8-9).

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by Martha Peace

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Observations and Experiences Regarding Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage (4)

Bill Cavender

Years ago I sat in a courtroom, listening to a divorce proceeding. The woman was a member where I preached. Her husband was an unbeliever. She was a nurse; he was an EMT. They had a beautiful little daughter about three years old. They met at the local hospital when he would bring patients into the emergency room. She was an attractive woman; he was a long-haired, shaggy, hippy-looking bum, but “nice and courteous and attentive.” He told her he had never been married and was “looking for a church.” They began a courtship, she fell for him, and they married (I did not know either of them at that time). No sooner did they marry than his drug and alcohol problems manifested themselves; his anger and violent temper, and his physical and emotional abuse of his wife began. She learned he had been previously married. She should have left him but she didn’t. They had a child. Conditions deteriorated, he began to keep loaded pistols in their house and under his pillow, and a hunting knife by their bed, threatening to use it on her if she did not submit to him and be silent about his conduct. He began an adulterous affair. Then he wanted a divorce but still she loved that sorry culprit and thought she could change him. He filed for divorce and I attended the trial. In spite of his craziness, pure meanness, and evil conduct, the judge granted him a divorce for “marital incompatibility” and gave him shared custody of their precious child. Later the child was taken from him and the custody nullified due to abuse of the child. He later died of drugs and alcoholism. That good woman, who made such a blunder, is still single. She was unjustly “put away” in a civil court of men by an ungodly mate but in the court of heaven she

is innocent and could remarry if she desired to do so. But had he not divorced her, she would probably have been murdered, for I don’t believe she would ever have divorced him. Her child is a grown woman now. Be careful who you marry. Have a long and morally pure courtship. Know who the person really is and what his/her background is, before you allow yourself to become emotionally involved and agree to marriage.

One day long ago I was in the office of the church building where I preached, going about my studies and my work. The phone rang and a crying, hysterical sister was on the line, asking if she and her husband could come and talk with me. They did. Their problem was this: “Frank” (a fictitious name) was a bachelor, never married, an exceedingly fine and good man, a Christian since his boyhood days, coming from a family well-known in the church, his father being an elder for many years. “Susan” (a fictitious name), a widow with a grown daughter, a Methodist, had met him. He taught her the truth of the gospel and she obeyed. They began a courtship and decided to marry. After several years of happiness, she was at the “beauty shop” that day when their telephone rang at home. Frank answered the phone. A kinsman of Susan was on the phone, wanting to tell Susan that her first husband had died in a distant city and his funeral would be held in a couple of days. This news devastated Frank. He had no idea that Susan had had two husbands. She had only told him about the second one, the father of her daughter. When she came home from

her appointment, Frank told her of the message. She was devastated and distraught. She had not intended to deceive Frank. She had married this fellow very early in her life, about age seventeen or eighteen; they lived together for a short while and divorced. She had long since laid this aside in her memory, so she said. When they arrived at the church building, they were both in great grief and flowing tears, sobbing almost uncontrollably. She told me this story, of that youthful marriage, and, how she did not realize that this first husband of forty-five years or so before was even alive. She, literally, got down on her knees before her husband, shedding profuse tears of sorrow and sadness, repenting of her wrong, and telling Frank how much she loved him, and appreciated and respected him, and how she would not knowingly have hurt him for anything in this world. She was begging for his forgiveness and he forgave her. We talked, read Scriptures, and earnestly prayed. I never saw a more sorrowful, penitent person in my life than Susan was that day. It was never mentioned again as long as they lived, at least not to me.

Some are teaching the idea that a couple is not married until the “marriage license is recorded at the courthouse.” This is not true. The Testament of Jesus does not say or teach such an idea. Jesus did not teach that God joins couples together at the courthouses of men (in America or anywhere else on earth, but he does so in the courts of heaven; men are trying to “Americanize” the teachings of Jesus and the apostles). This is binding where Jesus our Master did not bind. Years ago I said a “wedding ceremony” for a young couple, and after the wedding they went on their way to another city to live and to go to college. I completed the license, dropped it in the post office the next day after the ceremony, and thought no more about it. Some five or six weeks later the couple received a letter at the bride’s parents’ address, saying that the license had not been returned. They contacted me. I went to the courthouse and told the officials that I had mailed the completed license the morning after the wedding. The matter began to be investigated. The very night I had put the license into the mail earlier that day, a mail truck had wrecked with a tanker truck, and both vehicles had burned. Postal inspectors concluded the license would have been in the mail that burned. The couple had to come back to the courthouse, after six weeks or more of marriage and obtain another license. I had to go and complete my part of it, and then the license was duly recorded. I told this true incident to a preacher years ago. His conclusion was that the couple was living in the sin of fornication for six weeks, until the second license was completed and filed at the courthouse. He opined that they should publicly confess their sins!

Charles Hodge, in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (334) correctly commented: “The State can neither make nor dissolve the marriage tie. It may enact laws regulating the mode in which it shall be solemnized

and authenticated, and determining its civil effects. It may shield a wife from ill-usage from her husband, as it may remove a child from the custody of an incompetent or cruel parent. When the union is in fact dissolved by the operation of the divine law, the State may ascertain and declare the fact and free the parties from the civil obligation of the contract. But it is impossible that the State should have authority to dissolve a union constituted by God, the duties and continuance of which are determined by his law.”

Some years after the above mentioned event, Marinel and I began working with a church of some two hundred fifty souls in attendance. There was this nice college-age couple who had “courted” a while and planned to marry. They asked me to conduct the wedding service. The girl’s mother was also a member of the congregation, a godly and gracious lady. She wanted a lovely “church wedding” for her only daughter and the daughter wanted that also. The elders allowed the use of the meetinghouse for weddings (and funerals) provided no mechanical instruments were used and a faithful gospel preacher was in charge of the service. We had a “wedding rehearsal” on Friday night before the “real wedding” on Saturday night (I have always disliked “wedding rehearsals”). Saturday night came, the audience assembled, everyone was ready for the wedding, and I was still asking the groom for the marriage license. I wanted to see it before the wedding (he had previously been assuring me that he would give me the license before the wedding). About five minutes before we were to enter the auditorium for the wedding to begin, he said he needed to talk with me. He took me aside into a classroom and told me that he and his sweetheart were already married. They just couldn’t wait, they didn’t want to commit fornication (I appreciated that in their conduct), so about ten days before they had gone to a civil judge to be married, and the license was already filed at the courthouse. He begged me to go on with the “wedding ceremony,” as not to do so would “break the heart” of his mother-in-law and disappoint both their families and all their friends. I reluctantly did so but it gave me a good opportunity to preach them a good sermon, including the sin of lying. I’m sure that couple has never told anyone. They told me later they were sorry for having done this and asked my forgiveness. From what I have heard since, they are happily married and are good workers for the Lord.

In one congregation where I preached, a young, unmarried lady in the church wanted to talk with the elders. She was planning to be married to a man who had been married. She said that her husband-to-be had previously married a woman a few years before. After the wedding ceremony, he and his bride went to change from their garments into other clothing, to travel off to their honeymoon. He changed his garments and stood outside his changing room, waiting for his bride to come out of her dressing room. But she did not come out! She could not be found! Later in the

night they learned why she disappeared. She had eloped immediately after the wedding, and reception, with his best man in the wedding! They were old sweethearts. The preacher, who officiated at the wedding, not knowing these events as they occurred after he had gone home, mailed the marriage license the next morning to the court clerk and it was recorded. So, she told us, her husband-to-be was never really married, never had a wife, never cohabited, later legally divorced his erstwhile bride, was free to be married, and she intended to marry him. She did. I did not participate in the wedding.

I was preaching in a gospel meeting in a southern state some twenty years or so ago. A lady and her pretty teen-age daughter approached me after the evening service asking if they could speak with me. After folks cleared out and we could go aside, she asked my advice regarding her problem. She was married to an alcoholic, abusive husband, an ungodly man. In recent months he was trying to abuse their daughter and molest her. She was planning to separate from her husband and remove the daughter from a father who would possibly try to sexually molest his own daughter. I advised her, if she was telling me the truth and these were really the circumstances in their home, to separate herself and the child from this man, to remove the girl from his presence. Shortly thereafter I learned that she did so. Some months later this man assaulted and raped a woman and was sent to prison, so I was told later. I believe the woman did the right thing, to protect herself and her child. This man was violating every principle and teaching regarding the conduct of a husband and father toward his wife and child (Eph. 5:22-33; 1 Pet. 3:1-7; Col. 3:18-21). I mentioned this true incident in a sermon some years later. The preacher, where I was holding the meeting, told me that I had sinned, that I told the woman wrongly, that she had no right to separate from her husband, and could not scripturally do so unless and until he actually raped his daughter, making himself a true adulterer. Then, and only then, could his wife have had God's approval to leave him! He opined further that, if the wife had not separated from him, it was possible that he would not have assaulted and raped the woman and been sent to prison! So she sinned in separating from her husband and I sinned by advising her that she should do so, for the protection of her child!

I have only "touched the hem of the garment" in writing of these few experiences. I could relate many, many more interesting, unique, twisted, convoluted, sad, sinful, and even humorous (if they were not so serious, for the consequences are eternal) marriage events. None of these affects anything that Jesus our Lord and the inspired apostles taught us regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Every preacher has his own experiences as years go by, and we work with all kinds of folks who have all types of problems. My purposes in these articles are twofold: (1) to remind all of us that human relationships, involving

marital problems and difficulties, are the most tenuous, the most ill-defined, the most difficult of all to deal with, the most insolvable, than all the matters we will deal with in life, the reasons being that emotions, faulty memories, failures unseen and unrealized, prejudices, good will and ill will, influences from others, and many other factors are involved; and (2) all of us are *only* teachers of the people; we are not investigators, police, and detectives examining the marriages, divorces, and remarriages of people. We can only help when we are called upon for advice, counsel, and teaching, and when such ones tell us the truth and only the truth. All we can tell anyone is what Jesus and the apostles said, without additions and subtractions. Each person is responsible to God through Jesus Christ for his own life and will give account at the last great day. Some marriages and divorces are obviously sinful and very recognizable; some are not sinful because Jesus gave a right of divorce to an innocent, moral husband/wife whose companion has been guilty of adultery; some are questionable and cannot be satisfactorily dealt with by people outside the marriage. Teach the word of God ahead of time. Preventive teaching is much more effective than trying to excise the cancer of error and sin after it afflicts its victims.

"Conservative" churches of Christ, with all our various issues, opinions, conscientious scruples, strains and stresses, seen and unseen schisms and parties, had best be very conscious and careful how we deal with one another. We are a very small group of brethren and local congregations ("non-institutional" and "anti" churches we are called by others), living in a great big world of about 6,750,000,000 (six billion, seven hundred fifty million) lost souls. I doubt not, considering our numbers, that we are one of the most divided, disturbed, debating group of religious people in the USA. We are not increasing in numbers and influence, but rather are rapidly decreasing and diminishing in both areas. As our older brethren pass on into eternity (that generation which fought battles for truth, the identity of the kingdom of God in a sinful world, and defined who we are as a people), we are becoming a more fractured, foolish, and fussing people, having little to offer a sin-cursed world by way of salvation and hope in Christ Jesus. We are not busy preaching the plain and pure gospel of Jesus Christ to lost souls about us. Instead we are crucifying our Lord afresh in our words, behavior, and deeds as we nail each other to our crosses of opinionism and extremes, traveling under the disguises of "soundness" and "contending for the faith." The "non-institutional" congregations which are prospering to any degree in numerical growth, in spirituality, in peace, in developing leadership and teachers, in solid internal teaching programs, in rooting and grounding brethren in the faith, in supporting the gospel in other areas of the lost world, are those churches which are "steering clear of" and ignoring, as much as possible, the fusses and debates among us having to do with a minority's extreme opinions. You cannot save souls and build strong churches

for the Lord by fussing, fighting, crucifying your brethren, majoring in minors, and engaging in non-profitable, pointless arguments.

There are not many hard-working, visiting, Bible-studying, Scripture-memorizing, hospital-and-nursing-home-visiting, home-Bible-studies, preachers anymore. Most are too busy on the computers, on the Internet, on the golf courses, and watching the television, to be good builders of local churches anymore. Preachers used to arise from bed early in the morning, shave, shower, have breakfast, go to their office, study and memorize and write for several hours, spend the afternoons calling upon visitors to services, visiting the local hospitals and nursing homes, visiting shut-ins and aged members, be out in public meeting people in the community, and having a home Bible class a couple of nights a week. Preachers worked, people were baptized, churches grew in numbers and in doctrinal strength and peace, and the cause of Christ prospered. There is not much of that kind of good work going on among preachers anymore. Brethren are so lazy and ill taught that they do not demand or desire hard-working preachers. They want people pleasing-personality, non-offensive, short-sermons

preachers, who never “rock the boat” or make any sinner uncomfortable, and who “get us out early” from the service so we can beat the “sectarians” to the cafeterias and restaurants before they get crowded.

Preachers who get side-tracked from their work of preaching the gospel of Christ and saving lost souls, who get off into extremes, opinions, unprofitable discussions, and who are not building the church in numbers and spirituality where they preach, need to be doing something else. We have great need of old-fashioned preachers, old-fashioned churches, old-fashioned elders and deacons, doing Jesus’ work of saving lost souls (Luke 19:10) and teaching the saved to “live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Tit. 2:11-12). We will not prosper as a people until we truly return to the “old paths” in every facet of our relationship with our Father in heaven through Jesus our Savior, and to our love for the souls of those lost in sin (Jer. 6:16).

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What Are We Gonna Do?

David McPherson

1. It’s Sunday morning. A member of the church walks into the meeting house with a guitar. He’s scheduled to lead the singing and is determined to do so with the accompaniment of his mechanical instrument? What are we gonna do?

2. It’s Sunday morning. A member of the church is preparing the elements for the Lord’s supper. She has decided to use quail and water since both are mentioned in the Bible. What are we gonna do?

3. It’s Sunday morning. A member of the church is not present for the scheduled services of the church. As a matter of fact, it has been a very, very long time since he was present. What are we gonna do?

Thankfully, I’ve never known of members in the Lord’s church being guilty of the first two scenarios. Unfortunately, the third act is seen quite too often. And just as saddening is that many times nothing is done to correct the situation.

If either of the first two instances were realities in most conservative churches of Christ today, the elders would be on it like “ugly on an ape” — and rightly so. But why, brethren, are we not just as concerned about the brother or sister who continually forsakes the assembling of ourselves together (Heb. 10:25)? Is he any less guilty of error? Certainly not!

It is high time that brethren “get off the stool of do-little, and stop whittling on the stick of do-less” and take a stand against *every* sin that attempts to creep into the church. What are we gonna do?

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A Tribute to Dad

Marc W. Gibson

As a family, Dad had us involved in things together. The family went on vacation together, worshiped God together, did farm work together, worked in the garden together, etc. Everyone felt involved and had a purpose whether or not we liked what we were doing.

The ninetieth Psalm is authored by Moses, the man of God. He was not the sweet singer of Israel like David, nor a man of the immense wisdom of Solomon. Yet, Moses was a faithful man of God who was a great leader of God's people. He wasn't perfect, but his single-minded goal was to do the will of God. His example and words live on in the things written aforetime.

In this ninetieth Psalm, Moses contrasts the eternity of God with the frailty of man. While God is from everlasting to everlasting, man's years are short, laborious, and soon over. To make this contrast even more apparent, Moses speaks of the actual length of a man's life:

The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away (v. 10).

As my earthly father approaches his eightieth birthday (May 30), I have thought more and more about this passage and its meaning. Dad's life has been an example to me and countless others, yet the days of his life and ours are but a few on this earth. As Moses would go on to write, "So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (v. 12). The true measure of our life is not in the actual number of days that we live, but the wise quality of living that

characterized those hours, days, and years. I beg the patience of the reader as I express a few words of tribute to my dad for the wise and godly living that he demonstrated to me.

Early Years

Earl Russell Gibson was born in a small farmhouse in Tuscarawas County in the state of Ohio on May 30, 1924 to Wilber and Wilda Gibson. The farmland he enjoyed as a child was owned by his family and had been handed down over the generations. Religiously, the Gibsons were Methodists. Dad had been somewhat unsuccessful in attempts to "pray through" to get his salvation. Things didn't change until, in high school, his eye caught sight of a pretty young girl by the name of Erma "Billie" Dillehay, daughter of William and Hazel Dillehay, two faithful members of the church of Christ in Newcomerstown, Ohio. As they dated, he attended worship services with her and heard the Bible preached as he had never heard it before. He quickly learned the gospel plan of salvation and was baptized into Christ at about age sixteen. Unfortunately, his family was not as quick to hear and believe the truth, holding fast to the Methodist traditions. Thankfully, a number of years later, his father would accept and obey the gospel call.

A Family

Earl married Billie Dillehay in Columbus, Ohio on June 3, 1945 and settled in Newcomerstown where

they live to this day. Dad was an only child and looked forward to having a large family. Five children were born to this union: David, Cynthia Jane, John, Daniel, and Marc. Dad got the large family he always wanted, and Mom got a lot of work. But together they succeeded in providing for us and preparing us for the years on our own.

As a family, Dad had us involved in things together. The family went on vacation together, worshiped God together, did farm work together, worked in the garden together, etc. Everyone felt involved and had a purpose whether or not we liked what we were doing.

Discipline

Dad had a firm hand, figuratively and literally. Working on the farmland that he owned (seven miles outside of town) kept him strong in body. We boys knew not to get out of line, or a large hand would grab our collar and help us straighten up. We grew up respecting his firm hand of discipline and he helped us learn right from wrong. I still recall being taken out of services for acting up, and it was one fearful trip that I did not wish to repeat! I came to understand that he did it because he loved me and wanted me to learn some necessary lessons. That's what fathers are for: "And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

Discipline was not just of the corrective type, but of the instructive type, too. Dad was not shy to point out God's truths and the evils in the world, warning us to stay away from the devil's lures. He spoke to his children plainly about the need to be faithful to God. Hours on the farm produced wagon-loads of lessons about God, nature, morals, and our choices in life. These lessons I have never forgotten.

Labor

Dad was (and still is) a busy man. In addition to farm work, he was employed as a machinist at a file factory and sold Knapp shoes for many years. These things left precious few hours for lounging around, watching television, or other such sedentary activities. I did not have a dad who was that interested in sports (watching or playing) like other kids did, but I have no regrets about that. Dad had other interests I shared with him that served me just fine. What I did see was someone who was industrious, not lazy; a careful steward of finances, not wasteful; someone who knew time was precious, and not to be frittered away mindlessly. Dad was busy with a lot of things, but he was always there when I needed him — I never remember feeling that I was not important to him. It is important for any child to know that their parents are always there for them.

Dad has learned (I think) to pace himself as the years have increased. He has retired from many of his former labors, but still keeps relatively busy. A heart valve transplant a few years ago forced him to learn to sit and rest more. Yet there are things we all can do, no matter our age or health. We never retire from the Lord, and our labors must continue into our sunset years. Even now Dad serves as an elder of the church in West Lafayette, Ohio, and in teaching and encouraging souls to be saved before it is too late.

Husband

Dad and Mom are polar opposites in many things. She's a city girl — he's a farm boy; she's shy and reserved — he'll talk a leg off of you; she likes to be around the house — he likes to be on the go. Nevertheless, opposites do attract. They learned to meld their lives and likes together. They certainly did not always see things alike, but worked things out for the good of the family. Dad was faithful as her husband, from whom we kids learned to be devoted to our mates for richer, for poorer, in

good times and in bad. They've been devoted to one another for over fifty years. Not bad for an outgoing farm boy and a shy city girl.

Faithful Christian

The lasting legacy Dad will always leave in my mind is of a dedicated Christian to the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ. There simply was no question, doubt, or reservation that this was the driving force in his home. The Bible and the concerns of the church were constantly discussed. Dad was more interested in spiritual matters than in any other endeavor on this earth. I know this because we dropped whatever we were doing to go and worship God. Dad ran Knapp shoe fair booths for three county fairs at one point, and it would have been easy to skip Wednesday night Bible study to oversee the booth. This never happened. Dad left another salesman at the booth and we hustled to get to services. Farm work was left behind when it was time to worship God. The things of God always came *first*. In addition, we attended gospel meetings all around the east-central Ohio area, where I heard solid and faithful gospel preaching. This was a large influence in my decision to preach the gospel.

In times of controversy Dad stood stubbornly for truth against error. When the church in Newcomerstown involved itself in a sponsoring church arrangement in the mid-1960s, Dad, along with a few other members, voiced scriptural opposition to this unauthorized practice. Dad learned about these issues from those who, in sermons and debates, defended the pattern of the word of God (such as the Willis-Inman debate in Parkersburg, West Virginia). The elders of that congregation refused his call for discussion and Bible study and threatened to withdraw from our family and the other "troublemakers." Dad was not about to compromise. Those faithful few left and formed the congregation in West Lafayette which is now the Parkview church of Christ. Though I was just a child at the time,

Those Persecuting Printers

Irvin Himmel

Johannes Gutenberg and his associates are credited with the invention of printing from movable metallic type in about A.D. 1450. That development made it possible for copies of the Bible to be made with less expense and in far greater number. The first Bible printed from movable type came from Gutenberg's press in Mainz, Germany, and was an edition of the Vulgate, a Latin translation completed by Jerome in A.D. 405.

Prior to the invention of printing all copies of the Bible were handwritten manuscripts. It was a task both laborious and tedious to copy the Bible by hand. The copyists went to great lengths to maintain accuracy. Human errors could not be avoided. The invention of printing allowed proof reading and correcting before the copies were completed. Even with that improvement errors



sometimes occur. The infallibility of God's word does not mean that men who copy, translate, and publish his word are infallible.

Printers' errors in the Bible stand out like the proverbial sore thumb. Some are ludicrous. Others are preposterous. Most are humorous. They are too glaring to be taken seriously. Modern technology has not completely solved the problem of typos and errors in spelling.

Nicknames are given to Bibles with printing errors. The following list is interesting and illustrates how errors escape notice until the printing is done.

Place Makers' Bible: An English translation known as the Geneva Bible

I have heard this story many times and always thrill at the courage of faithful brethren standing for the truth. It was in those times of controversy that Dad taught his children to stand for the truth no matter what the consequences. We saw in him complete devotion and love for the truth, and a willingness to fight the good fight of faith.

In recent years, Dad has observed present controversies in which many brethren are compromising and departing from the truth with attitudes similar to the divisions of years past. While some have become apologetic and accommodative toward error, or even disengaged and unconcerned, Dad keeps encouraging his children (and grandchildren) to stand for the truth and never compromise with error. We are of age to make our own decisions, but he showed us "the way" that we "should go" (Prov. 22:6). I believe

that I can speak for my siblings that we are very thankful for that service he rendered us. Now we must continue to "contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

Conclusion

I am thankful that God has given Dad the strength to approach an eightieth birthday. I count myself fortunate to be his son. As the vapor of our lives begins to fade and eternity's arms move closer, a "numbering of our days" helps us all to measure our lives by the proper standard. Let us be thankful to everyone who has made a difference for good in our lives. And may we focus our lives on "fearing God and keeping his commandments" (Eccl. 12:13). Thanks, Dad, for helping me understand this.

was completed and published in 1560. The second edition appeared in 1562 and worded Matthew 5:9, “Blessed (are) the place makers: for they shalbe (*sic.*) called the children of God.” The printer somehow substituted “place” for “peace.” It occurs to me that many are interested in making a “place” (a position of honor, a fine house in which to live, a recreational area, or a place for retirement), but that would not entitle them to be called “children of God.” The blessing belongs to those who make “peace.”

Judas Bible: King James I appointed that a translation be made “as consonant as can be to the original Hebrew and Greek” and printed without marginal notes, and to be used in all the churches of England. He appointed fifty-four men as translators. The scholars worked in companies at Westminster, Oxford, and Cambridge. Their finished work was published in 1611 as the King James Version. In Matthew 26:36, the name of Judas was used erroneously in place of Jesus in some early editions. Obviously, it was not Judas who came with the disciples to Gethsemane, telling them, “Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.”

Wicked Bible: A 1631 edition of the King James Version was printed by Stationers’ Company in London. A “not” was omitted, making Exodus 20:14 say, “Thou shalt commit adultery.” Archbishop Laud summoned the printers before the court of High Commission. Orders were given to destroy all copies of this Bible, and a heavy fine was imposed. A few copies survived. One is on display in the Bible Museum in Branson, Missouri. It is sometimes called the “Adulterous Bible.”

More Sea Bible: A 1641 edition of the King James Version omits the word “no” in Revelation 21:1. Instead of reading, “and there was no more sea,” it reads, “and there was more sea.” The tiny words “not” and “no,” critical to the meaning of the text, are a comedy of errors in the hands of printers. One wonders if Satan has a hand in their errata. After all, when God told Adam and Eve, “Thou shalt surely die,” it was the serpent who said, “Ye shall not surely die” (Gen. 2:17; 3:4). Playing with the words “not” and “no” completely reverses the message.

Unrighteous Bible: The printers goofed again in 1653. An edition of the King James Version came from the press at Cambridge. The omission of a “not” in 1 Corinthians 6:9 resulted in this wording: “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall inherit the kingdom of God?” As if to further encourage the unrighteous, another blunder appears in Romans 5:13. The word “unrighteousness” becomes “righteousness,” resulting in this sentence: “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of righteousness unto sin.” Perhaps the proof reader was caught up in his own day dreams when examining Romans and 1 Corinthians. At any rate, Cambridge had to push the recall button on that Bible.

Vinegar Bible: Printing errors are not confined to the

text. In 1717, an edition of the King James Version was printed by Clarendon Press at Oxford. The title over Luke 20 reads, “The Parable of the Vinegar,” rather than, “The Parable of the Vineyard.” Maybe the typesetter was an old man with poor eyesight who did his own proofing.

To Remain Bible: In 1805, a Bible printed at Cambridge worded Galatians 4:29 in this manner: “But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit to remain, even so it is now.” How did the words “to remain” get into this verse? They entered through an odd circumstance. There was a question about the comma in the sentence after the word “Spirit.” An editor made the notation for the comma “to remain,” and the typesetter added the words “to remain.” That which was to remain was the error. It remained for two more editions.

Discharge Bible: An 1806 Bible expressed the first part of 1 Timothy 5:21 as “I discharge thee before God.” It should have said, “I charge thee before God.” To “charge,” as the word is used in this passage, is to solemnly testify or to solemnly admonish or adjure. To “discharge” is to release, dismiss, or terminate. Some might prefer to be discharged than to be charged with responsibilities. Here is another case of a printer’s error giving readers a charge — whoops! I mean a discharge.

Pain Bible: My wife sometimes uses an edition of the King James Version printed by Royal Press, Inc., Montreat, North Carolina. The copyright date is 1976 by Crusade Bible Publishers, Inc. I call it the “Pain Bible.” A printer’s error makes 1 Timothy 6:6 to say, “But godliness with contentment is great pain.” It should be “great gain.” Now I will admit that some folks would experience great pain if they had to live in a godly manner and show contentment. However, that is not what Paul is saying to Timothy.

Printers’ Bible: In 1702, an edition of the King James Version came out with a printer’s error that says it all. The psalmist wrote in Psalm 119:161, “Princes have persecuted me without a cause.” The 1702 Bible makes the psalmist complain, “Printers have persecuted me without a cause.” Indeed!

One of the most popular commentaries used by members of churches of Christ is *The People’s New Testament with Explanatory Notes* by B.W. Johnson. It includes the text of the King James Version and parallel to that the text of the English Revised Version of 1881. Johnson’s notes are on the lower half of each page. Copyrighted in 1889 by Christian Publishing Company, it was published for a long time by the Christian Board of Publication in St. Louis, Missouri. A printer’s error in the King James text of 1 Corinthians 11:6 makes the verse say, “. . . But if it be a shame for a woman not to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.” This is another example of a troublesome little

“Captain Kangaroo” and Children

Johnie Edwards

“Captain Kangaroo,” Bob Kershan died on Friday January 23, 2004 at the age of 76. His television show for children began on October 3, 1955 on CBS and ran for thirty-six years. He had some good things to say concerning our children.

1. Children See Too Much Violence.

Mr. Kershan thought that our children see far too much violence on television. When many children watch as much as six hours of TV a day with much of it being violence, it is no wonder so many children turn out the way they do. The wise man said, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Prov. 23:7). Children’s thinking can be influenced by what they see and hear. Are you aware of what you children are seeing on television?

2. First Six Years Of Living. “Captain Kangaroo” was quoted as saying, “Children learn more in the first six years of life than at any other time.” This is scary! Think about it.



Many parents do not seem to realize how true this really is. It is difficult to get many parents to faithfully bring their children to Bible study. You ought to see that your children are in a Bible class very soon after they are born. Now read Proverbs 22:6 and Ephesians 6:4. Why not bring your children to the next Bible class.

3. Influence Of Parents. Bob Kershan said, “Parents are the ultimate role models for children. Every word, movement, and action has an effect. No other person or outside force has a greater influence on a child than the parent.” What a responsibility parents have! No wonder Paul said, “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). This parental influence was seen in the life of young Timothy. Paul penned, “When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy

grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also” (2 Tim. 1:5). You see, Timothy’s family made sure “that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15). Ezekiel recorded, “. . . As is the mother, so is her daughter” (Ezek. 16:44). Remember, as a parent, how you

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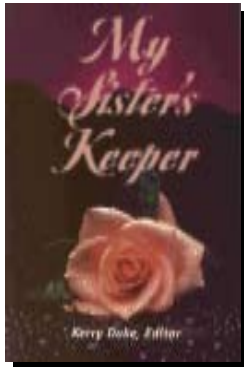
“not” that was inserted by mistake. The present editions of Johnson’s commentary, published by Gospel Light and the Gospel Advocate, have corrected the error.

Printers perform a valuable service in publishing the Bible in numerous translations and with such helps as concordances, dictionaries, maps, etc., but they are not immune to errors. The mistakes of printers do not rule against the inerrancy of the text as revealed by the Holy Spirit. Thank God for his authoritative, infallible, and all-sufficient revelation. And watch out for the errors of those persecuting printers.

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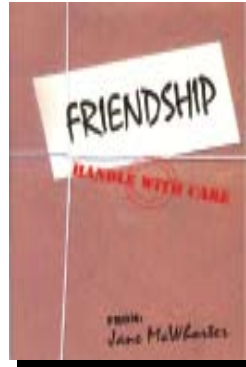
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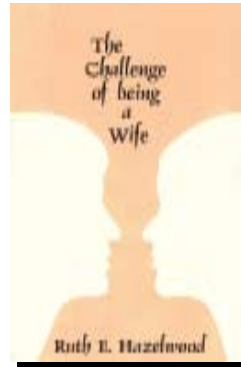
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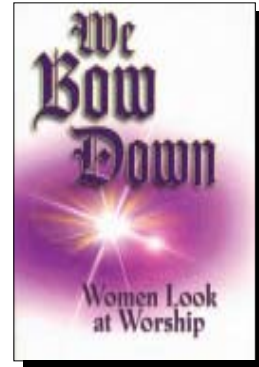
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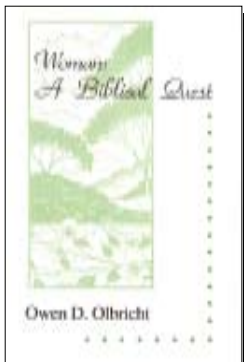


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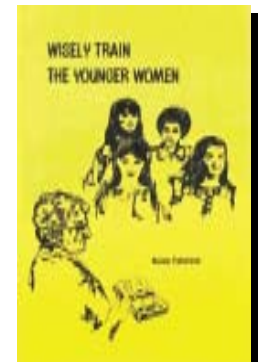
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Gay Marriage and Homosexuality

Tim Haile

With a 4-3 vote, on Wednesday, February 4, 2004, the highest court of the state of Massachusetts clarified an earlier opinion ruling in favor of *homosexual marriage*. This ruling classifies Massachusetts with Hawaii and Vermont in officially granting marriage rights and benefits to homosexual couples. Although Vermont's law differs from the other two in description (*Domestic Partner Law*), the results are the same: homosexual relationships are officially and legally recognized by these states.

With these decisions, the United States has now stepped onto the slippery slope that several other countries have occupied for some time. Belgium, Denmark, and the Netherlands offer full marriage rights to gay and lesbian couples. France, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden offer comparable "legal status" to civil unions. Ontario and British Columbia now accept gay marriages and it appears that the rest of Canada will soon succumb to political pressures to comply. In Canada, it is *federal law* that defines marriage. Since most Canadian officials reject a patchwork solution to the problem, national legalization of gay marriage seems inevitable. With the legalization of same-sex marriage in Canada, lesbian and gay Americans may enter Canada one day and come back as *husband and husband* or *wife and wife* on the next day. It is being said that the Canadian side of Niagara Falls could very well become a "gay Las Vegas," with quickie weddings for lesbian and gay Americans.

Some Things to Consider

1. Homosexuality is sinful. Some Catholics say that homosexuality is not sinful because it is not specifically condemned in any of the four Gospels. They overlook the fact that *fornication* is condemned in two of the Gospels (Matt. 15:19; Mark 7:21), and *fornication* includes all types of illicit sexual relations including *homosexuality*. Furthermore, Paul told the saints at Rome that he was ready to preach the "gospel" to them (Rom. 1:15, 16). This "gospel" includes a list of attitudes and behaviors that will result in one being doomed in spiritual death and separation from God (Rom. 1:18-32). Among the sins discussed in this list is the sin of homosexuality. I cite verses 26 and 27:

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 recompense of their error which was meet.

What is commonly known as "gay" and "lesbian" sexual conduct is defined in this passage as being *sinful* and *unnatural*. Along with those who practice the other sins listed in these verses, those who do such things are "worthy of death" (Rom. 1:32). Of course, any sin, including homosexuality, can be *repented of* and forgiven. For instance, consider 1 Corinthians 6:9-11:

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, and thieves can be "washed, sanctified and justified." However, *not in their sins!* They must quit their sinning in order to have the hope of forgiveness (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 17:30; 2:38). The same is true with the *effeminate* and *homosexuals*. Paul described those who do such things as "unrighteous" and said they "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Though some of the Corinthians had practiced these sins in the past, they had repented of those sins and met the other conditions of God's grace that enabled them to be *justified* (Acts 18:8).

The Greek word for homosexuals (*arsenokoites*) is also found in 1 Timothy 1:10. It means for a man *to lie with mankind as he would womankind*. This definition is actually found in the Old Testament. Leviticus 18:22 says, "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination." The Old Testament imposed the death penalty upon homosexuality. Leviticus 20:13 says, "If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both

of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.” We are not judged by Mosaic law today, but as we saw earlier, the New Testament condemns homosexuality just as plainly as the Old Testament and we will be judged by that law (John 12:48).

Homosexuality was also condemned under the Patriarchal system. Genesis 19:5 speaks of the wicked men of Sodom demanding of Lot that he allow them to have sex with his male visitors (hence, the name “sodomites”). God destroyed the men of Sodom with a devastating destruction. Jude said that God had set Sodom and Gomorrah forth as examples, “suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 7). Judges 19:22 makes reference to sodomites of Gibeah, of Benjamin. Their wicked actions resulted in a tribe of Israel being almost wiped completely out! Homosexuality has *always* been a violation of God’s law, and it has always been severely punished.

2. Marriage is for a man and a woman. Gay marriage is simply not authorized by God! Referring to Genesis 2:24, Jesus said:

And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? (Matt. 19:4, 5).

God made man *male* and *female* and authorized their being yoked together in a marriage relationship. Every Bible passage that addresses marriage, addresses a *male/female* relationship. In order to avoid sexual immorality Paul said for “each man to have his own wife, and for each woman to have her own husband” (1 Cor. 7:2). Homosexual relations are condemned in Scripture. Worldly, secular minds may reason that gay marriages should be accepted. However, no Bible believer can defend such marriages.

Along with being *unauthorized*, gay marriage does not accomplish God’s will for the marriage union. After making man “male and female,” he told them to “be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth” (Gen. 1:27-28). Homosexual unions cannot *multiply*. In fact, the very concept of homosexuality is inherently flawed. If practiced by all humans, the practice of homosexuality would terminate the entire human population in just one generation.

3. The Legalization of Gay Marriage Will Lead to the

Acceptance of More and More Perversions. Once the traditional and biblical standard of what constitutes a “marriage” has been abandoned, the flood gates are thrown open for state recognition of other forms of sexual perversity. For example, the North American Man-Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) has been pressing to be accepted. Will some states next grant marriage rights for pedophiles to “marry” young boys? And what about those who practice bestiality? *Bestiality* involves sexual relations between humans and animals. Leviticus 18:23 specifically condemns the practice. Like homosexuality and lesbianism, bestiality is a type of *fornication*. Will some states soon be granting marriage licenses for one to “marry” his pet goat or dog? Where will this end? Let us review the digression that has already occurred in this country when it comes to the

institution of marriage:

1. Marriage was seen as a divine institution between an eligible man and an eligible woman. Divorce was considered *shameful* and was difficult to obtain. It was acceptable only in cases where one’s mate was sexually immoral. This was in harmony with Matthew 5:32 and 19:9.

2. Divorce standards began to loosen. Divorces could be more easily obtained, and for lesser reasons than just sexual immorality.

3. Marriage licenses were then granted to those who had divorced for causes other than sexual immorality. State laws approved adulterous remarriages (Matt. 19:9).

4. People lost respect for the institution of marriage. Couples began to live together outside of the commitment of the marriage bond.

5. “Domestic partner” legislation was passed in some states, opening the door for legal benefits to be extended to gay partners.

6. Hawaii and Massachusetts have now approved gay marriages. The state of Massachusetts will be granting marriage licenses to homosexuals beginning in May 2004.

What do you think will be next?

Conclusion

The Bible says that “evil men and seducers shall grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Tim. 3:13). Sin and error are restrained only when Bible believers speak out boldly against them to stem the tide (2 Thess.

Are You Part of the International Churches of Christ?

David Dann

Jesus rebuked the religious sectarians of his day saying, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves” (Matt. 23:15). While the Pharisees claimed to be servants of God, were zealous, and worked to make converts, they failed to actually do the will of God.

Similarly, today there are those who claim to serve the Lord, display extraordinary zeal, and work diligently to make converts all the while failing to truly do the will of God. One religious group well suited to such a description is the “International Churches of Christ” or ICOC. The ICOC is present in many major cities in North America as well as in numerous other places around the globe. For example, the Toronto Church of Christ, the Atlanta Church of Christ, and the Los Angeles Church of Christ are affiliated with the International Churches of Christ. Because the ICOC uses the name “church of Christ,” those familiar with that group have often asked me, “Are you part of the International Churches of Christ?” The answer is, of course, “no,” but the question is worthy of deeper consideration. Who are the ICOC? What do they believe and teach? How do they differ from the church as revealed in the New Testament? These

and other important questions need to be answered.

History of the International Churches of Christ

Many churches of Christ departed from the New Testament pattern of the work of the local church in the division over institutionalism and social gospel practices in the 1950s and 1960s. Many decided that, rather than look to the Scriptures for authority to act in all matters pertaining to the organization and work of the local church (2 Tim. 3:16-17), they would endeavor to take on projects bigger and, supposedly, better than those revealed in the Bible. It was not long before those who rejected the New Testament pattern in favor of innovation began pursuing newer and seemingly brighter humanly devised plans for the church.

In the early 1970s the Crossroads church of Christ in Gainesville, Florida presented itself among institutional churches as being on the cutting edge of innovative brilliance in carrying out schemes to reach the lost with the gospel. Under the direction of a preacher named Chuck Lucas, the Crossroads congregation implemented an aggressive approach to evangelism targeted at recruiting converts on college and university campuses. These young converts would be assigned a “prayer partner,” that is, a more experienced brother or sister in the congregation who would have the responsibility of providing the convert with personal spiritual guidance. The Crossroads church soon became known for making large numbers of converts and others sought to follow their approach to evangelism.

One of Lucas’ most promising converts was a young man named Kip McKean. Before long the student surpassed his teacher. In 1979 McKean and some others started the Boston Church of Christ in Boston, Massachusetts. By aggressively employing and expanding upon the methods he learned from Chuck Lucas, Kip McKean took oversight of a movement that by 2003 had grown to 185,000 members in 430 churches located in 170 countries around the world. It began as the “Boston Movement,” then came to be known

2:7). We cannot wait any longer. Let us speak out against these perversions. And let us speak out against the foolish notion that human legislators and courts have the role of defining and “ratifying” marriage. God is not going to allow civil law to “ratify” gay marriages in Massachusetts or anywhere else! Rome once thought that they could defy God’s moral standards, but Rome was “thrown down with violence, and shall not be anymore” (Rev. 18:21). Will that also be this nation’s fate?

as the “Discipling Movement” before finally adopting the name, “International Churches of Christ.”

What is the ICOC Known For?

1. A human founder and head. There is no doubt that the body known as the “International Churches of Christ” did not exist before Kip McKean began his work. It is just as clear that for nearly twenty-three years he served as the head of the movement, even wearing the titles of “World Missions Evangelist” and “Leader of the World Sector Leaders.” On the other hand, the Bible teaches that Christ is the founder of the church that truly belongs to him (Matt. 16:18), and he is the head of it (Col. 1:18).

2. A man-made religious hierarchy. With one leader at the top, the ICOC has functioned through an elaborate hierarchy system involving a pyramid of World Sector Leaders and Geographic Sector Leaders. The ICOC hierarchy resembles that of a multi-level marketing corporation. The Scriptures give no hint of a church-wide hierarchy or sector leaders of any kind. The formal organization of the church presented in the Bible is limited to that which should ideally be present in each local congregation, consisting of saints, including elders (bishops), and deacons (Phil. 1:1). There are no officers in the universal church, nor is there any organization other than the local church. Each local church in the New Testament was autonomous, that is, each handled its own affairs rather than being directed by another church or organization.

3. A heavy emphasis on numerical growth. The ICOC has placed its members under constant pressure to meet predetermined goals in making new converts. Growth in numbers is what counts. Lost in all of this is the fact that the gospel is God’s power to convert souls to Christ (Rom. 1:16), and it is God who gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:7). The Scriptures charge preachers with the responsibility of preaching the pure gospel (2 Tim. 4:2-4), rather than the responsibility of baptizing a certain large number of people.

4. Discipling partners. Much like the Crossroads “prayer partners,” the ICOC assigns a “discipler” to provide direction for each convert. Disciplers have extensive authority over those they “disciple.” Nearly everyone in the organization submits to a discipling partner. No such relationship is found in Scripture. In fact, Christians are taught to “submit to one another” (Eph. 5:21) and “edify one another” (1 Thess. 5:11). We are to be disciples of Christ, rather than submit to man-made rules and regulations (Col. 2:20-23).

Recent Developments in the ICOC

1. Kip McKean resigns. On November 6, 2002 Kip McKean resigned his positions as World Missions Evangelist and leader of the world sector leaders of the

International Churches of Christ. In his letter of resignation McKean offers a general apology to members of the ICOC for his sins, which are presented in only general terms as arrogance, anger, and problems within his own family. McKean’s resignation seemingly brings an end to his twenty-three years of leadership over the ICOC, though he will remain on the ministerial staff of the Los Angeles Church of Christ. Following his resignation, the world sector leaders of the ICOC held a unity conference in order to devise a new form of church government. Since the ICOC is geographically broken down into nine world sectors, it was decided that the leaders of each of the world sectors would work together in order to oversee the operations of the entire body.

2. Many ICOC leaders call for reform. On February 2, 2003 Henry Kriete, leader in the London Church of Christ, published a 39-page open letter to the elders, teachers, and evangelists throughout the ICOC. In the letter Kriete calls upon the other leaders in the movement to either tone down, or give up many of the unscriptural practices of the group, including the use of a religious hierarchy, an unhealthy focus on numerical growth, and the use of discipling partners. Many other ICOC leaders soon followed suit in joining Kriete’s call for reform within the International Churches of Christ. As a result, the ICOC is currently in the midst of a transitional period of time during which its leaders are seeking to improve the organization.

What Should the ICOC Do Now?

The aims at reform being made within the International Churches of Christ are reminiscent of the sixteenth century call for reform within the Roman Catholic Church that led to the Protestant Reformation. The Catholic Church was reformed and restructured a thousand times over resulting in the formation of numerous Protestant denominations. Through reformation, one erroneous organization managed to multiply into thousands of erroneous organizations. The reformers of the ICOC should not make the same mistake. The following points briefly summarize what ought to be done by the ICOC at this point in time:

1. Get back to the Bible. The International Churches of Christ have spent twenty-three years listening to the direction of Kip McKean. It is now time to listen to Jesus and his apostles. In the Spirit-revealed Scriptures God has given man “all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:3). For many years ICOC leaders have said, “Where the Bible speaks we are silent; where the Bible is silent, we speak.” It is time to abandon that erroneous slogan and instead, “speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11). The damage done through world missions evangelists, world sector leaders, discipling partners, and many other ICOC practices would not have occurred had the “pattern of sound words” (2 Tim. 1:13) been followed.

They Couldn't Restrain Themselves Even Though Watched and Warned

Jay Horsley

School officials were shocked at the lack of restraint shown by their students (see newspaper article on p. 21). Even though the students had been clearly warned in advance that certain behaviors would not be tolerated, many did it anyway. So a school dance in Oregon had to be shut down due to persistent “grinding” — an extremely lascivious type of dancing.

“Up Against The Other Person”

One boy at the dance is quoted as saying that he didn't see anything unusual, much less wrong, with dancing “up against the other person” — his somewhat limited description of the sexual nature of the dancing. This young man downplays the sexual nature of such dancing just as many adults (and sadly some Christians) do.

Pair Dancing Has Always Been Sexual

Men and women dancing together is, always was, and always will be sexually charged — even if some of the participants are too naïve to realize it or refuse to admit

it. The Scriptures make this connection in the accounts of Israel worshipping the golden calf and committing fornication (Exod. 32:19; 1 Cor. 10:7) and when a young woman's dancing excited the lust that cost John the Baptist his head (Matt. 14:6-8).

Historians agree:

Dancing is an art form to express lovemaking. For this reason steps and positions are designed to bring into physical contact those parts of a man and woman which are most sexually sensitive. Movements are designed to be visually simulating sexually (Curt Sachs, *World History of Dance*).

In folk dance the pair dance is often of erotic intention . . . Because of its physical appeal, dance lends itself to erotic purposes and has been practiced to these ends by both sexes” (“Dance,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*).

So does popular culture:

2. Give up the hierarchy. No hierarchy structure for the church is found in the New Testament. Therefore, there should not be such a hierarchy now. While we find “churches of Christ” (Rom. 16:16) in the Bible, we do not find “pillar churches,” “head churches,” or one church directing the affairs of another church. Let the local elders oversee the flock that is among them (1 Pet. 5:1-4).

3. Cease to exist as a body. There is no authority in the Bible for a religious body known as the International Churches of Christ to exist. The members of the ICOC ought to simply live as Christians and worship and work together in local congregations. The ICOC is a recently formed denomination. Jesus did not die to purchase a denomination, nor does he desire ownership of one (Acts

20:28; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23).

Conclusion

Just because a church calls itself a “church of Christ” does not mean that it truly is of Christ. As Jesus said, “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). It is meaningless to wear the name of Christ while refusing to do his will. Let us learn from the failures of the ICOC movement.

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Dancing together to any rhythm or beat also puts the spouses in harmony with their own and each other's bodies in a way that other forms of exercise, intended to promote physical fitness, do not. And it is this connection that makes dancing so beneficial to couples who want to remain lifelong lovers ("12 Genuine Aphrodisiacs [No Kidding]," *Redbook* [July 1990], 103).

Now All Restraint Is Gone

In our cultural past the sexual elements of dancing were more subtle, refined and hidden. Dancers were usually restrained by society, propriety, shame and the very fact that they were in public. This led some to naively deny that dancing with the opposite sex was even sexual at all. *But today all such subtly and restraint are often completely gone.*

Consider the newspaper account again: The fact that others are watching did not matter. The fact that chaperons and school officials were watching did not matter. The fact that they were warned in advance did not matter. The fact that they were warned repeatedly did not matter. Only belatedly did someone have the sense to call the whole dance off. Would that no other were never allowed to begin. Why would we encourage or allow anyone whom we have influence on or authority over to ever go to one?

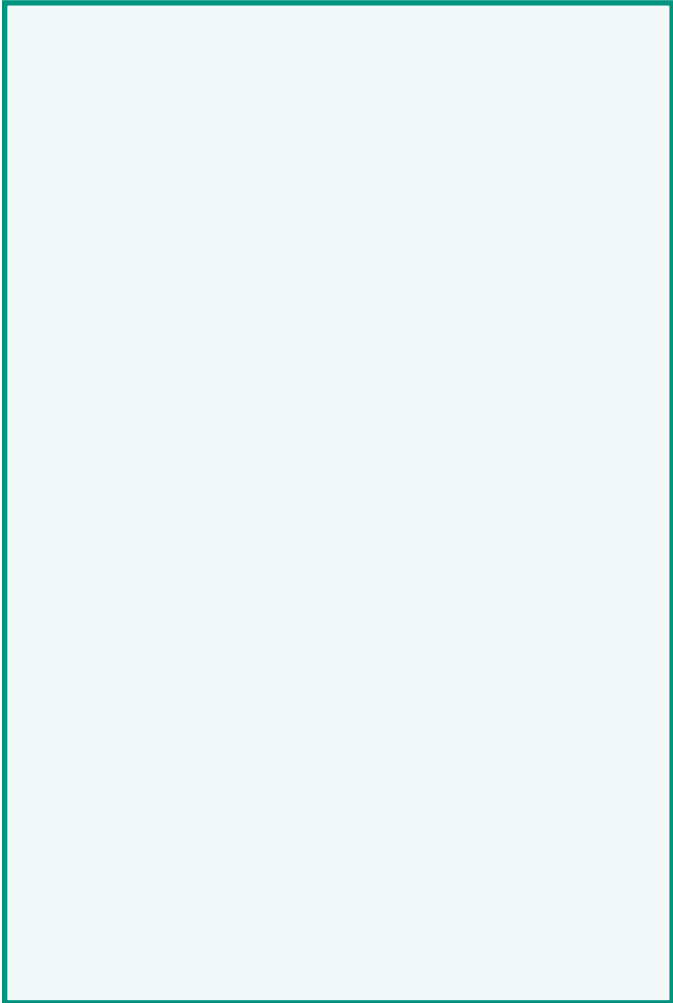
The student interviewed quickly dismissed the idea that adults should even be concerned: "It's just the way people dance these days." As the prophet lamented, "They certainly were not ashamed, And they did not know how to blush" (Jer 8:12).

Sex With Your Clothes On

A school administrator — after witnessing first-hand what many do not wish to see — described such dancing as "sex with your clothes on." If any allow their children to dance in this sensual way (and if our youth find such sensual conduct normal and acceptable and do it even when being watched) what will they do when alone and not supervised? If they "have sex with their clothes on" and parents either watch approvingly or ignore it, what will they do when they can't be seen?

Be Separate And I Will Welcome You

Let us live better and teach our children better than this. "For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,' says the Lord. 'And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,' Says the Lord Almighty. Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 6:16-7:1)

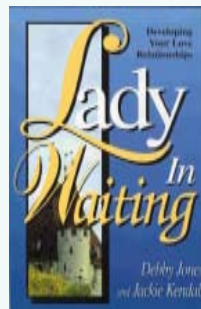


LADY IN WAITING

Developing Your Love Relationships

by Debby Jones & Jackie Kendall

Too often in today's literature reliance on self is emphasized rather than on our Savior. *Lady In Waiting* goes beyond pop psychology and clings to the steadfast foundation of God's word. This book integrates biblical truth with an honest evaluation of the struggles facing today's single woman. This book is not about finding the right man, but being the right woman. It focuses on ten qualities of a godly woman that are found in the Book of Ruth.



18487 PB . . . \$10.99

Incident in Indy

Aaron Erhardt

While conducting a gospel meeting in Indianapolis, I was approached by a visitor who had a question about baptism. She had been baptized in a nearby denomination, but was unsure if it was scriptural. During our conversation she stated that the denomination she was affiliated with was called Eastern Star Church. It is one of the largest churches in the area and growing rapidly. I told her that I would be glad to meet with the pastor of Eastern Star to inquire about his view of baptism.

The next morning the local preacher, Ron Daly, and I went to visit Eastern Star Church. I asked to meet with the pastor but was told that I had to make an appointment. I then asked if they had any written material that stated what they believed about obtaining salvation. The receptionist said the only written material they had was about the various activities offered by the church, not salvation. After leaving the premises Ron and I went to a library and logged on to the Eastern Star website. To my surprise there was not one word about how to be saved. The site was filled with information about upcoming events but void of all doctrinal matters. Determined to get an answer, I called the church and said it was extremely important that I know if they taught that baptism was necessary for salvation. The receptionist refused to give me an answer. Finally, I was put in contact with an associate pastor. He would not answer “yes” or “no,” but stated that “baptism is an act to be obeyed.” I knew what he meant by that rehearsed line, but insisted he be more specific. After much hesitation and sophistry he finally said that baptism does not save us. He concluded “man is justified by faith alone.”

Isn't it amazing how much trouble we encountered before finding an answer to a simple question about baptism? Eastern Star Church is quick to inform the public about its fun and games, but slow to answer important doctrinal

questions. (This is typical of modern-day denominationalism! When it comes to taking a stand on controversial issues, denominational churches display the backbone of a worm! Their main objective is growth, not truth.) The chart reveals the differences between the New Testament and our experience with Eastern Star.
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THE MYSTERIOUS NUMBERS OF THE HEBREW KINGS

by Edwin R. Thiele

The author has addressed the issue of the synchronization of the reigns of the Hebrew kings. He has produced a chronology that is consistent with the scriptural records and the records of other nations of the ancient world.

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“Enter Ye In By the Narrow Gate . . .”

Jim McDonald

Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it (Matt. 7:13f).

This passage is a reminder from Jesus that there are only two positions one may occupy concerning God: he is either for or against him. There is no middle ground. Jesus said, “He that is not for me is against me. He that gathereth not with me scattereth” (Matt. 12:30). It has ever been so. Moses said, “I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse: therefore choose life, that thou mayest live” (Deut. 30:19). Jeremiah said, “Stand in the ways and see and ask for the old paths wherein is the good way and walk therein and ye shall find rest unto your souls. But they said, we will not walk therein” (Jer. 6:16).

Notice the contrast Jesus gave between two choices. One is a broad way which most travel, but which way leads to death. This is the path of the immoral, the dishonest, the selfish, and uncaring. The other path is narrow; straitened (difficult); it leads to everlasting life, yet just a few find it. Why do just a few find the narrow way?

The Narrow Way Requires Decision

One can walk the broad way and live a life of indecisions, but walking in the narrow way demands that choices be made. He who chooses the narrow gate chooses the word that will be the deciding standard in doctrine, practice, and morals. The disciples recognized this. When Jesus asked, “Will ye go away also?” Peter responded, “Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:68). When one chooses the word as his standard, he rejects all else. “To the law and to the testimony” (Isa. 8:20).

The Narrow Way Requires Sacrifice of Self Interest

Jesus said, “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself” (Matt. 16:24). Paul said, “I have been cru-

cified with Christ and it is no longer I that live but Christ that liveth in me” (Gal. 2:20). How hard it is to crucify our self interest and purposes. How hard it is to say, “Not my will but thine be done”! How hard to fully say, “Lord what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 22:10). We may feel our intent is to do just his will but when we face the crucial test, (such as with the rich young ruler), like him, we may sadly turn away.

We Must Be Willing to Separate From Family or Dearest of Friends

Many examples from the past illustrate how some are willing to make such sacrifice while others refuse to do so. Jesus was informed his mother and brethren stood without. He said: “Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? . . . Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother” (Matt. 12:48, 50). Jesus tells us that those who lose family for his sake will receive one hundred fold more family now (Mark 10:29). This is a gracious promise but that does not diminish the anguish and sorrow we must feel when we chose Christ over family or friend.

We must Be Willing to Walk by Faith

Choosing the narrow gate requires a walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7). Great and bountiful are the promises of God but we will not experience many of his promises in this life. We will never, in this life, see him resurrect the dead, see his face, nor share eternal youth and eternal life. We must accept all these promises upon our faith in him and our trust in his word. What we see in our present world denies all these future promises.

The decision is ours. Two ways open to us and invite us to pursue them. Which gate will we choose?

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“Family” continued from front page

in homes apart from their biological fathers.

Between 1960 and 2000, cases of co-habitation (living together without being married) rose from 500,000 to 5.5 million.

Today, more than half of all marriages are preceded by the couple co-habiting.

Among young people in their 20s and 30s, cohabitation is replacing marriage as the standard mode of family life.

Of those who just live together, only about 1/6 remain together at least 3 years.

Of those who just live together, only about 1/10 remain together at least 5 years.

Contrary to theory and popular wisdom, those who live together before marriage are twice as likely to split up as are married couples.

Despite a recent small decline, 25% of all pregnancies end in the murder (abortion) of the baby in the womb.

Now, do these statistics — and the misery index they represent — suggest that leaving God’s pattern has resulted in happier, healthier lives and families? It would seem difficult to make that argument with a straight face.

Many who continue to press for more radical changes in social structure and family life claim we must progress with the times and change as norms change. But is this really “progress”?

C.S. Lewis once wrote, “We all want to progress. But progress means getting nearer the place you want to be. And, if you have taken a wrong turn, then to simply go forward does not get you any nearer. If you are on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-face and walking back to the right road — and in that case the person who goes back soonest is the most progressive.”

What Lewis really describes is the biblical admonition to “repent.”

For those of us who believe the Scriptures are inspired and profitable to righteous living (2 Tim. 3:16-17), faith in God’s will impels us to follow his commands (Heb. 11).

But the statistics revealed above demonstrate even to those without faith in God’s word that the non-biblical model for family life is not working.

The undermining of the biblical concept of marriage and family also is resulting in more educational failure, more suicide, crime, depression, and unstable home life (unstable

homes breed more unstable homes).

Where did all this start? That may be debated. While the growth of women in the workplace took more and more mothers from the home and left rearing of children to public institutions, the greatest changes appear to have begun with the radical shift in personal, cultural, and moral values in the 1960s.

That decade saw a rise in radical individualism, unrestricted liberty, and personal choice. The Bible would merely describe this as selfishness and as one of the components of the “works of the flesh” (Gal. 5:19-21). Feminism is largely just a specific manifestation of this movement.

Since biblical teaching on the family calls for male and female responsibility — not merely liberty to do as one pleases — proponents of unfettered sexual freedom have launched an unparalleled assault on divinely ordained family values.

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“Fallible Men” continued from page 2

fallible; nevertheless, to them he has committed the care of the earth and its works. Man’s responsibility to care for God’s earth should not be ignored. Abusing the environment which God has committed to man’s care leaves subsequent generations deprived of the resources they will need for their own preservation.

Administration of Civil Justice

God has entrusted to the hands of men the administration of justice, knowing that mankind is fallible and subject to corruption and sin. From the very beginning, this has been so. In giving his instruction about the punishment of the murderer, God said, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, *by man* shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man” (Gen. 9:6).

The institution of government was one of God’s gifts to men and is the Lord’s tool for administering justice. After instructing men not to take personal vengeance, because vengeance belongs to the Lord, Paul wrote that civil government is God’s instrument for administering vengeance to punish the wicked. Read the context,

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Let

every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour (Rom. 12:18-13:7).

The entire judicial system has been established by God for man's good. Its purpose is to punish evil doers. And, one should take note, God's instrument for punishing wickedness is distinguished from exercising personal revenge. When one turns over to the government the punishment of wickedness, he is not taking personal vengeance. He is using that which God has set in place to punish the wicked.

When God entrusted to the hands of men the administration of justice, he was fully cognizant that mankind is fallible, subject to sin and corruption. Nevertheless, he entrusted to mankind the administration of justice. One must understand that mankind will never be able to administer perfect justice; that will be done by God in the final judgment. There will be occasions where guilty men are found "not guilty" and when innocent men will be declared "guilty." And, on some occasions, the punishment given to them may include capital punishment. Yet, knowing the fallibility of men, nevertheless the Lord declared, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, *by man* shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man" (Gen. 9:6).

It is God's will that fallible men exercise this authority over other men. There have been mistakes made and there will be even more mistakes made in the future, despite man's best attempts to administer justice equitably. However, one dare not throw out the system of justice because it occasionally errs. If that were the case, one would have to throw out, not only capital punishment, but also the entire prison system, for there are men in prison who have been declared guilty but are innocent. Some are serving life sentences and others lesser terms. Such is what happened to Joseph who was placed in an Egyptian prison although he was innocent. Nevertheless, God did not will the overthrow of the Egyptian justice system. God did not will the overthrow of capital punishment because it put to death his sinless Son, for Romans 13 was written after that happened.

The most tragic mistake that could be made in reaction

to the recognition that fallible men make mistakes is to overthrow the judicial system. Because some are wrongly incarcerated, we abolish the prison system; because some are wrongly put to death, we abolish capital punishment. Because some are awarded judgments that are wrong, we eliminate that portion of the judicial system that allows one person to seek justice from those who have taken advantage of him. This would be the greatest mistake humans could make. Rather, we have to accept that humans are fallible and do the best we can to administer justice in the face of our fallibility. The God who set up the system knew our limitations when he instituted it.

Administration of Church Discipline

God has also entrusted to mankind the responsibility of administering church discipline, knowing that men are fallible and subject to corruption. Nevertheless, God has charged the church with the responsibility of withdrawing its fellowship from impenitent and rebellious sinners, which action itself is called a "punishment" (2 Cor. 2:6). Paul instructed the church at Corinth to exercise discipline against an immoral brother. He wrote,

It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us (1 Cor. 5:1-7).

Other passages of Scripture also commit to mankind's care church discipline (Matt. 18:15-17; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14-15; 2 John 9-11; etc.).

The Lord knew that fallible men would be administering church discipline and even addressed a case in which a man wanting pre-eminence led the church in withdrawing fellowship from godly men. John tells about Diotrephes saying, "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God" (3 John 9-11). Despite

the fact that there are wicked men who sin and fallible men who err in the administration of church discipline, God's will is that the church administer church discipline.

God also wills that fallible men rebuke, expose, and withdraw their fellowship from those who are false teachers. Paul wrote,

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

If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmising, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself (1 Tim. 6:3-5).

God's people have no choice but to administer church discipline toward those who are teaching heresy. Those men who step forward to do what God has charged his saints with doing are not and never will be perfect. Some will express things in terms that grate against the nerves of more sensitive brethren. Some will be sarcastic when others think they should be gentle. There even may be some occasions when innocent brethren are charged with "false teachings." This has been done in the past and will occur in the future because fallible men are administering God's discipline.

Writing in *Christianity Today* about the need for heresy trials in mainstream Protestant denominations, Chris Armstrong said,

And this is the nub. As a teacher of mine once put it, if Jack the Ripper is abroad in your town, killing people and mutilating thier bodies, the city's leaders must track him down and render him unable to inflict further harm. And, if as the historic church has always — until today — agreed, a person insists on teaching beliefs that threaten the eternal lives of all who hear them, that person must be disciplined and his harmful teaching rendered null within the church.

It is easy for a comfortable "Christian" society to demonize the mechanisms the historic church has developed to deal with heresy. But to wink at heresy is to suck the life from faith.

Heresies are worth fighting against, through the same kinds of mechanisms that the church has always used. Yes, these mechanisms are tainted by politics and pride. But somehow still, we must believe, they have been used and will

continue to be used by the Holy Spirit for the health of his church. In Appleby's words, "What we hold devoutly to be true, what we identify as the very core of our Christian identity, has come to us through the imperfect channel of human history" ("Tangling With Wolves," *Christianity Today* [August 2003] 51).

There will always be those who want to nitpick to pieces those godly men who call our attention to the false doctrines being taught among us — including such doctrines as unity-in-diversity (whether justified by an incorrect explanation of Romans 14, continuous cleansing, imputed righteousness or some other doctrine), God's law of marriage does not apply to non-Christians, hell is not eternal punishment, the days of creation are long eons of time, Satan did not appear to Eve in a serpent's body, etc. Every preacher who addresses these issues is fallible, makes judgment decisions others will disagree with, and sometimes errs. But, just as we do not think that the judicial system should be destroyed because some judges and jurors err or use poor judgment, we also should recognize that God has placed fallible men in charge of doing the job of exposing heresies that are taught, whether among us or among denominational folks.

The most tragic mistake would be for men to react to human foibles and fallibility by saying that churches ought not to withdraw from impenitent, rebellious men. How tragic would be the situation if brethren reached the conclusion that the work of exposing heresies and heretics was so unpleasant to them that they treated with contempt those men who study their Bibles in order to call our attention to such apostasies and warn us about the men who are spreading them. God knew the fallibility of men when he committed to men's charge these respective works.

Conclusion

Recognizing that fallible men administer God's work is not to be understood as a defense of sin. Wherever errors have been made (whether in the judicial or spiritual arena), they need to be corrected. But, let us not make the mistake of ceasing to do the work God has committed to mankind's charge because of the fallibility of humanity.

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All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.

First Annual Truth Magazine Lectures

The Renewing of Your Mind

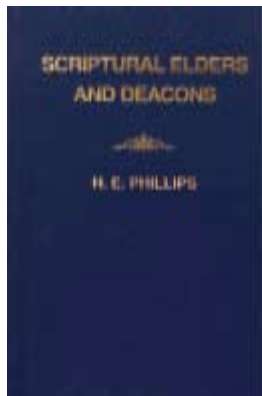
July 12-15, 2004

Bowling Green, Kentucky — Convention Center

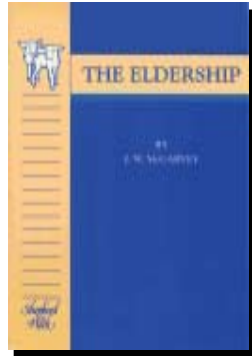
“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:1-

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
8:00 - 8:50	Scientific Fore-knowledge and the Bible (Larry Dickens)	House Churches (Harry Osborne)	Testifying in the Worship Assembly (Bobby Graham)
9:00 - 9:50	Renewed View of Morals (Aaron Erhardt)	Renewed View of the Church (Larry Hafley)	Renewed View of Jesus (John Isaac Edwards)
10:00 - 10:50	Renewed View of Sexual Morals (Lewis Willis)	Renewed View of Unity (Russell Dunaway)	Renewed View of Biblical Interpretation (Marc Gibson)
11:00 - 11:50	Renewed View of Marriage (Brett Hogland)	Renewed Commitment to Balanced Preaching (Ron Halbrook)	Renewed View of Worship (Jason Longstreth)
Lunch Break			
Ladies Classes			
1:30 - 2:20	Material available for Children's Classes (Vernita Goodall)	A Biblical View of Femininity (Anne Stevens)	Issues for a Preacher/Elder's Wife (Bobby Adams)
Auditorium			
1:30 - 2:20	Evangelism in Canada (Brian Sullivan)	Evangelism in India (John Humphries)	Evangelism in Nigeria (Karl Diestelkamp)
2:30 - 4:00	Open Forum: No Assigned Topic	Open Forum: Role of Government in Divorce/Remarriage (Mental Divorce): Ron Halbrook, Harry Osborne, Donnie Rader, Greg Gwin	Open Forum: Sunday Evening Communion (Al Diestelkamp, Dick Blackford)
Singing: 7:00 - 7:30 Led by R.J. Stevens			
"The Renewing of Your Mind" (Rom. 12:1-2) (Mike Willis)	Renewed View of Parental Discipline (Weldon Warnock)	Renewed Commitment to Evangelism (Connie W. Adams). This service will begin at 8:45 p.m.	Recommitment to Biblical Authority (Bill Cavender)

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