

Volume L
Number 6
March 16, 2006

Magazine

New Hymnal in Progress

For years, Truth Bookstore has supplied churches with quality hymnals. In order to continue that service into the next generation, Guardian of Truth Foundation has agreed to publish a hymnal produced by Sumphonia, a nonprofit foundation whose purpose is to write, compile, and distribute materials for worship, especially those materials related to congregational hymn worship. You might be familiar with the Sumphonia recordings, *In the Midst of the Assembly* and *As Living Stones* (see their website: www.sumphonia.com). These recordings contain worshipful hymns written by Christians and produced by the Sumphonia Board of Directors. This Sumphonia Board of Directors will serve with Steve Wolfgang, of the GOT Board, as senior editors for the new hymnal.

One unique aspect of this hymnal is that it will give everyone, including you, an opportunity to provide input as to which songs will be included. You will have the opportunity to complete a song survey that will soon be posted on the Truth Magazine website. The survey includes approximately 2000 titles from current and older hymnals published by brethren. It will ask you to register your name and submit other information to allow the editorial board to interpret survey results effectively. Watch for the announcement of this survey soon in a future issue of *Truth Magazine*.

Over the next few months, we will be posting the progress of this project. Because churches change songbooks so infrequently, it is good to know beforehand that a new hymnal will be available. Look for the hymnal to be in print by late next year, or early 2008.



Vol. L March 16, 2006 No. 6

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Now Who Is Being Intolerant?

Mike Willis

A federal judge ruled on November 30, 2005 that those who lead prayer in the Indiana General Assembly will not be allowed to offer their prayers “in the name of Jesus” because that constitutes government establishment of a particular religion. One thing this proves is that America does have a problem of runaway judges who need to be reigned in. That is a political issue which we will leave for those involved to correct.

What is more interesting to me is the evolution of religious tolerance. Tolerance begins with the idea that there is no one divinely revealed truth. Because no one has a totally objective understanding of knowledge, then all “truth” statements are equally subjective. The truth statement of the Buddhist is equally as valid as is the truth statement of the Christian and vice versa. Since there are no absolute truths, every statement that affirms objective religious and ethical truth is false.

Given that there are no absolute truths, all subjective statements of religious belief are equally valid (or invalid) and should be treated equally in the public square. In the earliest presentations of this point of view, when Christianity (in its broadest sense) controlled the public square in America, those espousing another point of view wanted the right to express their religious faith. They asked for tolerance of Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Jainism, and the various cults and sects in our society. Those who believed in Jesus but had accepted religious pluralism supported their call for tolerance because they had lost confidence that there is only one revealed religious truth.

Through the years, these “Christian” religious leaders taught our generation the virtues of religious tolerance and pluralism. The ACLU became the legal arm for removing every vestige of the Christian religion from our public institutions. Through their lawsuits against schools and government institutions, the ACLU has successfully secularized the public square. All of this has been done in the name of the separation of church and state.

But, what kind of government controlled religion does America have in the case that the state begins to sponsor atheism, even though it should present itself under a different name? Suppose we had state sponsored teachers of religion who taught in their college courses that the Bible is not a revelation from God, that it is filled with contradictions and errors, that it is historically inaccurate and full of myth and legend. Suppose we

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Troubled Over Addiction

Connie W. Adams

Addiction is defined as “a compulsive use of habit forming drugs” (Webster). It may take the form of alcohol, or the ingestion of pills, the injection of a substance into the body, the sniffing of a substance, all of which have a mind altering effect. There are three basic classifications of drugs: stimulants, depressants, and hallucinogens. These effects may be induced by illegal drugs, and sometimes by legal (prescription drugs). Many lives have been shattered, hearts broken, homes wrecked, children abused (as well as spouses), and great costs have been inflicted on society at large because of addictions.

I am not an addict. I have never been an addict. Then, you may ask, “What qualifies you to discuss this problem?” One does not have to wreck his own car before he can open a body shop. A physician does not have to become pregnant in order to treat those who are. The Bible addresses this subject in language which all can understand and apply. I will have to leave it to professionals as to the psychology of this problem. We are not talking here about the proper use of medicines prescribed by doctors for the treatment of illnesses, though some have become “hooked” on prescription drugs. Our concern here is with what the word of God teaches on the subject.

The Bible Condemns Drug Abuse

1. The Bible condemns the abuse of mind and body. Paul said, “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor. 9:27). It is the duty of every Christian to keep his body under the control of his spirit and if he does not, then he will be rejected by the Lord.

Paul also said, “All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any” (1 Cor. 6:12). The addict is brought under the power of something other than the will of God. He loses control and the substance takes over. For every “high” there is a low until it takes more and more of the substance to achieve that “high.” Meanwhile, the lows get lower. In that same chapter Paul taught that our bodies belong to God. In verse 19 he said, “Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit” and “ye are not your own.” That pretty well clinches the folly of the argument that “my body is my own and I can do with it what I please.” Then he added, “For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (vv. 19-20). Not only does addiction affect your body and mind, it has horrendous results in the lives of other people, including unborn children.

2. Substance abuse is against the law. Romans 13:1-7 teaches that we are to obey civil rulers. They are servants of God to administer justice and

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provide for the well-being of their subjects. Their function is to punish law-breakers and offer peace and security to those who are law abiding (1 Pet. 2:13-14). The law stipulates the level at which one is intoxicated. Other drugs, including marijuana, are against the law (and that includes growing it, smoking it, or selling it). Stronger drugs are also forbidden by law. In Romans 13:13 Paul said, "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness." The addict may need treatment but he got that way by breaking the law.

3. Drug abuse is a "work of the flesh." In Galatians 5:19-21, Paul gave a list of sins which are "manifest" or clearly understood to be wrong. He said those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. In that list is "sorcery" ("witchcraft," KJV) in verse 20. This practice is also condemned in Revelation 21:8 under threat of hell fire. The term here, from *pharmakia* suggests the use of drugs to induce spells or enchantments. Under the law of Moses sorcery was a capital offense. Under the New Testament it promises eternal punishment for those who do not repent.

4. Addiction keeps bad company. "Evil companions corrupt good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33). While that was said in a context opposing false teachers who influence, the principle is found throughout the Bible. "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall. For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence. But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble" (Prov. 4:14-19).

What are the companions of addiction? Death by drunk drivers. Murder. Suicide. Theft. Bribery. Prostitution. Lying and deception. Shall we add more?

The addict cannot keep a job. He lies to himself. He loses his mental edge. He is not dependable. When sober, he will promise you the moon, but he is short on delivery. His habit brings him and his family to poverty. While he may think his addiction affects only himself, ask his mother and father, his wife, children, and grandchildren if their lives have in any way been affected by this addiction. Ask the taxpayer who pays higher taxes to cover the social programs to provide for them and to attempt to rehabilitate them.

The Bible and the Causes of Addiction

1. We live in a culture which thinks everything can be solved by taking a pill. We need pills to go to sleep, to wake us up, to slow us down, to speed us up. We are led to believe there is a pill for every pain. When you decide you "just can't take it any more" remember Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). He was a prisoner when he wrote that.

2. We look for easy and quick solutions. Paul suffered a "thorn in the flesh" for which he besought the Lord three times. The Lord's answer was consistent: "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. 12:10). James said, "The trying of your faith worketh patience" (Jas. 1:3). There are just times when we need to toughen our resolve (and our hide along with it).

3. The pressures of the world about us are intense. Many are tempted to drop out, shoot up, get high and don't worry about tomorrow! That is why it is urgent that we seek the companionship of those who are wise and winners, not fools and losers. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Prov. 13:20). Music has a heavy influence, often in the wrong direction, as does much of the entertainment world. Drug use is glamorized in many cases, concealing the reality of the pit of horror into which the addict falls.

4. A permissive society contributes to the problem of addiction. Disfunctional families leave children without training, guidance, and discipline. Absentee parents have been replaced by day care, baby sitters, TV, and videos. Teenagers are often home unsupervised for hours. Many of them first begin to drink in their own homes. Medicine cabinets are full of over the counter and prescription drugs. Some rock music encourages it. Friends who have tried it tell them how great a feeling it gives you. Many parents have tried to compensate for their absence by giving their children "things." Things are poor substitutes for parents who are available and ready to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). There is a crying need for mothers to teach their children how to please God (Tit. 2:4-5).

5. Dissatisfaction with the "establishment" has contributed to drug abuse. The 1960s with the campus antiwar protests bred a whole culture of music and drugs which saturated a nation. Now, some of those who were part of that culture have become the establishment. Many young people left home, went to college, got caught up in the protests, disdained the government, spit in the face of convention, and objected to whatever their parents were for. The influence of rock music was profound in shaping the mind set of the young people of the nation. Whatever the establishment approved, the new culture rejected. That is one reason our nation has lost many of its values, including any semblance of pride in personal appearance. Many of our people look like a nation of rag pickers, bums, and hobos. Our nation descended into a land of dope addicts, fornicators who disdain marriage and just sleep with whomever until the new wears off, and subscribe to the notion that "if it feels good, do it."

The above causes were listed (along with two others) by the National District Attorneys Association back a few

Reducing Mark 16:16 to a Footnote

John Isaac Edwards

If you have a copy of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, you will observe that the last paragraph of the book of Mark, Mark 16:9-20, which contains Mark's account of the Great Commission, has been removed from the text and reduced to a footnote.

The Pretext For Ejecting Mark 16:9-20

The so-called translators of the Revised Standard Version have ejected this ending of Mark on the basis that Mark 16:9-20 is missing from the two fourth century manuscripts *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus*.

years ago. Whatever the causes are found to be which lead to drug abuse, the problem is severe and must be taken in hand, for beyond all the personal, physical, and societal issues involved, there are souls at stake. At first, the addict may think it a poor substitute for what he craves, but the Psalmist was right when he said, "Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (Ps. 1:1-2). The addict only escapes from the bondage of sin when his mind is captured by the will of the Lord and he finds his only true freedom when he becomes a bondservant of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). There is a power greater than addiction to drugs. It is the power of the gospel to save souls from ruin (Rom. 1:16).

For centuries, thousands upon thousands have been rescued from the jaws of impending eternal destruction by the simple, yet powerful message of a Savior's love. Leave your bottle, your needle, your pills, and the evil companions who would lure you away, and fly into the everlasting arms of Jesus, the Savior of the world.



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They have inserted the misleading footnote that "Other texts and versions add" the passage of Mark 16:9-20, while the truth is that the passage is in all of the more than five hundred manuscripts, except the two, and it is in all of the more than two thousand manuscript copies, without exception, missing from none.

Why Mark, But Not John?

The end of John, John 21:25, is missing from these same two manuscripts, but the ending of John has not been omitted from the Revised Standard Version. Why eject the end of Mark, but retain the end of John when it is missing from the same manuscripts in which the end of Mark is missing?

Looks like a translator of The Holy Bible would want to be consistent in his translation, wouldn't you think? Instead, the translators of the Revised Standard Version are biased against the last paragraph of Mark. Could it be that they are trying to evade the Lord's teaching in Mark 16:16? By the way, removing Mark 16:16 from the text and reducing it to a footnote doesn't change what the Lord said!

The Testimony of J.W. McGarvey

J.W. McGarvey, who was rated by the editor of the *London Times* as among the greatest scholars of the world in the field of Evidences and the defense of the Bible against the Higher Criticism of the nineteenth century, writes at the end of his Commentary on Matthew and Mark: "Our final conclusion is, that the passage in question is authentic in all its details, and that there is no reason to doubt that it was written by the same hand which indited the preceding parts of this narrative. The objections which have been raised against it are better calculated to shake our confidence in Biblical Criticism than in the genuineness of this inestimable portion of the Word of God."



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Cipriano Carpentero (1947-2005): Faithful Soldier, Dear Brother!

Ron Halbrook

On December 29, 2005 at 6:30 p.m. brother Cipriano Carpentero passed away from his loved ones and his life of service to God on this earth. We sorrow for his family and for ourselves because we will miss him very much, but we do not sorrow for him because “to be with Christ . . . is far better” (Phil. 1:23). There he is comforted while waiting for the resurrection day when all the angels and all the saints of all the ages will join in praising God around his throne in heaven.

The Journey of Life, A Journey of Faith

Cipriano was born on September 26, 1947 in the Province of Lanao del Norte in northern Mindanao to Vidal and Teodora Sulatorio Carpentero. His secondary education was completed at Sacred Heart Academy in Molave, Zamboanga del Sur and his BS Degree in Commerce was received at Immaculate Concepcion College in Ozamis City (Misamis Occidental Province in northern Mindanao). An additional two years of study in law school were completed at Misamis University in Ozamis City.

Linma Tamparong Agpasa became his bride on December 22, 1970 and God blessed their marriage with five children: Angelito, Annalynn, Cipriano Jr., Anna Marie, and Hannie Lynn. Now that these children are grown and married, there are five precious grandchildren who will miss their “Lolo.”

Like most Filipinos, Cipriano was born into a Roman Catholic family. His fervent, sincere spirit was seen when he became a Catholic Faith Defender, but he later joined the Mormon Church and began to rise in its ranks. By the grace of God, the original gospel of Christ convinced Cipriano when he heard Alfredo “Fred” Samodal debate a preacher from the Iglesia ni Cristo (a group formed in 1914 denying the deity of Jesus Christ). Leonardo Lagasca baptized him in September of 1975 in New Annex, Ozamis City.

Burning with a desire to teach the truth, Cipriano began

preaching the gospel, often supporting himself with his own hands like Paul in Acts 18:1-3. His life as a gospel preacher led him to live and labor in the following places: Ozamis City, Misamis Occidental Province (1975-76); Oroquieta City, Misamis Occidental Province (1977-79); again in Ozamis City (1980-90); Guitran, Dumingag, Zamboanga del Sur Province (1990); Sunshine, Cavite, Manila (1991); Pembo, Makati and Malabon City, Manila (1994); and with the congregation at Camaman-an in Cagayan de Oro City, Misamis Oriental Province (1995-2005).

When Jim McDonald first brought me with him to preach in the Philippines in 1995, I met Cipriano under circumstances which revealed both his godly character and his talent. We needed someone to help in translating in a situation involving several meetings with brethren who had conflicts. Not only did Cipriano handle the translation, but also he helped in the tense discussions by exhibiting a calm and fair demeanor toward everyone involved. I remember thinking at the time, “This is the demeanor a judge needs in hearing a case in court.” Similar situations through the years have confirmed my initial assessment. Our brother was always calm and fair in dealing with conflict and controversy. His strong commitment to follow the truth of God’s word was equally evident.

On my second trip to the Philippines in the spring of 1998, I met Jonathan Carino of Cebu City. Under the pressure of difficult circumstances, he exhibited a similar combi-



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Cipriano Carpentero: A Servant of God to the End

Harry Osborne

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament tell us of Jacob's diligence to fulfill his duties before God until the end. Genesis 49:33 says, "And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people" (NKJV). As the one entrusted by God to keep alive the knowledge of the promise first given to his grandfather, Abraham, Jacob saw the need to once more instruct his sons before he could quit his earthly walk. The Hebrew writer gives us added information about Jacob's final hours: "By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff" (Heb. 11:21).

We not only learn much about Jacob's character from the fact that he spent his last moments in worship to God, but we also learn of the impact his life had on those around him. Genesis 50 begins with these words: "And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him . . . and the Egyptians mourned for him threescore and ten days" (Gen. 50:1-3). A father who had come by faith to depend on God left a lasting impression on his son, Joseph. As Joseph's death drew near, he commanded that his bones be carried out of Egypt and back to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen. 50:24-25). We would expect a son who shared his father's faith in God to be beside his father, even in death. We would expect him to show compassion and respect for his father at his passing, just as he had in life. But Jacob's death was mourned by many more than just his family. The Egyptians mourned him for seventy days. That period of mourning indicated the degree of respect afforded to Jacob, especially when we consider that Moses and Aaron were mourned only thirty days by Israel (Num. 20:29; Deut. 34:8, note that Saul and Jonathan were only mourned until even, 2 Sam. 1:11-12).

On December 29, 2005 at about 6:30 p.m. local time in the Philippines, another man of faith breathed his last

and journeyed home, my dear friend and brother Cipriano ("Cip") Carpentero. Like Jacob of old, Cip spent his last hours instructing, comforting, and worshiping with his family, as he knew his time was nearing an end. His son, Jhun, told me that they had just completed reading Revelation 21-22 and Psalm 23 when Cip simply stopped breathing. He had suffered terribly towards the end as the liver disease had its final effect upon him. The last time I talked with Cip, I asked him how he was feeling and he told me, "Fine." Afterwards, I found out that he had chest pains so bad that day that the doctors thought he might be having a heart attack. For all who knew Cip, that typifies the way he lived his life. He minimized his hardships and had greater concerns for others than for self. Though all of us who loved him so much will miss him terribly, we could not wish his suffering to be prolonged and his reward delayed any further. Cip and I spoke almost every day over his last few weeks on earth, talking freely of our hope to be reunited before the throne of God where there will be no more death, or pain, or sickness, or sorrow (Rev. 21:4). For right now, however, those who loved him so much continue to mourn in a way befitting a great man who touched our lives and enriched our souls.

As Joseph exemplified a family's love towards Jacob in that time of death, our brother's family grieves over the loss of a husband, father, and grandfather who was truly loved by them. His good wife, Linma, was by Cipriano's side at death just as she had been throughout his life. She would greatly appreciate any expressions of sympathy from those who might lift her spirits during these difficult days. You may write to her at the following address: Mrs. Cipriano Carpentero, P.O. Box 0288, Cagayan de Oro City 9000, Philippines. Cip's children (Angelito, Annalynn, Jhun, Anna Marie and Hannie Lynn) mourn the loss of a loving father who wisely instructed his children about the path of righteousness. During Cip's last days, I spoke repeatedly to his son, Cipriano Jr. ("Jhun"), who stayed by

his father's side throughout the time of sickness to care for his needs. Cip expressed his joy to me that his son shared his commitment to the work of the Lord and would carry on the work of standing for the same truth he so selflessly upheld. Truly, greater joy hath no man than this, to hear of his children walking in truth (3 John 4). And not just the children, but also the grandchildren. One of the most precious things I have seen is the way Cip's grandchildren showed their great love for their "Lolo." They melted his heart and he had clearly captured their hearts. They will miss him terribly, but I hope they will always remember the legacy of faith he left for them and follow him as he followed Christ (Phil. 3:17).

Furthermore, as Jacob was mourned numerous days by many beyond his physical family, so a host of brethren throughout the Philippines mourned our departed brother for many days. After his passing, brethren in Manila gathered for three full days of preaching the gospel as a part of brother Cipriano's funeral. His body was then taken to Cagayan de Oro City on the island of Mindanao for six more days of preaching as the funeral continued. On January 7, 2006, Cipriano Carpentero's earthly tabernacle was laid to rest in Cagayan de Oro awaiting the resurrection of the last day. Though separated by many miles, my heart has been joined together with those in the Philippines as we have together mourned our dear brother each day since his passing. In my work there, I have seen so many Filipino brethren who share in that same great faith that Cip had. That shared faith caused the great expression of grief. It is hard to think that my beloved Cip will no longer be with us as we continue in the on-going harvest of souls in the Philippines. During my first trip to that nation, I became so attached to Cip that we both cried as we said goodbye at the Manila airport. He changed my life for the better and I thank God for him each day.

In Acts 9, we are told that a disciple by the name of Tabitha, or Dorcas, was "was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity" (Acts 9:36, NASB). When she died, those who mourned her "stood by weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them" (Acts 9:39). Though brother Cip was not a maker of physical garments, many of us are the recipients of far greater spiritual gifts he imparted to us through his life and his teaching. As he has now passed from this life, surely he rests from his labors and his works do follow him (Rev. 14:13). To those of you who never had the privilege of meeting my dear brother, I would like to show you a few things he left that help me.

1. His Humility. Jesus said, "Whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever would be chiefest among you, shall be servant of all" (Mark 10:43-44). By that measure, Cip was at the very top. He was unsurpassed in his abilities to capture an audience's

attention, but never understood the uniqueness, nor sought to use his ability to promote self. On several occasions, I saw him endure totally unjustified attacks, but I never saw him respond in kind. He kept his focus on the cause of Christ and was ready to be misused personally if it kept the cause from being hindered. Even in the small things like choosing a seat, Cip took the least comfortable place so that others could be comfortable. Several Filipino brethren have taught me much about humility, but none more than my beloved Cip.

2. His Effectiveness in Spreading the Word. Luke's depiction of Apollos has always seemed apropos in describing Cipriano: "An eloquent man . . . mighty in the Scriptures" (Acts 18:24). Cip could keep an audience at rapt attention whether he was the sole one preaching or the interpreter into the native dialect. I have never seen his talent excelled and rarely have I seen it matched. Yet, his great ability to speak was never the focus of his effort. Cip used his talents to get people to understand and remember the truth, not Cipriano Carpentero. As we worked in lectures over the past few years in preaching to denominational preachers, Cip had a unique ability to help them grasp concepts that challenged their fundamental beliefs and appeal for their submission to truth. In debates, he was the greatest nightmare for the teacher of error. Many Filipinos now preaching the truth came out of denominationalism as a direct result of Cip's work.

3. His Single-Focused Life. Jesus said, "The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" (Matt. 6:22). Cip was filled with the light of truth because that was his obsession. He, like Paul described the household of Stephanas, "addicted" himself to the ministry of the saints (1 Cor. 16:15). Last year, I called Cip just before I left to go over to the Philippines and asked if I could bring him anything. He asked me if I could find him a copy of Foy Wallace, Jr.'s book, *God's Prophetic Word*, because he was studying Premillennialism in order to write a tract refuting the false theories. I told him I could not get one in before I left, but would lend him my copy. When I hung up the phone, I both laughed and cried as I thought how "Cip" that request was. He lived in a home that American brethren would associate with great poverty, but he did not ask a single dime from me to better his living conditions or some item to give him physical comfort. His request was for something to help him study God's word and serve others by teaching.

On Sunday, December 18, 2005, I saw my dear friend and brother for the last time until we are reunited before God's throne. David Halbrook and I joined Cip, his family and several other brethren for a worship service in the small apartment where Cip stayed in Manila. He was on a cot, badly jaundiced and masked to protect from further infection. As we sang the song "When the Roll Is Called

The Right Wrong Number: A Door Opens in the Philippines

David Halbrook

When the phone in the office at the church building rings, I immediately dread that someone is calling wanting to sell something to me or to get something from me. During one July afternoon (2005), I was studying at the office and the phone rang. I was surprised to hear a distinctly Filipino accent on the other end of the line. At first, I thought that it must be one of the brethren in the Philippines, but it soon became apparent that this individual was not a member of the church of Christ. His name was Jonathan Aparre, and he was visiting Baytown, Texas. He was a Baptist pastor, wanting to report on his work to churches in the area. "How did he get this number and why is he calling here?" I wondered. I simply assumed that he must have "let his fingers do the walking," and randomly chosen our number out of the Yellow Pages. But, I did not concern myself with the reason why and simply tried to learn what I could about this man.

During the course of our conversation, I informed Jonathan that I had been to the Philippines to preach, and we quickly realized that I had been near his hometown on the island of Bohol during previous trips. "Interesting," I thought but I had no idea what opportunities this would introduce.

Up Yonder," Cipriano squeezed my hand several times and looked at me with a tear in his eye. I nodded in return and whispered to him, "I'll see you there." We live on with the assurance that he is now comforted in Abraham's bosom until that great day when all of the saints will be called home. May the Lord bless the Carpentero family with strength, hope, comfort and thankfulness for being blessed to share the life and love of such a great man.

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After our conversation continued for a few minutes, I asked if he would like to meet to talk further, and he expressed an interest in doing so. As a result, he, Larry Hafley, and I met and talked for over an hour. At the conclusion of this meeting, Jonathan suggested that I come to preach at his congregation if I returned to the Philippines and was in his area.

A few months later, the elders of the Pruett and Lobit congregation and I decided that I would look for another opportunity to go and preach in the Philippines. When discussing some possible dates with my dad, Ron Halbrook, we realized that his trip scheduled for late November/early December would possibly provide an opportunity to be in Jonathan's area.

In the meantime, some brethren in the Philippines had already contacted Jonathan, and he seemed to respond warmly to them. I e-mailed Jonathan to let him know that I would be in his area and wanted to accept his invitation to come and preach. His response was "very sure you're very much welcome to teach and to preach us the wonderful and precious doctrine of Christ . . . Tell your dad I really appreciate of what he did to me of keeping him sending me lessons regarding Christ Doctrine." Through the broken English, it was clear that Jonathan continued to be open to allowing us to come preach at his church. Brother Jonathan Carino, a gospel preacher who lives on the island of Cebu, traveled to Bohol and made the final arrangements for us to preach at Jonathan Aparre's place. So on the evening of December 12, after our day lectures in Tagbilaran City on Bohol, we would travel to Liberty Bible Baptist Church to preach the gospel.

Before we arrived in Tagbilaran City, we spent over a week in Pagadian City on Mindanao, in part teaching classes to men who were or had the desire to be preachers

of the word. It was here that in talking to Jonathan Carino I learned how Jonathan Aparre called me that day back in July—he *dialed the wrong number!* He was intending to call only Baptist churches but a slip of the finger had resulted in him reaching me at the Pruett and Lobit church of Christ. I could not help but wonder if “perhaps” he dialed the wrong number so that he and others would have an opportunity to hear the original gospel (Phile. 15).

As it turned out, not only did Jonathan Aparre provide access to his church to preach, he also became one of the primary means of spreading the word of our coming to Tagbilaran City. He sent around 100 invitations to people all over the area and beyond. When we arrived, a former classmate of Jonathan’s, from a Baptist Bible college, had come from a completely different island in order to attend. Also a “pastora” came from over three hours away, bringing ten of her members with her. Many of the members of Jonathan’s church were in attendance as well. Our total attendance the first day was around 70, the majority of whom were not Christians. Dad and I preached topics such as “The Message of the Bible,” “The Conversion of the Ethiopian Treasurer,” and “The Two Covenants” the first day of the lectures. As was to be expected, most of those in attendance had never heard many of these basic truths involving the plan of salvation and the New Testament church.

Our first day of lectures ended around 6:00 P.M. and after supper we headed for Liberty Bible Baptist church, arriving around 8:30. It was a small building and from the outside did not look much different than many buildings of our brethren. There were around fifteen people in attendance, many of whom had either spent all day at the lectures or had been working all day, so it spoke well of them that they were present.

As a result of teaching on the subject of instrumental music earlier that day, instead of cranking up the electric guitar to accompany the singing, Jonathan Aparre asked one of our members to lead the singing and the electric guitar remained in the corner as we sang a few songs. Next came my opportunity to proclaim the gospel of Christ within the walls of a Baptist church. What a unique opportunity for an American preacher living in this period of time! I would have given almost anything to have the promise of Matthew 10:19 available to me at this moment (“do not worry about how or what you should speak. . .”).

Doing the best I could with the “talent” entrusted to me by my Lord (Matt. 25:13ff), I preached from 1 Corinthians 1:13, challenging the audience to think about the three questions that Paul posed: “Is Christ divided?” “Were you baptized in the name of Paul?” “Was Paul crucified for you?” I asked them to consider how these questions could lead to religious unity today. Paul illustrated part of the root of division in Corinth by rebuking them for giving allegiance to any other than Christ (1 Cor. 1:12). The lesson showed that this warning applies today as well. I warned of the divisiveness of wearing religious names which identify us with anyone other than Christ. The name “Christian” clearly identifies us with Christ while “Buddhist,” “Lutheran,” “Baptist” . . . identify us with men who can provide no salvation. They were challenged to consider with what their religious name identified them. While making this application, a slight smile on the face of one member of the audience indicated that the point was understood.



Right to left: David Halbrook, Jonathan Aparre, Fred Orgario, and a young Baptist—outside the Liberty Bible Baptist Church

The lesson proceeded to teach that the death of Christ established the new covenant under which we now live. The death of no other person could accomplish this, so if we claim to desire the benefits of the death of Christ, then we must follow the law which his death put into force (Heb. 9:17). I closed my lesson by showing that baptism in the name of Jesus is for the remission of sins and that no part of God’s instruction in this matter can be changed.

Dad’s lesson was “The Original Gospel.” He showed that God revealed the original gospel, which the New Testament records, but that over time men perverted it.

Galatians 1:6-9 shows that we must adhere only to the original gospel. Also, the original gospel reveals the original baptism. Acts 2:37-38, among other passages, reveals that the original baptism was for those who believed in Jesus Christ and wanted their sins to be forgiven. Then, in Matthew 16:18, we see the original church which Jesus planned to establish. After it was established in Acts 2, men perverted the Lord’s church in many ways. In A.D. 606, the Roman Catholic Church crowned its first pope signifying a clear departure from the original church. Since then, many churches have been established, but our goal must be to be a part of the Lord’s church. There were no questions or responses at the conclusion of the service, but some of the same members were again present at the lectures the following day.

Our translator that evening was Fred Ogario, a faithful preacher from the island of Cebu. He was helping us due to the sickness of a brother who typically traveled with us to translate, Cipriano Carpentaro. (Our brother Carpentaro later died on December 29 as a result of the illness which prevented his presence with us on this evening.) Over the course of the two days of lecturing, Fred became acquainted with Jonathan. Jonathan has expressed interest in continuing to study the subjects which he has learned since his contact with me and other Christians, and Fred has agreed to make the time and effort to return to this area and continue to study with Jonathan. I am thankful for men like Fred who labor diligently in using opportunities such as this.

While at times it seems that we in America have to claw and dig to find someone who is interested in studying the Bible, in the Philippines often preachers have more invitations than they can meet. At times, the mere quantity of invitations are simply overwhelming for them, and often financial limitations prevent these men from being able to go to places where they are invited. If you have the ability to support a faithful gospel preacher in the Philippines, please consider that the U.S. dollar stretches further there than here. You might be surprised to learn that \$50-100 dollars a month will accomplish far more there than here at home. That amount will not fully support a man but can be a great help. It is a blessing when we can both help to

provide the physical needs which these men deserve (1 Cor. 9:14) and help to pay for personal expenses incurred while answering invitations to preach the gospel. At times, these invitations come from *denominational preachers*, asking the gospel preacher to come and preach to the denomination! Such opportunities are open in the Philippines *now* to our brethren, and often one of the barriers to these invitations being accepted is the money to get there and back home.

Let us have our eyes open to the opportunities that our financial prosperity could provide. If we cannot go and harvest in certain fields, will we support those who do have that opportunity yet are lacking the financial ability. The words of Jesus in Matthew 9:37-38 are still true, and they still touch our hearts. "Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers

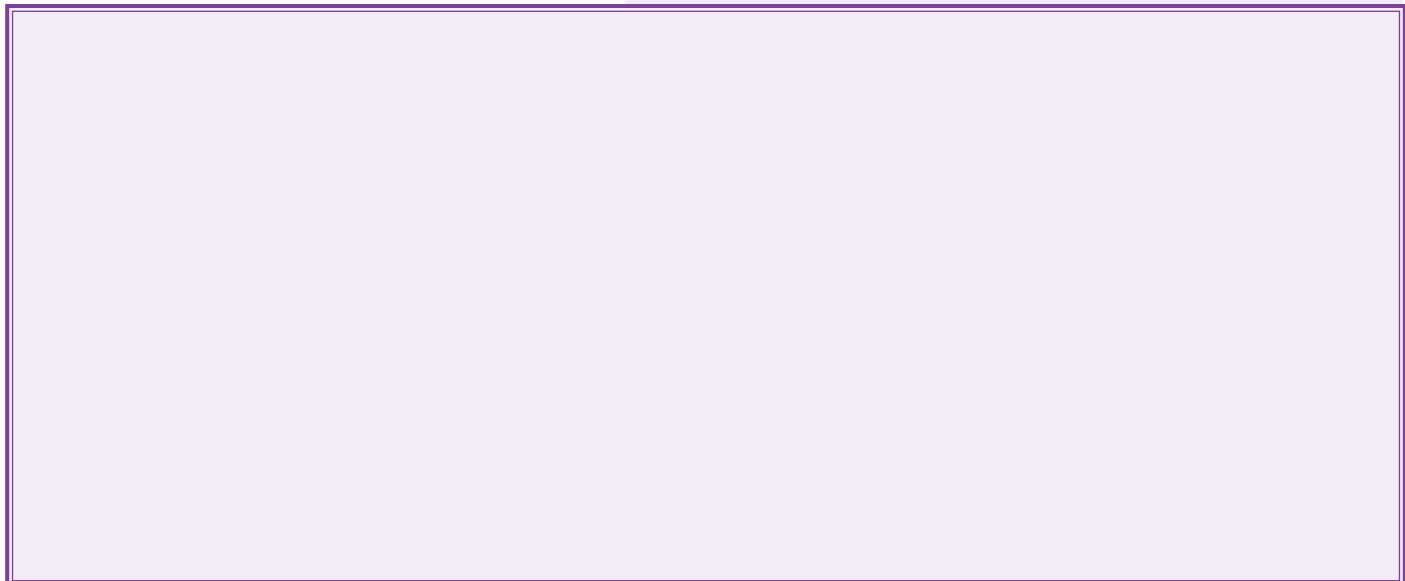


David Halbrook (right) preaches "Paul's Three Questions for Unity" which Fred Orgario (left) translates into the local dialect.

into His harvest."

What wonderful opportunities I was given as the result of a misdialed number. As it turned out, the misdialed call became more akin to the Macedonian call. God help us to hear the call of the lost and to realize that the Lord has called us to preach the gospel to them (Acts 16:10).

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Sunday Services Cancelled This Christmas

Kevin R. Fermenick

Strange things regularly occur in the religious community. With so many denominations and sub-groups, thereof, that is not particularly unusual. However, what has occurred this past year is note worthy.

Several mega-churches around the country decided to cancel their regular Sunday services. The reason? This particular Sunday was also Christmas Day.

I am not advocating the celebration of Christmas as a religious holiday. There is no scriptural authority to do so. It is the *death* of Christ that is significant for our salvation, not his birth. No one, not even those who promote its celebration, have any idea as to a certain time of year, much less a specific date when Jesus was born. The holiday is pagan in origin (in close conjunction to the winter solstice). I could go on.

Their reasoning for such an action, however, is most illuminating. It tells us quite a bit about how they view themselves and how they view Christianity. It is essentially a telling example of post modernism. It also illustrates how far we can go in straying from Bible authority, when we no longer feel a need for a “thus saith the Lord” in our spiritual activities.

The number of the congregants for these churches (Willow Creek Community Church, South Barrington, IL; Southland Christian Church and Crossroads Christian Church, both of Lexington, KY; Fellowship Church, Grapevine, TX; Mars Hill Bible Church, Grandville, MI; and the North Point Community Church, Alpharetta, GA), range from 7,000 to 20,000. I suppose that trying to accommodate such massive crowds tempts themselves to act as businesses as much as churches. There is no other way to explain their actions (more on that later).

The most egregious error of these churches that I see is getting their priorities twisted regarding their worship

responsibilities. They are focusing on the holiday of Christmas, and not on the fact that last year, December 25 fell on Sunday, the Lord’s Day, the “first day of the week.” It is the Lord’s Day that is of importance, not the holiday. Christmas was not celebrated in New Testament times, but the saints worshiped on Sundays!

We are to worship on Sunday, the first day of the week. It is the day our Lord rose from the dead (John 20:1-19). It is the day the church began (remember that the day of Pentecost, Acts 2, always fell on the day after the seventh Sabbath from the Passover, Lev. 23:11, 15-16, *ergo* Sunday). It is the day that we read of saints congregating to worship (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2).

I heartily agree that a Christian’s worship to God encompasses far more than the Sunday congregating of the local church members. Nevertheless, that does not excuse missing the Sunday assembly. Worship is personal *and* collective in practice.

You can’t partake of the Lord’s supper (communion) without assembling with the saints (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20, 33-34). The Apostle Paul instructs us in “. . . *speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord*” (Eph. 5:19, emphasis mine, KRF). Paul further instructs us, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom *teaching and admonishing one another* with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God” (Col. 3:16, emphasis mine KRF). Preaching and teaching is rather pointless without an audience of students, so assembly is required for these activities as well.

A member of a local Portland area church, also forgoing Sunday services on December 25, said to a radio reporter, “You don’t have to go to church to celebrate Christmas.” True enough, but you do have to “go to church” to wor-

ship with your fellow saints! That people seriously accept the celebration of Christmas as a holiday, as legitimately trumping our regular Sunday worship to God is flabbergasting to me.

MSNBC.com reported that officials from mega-churches around the country had consulted with each other prior to making their decision to cancel December 25 services. What happened to reading your Bible to see how and when God wants you to worship him? Since when is conferring with each other a valid Bible based method of determining divine authority for any action (Col. 3:17)? This reminds me of when Jesus was told that the Pharisees had taken issue with his teaching. They were not viewing what Jesus had to say as authoritative either. Just as today, people were looking for ways other than those divinely given to justify their actions. Jesus called the Pharisees blind guides, "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matt. 15:14). How do you suppose Jesus would describe these church officials today?

The reasoning of these officials demonstrates their view of Christianity. Southland Christian Church officials said the decision was to allow staff and volunteers a day off to spend Christmas with their families. In other words, church staff are given the holiday off. Willow Creek spokeswoman, Cally Parkinson, said that the decision was more than "family friendly" it was being "lifestyle friendly" because people are just "very, very busy."

The "me" generations of the post-modernism era are coming to full bloom. Nothing is sacrosanct anymore. Even the assembling of ourselves together to worship our Lord on the regularly assigned day takes back seat to having a holiday off. You think I'm being harsh? The preacher for the Crossroads Christian Church noted that Christmas is "viewed more as a holiday than a holy day."

The family is what is important for so many religious organizations today. Willow Creek Church member, Karyn Kulpinski, opined that Christmas is "about community and being with your family." Never mind that most people are confusing the issue of a holiday against the fact that it is Sunday worship being forsaken. But even those who celebrate Christmas as Christ's birthday have now effectively denied that.

Christmas is now a family holiday. Christ is secondary. Jesus said, "For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law: and a man's foes (shall be) they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:35-37). Jesus did not tell us that family

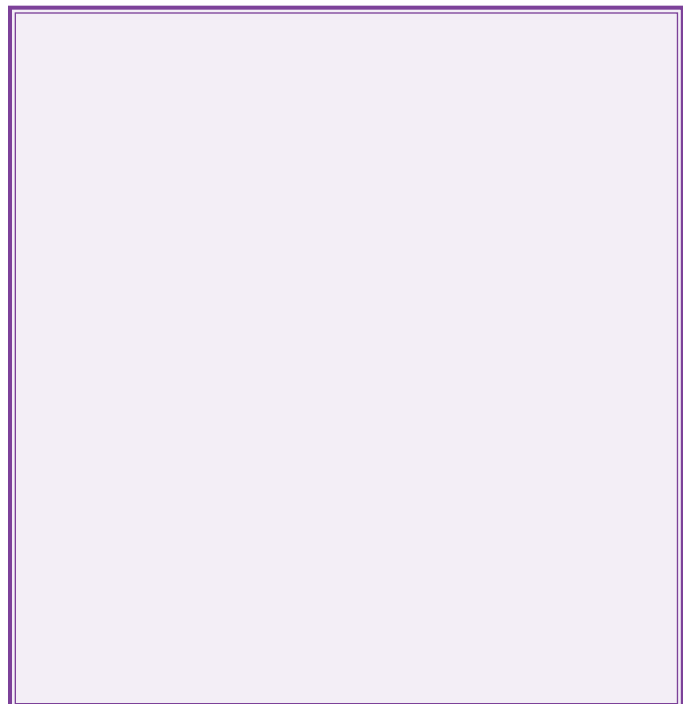
is not important. Elsewhere he commands us to honor our father and mother, but he is to be first in our lives. Oh, by the way, note the next verse, verse 38, "And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me." Self sacrifice is commanded of us. I would hardly think that coming to worship services for a few hours out of your holiday in order to worship your Savior is too much to ask. Not much of a cross to bear is it?

These folks counter by saying they have up to eight Christmas Eve services to compensate. Again, they are not considering the Lord's Day as important. These services are offered as substitute services. I'm reminded of God being incensed at the Israelites for offering him the culls of their flocks rather than the unblemished, as commanded (Mic. 1:7-10).

Finally, a pathetic excuse is offered, as if they know of their error but have no courage to correct it. They say not many came to services last time Christmas fell on a Sunday (1984). That is a real, but very different problem. That some members demonstrate a weak faith does not obligate nor authorize us to join them. Two wrongs have never made a right. Again, let me emphatically state that I am not condoning the celebration of Christmas as a religious holiday in any way.

Not every church closed its doors on December 25, but the fact that any did is sad commentary on how far man has gone in worshipping himself rather than his creator.

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Our Attitudes Toward Our Brethren

Jesse Flowers

Something that has been troubling me more and more lately is how I've seen fellow Christians treat one another. I have witnessed older preachers whom I respected tear each other down with cold, provoking words. I have seen (what I thought were strong) elders fighting amongst each other and dividing good churches. Far too often I see or hear about e-mails being forwarded around by brethren that were meant originally to be private that have been made public and stirred up unnecessary turmoil and harsh feelings. And too many times I have seen local congregations splinter and split, because of the havoc wreaked by a preacher of the gospel asked to leave.

It leaves a younger evangelist like myself saddened and discouraged by such ungodly behavior. The way that many of God's children speak and act toward one another is getting out of control! "But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!" (Gal. 5:15).

Yes, we "contend earnestly for the faith" (Jude 3), but in the midst of doing so we are to maintain a Christ-like spirit (Phil. 2:24-26). Yes, brethren will always be debating and disagreeing on various Bible issues, but in the midst of the strong arguments and emotions we still must *love* our brother (I John 4:20-21)! Yes, "that the truth of the gospel might continue" we do not "yield submission even for an hour" (Gal. 2:5), but we still "*love as brothers*, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing" (1 Pet. 3:8-9).

We speak of restoring first century Christianity and that is surely a right and proper thing to do. However, in our efforts to restore, let us not be negligent to also pattern our attitudes after those we read about on the pages of the New Testament. Take for example the attitudes, feelings, and relationship that the apostle Paul had with the saints at Thessalonica.

We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers (1 Thess. 1:2).

So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us (2:8).

But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire (2:17).

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even

you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy (2:19-20).

For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord (3:8).

And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you (3:12).

Are those statements and declarations of Paul's not impressive to you? Just think how much better our relationships with one another would be if we felt the way Paul did toward these brethren of his! This is merely a sampling of the numerous passages we could call to our attention to remind us of the godly attitudes and warm feelings we should have in our relationships with one another. As those bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, these are attitudes that should not seem forced upon us. But rather a disposition that develops naturally among those who are imitators of both our God and Savior (Eph. 5:1-2).

The present atmosphere of personal feelings and attitudes among so many of the Lord's people today is not what it should be. Brethren, what can we do

to change and improve our relationships with one another? Here are a few Biblical suggestions:

1. Let us treat one another in the manner that we would desire to be treated (Luke 6:31).

2. Let us be "kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another" (Rom. 12:10).

3. To patiently accept wrong and be cheated, rather than to always demand our personal rights (1 Cor. 6:7-8).

4. To possess a love that is indeed kind; not envious; not rude; does not seek its own; not arrogant; is not provoked; keeps no account of evil; does not rejoice in sin; bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things; never fails (1 Cor. 13:4-8).

5. To walk "with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-3).

6. To "let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may

impart grace to the hearers" (Eph. 5:29).

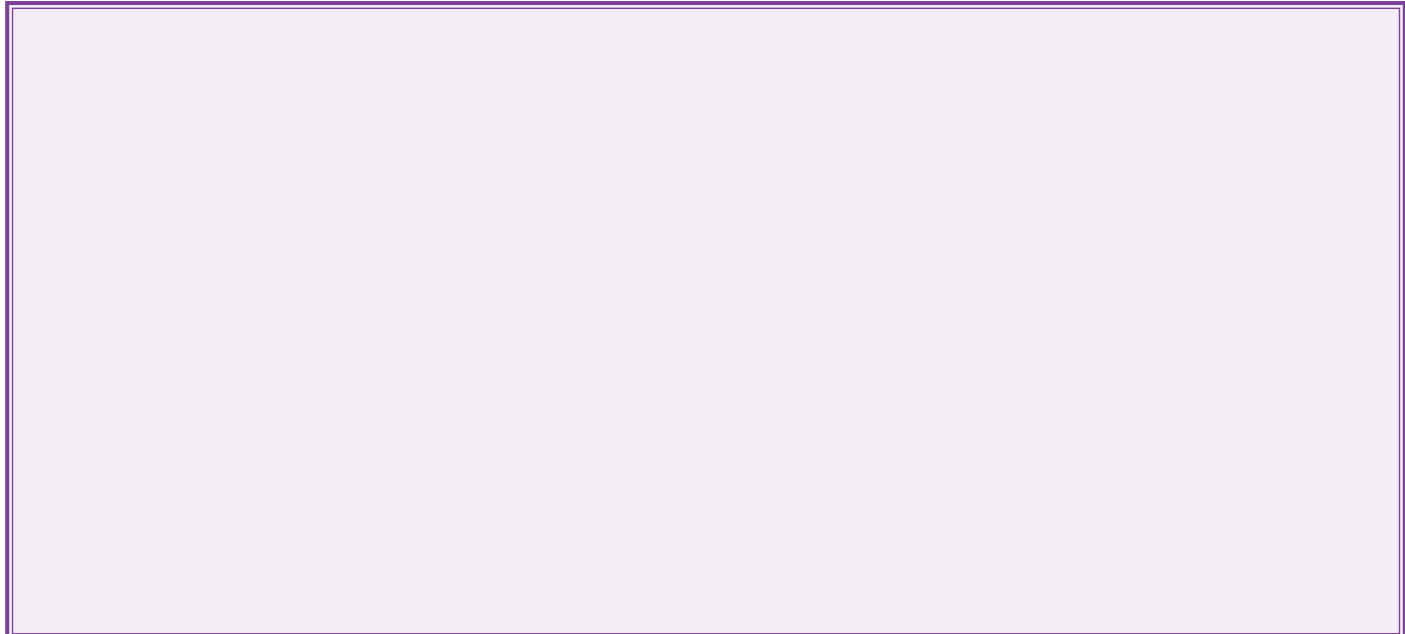
7. To be willing to submit "to one another in the fear of God" (Eph. 5:21).

8. To put away selfish ambition and conceit; to esteem others as better; to look out for our brethren's interests and not merely our own (Phil. 2:3-4).

9. If we have a complaint with a brother, instead of holding it over him, forgive him (Col. 3:13).

10. Let us be quick to hear, but slow to speak and wrath; also to bridle our tongue (Jas. 1:19, 26).

I suppose the attitude needed most among us today brethren is that of a poor and contrite spirit, and to be one that still trembles at God's word (Isa. 66:2). Let our sentiment be that of Paul's: "... besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:28). We must take heed to both ourselves and the doctrine in order to be saved and to save others (1 Tim. 4:16). As we strive to do right, let us not forget the command to: "*Love the brotherhood*" (1 Pet. 2:17).



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Why We Don't Have Time

Donnie V. Rader

The modern American lifestyle is over committed to too many activities. There are “too many irons in the fire.” We feel like we are running a “rat race.” There is so much that calls for our attention: our families (mates, children, parents), our jobs (long hours, overtime), school (homework, extra activities), spiritual matters (church, study, prayer), sports (children involved, coaching, watching), friends (visiting, talking, helping), and hobbies (fishing, hunting, golfing, sewing, collecting, woodworking).

Simply put, we have too much to do and too little time to get it done. Our schedules are full of “this and that.” This certainly affects God’s people. We become so busy that some things are crowded out. Spiritual matters may suffer. We may miss a few services. We may neglect our study of the Bible. We may not take the time to pray as we should. Family relationships suffer as well. We may have less time to devote to the marriage or spend with the children. Our relationships with brethren and friends suffer for we don’t have time to visit. We have little or no time to relax and take care of ourselves.

There are two basic problems. First, we fail to recognize the problem. Second, we don’t know what do about it.

Seeing the Problem

1. Reasons for the problem. Perhaps there are several reasons why we have over crowded our lifestyles, but we only list three here. First, materialism causes us to spend more time working, building careers so we can have more and more. Second, we are fascinated with fun. Thus, we fill our schedules with recreation, entertainment, hobbies, and travel. Third, we have a hard time saying “no.” We lack self discipline.

2. Why we can’t see the problem. Much of what we are doing is not wrong within itself. What we are involved in may be good and productive. After all, we give *some* attention to the things that are important. We talk about the problem. We admit that we are “too busy” though we

do little about it. We view our “overcrowded life” as only temporary. Dr. James Dobson well describes this view.

I don't even know any men who aren't running at a breathless pace. . . . Most of these husbands and fathers will admit that they're working too hard, but an interesting response occurs when this subject is raised. They have honestly convinced themselves that their over commitment is a temporary problem . . .

Most people can tell you with a straight face that the pressures they feel are the result of temporary circumstances. Their future will be less hectic. A slower day is coming. A light shines at the *end of the dark tunnel*. Unfortunately, their optimism is usually unjustified. It is my *observation* that the hoped-for period of tranquility rarely arrives. Instead, these short term pressures have a way of becoming sandwiched back to back, so that families emerge from one crisis and sail directly into another. Thus, we live our entire lives in the fast lane, hurtling down the road toward heart failure. We have deluded ourselves into believing that circumstances have forced us to work too hard for a short time, when, in fact, we are driven from *within*. We lack the discipline to limit our entanglements with the world, choosing instead to be dominated by our work and the materialistic gadgetry it will bring. And what is sacrificed in the process are the loving relationships with wives and children and friends who give life meaning (*Straight Talk*).

3. Effects of the problem. (a) We easily become frustrated and troubled about many things as Martha did (Luke 10:41-



42). (b) Spiritual matters are choked out by the cares and pleasures of life (Luke 8:14). Consequently, we give God the left-overs (cf. Mal. 1:8, 13). (c) The home suffers. James Dobson said, “Over commitment is the number one marriage killer.” We all have known of couples who have “grown apart” over a period of time and perhaps end in divorce because they were so “busy” they didn’t have time for each other. (d) Our effectiveness suffers. We could do more, if we were not so busy. We could do better quality in our jobs and in spiritual things, if we were not so busy. Personal evangelism is lacking. We don’t have time. Our attendance (or lack of it) easily becomes a problem. Finding teachers for Bible classes is hard because they are all busy. Hospitality dwindles because we are so busy.

Working the Solution

1. Remember our purpose in life. The purpose for our existence is to fear God and keep his commands. Solomon concluded his pursuit of this question by saying, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Eccl. 12:13). While we may be involved in many other things in life (such as pleasure, our jobs, school, etc.), such is not our purpose.

2. Remember the warnings. Notice the following instruction that warns of materialism, pleasure, etc. hindering our service to the Lord. All of these admonitions tell us to keep God and service to him first and foremost in our lives.

So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant—when you have eaten and are full—then beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage (Deut. 6:10-12).

And the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity (Luke 8:14).

For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10).

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone (Matt. 23:23).

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you (Matt. 6:33).

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me (Gal. 2:20).

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear (1 Pet. 3:15).

Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (Matt. 16:24).

But Jesus said to him, “Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead” (Matt. 8:22).

3. Make time for what is important. That is part of redeeming the time (Eph. 5:16). It is later than it has ever been (Rom. 13:12). Thus, we must use the time we have wisely. We must make time for worship of the Almighty (John 4:24; Heb. 10:25). Time for study of the word needs to be scheduled (Acts 17:11; 2 Pet. 3:18). Daily prayer should be offered to God (Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12). Family must never be left out (Eph. 5-6; 1 Pet. 3:1-7). That may mean that other things have to be cancelled in order to be with the family. If it is important, we will make time for it.

4. Be slow and careful in making commitments. All too often we hastily pledge to do something that we don’t have time to do. We agree to requests and obligate ourselves when saying “no” would be the best thing. Solomon said, “Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil. Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few. For a dream comes through much activity, And a fool’s voice is known by his many words. When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed—Better not to vow than to vow and not pay” (Eccl. 5:1-5).

5. Strive for balance. We must work hard (Col. 3:23; 2 Thess. 3:10). Yet, we must not neglect other matters because of work (Matt. 6:33). Balance will be present if we pull all things in our lives together in proper priority. Important things must not be neglected. We must keep first things first. Any decisions we make must be based upon spiritual matters and not material matters. For example, rather than reason that I have to miss church to go to _____ because I will lose money if I don’t, let’s be more concerned about the spiritual impact.

We don’t have time to do all we need to do because we have over crowded our lifestyles. Let us admit the problem and then work the solution.

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When I Forsake the Assembly of the Saints

David C. Morrison Jr.

It is the time of year that many congregations are having gospel meetings. Much effort is made in order to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. While there are visitors at nearly every service some of the members are not at any of the services. I recognize some things are beyond our control. However, many more things are within our control if we would only “prioritize” our lives according to Matthew 6:33: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.”

Let’s examine the title of this lesson. By the “assembly of the saints” I mean any time (not just Sunday morning a.m. service) the local congregation comes together into one place to worship God (1 Cor. 11:18, 20, 33). By “forsake” I mean that you *chose not to be in the assembly*.

What happens when I forsake the assembly of the saints?

- I disobey God (Heb. 10:25).
- I show my lack of love for God (1 John 5:3).
- I am having a terrible influence upon my children (Eph. 6:1-4).
- I am having a terrible influence upon my neighbors and friends (Matt. 5:13-16).
- I am tearing down, not building up the church (Rom. 14:19).

- I show my priorities are not right (Col. 3:1-4).
- I neglect my own soul’s salvation (Matt. 16:24-28).

I have yet to hear an “excuse” that is going to stand the test of judgment. We will one day stand before the living God and give an account of the deeds done in the body.

How will you finish the sentence:

“God, I willingly forsook the assembly of the saints because _____.”

Now recognize whatever you place in the balance of that sentence is your “priority.” Compare that with Matthew 6:33.

Who is so bold as to stand before God and state that they “chose not to be in the assembly”? Do we believe God will just ignore his own word? He compels us to “not forsake the assemblies” and admonishes us to “exhort one another.” Will we stand before him justified if we “sin wilfully”? Of course not, we are only deceiving ourselves (Gal. 6:7-8).

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“Tribute” continued from page

nation of godly character and talent. During the latter half of a six-week trip in 2000, Cipriano, Jonathan, and I began to travel and work together as a team. Our relationship has grown closer and our efforts more effective as we have continued working together two or three times a year from 2000 through 2005 in the central islands called the Visayas and in Mindanao. Both of these men have shared preaching duties with me, and both have been faithful and forthright in proclaiming the whole counsel of God. Recognizing the same traits in Cipriano, Lordy Salunga asked him to serve as a staff writer for *The Sword and Shield*, a sound gospel paper published quarterly in the Philippines. Lordy commented that Cipriano has produced regular articles of excellent quality and that it will be difficult to replace such a writer. Lordy submitted the following tribute concerning his friend and brother:

Tribute to Cipriano “Chiquito” Carpentero by Lordy Salunga

I never had the privilege to know and work with brother Cip for a long time since I only met him either in 1997 or 1998. Because of our distance from one another, I in Angeles City and he in Cagayan de Oro in Mindanao, we could not work regularly with one another, but when we worked together, it was always a joy for me. He was a good translator. He was a good debater. He was a good preacher and he was a good writer. When the *Sword & Shield* began, he was there from the beginning, helping me out. He was one whom I could always depend upon if there was a need for a specific topic.

Things that have endeared me to him were his simplicity, humility and calmness, and his faithfulness. We shared the same goal that somehow, someday Philippine churches could be self-supporting. The first time I saw him, it struck me that he resembled a certain comedian, Chiquito and I told him that and whenever I would see him I would always call him by that name. The last words I told him the last time I saw him while he was bedridden were, “Whenever and wherever we will meet again, I will still call you Chiquito.” I will miss him, a wonderful brother and co-worker in the Lord’s vineyard. I could feel his loss now while I will continue the work in the *Sword & Shield*. I know some other will rise up to the challenge. Brother Cip has finished his race, he has fought a good fight, he has kept the faith, while we who have remained will still fight the good fight of faith, and run our race. How wonderful heaven must be when we will meet brethren faithful ones who have gone on before us. Brother Cip cannot come to me anymore but I will go to meet him when my time to leave this earth comes, the Lord willing. I will miss my dear brother Cip aka Chiquito.”

Christian Character Exemplified

Cipriano had many strengths as a gospel preacher and he tried to live above reproach in his personal life, though he did not claim perfection. Having worked closely with him and having observed his character for a decade, I can

be a better and stronger Christian because of his example and influence. Here are some things I remember about “brother Cip.”

Set for the Defense of the Gospel

Just as Cipriano had once been a Catholic Faith Defender, and had once risen in the ranks of Mormonism, his faith and conviction in the true gospel of Christ were strong. His considerable talents were not used to promote himself, but he was “set for the defense of the gospel” (Phil. 1:17). His knowledge of the truth and his zeal for the truth joined hand in hand to make him an effective advocate for the gospel. Thirty or more tracts were written by his hand. Preachers who saw his sermon notes and teaching materials asked for copies in my presence.

In the Philippines, it is possible to get invitations to preach in denominational churches, or to invite denominational preachers to hear us in other venues. Jonathan Carino and Cipriano along with other brethren have worked with us in taking advantage of such opportunities many times. Many come to listen and study. When translation into the local dialect was needed, Cipriano was always ready, willing, and fluent. Question and answer periods are very productive. Occasionally, the questioners become heated and agitated, but Cipriano usually could calm them by his effective answers and good demeanor.

Cipriano was well equipped to defend the faith in controversy and debate involving issues “from without and within” the church. Agitators, compromisers, and promoters of false doctrine found a formidable foe in Cipriano. He ably met the errors which disturbed brethren such as instrumental music, premillennialism, liberalism, false doctrines on marriage and divorce, eating blood, the so-called “one covenant” or “one moral law” theory which blurs the line between the two covenants, and other strange and perverse doctrines. He held debates with a premillennialist in Cagayan de Oro City in 1999, with a Baptist Church Defender in Bacolod City (Negros Oriental) March 10-11, 2005, and with a Catholic Faith Defender in Bacolod City May 12-13, 2005. Souls have been led out of error and baptized into Christ on these occasions.

Lordy Salunga, editor of *Sword & Shield*, reported on the debate with the Baptist:

Debate

On March 10-11, Brother Cipriano Carpentero of Cagayan de Oro City met Mr. Baltazar Niangar of the Christian Reformed Church in a debate. Brother Cipriano affirmed the following proposition on the first night: “**Resolve that the Scriptures teach that water baptism is necessary for the remission of sins.**” Mr. Niangar affirmed the following proposition on the second night: “**The Scriptures teach that salvation is by grace through faith alone before**

and without water baptism.” The debate was orderly with the disputants having their own moderators and time keepers. Brother John Carino was the chairman and ably kept the order of the debate. The editor with the help of brother Rody Gumpad moderated for brother Carpentero. Brother Carpentero came well prepared with his overhead charts and he ably anticipated his opponents’ arguments. His opponent on the other hand failed miserably in proving that salvation is by faith alone. On his affirmative speeches, he quoted verses that salvation is by faith which bro. Cipriano does not dispute but his proposition called for proving that salvation is by faith only. On his negative stand, bro. Carpentero remarked that it was his job to destroy his opponents’ arguments in proving that salvation is by faith only but he said that he cannot destroy something that has not been built. Brother Jack Jaco was instrumental in arranging for the debate and brethren from the island of Negros supported the debate. Brother Rody Gumpad came with 6 others from the Tuguegarao area to provide moral support. Brethren Gumpad, Carino and others preached during the day in the venue and as a result three were baptized. Bro. Jack requested the editor to baptize them. It was a successful means to preach the truth! (*Sword & Shield*, [Jan.-Feb.-Mar. 2005]:13).



The debate with the Catholic Defender was also successful, as reported by Jack Jaco. Here is part of this report:

**Report on Debate with Roman Catholic
May 12-13, 2005**

The debate in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental, was held May 12-13, 2005. There were two propositions: **“Resolved, that the Church where I am a member designated as the Church of Christ is the true church built by Christ, because its organization is Scriptural.”** Brother Cipriano “Cip” Carpentero affirmed and Mr. Rey Intela denied. The second proposition: **“Resolved that the Roman Catholic Church is the true church built by Christ, because of its organization is Scriptural.”** Rey Intela affirmed and Brother Cip Carpentero denied.

Brother Cip Carpentero made a great job. He prepared charts and shown using his overhead projector, and it gave him advantage as he presented his speeches. His opponent being ex-priest and professor of a well known university concentrated his research and preparation on historical facts to prove his proposition. His argument hinged on the historical continuity of the Roman Catholic Church leading to his conclusion that it is the true church because the Devil did not prevail against it.

The debate taught us much particularly in the proper conduct of a debate. Brother Cip Carpentero and Rey Intela behaved themselves as gentlemen despite heated arguments especially in the period of interpolation. We are proud of Cip though he encountered stiff resistance still

he was able to teach the truth and thus the truth prevailed against error.

We purposely held the debate on evenings as we devoted the daytime to a lectureship among the members of the church. We limited the number of preachers to 25 with a maximum of 30 but still 42 attended. Four of those who attended came from afar not from Negros area. Brother Jonathan Carino, brother Cip, and I did the teaching. We are very happy that after Jonathan Carino taught on the lessons on church organization and unity among Christian brethren, there were three liberal preachers who confessed that they will leave the error of liberalism and embrace the truth (*Sword & Shield* [Apr.-May-June 2005]:47).

We are reminded by Cipriano’s efforts that debates do much good when properly prepared for and properly conducted.

Faith and Finances

Like most Filipino preachers (and many of us here in the U.S.), Cipriano was not ashamed to work in secular occupations for many years without foreign financial support. On one occasion a church in the U.S. supported him for a time, but when he noticed the brethren sent only a check and never showed any personal interest in his reports or work, he ended the support on his own initiative and relied again on secular work. He was blessed to receive some regular support, but this came in his later life as a preacher not during his early years. In contrast to his example, a few preachers complain if they are not immediately and generously supported during the first years of their work, and some offer themselves to the highest bidder to preach any doctrine for gain. Cipriano like Paul could say, “For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. . . . I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:11-13).

When handling funds for support or benevolence, a few preachers practice deceit and corruption by refusing to list all of their supporters, by asking help for ghost brethren or churches, and even concocting false reports of baptisms, surgeries, or storm damage. Such men experience envy and strife when faithful brethren receive some blessing from God’s hand, which results in “perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness” (1 Tim. 6:5). Cipriano had no tolerance for such greed, envy, and strife. In handling funds for support or benevolence, he gave accurate reports and provided clear confirmation of how the money was used, “avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men” (2 Cor. 8:20-21).

A few Filipino preachers will travel far and wide to greet American visitors, but their main focus is to ask for financial support and benevolence every time from every visitor. In contrast, Cipriano often sacrificed himself to help American brethren traveling and preaching in the Philippines, but almost never requested funds for any purpose. At times he suffered sickness and pain in our presence without asking our help. He believed it is more important for Filipino brethren to learn to work out their own problems among themselves so that the churches will become more active, and not be dependent on foreign sources. When he gave this same advice to certain preachers, they did not like to see his face anymore. We are not surprised by this reaction. Jesus said some people who followed him did so in hopes of getting “loaves and fishes,” but they left him when he offered only spiritual food and salvation (John 6). Cipriano never tried to prevent us from meeting any valid need, but he focused his attention on the spiritual work of God’s kingdom, not on getting “loaves and fishes.”

His Faith Follows Him

A little over a year ago Cipriano began suffering from stomach pains, which was diagnosed as an ulcer problem. When Steve Reeves, Harry Osborne, David Halbrook, and I arrived in Pagadian City on Mindanao on Dec. 1, 2005, Cipriano was there to help us in our work of preaching the gospel of Christ. On Saturday he was stricken by severe stomach pain and taken to the hospital. The doctor said his gall bladder needed to be removed. His son, Jhun, came from Cagayan de Oro City to accompany Cipriano to Manila. There the doctor determined that he was in the final stage of liver disease. I was able to speak briefly with him every day by phone and his faith in God continued to be strong until the end. During the last two days of his life, he became delirious (I did not attempt to speak with

him the last day). His family along with the doctors and nurses did their best to make him comfortable, but his body finally succumbed to the ravages of disease and the demand of death.

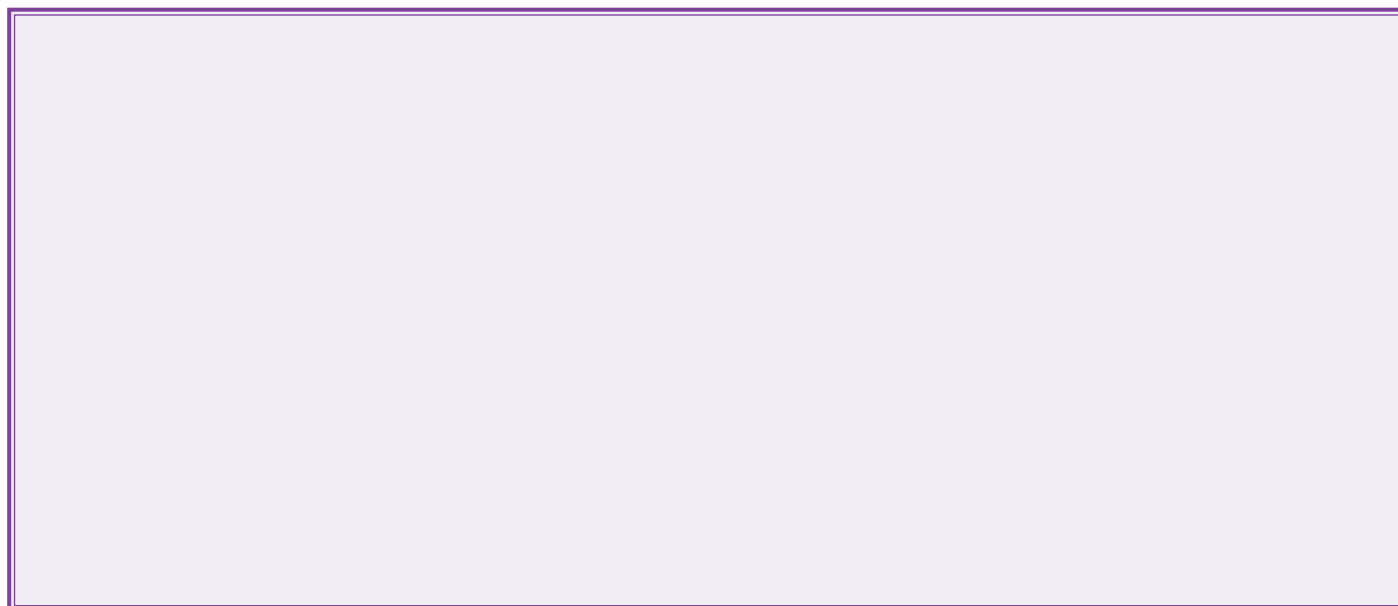
At the time of his death on December 29, his wife Linma, his son, Jhun, and his daughter, Honeylyn, were with him, singing songs of praise to God and reading the final Scriptures to him (Rev. 21-22; Psalm 23). After three days for the funeral in Manila, his body was taken to Cagayan de Oro City on Mindanao for the final services conducted January 2-7 including the burial service on the 7th. He is buried at the cemetery named Forest Lake Divine Shepherd Bulua, Cagayan de Oro City.

It is the custom in the Philippines for brethren to conduct several funeral services so that many people hear the gospel. Sermons were preached in Manila by Ben Cruz and then in Cagayan de Oro City by Lordy Salunga, Ramon Carino, Jonathan Carino, Rody Gumpad, Gerry Ca-a, Fred Samodal, Leo Armada, Julie Notarte, and Juanito Balbin (and perhaps others I am not aware of). Thus, even in his death, our dear brother Cipriano was a blessing to his fellowman.

Tribute to Cipriano Carpentero by Jim McDonald

The death of Cipriano Carpentero was a great loss to the work of our Lord in the Philippines, to American brethren for whom he constantly served, and certainly a personal loss to me.

I met Cipriano at a major crisis in my travels to the Philippines. For three years my activities had been restricted primary to Luzon, but I had received many invitations from Mindanaon brethren to come south and “help us.” I finally determined that in the Spring of 1995 I would visit there.



This was Ron Halbrook's first visit to the islands and our first trip together. Ron had been asked by the elders of the congregation in West Columbia, Texas to visit and survey the work in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental. He asked me to accompany him there, which I did.

Tensions in Mindanao were very high at that time between Muslims and their government. Filipino brethren in Manila were fearful about travel there and urged that I not make the trip I had promised to make. An American preacher in Manila heard of my plans and sent me word that I should not to go, telling me that there were cannibals there who would "eat me up." In the midst of these alarms a band of Muslim rebels stormed through a city called Ipil, just a short distance from where I was scheduled to speak. The rebels killed 50 innocent folk. Suffice it to say, I had "mixed emotions" about my promise and wondered whether I should cancel my scheduled trip! I was in a quandary as to what to do and sought, through prayer, some direction from God.

Mindanaon brethren knew I would be alarmed with the recent news of the Muslim attack and so they dispatched Cipriano to see me and assure me it was safe to come. Cipriano boarded a ferry, and spent a day and night on it to arrive in Manila. But, Ron and I were not there; we were far south in Negros. So, without delay, he caught a ferry which brought him to Negros that he might seek me there. He found me and assured me that it would be safe for me to fulfill my plans. To me, Cipriano was God's answer to my prayers. Ron had to return to the States but from Manila I flew to Mindanao and met, for the first time, many of those who today are in the forefront of the Mindanaon work.

I have never regretted that trip. Through the next ten years the work in Mindanao occupied a major portion of my concern, as it still does. Many have been the trials faced there; fear from the Muslims; fears from brethren who turned out to be "false brethren"; misbehavior in morals, doctrine and dealings from men whom we believed to be friends of Christ. On the other hand, the brethren there have baptized thousands of souls and established scores of congregations. I will never regret making that first fate-

ful trip, nor the reassurance, courage and comradeship of Cipriano.

I found "Cip" to be a prince among men. Others may believe otherwise, but never did I see duplicity, dishonesty or fickleness in him. He was always ready to help, whether to translate, to help solve problems, or to serve as a faithful messenger. He was my friend and how I loved and miss him! We mourn for him, but we rejoice at the prospects of his hope, the result of his steadfast faith. May his wife and family be greatly comforted and may God raise up someone else to do the work he did so well!

Those who wish to send expressions of sympathy to sister Linma may write to Mrs. Cipriano Carpentero, P.O. Box 0288, Cagayan de Oro City 9000, Republic of the Philippines.

Cipriano was a tireless and unselfish servant of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. His family will remember him as a faithful, loving husband and father. He was an able gospel preacher, a skilled translator, a patient peacemaker among God's people, a wise counselor, a strong defender of the faith once delivered to the saints, and a dear friend to all who are friends of God. He can say with Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

There are other men of sterling character and fearless faith like Cipriano Carpentero in the Philippines. Not only do our efforts there bear much good fruit, but also the faith, hope, and love of these dear brethren increases our own faith, hope, and love. While we are helping them get to heaven, they are helping us get to heaven where we all will rejoice around the throne of God and praise him for his saving grace.

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“Intolerant” continued from page 2

had state sponsored ethics departments which taught our students that one cannot make moral judgments based on the Bible; rather moral judgments must rest on some other foundation than a divine revelation. Suppose that such state schools reached the point that they could not even pass a moral judgment on someone who, in the name of religion, commandeered an airplane and flew it into a large tower killing thousands of innocent people. Suppose they said that one can no more condemn this religious act than he could condemn baptism in water for the remission of one's sins which, in their view, amounts to ritualism or magic. If you imagined all of these things and then checked to see if they are reality, you would find the viewpoints described in this paragraph being taught in most state universities, including those near where you live.

But pluralism and tolerance, however, are intolerant toward those who teach revealed religion. School prayer cannot be tolerated in public schools; the Ten Commandments cannot be displayed in our government buildings; the idea of creation cannot be taught in our classrooms. And now, in Indiana at least, the one opening the daily session of our General Assembly with a prayer cannot pray “in the name of Jesus.” Those who have taught us to be tolerant of others' religious beliefs have brought us to the place where our beliefs are not tolerated in the public schools and in the government buildings. Many religious leaders fear that we are not far removed from the point that, should a conservative preach that “homosexuality is sinful,” he can be charged under “hate crimes” legislation.

In the darkness of such a culture as this, the light of the gospel needs to shine. The gospel claims that there is a knowable and absolute truth. Jesus said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Unashamedly, first century preachers proclaimed that the only way to attain salvation from one's sins is through Christ. “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). Jesus did not hesitate to say that unrevealed religion is false and worthless (John 4:22; cf. Acts 17:23), and neither should his disciples. Disciples of Jesus had no trouble identifying that lasciviousness, fornication, adultery, and homosexuality are sinful behavior, in spite of how popular these sins were in such centers as Athens and Corinth (1 Cor. 6:9-10). Jesus taught that divorce for reasons other than fornication and remarriage resulted in adultery, even though some of his own disciples thought this teaching was harsh (Matt. 19:9-12).

Bold preaching, even in the face of religious persecution, confronted the religions and philosophies of that day and conquered them. Paul wrote, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after

Christ” (Col. 2:8). Just as Christianity was in a warfare with non-Christian philosophies and dogmas in the first century, we are in a similar warfare today. This is not the time for non-confrontational preaching that is unwilling to lay the issues on the table and engage the debate; this is a time for spiritual soldiers to take out the sword of the Spirit to engage the spiritual conflict. “For though we live in the world we are not carrying on a worldly war, for the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete” (2 Cor. 10:3-6, RSV). There are spiritual strongholds in America which need to be assaulted. If they grow any stronger, they will entirely silence their opposition, just as they have silenced teaching creation in the classroom, having public prayer in the school room, displaying the Ten Commandments in the court house, and those who pray in the name of Jesus from leading prayer at the General Assembly of the Indiana State House. The Captain of our Salvation is calling us to arms. Sound the battle cry! Arise to arms!

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Preacher Needed

Scottsville, Kentucky: The Gallatin Road church of Christ is looking for a full-time preacher to begin working with them in June. The church has an attendance of approximately 45 on Sunday morning. Some outside support will be needed. The church owns a preacher's house. Scottsville is twenty miles east of Bowling Green, in the south central part of the state. If you are interested, contact James Perkins (270-622-3254) or Keith Gerald (270-622-6581).

Livingston, Tennessee: The Cullom church of Christ is looking for a full-time preacher to begin working with them immediately. The church has an attendance of about 20 on Lord's day. A small amount of outside support may be necessary. Livingston is located about 100 miles northeast of Nashville. If you are interested, contact James Burroughs at 931-268-8247.

Preacher Available

Ron Eppler, 5600 Kilcrease Rd., Pine Bluff, AR 71603: I am currently preaching in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. The attendance averages about 70 each Lord's day. I have been here these last four years. I am looking for a congregation that wants a sound preacher of the gospel and is willing to work with a preacher that desires to help them grow spiritually and in numbers. I have been preaching for sixteen years. I began under the guidance of faithful preachers such as Jim McDonald, Elmer Moore, Bill Jeter, and R.J. Stevens and others who helped and encouraged me with a good foundation in the Lord's work. I began preaching by appointment round about East Texas for about one year. I began my first work in Comanche, Texas, on to Stillwater, Oklahoma, Tuckerman, Arkansas and Pine Bluff, Arkansas where I am currently working with the good brethren here. I have a thirty-minute radio program and publish a weekly bulletin. I also stay busy with personal work (which I truly enjoy). I currently have two Bible correspondence courses which seem to be doing well.

I am fifty-eight with a wife of twenty-seven years and have two grown children; our eldest son is preaching full time in Corrigan, Texas. Our other son is currently staying with us and he is a great help in my work. You may freely contact any of the references listed. My e-mail address is ronepp@sbcglobal.net.

References: Jim McDonald, Lufkin, TX, 936-637-0229; Elmer Moore, Livingston, TX, 936-967-0243; Shane Carrington, Sulpher Springs, TX, 903-439-4639; Dan Shipley, Burnet, TX, 512-756-4493.

Quips & Quotes

Judge Upholds Oregon's Ban on Gay Marriage

"Salem, Ore. — A judge on Friday upheld a gay marriage ban adopted by Oregon voters last year, rejecting claims that the amendment made too many changes at once and interfered with local government.

"In his ruling, Marion County Circuit Judge Joseph Guimond backed supporters of the law who said the measure only clarified marriage law in a single, simple sentence.

"The Oregon amendment passed overwhelmingly in November, 2004 as Measure 36, reads: 'It is the policy of Oregon, and its political subdivisions, that only a marriage between one man and one woman shall be valid or legally recognized as a marriage.'

"Seventeen other states have similar constitutional bans" (*The Indianapolis Star* [November 5, 2005], A10).

TV Sex Scenes Have Doubled Since 1998

"Washington — Gabrielle on 'Desperate Housewives' has sex on a table with her teenage gardener, and Julie and Jimmy on 'the OC' roll around under the sheets, passionately kissing.

"Steamy scenes like these have become even more common on TV, particularly in shows popular with teens. A study released Wednesday by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that 70 percent of TV shows include some sexual content, with an average of five sex scenes per hour.

"On the top teen shows, the number is higher—6.7 scenes an hour.

"The study examined programming on ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, WB, PBS, Lifetime, TNT, USA Network and HBO. Sexual content could be anything from discussions about sex to scenes involving intercourse.

"The number of scenes involving sex has nearly doubled since 1998, the study said, from 1,930 to 3,783.

"The study did not offer an opinion on whether sex on TV is harmful to children. But lead researcher Dale Kunkel said it's generally established that TV influences kids" (*The Indianapolis Star* [November 10, 2005], A10).



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