

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me" — John 5:39.



"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" — Acts 17:11.

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

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THINK ON
THESE THINGS

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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH

The prophecies in Isaiah 2: 2, 3, Daniel 2: 44 and Joel 2: 28-32 pinpoint the time when and place where the church Christ promised was to be established. There are four identifying marks that everyone looks for in establishing the true identity of a person or thing. These are:

1. The **PLACE** where one is born or a thing begins.
2. The **TIME** when one is born or a thing begins.
3. The **NAME** given to the person or thing.
4. The **PARENTS** of the person or **CREATOR** of a thing.

I propose to look at the **PLACE** and **TIME** in this article to show that the church of the Lord can be identified by these marks, and all other churches must be excluded because they are not genuine.

The **PLACE** could be no other than Jerusalem. The prophets said the kingdom or church would be established in Jerusalem and the word of the Lord would go forth from Zion. Jesus told his apostles to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, and when they received **POWER** they were to bear witness of him. (Luke 24: 47-49; Acts 1: 4-8). On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles and they began to reveal the message of salvation (Acts 2). Luke 24: 47 says: "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, **beginning at Jerusalem.**"

We must conclude that any church that did not have its origin in Jerusalem on Pentecost cannot be the church that Christ established. Is that not a scriptural

and logical conclusion?

The **TIME** when the church began had to depend upon several events. It is certain that the church could not have begun before these important events because they are related to the establishment of the kingdom.

1. The church could not begin before the "fullness of time" spoken of in Galatians 4: 4, 5. The fullness of time had to do with the birth of Christ, and that was essential to everything related to remission of sins and eternal salvation in heaven. Acts 1: 6, 7 reveals that the times and seasons are in the power of the Father. Jesus said, "**The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand:** repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1: 15).

2. The church could not have been established until after the death of Christ. His blood had to be shed because the church was purchased with his blood. Until the blood was shed no price was available to purchase the church. Acts 20: 28 says: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath **purchased with his own blood.**"

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1: 18, 19).

3. The kingdom or church could not have been established until Christ **ascended to the right hand of God** to receive "all power" which he now has (Matthew 28: 18). Peter declared him to be by the right hand of God exalted, and that he had been made both Lord and Christ (Acts 2: 33, 36).

Daniel saw the future in a vision which is a prophecy of Christ ascending to God to receive a kingdom. Daniel 7: 13, 14 says: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an ever-lasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

4. The church or kingdom could not **come until the power came.** The power is the Holy Spirit on the day of

Pentecost. Jesus said the kingdom of God would come during the life time of some of those to whom he was talking at the time (Mark 9: 1). He told the apostles that they would be "endued with power from on high" when the promise of the Father came upon them (Luke 24: 49). The context shows this to be the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Again, Jesus said they would "receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you..." (Acts 1: 8). They were endued with the power on Pentecost and began to speak as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2: 4).

5. The church could not come into existence until the foundation was laid. Jesus said he would build his church, and he said he would build it upon the rock: the fact that he is the Son of God. He said "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"—the building of his church. This expression simply means death would not hold him; he would arise from the dead, thereby being declared to be the Son of God (Romans 1: 4).

The foundation was laid by the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2: 19-22). This was done by their prophecy and preaching of Christ as the Son of God. When this fact is preached and believed, the foundation is laid in the heart of the believer for his obedience and salvation. All those who are being saved are added to the Lord's church (Acts 2: 47). Christ could not be preached in fullness until he arose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of God. The apostles were not permitted to preach Christ until they were endued with power (Acts 1: 8). He was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection of the dead (Romans 1: 4).

Isaiah foretold of the foundation in these words: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."

Peter refers to this passage from Isaiah and applies it to Christ as the foundation upon which Christians as "lively stones" are built up a spiritual house. This is the church (1 Peter 2: 4-8).

The apostle Paul says he laid the foundation and another builds upon it. As an apostle this was his work to reveal Christ, thus laying the foundation for the church. Christ said he would build his church upon the rock—the fact that he was the Christ the Son of the living God (Matthew 16: 16-18). Paul revealed this fact and thus laid the foundation upon which the "living stones" would be built. He says of this foundation: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3: 11).

From all this evidence it is impossible for one to claim a date for the beginning of the church prior to the day of Pentecost following the resurrection and ascension of Christ. Not one of these facts can be dismissed as not being essential to the establishment of the church. This date being established, no other date in all of history will be accepted as the time of the beginning of the church of the Lord. All that began at another time cannot be the one Christ promised to build, and did subsequently build on Pentecost following his ascension to the right hand of the Father.

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6. The church is spoken of as being in existence from Pentecost, and saved people were being added to it as they were being saved. The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved (Acts 2: 47). Paul said to the church at Colosse: "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints of light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Colossians 1: 12, 13).

The kingdom, which is the church, is spoken of as being in existence, and those at Colosse had already been translated into it. The birthday of the church Christ built was A. D. 33 in the city of Jerusalem. A church that began at any other time and place is a counterfeit.

Editorial

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PENTECOSTALISM AND FINAL REVELATION

In my lifetime the Pentecostal movement has forged into the mainstream of popular religion in America and around the world. David Edwin Harrell, Jr's new book: **ORAL ROBERTS, AN AMERICAN LIFE** is, to this date, the definitive history not just of Oral Roberts and his unquestioned leadership of the modern charismatic world, but of the maturity of that movement into a major force in the religious world. Harrell writes as an historian with restraint and objectivity. The well-documented work stands apart in this field of study. While it is not written as an expose, or an attempt at doctrinal refutation, the facts, objectively told, speak for themselves. Every preacher or teacher who has to deal with people of charismatic persuasion would do well to read this book. It will give you a comprehensive insight into this whole movement and help you understand the presuppositions which underlie the various arguments made in defense of modern-day belief in the continued operation of miraculous spiritual gifts.

I first heard Oral Roberts under his huge tent in early 1949 when he came to Tampa, Florida for one of his early healing crusades. Earl Kimbrough, a few others and myself learned quickly the danger of questioning what was taking place, at least on their turf. In the early days of that movement there was a thin line between an "usher" and a "bouncer." Roberts was not the suave, polished figure he became later as the head of a vast religious empire. But even then, he was a compelling speaker and was able to carry most of his audience wherever he wanted them to go. Over the years since, I have attended and observed a number of others who made essentially the same claims as Oral Roberts but I have not heard, among Pentecostals, his equal in ability to move an audience.

Had someone told me in those days that Roberts would eventually have the effect on the entire religious community in this country and around the world which he has attained, I would not have believed it. But I believed then and now that Pentecostalism rests upon several false premises. It is a subjective form of religion. The gospel of Christ is an objective message. The "faith once delivered to the saints" is a definitive standard by which all religious claims may be measured. The so-called pentecostal experience asks you to simply take their word for it that they had an experience with God outside of that which can be measured and substanti-

ated by the word of God. In 1956, in Decatur, Georgia, I held my first of several public debates with Pentecostal preachers. I still believe what I charged then that these people are lacking in respect for the word of God. At whatever point their human testimony conflicts with the word of God, they will hold to their story and reject the word of the Lord.

The crux of the whole controversy is whether or not the scriptures constitute God's final revelation to man. Harrell quotes Oral Roberts as saying "I think in a sense the Word is still being revealed." Again he is quoted as saying "I reject anything, any denominational viewpoint that says it's all been revealed." Folks, that is the essence of our whole dispute with these folks whether you call them "pentecostals", "charismatics" or whatever. They do not believe the Bible as we have it is the full, final and complete revelation of the mind of God. That is true whether we are speaking of Oral Roberts, Jimmy Swaggart, those on the PTL Club or the 700 Club, of some charismatic Episcopalian or Roman Catholic caught up in this movement. **When push comes to shove they just do not believe the Bible is the final revelation of God to man.** Never mind the fact that Jude said the faith was "once" (one time for all time) delivered to the saints (Jude 3). Forget the fact that Peter said "According as his divine power hath given us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called you unto glory and virtue" (2 Pet. 1: 3). Just ignore Paul's warning that we must not think of men "above that which is written" (1 Cor. 4: 6), or John's warning about "abiding not in the doctrine of Christ" (2 Jno. 9), these folks have had an experience with the Holy Spirit. That's what they tell us.

It makes no difference to them that Jesus promised that the Spirit would guide the apostles "into all truth" (Jno. 16: 13-14) and that Jesus said "thy word is truth" (Jno. 17: 17). Never mind that Paul said that what he received by revelation from God he had "written in few words whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ" (Eph. 3: 1-3). The Holy Spirit revealed truth as Jesus promised in understandable propositions which are found on the pages of the word of God.

Catholicism does not accept this truth. It wants the scriptures plus the voice of tradition, plus the "living voice of the living church." It does not believe that final divine revelation is in the scriptures. Mormonism has the same problem. They ask for the Bible plus the writings of Joseph Smith. Adventism claims the Bible plus the "testimonies" of Ellen G. White. Christian Science relies of the visions of Mary Baker Eddy. The Jehovah's Witnesses must have the inspired utterances of Russell and Rutherford. And the Pentecostals must have the Bible plus their "experience."

Oral Roberts and other charismatics claim over and over again that "Gold told me" to do whatever it is they decide to ask other people to help them do. Roberts even claimed that he saw a 900 foot Jesus hovering over the City of Faith and that Jesus told him to build that hospital and research center. A few years ago in Ontario, Canada, a young man was invited by the local

preacher and myself to attend the meeting in which I was preaching. He first said he would come to hear me speak on the work of the Holy Spirit. Then later he called and said he could not attend because he had asked the Lord about it and the Lord told him not to go. I asked him if he would inquire of the Lord as to what we would be doing or teaching that would be displeasing to the Lord and to please let me know. He said he would but we heard no more from him. I would believe that fellow as quickly as I would Oral Roberts. The truth is, I don't believe either one of them. Don't tell me I don't have faith in God. That is not the case. What I lack is faith in these men who are making claims inconsistent with the word of God.

Many have been swept up in the television preaching of such men as Swaggart and others like him who have some strong things to say about moral issues. While I would not be disposed to deny any truth they might utter, I must protest vigorously their false teaching on the Holy Spirit which contradicts exactly what the word of God teaches and offers no higher proof than their own testimony about an "experience." They do not tell sinners what to do to be saved in language the apostles preached. They have their modes of "accepting Christ", their "point of contact", their instruction on how to "claim your miracle" but they would not dare tell an audience what Peter preached on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2: 38 or what Jesus commanded the apostles to preach in all the world to the end of time as recorded in Mark 16: 15-16. They do not believe that and they do not preach it except to pervert it. They are dangerous purveyors of error leading multitudes astray. Jesus we know and Paul we know, "but who are you"? The issue is simple. These men say divine revelation is not complete in the scriptures. The scriptures state that these divine writings are full, final and complete. Now then, "to whom shall we go"?

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ACCEPTED OF HIM

(2 Cor. 5:9)

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HOW TO FACE TEMPTATION

Temptation is common to man (1 Cor. 10: 13). Even the Lord himself faced great temptation (Matt. 4; Heb. 4: 15). Temptation itself is not a sin, but is an occasion to sin. It is that which leads us to evil or entices to wrong doing. (Jas. 1: 14). It is when we yield to the temptation that we sin (Jas. 1: 15).

Like it or not, temptations will come. The Devil will see that that is done. He is constantly seeking to destroy the children of God. Our question then is "How can we better face these temptations?"

Remember The Word

In the moment of temptation the word of God is most likely the farthest thing from our minds. One who is proceeding into sin isn't thinking "What does the Bible teach on this subject?" or "What would God want me to do?" If it is a point of real weakness, we are without doubt pushing those thoughts back.

The apostle Paul warns that we need to put on the armour of God so that we may do battle with Satan and his forces. The Devil must be resisted (Jas. 4: 17). Thus, in preparing to fight we must be "girt about with truth.

... taking the shield of faith, _ and take ___ the sword of the spirit which is the word of God" (Eph. 6: 10-17, emphasis mine DVR). When Joseph was tempted to lay with Potiphar's wife, he remembered the Lord's will and said, "... how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God" (Gen. 39: 9)? Jesus responded to each temptation by saying "it is written" (Matt. 4: 1-11). David kept a straight path by thinking upon the words of the Lord (Psa. 119: 153, 157, 176).

Pray

1 Tim. 2 lists four elements of prayer, one of which is "supplication". That refers to the request for the averting of evil. We can and should pray that we would not be led into temptation (Matt. 6: 9-13). We should pray for strength to overcome our trials. Jesus told his disciples, who were at times weak, to pray "that ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. 26: 41). It is interesting that in the context where Paul discusses putting on the armour of God to fight against the wiles of the Devil, he says, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication "that ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. 26: 41). It is interesting that in the context where Paul discusses putting on the armour of God to fight against the wiles of the Devil, he says, "Praying always with all prayer and

supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. 6: 18).

We must remember that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man *availeth much*" (Jas. 5: 16, emphasis mine DVR). God will help us with the strength and faith to overcome.

Shun Evil Companions

Obviously friends have a great deal of influence on us. Godly and moral companions will have good influence, for they encourage us to do right. On the other hand, evil or ungodly friends have a bad influence, for they encourage us to do wrong. Those who have little or no respect for the Bible will advise and motivate us to sin.

We may think we are so strong that we will not be affected. Paul warns that we can easily be deceived, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. 15: 33). It can happen to any one of us! No one is so strong that association with sin and ungodliness will not have any affect upon them.

David describes how people progress into sin. It starts by "walking in the counsel of the ungodly", listening to them and investigating their way of life. Then, the next thing you know you are "standing in the way of sinners". You are looking and liking what you see while all the time becoming more and more familiar with sin. All of this is breaking down your resistance so that next you're "sitting in the seat of the scornful" which is simply being a part of them, doing the things they do (Psa. 1: 1-3). By avoiding such relationships we remove a lot of temptations that we would otherwise face.

Learn From Experience

The examples that others have set should serve as a lesson to us. We can learn much from their mistakes. When we see that their yielding to temptation only brought on more problems and temptations, we ought to learn that resistance is the best course (cf. 2 Pet. 3: 17).

We can also learn from our own experiences with previous temptations. When we have yielded, we remember the consequences. When we overcame, we remember that we were made stronger (Jas. 1: 2-3; 1 Pet. 1: 6-7; Rom. 5: 3-4).

Look For the Way of Escape

We must not think that the temptation has us trapped with no alternative but to give in. God has provided a way to escape (1 Cor. 10: 13). That is true with every temptation. Our problem most of the time is that in the midst of the temptation we're not really looking for the way out. There is that door of escape and that's what makes yielding a sin (Jas. 1: 13-15). The reason we don't see it is we don't try.

Substitute Righteous Living

It is not enough to empty our lives of evil, but we must fill it with things that are good. We are free moral agents which means that we can choose to do wrong or choose to do righteously (Rom. 6: 13). If we will fill our lives with righteous and moral activities, we won't have time to yield to temptation.

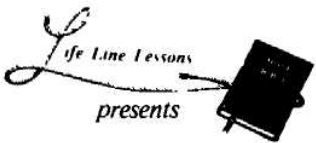
Paul writes to Timothy telling him to "flee" evil things. But, that isn't sufficient within itself. He was then to "follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (1 Tim. 6: 11).

Be Reminded Of Your Commitment

Remember who you are. You are a Christian, a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 11: 26). A Christian is one who glorifies God (1 Pet. 4: 16). You are a child of God (Rom. 8: 16), so act like one.

Joseph remembered who he was when Potiphar's wife tempted him and thus he "fled, and got him out" (Gen. 39: 12). Paul urged the Hebrews to remember who they professed to be (Heb. 3: 1; 4: 14; 10: 23). They had confessed Christ, become his disciples in obedience and claimed to be his servants. Therefore they ought to act according to their claim.

Ready or not, the temptations will come. However, if we just follow these simple guidelines, we can overcome.



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WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

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THE ONE BAPTISM

QUESTION: *Some preachers say that when Paul wrote, "one baptism" (Eph. 4: 5), he showed that Holy Spirit baptism was a thing of the past. They contend that in Acts, chapter 2 (33 A. D.) there were Holy Spirit baptism and water baptism; that in Acts, chapter 10 (41 A. D.) there were two baptisms (Spirit and water), but in 64A. D., when Paul wrote the Ephesian letter, there was just one baptism, namely, water baptism. Is this a valid argument?*

ANSWER: The "one baptism" of Eph. 4: 5 was instituted by Jesus in the Great Commission (Mt. 28: 19; Mk. 16: 16), and it was preached by Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 38). The "one baptism" of Eph. 4: 5 is the same baptism of Eph. 5: 26, and that is water baptism. Paul said in Eph. 5: 26, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it (church) with the washing of water (baptism) by the word." There is only ONE baptism that will do this, and, of course, that is water baptism.

The Bible teaches that baptism saves (Mk. 16: 16; 1 Pet. 3: 21), remits sins (Acts 2: 38), washes away sins (Acts 22: 16) and puts one into Christ (Gal. 3: 27). This is why Paul said there is "one baptism." Holy Spirit baptism never did these things, but rather it was a manifestation of God's approval and sanction. On Pentecost the outpouring of the Spirit demonstrated that the apostles were God's spokesmen (Acts 2: 16-18, 33), and at the household of Cornelius He witnessed to the Jews the acceptance of the Gentiles by God (Acts 10: 47; 11: 17; 15: 8). Holy Spirit baptism did not pardon or save from sin, but water baptism surely does (1 Pet. 3: 21). In other words, God saves us when we obey Him in water baptism.

As one of the planks of unity listed in Eph. 4: 4-6 we must accept water baptism as the only means to get into Christ. Hence, the "one baptism" was as much a necessity in 33 A. D. as it was in 64 A. D. The argument that there were two baptisms in 33 A. D., and one in 64 A. D., proving that Holy Spirit baptism had ceased, is a fallacious argument. Holy Spirit baptism had ceased alright, but Eph. 4: 5 does not prove it.

THE GREEN AND DRY TREE

QUESTION: Would you explain Luke 23: 31? What did Jesus mean by the green tree and the dry?

ANSWER: The verse states, "For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" This was said by Jesus on the way to Calvary. It is

seemingly a proverbial expression. The "green tree" would represent Jesus and the "dry tree" would depict the Jewish nation. Jesus, in the context, speaks of the destruction of the Jewish state (vv. 28-30) which happened about 40 years later. The meaning apparently would be: If the Romans put Jesus to death, the Innocent and Holy One, they certainly would not spare the corrupt and rebellious Jewish nation.

Jesus was as a succulent tree with beautiful foliage, and abundant and excellent fruit. Such a tree should be preserved. But if it (Jesus) was not spared, certainly the dry and withered tree (Jewish nation) would be cut down.

Alfred Plummer said the statement may be applied in more than one sense. "(1) If the Romans treat Me, whom they admit to be innocent, in this manner, how will they treat those who are rebellious and guilty? (2) If the Jews deal thus with One who has come to save them, what treatment shall they receive themselves for destroying Him? (3) If they behave thus before their cup of wickedness is full, what will they commit when it overflows" (*St. Luke*, pp. 529-30)? But Plummer, in my estimation, is too broad in his application, and, the weight of the context favors number one of the three senses he gave.

WAKE THE WORLD AND TELL THE PEOPLE

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OUR COMPULSION

Simply stated, the #1 need of God's people is to reach out and bring the lost to Jesus. Truly there are other needs to be met—Christian edification, rebuke against sin, exposing of false doctrine, etc. —**BUT OUR GREATEST NEED AND NECESSITY INVOLVES TRUMPETING FORTH THE GOOD NEWS MESSAGE OF JESUS TO A LOST AND DYING WORLD.** Sadly, in many places, the clarion call of the herald is scarcely heard.

We must understand that in our desire to restore the New Testament church and first century Christianity we must also reestablish the *evangelism* and *enthusiasm* of those early disciples. So often we argue with those who seek to pervert the church's mission (by turning it into a social organization to meet the needs of the "whole" man) that the church's God-given assignment is spiritual—to preach the *saving* gospel and not the *social* gospel—and then we turn around and the evangelism and enthusiasm that we need to do the thing just affirmed is virtually non-existent.

We **must** restore the level of spiritual enthusiasm held by those first century saints. We **must** capture their

zeal, their faith and their fire. We **must** WAKE THE WORLD AND TELL THE PEOPLE about Jesus like they did. And if we don't—what have we really restored?

We Must Have Tender Hearts That Care

One of the saddest of all scriptures is in Psalms 142: 4—*"No one cares for my soul."* We must care. We must learn to be anxious over the souls of others just like we are anxious over our own. Look at Paul. He cared so much that he affirmed a willingness to die and go to hell if that act could somehow save his kinsmen (Rom. 9: 1-3). Look at **Jeremiah**—the weeping prophet. And do you know why he wept? Souls were being lost AND HE CARED! (By-the-way, when was the last time you wept over a lost soul?) Look at **David**, whose eyes *"shed streams of water"* over the spiritual plight of his people (Psa. 119: 136). And, while you're at it, take a good long look at **Jesus**.

"And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them..." (Matt. 9: 36). *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem... How often I wanted to gather your children together the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling"* (Matt. 23: 37).

We must learn to love people like Jesus did. We must be motivated like He was, feel what He felt and see what He saw. Yes, Jesus cared! When we care, certain things will characterize us:

1. *We will seek opportunities.* Remember when you were dating? Surely you didn't wait for an opportunity to knock you over before you were willing to spend time with your sweetheart. Chances are you **CREATED OPPORTUNITIES**, sought after and pursued every occasion to be together. And why? Because you cared! Could it be that in our failure to seek spiritual opportunities there resides a greater failure to care?

2. *We will see the lost and not the cost.* When our child becomes ill, is it the cost of recovery that immediately concerns us? Absolutely not. We would spend every dollar we had (and, if need be, borrow more) to ensure the welfare of that child and do it all without complaint. And why? Because we care!

I've known of churches who would think nothing of spending \$10,000 to repave a parking lot but would never remotely consider spending an equivalent amount in some effort to reach out for the lost. This is **NOT** to suggest that we should be frivolous with the Lord's money. This **IS** to suggest that the mission of the church is to save souls, and every dime spent to accomplish that purpose is money well spent and divinely authorized.

3. *We will be willing to be inconvenienced.* Why does a mother sit and lovingly wipe the fevered brow of a child in the predawn darkness? Simple: She cares! Do you like to be inconvenienced? Not I. Sometimes I think that if I have to miss my supper or favorite television program in order to put my long legs under someone's kitchen table in an effort to lead one to Jesus—that such

is being inconvenienced for the Lord. We don't know what *inconvenience* is. Inconvenience is when the authorities threaten: *"If you preach—we'll beat you..."* *"If you preach we'll put you in jail..."* *"If you preach we'll kill you!"* Friend, that's inconvenience. And do you know how the early disciples faced inconvenience? *"They kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ"* (Acts 5: 42).

4. *We will pray.* In Matthew 9: 37-38 when Jesus announced the willingness of the harvest in contrast to the unwillingness of the workers, He said: *"Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers..."* *The Master said—PRAY! In 1 Cor. 3 Paul affirmed that men plant and water the gospel seed but it is God who gives the increase. We need to be praying that God will give the increase!*

"Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation" (Rom. 10: 1).

Have you been praying for another's salvation? A friend, a neighbor, a coworker, an unbelieving spouse of a Christian brother or sister, a young person at a critical age—? Brethren, God does not answer a prayer that has not been prayed!

5. *We will share.* There are too many selfish, stingy Christians (I don't know how else to say it). I cite, as proof of that accusation, the lack of personal evangelism carried on by most Christians. Let's quit being selfish with God's gospel. Jesus said, *"It's more blessed to give than to receive,"—and the thing we need to be giving and sharing is the GOSPEL. If we care we will share. It's as simple as that.*

We Must Have Eager Ears That Hear

"We have heard the Macedonian call today..." is a popular stanza of a popular hymn. However, in reality, far too many are failing to respond to, not only, the *Macedonian Call* but to ANY call. We must again tune our ears to hear the call and cry of the lost.

We Must Have Alert Eyes To See

That was the point of John 4: 35. Pointing to the fields of grain, Jesus said, *"Do you not say, 'There are yet four months and then comes the harvest?'"* Then pointing toward the people he added—*"Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest"* Yes, the soul harvest was at hand!

We Must Have Willing Feet To Go

ALL must go. Some can go across the state, while others can cross the country and still others can span the seas... But that isn't the case with most of us. In fact, for most, the **ONLY** "crossing" there ever needs to be is the street, the hall, the cafeteria at work. Indeed it is said, *"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the glad tidings of good things."*

Please...open your heart to care, your ears to hear and your eyes to see. And then, most of all, pick up those beautiful feet, "crossover," and tell a friend about Jesus.

**OBSERVATIONS UPON
20 YEARS OF PREACHING
(2)**

Dick Blackford

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The Number One Problem In The Church

I don't know if my experience has differed much from others, but from 20 years experience I have observed that the greatest problem in the church is people "wearing their feelings on their sleeve." This has also been described as "a chip on the shoulder," "thin skinned," and "touchy." Whatever expression is used, it refers to people who are too easy to get their feelings hurt. Many instances are not real offenses but are the result of misunderstanding. Some are only imagined by the extra-sensitive. The real damage comes when one who thinks he (or she) has been wronged, yields to the temptation to tell others about it before and without going to the accused. The church becomes the owner of a full-blown problem with all of its emotions.

When one allows a personal offense (whether real or imagined) to divide the body of Christ, stifle the church's work, and nullify its influence, he is viewing himself through the wrong end of the telescope. He suffers nothing compared to what Christ chose to undergo for us. The pride and arrogance of this generation hinders one from doing the humble thing—being willing to take wrong on behalf of the greater cause of our mission (1 Cor. 6: 7).

These kinds of problems seem to increase when the church is not working. Feeling the need for some activity, brethren may begin looking for faults and soon wage a full scale battle within the congregation. They hinder the gospel "in the name of the Lord." God forbid! No personal offense is that important.

Elder/Preacher Relationships

Only 6 of my 20 years have been spent working with an eldership. (Three of those I also served as an elder, having the privilege of seeing things from both views). I suspect there are more congregations without elders than there are with them. This is a tragedy and a hindrance. We should be overwhelmed with the wisdom of God's plan! We must never become complacent about this. One of the dangers is that preachers will end up functioning as elders without wearing the name or being qualified. God wants churches to have elders! Many problems can be avoided (or easily handled) that often get out of hand otherwise. This topic should not be neglected.

A preacher should be an example to other Christians in his support and submission to the elders. This does

not mean that he should be a "yes" man. He may need to make suggestions, urge elders on (encouraging them to go forward), but it should always be with respect.

Elders should not make unreasonable demands on the preacher or lord it over him. Many years ago I considered moving to a church in which one of the elders thought the preacher should keep a daily log book of all his activities (because his boss required this of him). It seemed unreasonable and a waste of time. I was afraid he was more interested in being my boss than my elder. Of course, I could have been mistaken or misread the situation. Ideally, the elders and preacher are a team whose works should complement each other's. They should always be mindful of the highest purpose in the world. Nothing should interfere with that purpose.

Pulpit Abuse

Preachers should avoid taking personal, private differences to the pulpit. A preacher may seek to identify his opponent(s) through insinuations, innuendoes, and inferences without calling names. He is asking for trouble and is a big part of the problem. If a brother inquires if the preacher is talking about him, the preacher should answer forthrightly. When Nathan told the parable to David, he didn't say "if the shoe fits, wear it." He said, "Thou art the man." When Judas asked, "Lord, is it I?" Jesus did not beat around the bush. He answered forth-rightly. It is no sign of bravery to play guessing games. Such action manifests all the courage of a "hit n' run" driver and should not be confused with standing for the truth. The preacher does not own the pulpit, and a church should not feel helpless when he abuses it. He is not immune to correction.

A preacher may also cause or enlarge a problem on the basis of hearsay. Such phrases as "I overheard," "it has come to me," "one brother said," and "They say," can often magnify or manufacture a problem. The audience has no way of knowing who "they" are or whether "they" said it. Unless he is willing to identify who said it, he will only create suspicion. Paul wrote Corinth about things that "had been reported" to him, but he wasn't afraid to identify the source as "the house of Chloe" (1 Cor. 1: 11). Preachers do not live above the gospel which they preach.

Preachers and Counseling

I have mellowed a little on this. Counseling falls more under the work of elders. However, because he is a concerned Christian a preacher may find himself giving personal help to someone with problems. There are situations he should avoid and others which deserve great caution. Private counseling with younger women is very unwise and is a work for older women (Tit. 2: 3-5). He may also fall into the snare of listening to gossip and/or spreading it. He may neglect weightier matters. There is much to consider. (We need to remember that people look at preachers out of the pulpit to know what they mean when in it). I do not advocate advertising formal or regular counseling hours, as do some sectarians.

Preachers and Insurance

In the civilized world medical insurance is no longer a luxury. It is a necessity and should be a priority for a preacher's family. This is involved in "providing for one's household" (1 Tim. 5: 8). Some have discovered too late how easy it is to get financially wiped out. I don't sell insurance. You will need to do your own shopping.

Outside Support

Much of my preaching life I have worked with churches which were not self-supporting. Raising support is no fun and is more difficult than it was a few years ago. While we must trust God's providence for our needs, uncertainty (or undependability from supporting churches) can make for difficult times. The \$500 monthly I was receiving when I began would be hardly enough today for a man with a family, even if it were \$500 weekly. A church sending \$100 per month used to be a goodly sum. It is a token amount today. If a preacher had several churches sending \$100 monthly much of his time would be spent writing reports and much of his money on postage and stationery. My suggestion to churches is (with the advent of the copy machine), that they not expect a personally typed report from each man they support. Allow him the same breaks that others use. I also suggest that churches answer all requests for support, even if they have to send a form letter saying they are unable to support at this time. Due to the number of requests we receive, we have had to do that in order to keep the local preacher from becoming a full-time secretary. But we always try to respond. One more thing, preachers who receive out-side support rarely get a raise, unless they ask. It would be great if a congregation would voluntarily increase support to him, as a raise. Of course, when another congregation finds out about it they may decrease theirs! However, preachers should give a full report.

Conclusion: I have had a few raw deals in my preaching life. Otherwise, I have been treated so much better than I deserve that those raw deals are not worth writing about. However, this article has a more pessimistic tone than the one 10 years ago. The pessimism is over the past, not the future. I have always believed conservative brethren have the potential to evangelize the world. We need to live up to it.

I wish to thank the reader for considering these random thoughts and would like to read what others have to say along these lines. You may hear from me again in 10 years. In the meantime, "preach the word."

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THE POPE VISITS THE JEWS

John Paul II, the charismatic pope who has done more than any of his predecessors to keep Catholicism in the news, made a recent visit to a Jewish synagogue in Rome. We quote from an article by the Associated Press:

"Pope John Paul II and Rome's leading rabbi embraced, read from the Psalms and prayed together in silence Sunday during the first recorded visit by a pope to a synagogue.

"The pope deplored the 'hatred and persecution' of the Jews throughout the centuries.

" 'You are our dearly beloved brothers and, in a certain way, it could be said that you are our elder brothers, ' he said to resounding applause from the crowd of about 1, 000 people.

"Speaking in Rome's monumental main synagogue facing the Tiber River, spiritual center of what is believed to be the oldest Jewish community in the West, the pope pledged the Roman Catholic Church would further its efforts to remove all forms of prejudice.

"He did not address the thorny issue of Vatican refusal to establish diplomatic relations with Israel...

"The pope, speaking in Italian, said: 'Certainly, we cannot and should not forget that the historical circumstances of the past were very different from those that have laboriously matured over the centuries.

"He quoted from Second Vatican Council's revolutionary 1965 document on non-Christian religions, 'Nostra Aetate' (In Our Times), which officially rescinded the accusation the Jews killed Christ.

"That from the document, John Paul said the church 'deplores the hatred, persecutions and displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and by anyone'."

That visit marks a new low in compromise, and should be an affront to Catholics and all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is amazing what politics and power will cause men to do! That's not the first time that religious leaders have denied the Lord.

The primary issue between Catholics and Jews is whether Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary by the Holy Spirit and was the divine Son of God, or the deceived, unfortunate, illegitimate son of a harlot mother! He was one or the other, and the pope is supposed to hold one position and the rabbi the other.

No wonder they prayed in silence. To have prayed

aloud would have been an embarrassment to both and demonstrated the inconsistency of their meeting. If the pope knows how to pray, he had to pray through or in the name of Christ in order to reach God. Jesus said, "And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14: 13). The apostle Paul wrote, "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2: 5). Does the pope believe that? Does the rabbi believe it?

Let it be understood that we are not anti-Semitic, nor do we believe in hatred or persecution of Jews or any other people because of their race or religion. No Christian should hate anyone, but we can and should reject some things which others believe.

The pope spoke of the old and troublesome question of the role of the Jews in the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The Vatican Council may absolve them of any guilt, but that does not change the facts of history and the scriptures.

According to Catholic tradition (and that's all the authority there is), the apostle Peter was the first pope. There certainly has been a change in the popes from first to last. The report said that John Paul and the rabbi read from the Psalms. We can name parts of the Psalms which they did not read, nor did they make the same application of the Psalms which concern Christ that Peter made in the sermon on Pentecost. Peter proved his point from the Psalms, and it was that the Jews had rejected the Christ! Consider what he said, as recorded in Acts 2, and remember that he was speaking to Jews (verse 5):

"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the Lord always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken; Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh will also rest in hope, Because You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence'" (Acts 2: 22-28 NKJ).

Peter quoted from Psalm 16, and made application of it to the Jews' rejection of the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. That rabbi doesn't believe a word of that! Does the pope? It seems to us that there was a meeting of two hypocrites.


But that's not all that Peter said. Verse 36 records that he said: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ. " Notice that phrase, "whom you have crucified. " To whom was he speaking? The Jews; the "house of Israel. " For all who believe the Bible, that settles that, regardless of what

any Vatican Council may decree.

Anyone who is thinking straight knows that sin and guilt cannot be inherited. Thinking that to be true has been the root of much religious error and confusion. We are not charging that Jews living today are guilty of the crucifixion of Christ. But their ancestors who were living at the time of Christ on earth were guilty. On another occasion, Peter told the Jews. "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you killed by hanging on a tree" (Acts 5: 30).

Had the pope been a true disciple of Christ, he would have tried, as did Peter, to persuade the rabbi and other Jews that Jesus was both Lord and Christ and then admonished those who did believe to, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2: 38).

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. " (John 14: 6).



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INTRODUCTION TO INDIVIDUALISM Part One

Jack Holt
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Introduction

Individualism is a doctrine which exalts the role of the individual's service to God to the point that it denies the collective a role. Individualists teach that "the only 'functional unit' that the Lord has is the individual";¹ therefore, the local church has no duties or responsibilities. As a result of this position, they deny that men are appointed as elders to oversee the local church, and they maintain it is unscriptural for a local church to have a treasury.

In this series of articles I will examine each of these positions in the light of God's word. But before I do that, it will be helpful to the reader to learn a little about the history of the movement, and to come to understand why it is growing among God's people.

Basic History of the Movement

The movement's founder and primary propagator is Charles Holt. Brother Holt stood for the truth against institutionalism in the 1950s, but drifted into his current position during the 1960s. He published a magazine, Sentinel of Truth, which had as its primary purpose the propagation of the Individualist position.

During the 1960s he was challenged by brother J. T. Smith to defend his views in public debate. Brother Holt signed propositions, but backed out at the last moment. He ceased publication of his magazine, and virtually dropped out of sight during the 1970s.

In this decade, brother Holt published a very fine book on baptism, and began to be received again by many churches. Brother Smith again challenged him to debate his position. They met on five successive evenings between September 30 and October 4, 1985, in Lake Jackson, Texas. At this writing, they are scheduled to meet again in March of 1986, in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

In January of 1986 brother Holt began distributing another magazine, the Examiner. With this publication, it became clear that he was not only meeting with success in converting Christians to his view, but that he intended to embark upon a nation-wide tour to spread the doctrine.²

Possible Reasons the Movement is Having Some Success

Four things occurred in the 1970s which have contributed to the rise of Individualism in this decade.

First, several brethren began running around the brotherhood promoting the idea that "we should preach Christ, and not the church." Their aim in doing this was

to correct what they saw as an overemphasis placed on the local church by Christians. Brother Holt doesn't believe there is any such thing as the local church, so when he promotes this idea he is not trying to correct an overemphasis; he is using it to destroy the local church.

The fact of the matter is, one cannot preach Christ without preaching His church. Whether one is using that word in its universal sense, or in its local sense, Christ purchased the church with His blood (Acts 20: 28). This is true of the universal church inasmuch as each member of it is washed with the blood of Christ (Revelation 1: 5), and it applies to the organized, functional, local church inasmuch as it is a part of the New Covenant which He ratified with His blood (see Hebrews chapter 9, and 13: 20). To "preach Christ, and not His church," is to preach a gospel which brings the curse of Galatians 1: 8, 9.

The second reason Individualists are meeting with success is related to the perception of many Christians that the "brotherhood" is in deep trouble. Seizing upon this apprehension, brother Holt and those with him have pointed to the organized, functioning, local church as the source of all problems. He paints a picture which characterizes preachers as a domineering clergy class, elders as totally inept or overbearing, and saints in general as being largely of the "Sunday morning" type who attend once a week, make a contribution, and consider these duties the extent of their obligation.

I am convinced of better things concerning brethren. We need to learn the lesson which God taught Elijah when he lamented that he alone remained faithful in Israel (1 Kings 19: 9-18). The divine response was, "I will leave 7000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him"³. We must take heart. When we give into feelings of hopelessness and despair because of the unfaithfulness of a few, we open ourselves up to false teachers.

The third reason this position is making progress has to do with the rise of the "unity in diversity" concept. Some brethren have grown weary of the battle, and are telling us that we must be more "tolerant" of others. As a result of this attitude, some brethren welcome brother Holt back with open arms in the early 1980s. He was invited to hold meetings, and given other opportunities to spread his doctrine. When brother Smith suggested in the May, 1985, issue of Searching the Scriptures that brother Holt needed to repent or tell brethren he continued to hold the same position he did in the 1960s, he came under a sea of criticism. 2 John 8-11 warns us of the danger of allowing false teachers an opportunity. If brethren had applied the passage to brother Holt, matters might not be as they are.

Finally, there is a cultural explanation for the movement's resurgence. We are living in a time when the individual is being exalted at the expense of "the group." We see this in government, in families, and in the religious world. In the civil realm, many are arguing that we need to "get the government off the back of the working man." In the family, ERA forces are arguing that the woman (the individual) needs to be free of the family (the group). And in the religious world, the de-

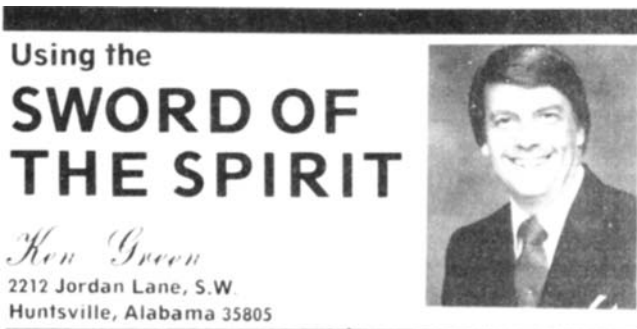
cline of "organized religion" is everywhere being heralded.

The Individualists have used this cultural phenomenon to push their cause. They are urging the "man in the pew" to throw off "the elder and preacher 'clergy' system. They are offering leadership roles to women in their movement, and are suggesting that New Testament women had such. And they are urging democracy among believers as an alternative to the organized, functional, local church.

Democratic principles are deeply imbedded in Americans, and some are convinced this system should rule in churches. But God never intended for churches to be democracies. They are theocracies, ruled through the medium of Jesus' word, and overseen by duly appointed elders (Acts 20: 28; Hebrews 13: 17).

¹ *The Examiner*, Truth and Freedom Ministries, Inc., P. O. Box 21584, Chattanooga, TN, 37421; Vol. 1, No. 1, page 30. ¹ *The Examiner*, page 15.

³ All quotations in this booklet from the Bible are from the New American Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.



AN EX-CRITIC SPEAKS

"... the more movies I saw, the more I changed. It took progressively longer to rid my mind of disturbing images, language and emotions. I was often depressed and reacted angrily to the slightest provocation from my wife and children. Finally, I had to quit... in the areas of language, violence and the graphic portrayal of sex (including homosexuality) on the screen, I believe there is worth in old-fashioned values."

No, those are not the rantings of a wild-eyed, fanatical, Bible-thumping preacher (as all who teach Biblical moral values are often caricatured). Neither are those words a testimonial at a backwoods prayer-meeting' service.

They are the words of John Culea whose movie reviews aired twice a week on the evening news of KFMB-TV in San Diego for 3 1/2 years. Film studios flew him across the country, first-class, to interview movie stars and directors. He stayed in the finest hotels and got all the popcorn and other goodies he wanted, free.

The November 1985 issue of Reader's Digest includes a condensed version of his story as originally published in the San Diego Magazine. Mr. Culea states that most

of his readers "welcomed my honesty and criticism of the ever-present violence, sex and profanity on the screen. Occasionally, viewers objected, and I was pressured by some co-workers to tone down my comments. One viewer was upset with my objections to a scene implied in the movie 'National Lampoon's Vacation.' He reasoned that incest happens all the time, and it isn't that big a deal.' To my chagrin, "Vacation" was one of the top moneymakers for Warner Brothers in the summer of 1983."

"Still, I continued to speak my mind. I believed that I could be of service by not accepting the barrage of filth and junk from Hollywood. For a while, it worked. I was able to watch a movie, write my critique and seemingly wipe the memory from my mind. I believed I wasn't affected by what I was watching."

Culea learned that he couldn't feed on filth without becoming ill. So he decided to change his diet. He states: "My last appearance as a film critic was in August 1984. I have not been to a movie since." He does not claim that all movies are rotten. Just the vast majority of them. He names a few, such as "E. T.," "The Fox and the Hound," "Never Cry Wolf," "Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan," and "Chariots of Fire" as favorites of his.

It is not the object of this writer to encourage people to never take in a movie. It is my purpose to motivate some serious thought on the kind of entertainment that is generally available at the movie house. As I write this article, of 25 movies advertised in the theaters of Huntsville, 19 of them are rated "R."

We often watch an old movie on TV and wonder why that kind of creativity and humor is not being produced today. The main reason is the kind of people who are making the movies today.

From 1934-1966, the production code maintained by the film industry stressed three general principles: (1) no picture was to be produced that would tend to lower the moral standards of those watching it; (2) only correct standards of life, subject to the needs of drama and entertainment, were to be presented; and (3) the forces of law and order were never to be ridiculed and evil was never to be made attractive.

Note these excerpts from this Motion Picture Production code: "No film or episode may throw ridicule on any religious faith... pictures shall not imply that low forms of sex relations are the accepted or common thing ... Brutal killings are not to be presented in detail... complete nudity is never permitted."

Jack Valenti became President of the Motion Picture Association of America in 1966 and established the present rating system. The situation has steadily deteriorated since then.

Our God demands that we think soberly. As one TV commercial expressed it: "A mind is too precious a thing to waste." Let us be selective in the area of our entertainment. Jesus said: "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (Lk. 16: 8). It may be that some of us can learn a valuable lesson from an ex-movie critic who's still criticizing.

PRECEPTS AND PERCEPTIONS

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MAY CHURCHES OF CHRIST

SUPPORT HUMAN INSTITUTIONS⁷—VI

Whom Shall We Please?

More than a hundred years ago churches of Christ began dividing because there were those who argued that missionary societies supported from church treasuries were merely "methods" whereby churches carried out the charge to "go... teach." Others said they were "aids" to the churches and as such should be supported by the churches. The promoters of this great program of human invention wrought havoc among churches everywhere they pushed them upon the churches. Today the story is being repeated among the very churches which have refused to support missionary societies dedicated to the mission of evangelism. The modern societies are dedicated to other missions. The benevolence societies are dedicated to the mission of orphan and old folk's care and the educational societies are dedicated to the mission of training elders, teachers and other church leaders. One wonders whom or what local churches are supposed to train! Are they merely to become money-raisers for human institutions?

As we said early in these articles, there is nothing wrong per se with men forming themselves into service organizations to sell food, clothing and shelter, reading, writing, arithmetic and Bibles or Bible courses. Few people have ever found fault with this. The stir starts, however, and the stir will continue as long as self-appointed institutional promoters continue to call upon the Lord's churches to underwrite benevolence and educational enterprises that none of the Lord's churches started or have one word of say regarding their operations. They are not "church schools" or "church homes." To call them such is to mis-call them.

In hundreds of congregations over the land there are men and women who attend worship and make regular contributions into the church treasury. They are not the type that have a lot to say in public. They know, however, that a school is not the church and a benevolence society is not the church. They conscientiously believe that a church has no right to support these human institutions. Elders, without regard to the consciences of these quiet souls, have been known to go before the congregation and urge the church to give freely to these institutions. Sometimes, without consulting or informing the church, they order the treasurer to write checks

to these institutions. The result is that in many locations there is unrest, suspicion and, not infrequently, downright distrust of an eldership which acts with such "high and mighty" tactics. When somebody dares question this practice elders and preachers proceed to brand the questioner as an "anti" which, in many instances, means the loss of favor, if not friendship, of those who think more of the human institutions than they do of the peace among and fellowship of their own brethren for whom Christ died.

To call a man an "anti" is to label him as a bad, bad person in the eyes of many people. The word "anti" simply means "against" or "opposed." The impression that some of these name-callers apparently want to leave is that those who oppose church donations to human institutions are against orphans and widows. This, of course, is not true and to leave such impression is basically dishonest. To speak such as true without knowledge is to deal in destructive gossip. To speak such knowing it is untrue is to deal in malicious falsehoods. A Christian will do neither. The very persons who brand others as "anti" are opposed to some things, aren't they? Don't they oppose "instrumental music"? They are against lying, stealing, adultery, and drunkenness, are they not? You see, dear brother, it all depends on what you oppose as to whether you are called an ugly name. Calling names is no rightful substitute for scripture or legitimate argument. Honest brethren want scripture instead of name calling.

Those who are concerned only about pleasing God will not be unduly upset at the nasty things said about them. They know that they are pleasing God even though they displease men. They also know that they are looking to their heavenly Father for their eternal reward, not to those who call them names and seek to destroy their influence. They know that Jesus said:

"Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you."
(Matt. 5: 11, 12).

Faithful Christians know that when men begin calling their brethren ugly names and slurring them, this does not answer the truth of God's word regarding the all-sufficiency of the Lord's local church to do everything God wanted it to do without underwriting human institutions to do the very work God commands His church to do in the first place. If there were scriptural authority for church support of these institutions, it would not take sixty years to produce the scripture authorizing it. Brethren need to listen to the Lord's word instead of the word of institutional promoters. When these promoters cease calling upon churches to do something for which there is no authority in God's word, trouble will cease, division will end, and brethren will again be at peace. As long as they continue to call upon the divine institution to underwrite the expenses of human institutions spiritual war will continue. Hostilities will not

cease as long as men who ought to know better continue to disobey God! Let us fervently pray that those who are using churches and urging churches to raise money for their human schemes may return to the simple work which Christ commissioned His churches to perform when He fully equipped them to do all things He commanded them to do.

SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

P. J. Casebolt

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ACCOMPLISHING DEATH

"And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias; who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Lk. 9: 30, 31).

Few of us regard death as an accomplishment; something to be spoken of in a matter-of-fact way. Death is one of the most inevitable experiences we will ever encounter, yet we steadfastly refuse to think about it, or prepare for it. We wait until it happens, and then we are forced to deal with events which are not easily handled under the best of conditions. I think we can learn to discuss death, including our own, calmly and forthrightly.

The young man lay in the coronary care unit of a large, metropolitan hospital. He had already faced and made decisions which would overwhelm most people. His heart had stopped beating several times, and he was surrounded by a literal forest of IV's, tubes and monitors. Death was not only possible, but probable. He had just decided to undergo a heart transplant, but had to wait until a suitable organ could be located, if at all. He had received little rest due to the constant medical attention which he required, and had to remain in a sitting position in order to breathe.

One night, around two or three o'clock in the morning, I decided to try something. The CCU ward was quiet, and competent nurses were watching his monitors at their station. I stood at the foot of his bed where I could observe the monitors above his head, and discussed the Bible with him. He was also a gospel preacher, and could hold his own on any Bible subject. We talked of life, death, his family, the church, and preaching. His blood pressure had been low, and his pulse high, accompanied by irregular heart rhythm patterns.

Within fifteen minutes, his blood pressure had risen about six points, his pulse dropped ten points, and his monitor indicated a more regular heartbeat pattern. The nurse noticed the change in his condition, and

asked what had happened. I told her we had tried a new medication, but I wanted more evidence. The following night, we followed the same procedure, with almost identical results. This young man wanted to live, be with his family, and take his place once again in the church and in the community as much as anyone. Yet, his courage and faith caused those around him to marvel.

Brethren, it is high time we began to discuss the reality of death. Some of us know that "it is appointed unto man once to die", but it just isn't something you talk about. I don't mean that we should just joke about it, or pass it off lightly, but we need to regard it as an accomplishment—a passage to better things in a better world.

Maybe we need to preach more about death outside the funeral parlors and cemeteries. Maybe we should sing more "funeral" songs in the public assemblies. Maybe we could begin to give more flowers and "bouquets" to the living. Maybe then we could accomplish death with more dignity and purpose; accomplish a victory through Christ.

THE FRUITFUL VINE

Dene Ward
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In Psalm 128: 3 the woman is called "the fruitful vine." In the Psalm this refers primarily to childbearing, but it can also be true in other areas where the woman acts as a "producer" for her husband.

The most important thing a home-maker produces is exactly what her title says—a home. Unfortunately, home-making has gotten a bad name lately. The woman at home is portrayed as a leech on her husband's arm— always a consumer, and never a producer. In this portrait she sits in her easy chair, a television in front of her, a telephone on one side, romance novels and sales catalogues on the other. On the one day a week she is not reading, gossiping or staring, she is out spending his hard-earned income on more clothes, a shampoo and set, and a basketful of overpriced convenience food. The beds are never made. The clothes may be washed, but one always has to pick through the laundry basket for clean underwear. Dinner varies from Chef-Boy-Ar-Dee to Stouffer's, depending upon the occasion. The children care for themselves, coming and going as they please. She does not know if they have done their home-work or their Bible lessons; she has no idea if they are being taught evolution, situation ethics, or any other atheisticism. If her children were kidnapped, she would not know what they were wearing (she sleeps in, you see) or the schedules they kept.

That is our image, ladies, and some of it is our fault. We have started believing our detractors when they tell us how unfulfilling our lives are. They ask us if we work, and instead of proudly saying, "Of course I work. I'm a home-maker," we hang our heads and mutter an apology about "being just a housewife." Titus 2: 4 calls the woman a "worker at home." We have been so busy emphasizing the "at home" that we have forgotten to emphasize the "worker." No, we do not punch a time-clock, but that makes it more difficult, not less. We have to MAKE ourselves take the time and do the work. We are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, NO holidays! It takes as many hours to stretch a dollar (gardening, canning, sewing, coupon-clipping, comparison shopping, baking from scratch) as it does to earn one. It takes more hours to read and discuss a Bible story than it does to plop a child in front of a television. It takes extra hours to read up on humanism and monitor a child's school-work for its insidious signs; then it takes good old-fashion nerve to speak up about it. No one gives us a neat, typewritten job description. We, ourselves, must organize dozens of chores involving almost as many different skills. It takes more self-discipline and creativity to be a good home-maker than any other career in the world!

But it is the most rewarding calling if it is handled as God intended. When one truly produces a home, people notice, not just because the housework is done, but

because the atmosphere of the home is carried with the family members. A haven, peaceful, secure—the place you run to not from—that is a home.

The fruitful vine lives to produce. She is never resentful or regretful. When we do as Titus 2: 4 says and learn to love our husbands and children, the homes we produce for them will show it, because all the work we do is for them. The fruitful vine asks nothing in return from those who pick her grapes, but because her fruit is so plenteous and sweet, they shower her with extra care and attention. What kind of fruit are you producing, ladies? Is it scarce? Tough? Undersized? Seedy? Sour? Does it come like a fortune cookie with a little message tucked inside that says, "... and after all I've done for you?"

It takes effort to be a fruitful vine. If you feel unfulfilled at home, maybe it is because you do not put forth enough of it. Let us get to work and change our image to what it used to be. "Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates" (Prov. 31: 31).

WHEN YOU MOVE—Please allow two months for change of address notices. We have a cut-off date for changes each month. *Thanks for your help.*

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

"... They rehearsed all that God had done with them ..."—Acts 14:27

Send all News Items to: *Connie W. Adams, P. O. Box 69, Brooks, KY40109*

WILLIE OPAL CHAFFIN AT REST

MARSHALL E. PATTON—After a brief vacation in Florida with relatives and friends, Vestal and his beloved, Willie were brought back to their home in Charleston, West Virginia on April 1. On Friday night of that week, just past midnight, Willie quietly and apparently with ease departed this life—April 5, 1986. She is survived by her husband, Otha Vestal Chaffin, a faithful gospel preacher of some fifty years; by two daughters, Mrs. Carolyn Linville of Charleston, WV and Mrs. Kathleen Paschall of Miami, FL; by three sons, Guilford of Hermitage, TN, Ronald of Charleston, WV and Larry of Mineral City, OH; by three sisters, fifteen grandchildren and nine great grandchildren.

Lowell Kibler and this writer conducted the memorial service at the Barlett-Burdett-Cox Funeral Home in Charleston on April 7, 1986 after which her body was laid to rest in the beautiful Tyler Mountain Memorial Gardens near Charleston.

Sister Chaffin possessed those virtues that make one an ideal preacher's wife. She was devoted first to God and then to her family. Some of us know personally something of Vestal's strength of character, his wisdom in resolving problems in harmony with the will of God, and his patient persistence in contending earnestly for the faith (Jude 3). Through both mountain tops of joy and deep valleys of sorrow sister Chaffin has walked faithfully by his side and contributed greatly to his success. Her godliness is reflected not only in her husband and his accomplishments but also in the lives of her children and in the lives of many others. Truly, her ornament was that of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Pet. 3: 4). She adorned herself "in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety" and "with good works (which becometh women professing godliness" (1 Tim. 2: 9, 10). It was both timely and fitting that Prov. 31: 10-31 was read at the beginning of the memorial service.

While the loss is great and the sorrow heavy, we "sorrow not as others which have no hope" (1 Thess. 4: 13). We praise God for this hope which saints have "as an anchor of the soul" (Heb. 6: 19) which enables us through such trying experiences to ever "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3: 14).

We pray for Vestal, the children and their families, all the relatives, and those who mourn the passing of this godly woman. May God's grace sustain them now and through all time that may remain this side of the Jordan of death.

HAROLD SHARP, 7408 W. Markham St., Little Rock, AR 72205— James L. Davis has been an outstanding man in the church of the Lord in southeast Georgia for a long time. He served as an elder at Gordon, Georgia and has preached for the church in Oglethorpe, Georgia. Every preacher who has been in that section of the country knows brother Davis and likely has eaten as his guest. He has always been a hospitable man. He is now in need of financial help. He recently had heart bypass surgery in Atlanta, Georgia. Since returning to his home he has been in the hospital in Albany for a time, then in the hospital in Americus and recently returned for a week's stay in the hospital in Atlanta. As all know, the constantly mounting cost of Doctors and hospital care is extreme. Brother Davis, at this time, owes a bill of \$34,000. It will take a long time to be able to pay this. Maybe some of you who have been in his home, or eaten in his restaurant and received his warm hospitality, would like to send him a gift at this time. I know it would be greatly appreciated. His address is: James L. Davis, Rt. 3, Box 29A, Americus, GA 31709.

FRANK INGRAM, 9960 37th St., N. Pinellas Park, FL 33565—As of July 29 I will be at the above address and will be available for either full or part time work and for meetings. I can be reached through the 14th Ave. congregation in St. Pete.

ARRIGO CORAZZA, Via Alessandro III, 47, 15100 Alessandria Italy—I'd like to inform the American brethren about the work being done in Alessandria. This city is located in north Italy, between Genova, Milan and Turin. It is a quiet city of 100,000 people. Patrizia, Deborah, Simona and myself moved here from Rome after seven years of work with the Via Sannio church there. We moved to help brethren heavily vexed in the past with doctrinal and practical errors. At present the church is composed of 15 members. Due to the influence of SENTIERI DIRITTI, a monthly magazine edited by my father, Alessandro Corazza, the brethren in Alessandria came to ask my brother Stefano (who preaches in Udine), Gianni Berdini (who preaches in Trieste), Rodolfo Berdini (preacher in Aprilia), Roberto Tondelli (preacher in Pomezia) and Valerio Marchi (a preacher from Udine) to visit them to discuss doctrinal issues. These faithful men did excellent work. Thus, the church here repented of their liberal standings of the past and sent out a circular letter to brethren in this country (mailed July 21, 1985) explaining their action. Last September I was invited, along with Valerio Marchi, to preach for them and moved here in December. We thank the brethren who faithfully supported the truth. We ask brethren everywhere to pray for us and for the results of our efforts. The work is slow and difficult, but God will give the increase. We meet on Sundays at 9:30 A. M. and on Thursdays at 9 P. M. All interested in walking by faith are invited to meet with us.

EFRAIN PEREZ, Casilla 1317, Valparaiso, Chile, South America—I am teaching three preacher training programs invited by local churches in El Progreso, Quilpue and Puente Alto (metro Santiago). I am teaching Harmony of the Gospels, New Testament Epistles, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Evidences of Christianity, the book of Acts, Minor Prophets and Church Music. Am also teaching a course in Homiletics and Hermeneutics. More than 30 persons are taking these classes. There are 15 congregations now in Chile and we need this kind of study to develop men in the congregations for leadership.

PAUL K. WILLIAMS, 18 Fairlie Rd., Eshowe, 3815 South Africa— As a result of a correspondence course study with a 22-year-old man of the college of agriculture near Empangeni, I baptized him in a nearby river the same day. Through the 28-year-old son of the preacher of a congregation about ten miles from Ingwavuma, I was able to visit and preach. About 100 assembled in a rondavel for service Saturday night and about that many Sunday morning. The preacher, brother Mafuleka, is 51 and was converted in 1979 by a black brother in another town where he was working. He and the church are associated with liberal brethren though I am sure they know almost nothing about the division over institutionalism. They gave me a wonderful welcome and invited me back. I am praying for wisdom in dealing with this situation. GENE AND BETTY TOPE will be spending a month in South Africa and will be with us for a series in the Eshowe Town Hall July 2-4.

RAY VOTAW, P. O. Box 801, Springs, Transval, South Africa—About two years ago while in a meeting with the Ndebele native black brethren I met some Pentecostal people who called themselves "Church of Christ." They asked me to preach for them in the Natalspruit township near here. I did, but about this time the riots started and I was not able to go into Natalspruit. But they found a relatively safe meeting place at the recreation hall of the old and historic Simmer and Jack Gold Mine in Germiston—about 35 kms. west of Springs. There were 14 in this little group. Since last report we have baptized the last six of these 14. The other baptisms were scattered through the last two years. We had a successful meeting in Lebo wa with 8 white preachers

and 9 black and coloured speakers. The church in Driekop, Lebowe was greatly edified and 8 were baptized. Although we have been able to establish churches in the national states of Transkei, Ciskei, Venda, Gazankulu, Swaziland, Kwandebele, Lebowe and Kangwane, there has been no church established in the country near the "Mountain Kingdom" of Lesotho. Week before last it was my thrill to baptize two men from that national state. Already they are making plans for me to accompany them to Basotho Qwa-Qwa to preach the gospel to their people. Pray for us. On the political scene, the government is passing measures to reform but not nearly fast enough for the revolutionary factions. Thus the unrest is in no sense abating. But the work of preaching the gospel goes on. I continually have to move very carefully but must at times take selected and calculated risks, and I am not all that brave! •

WILBERT GARINGO ENOSTACION, Estrada Apt., Gov. Ortega St. San Fernando, La Union, Republic of the Philippines 0501—Since last report we have baptized two here and had six restored from institutionalism. In January of this year we were able to rent a new building for services and classes. In the past, we met in our two bedroom apartment and that became too crowded. On April 6 we baptized a former Mormon bishop. Also, we have a class in Sevilla attended by some 20 Mormons. Our class at Wallace Air Station, a US military base here in La Union, has been cancelled due to the present problems with Muslims and with relations between Libya and the USA. Now, U. S. bases in the Philippines are off limits to Filipino visitors. But we have transferred classes to a house located adjacent to the main gate of the base. Attendance is 20-30, mostly US servicemen.

Another newly established congregation of 27 members is located in Luna, La Union. Esmín Villanueva is laboring to help the work to maturity. La Union province is a vast place with 29 towns. Work has been started in several of these towns but I need help with other workers.

RUBEN C. AMADOR, P. O. Box 7274, Houston, Texas 77248—The work goes well at Judway. Attendance runs in the 40's at both services and we have a good many visitors. Jose Soto was with us in a good meeting in May. In April I preached in a meeting in Reynosa (Mexico) with good interest and attendance. Brethren came from several congregations in the Rio Grande Valley and Mexico. One young man was baptized. Also in April I was in a meeting in San Antonio in which four were baptized. Wayne Partain is working hard with this good church

and also in other places such as Central America. Some brethren came from as far away as Monterrey, Mexico and Corpus Christi, Texas. Plans are set for me to spend about a month in Argentina working with Carlos Capelli and others.

PREACHERS NEEDED

GORDON, GEORGIA—The Hardie's Chapel church is looking for a preacher for full-time work beginning the first of July. The church is fully self-supporting and furnishes a three bedroom house. Gordon is located about 20 miles east of Macon. Those interested may write the church at: P. O. Box 409, Gordon, GA 31031. Or you may call Fred LaPlante at 912-628-2854, or Ray Watson at 912-628-2824.

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EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS

I see where the Letoli Christian Family Center of St. Jo, Texas has advertised a "Sounds of Joy Concert" "featuring the finest in Acapella Gospel Singing, Bluegrass, Country and Western and Classical Guitar. " Among those performing will be choruses from seven Texas churches of Christ. Question: What are churches of Christ doing with such things? Where did they get the authority from the word of God? There will also be singing groups from some of the schools and Blue-grass and Country and Western bands. What is even more interesting about this event is that their printed advertising says "Supported by members and congregations of the Church of Christ. " So, this is a church affair. Is it too much to ask for Bible authority? Note also the unscriptural concept of "congregations of the Church of Christ. " While the New Testament uses the term "church" in the universal sense to include all the saved, each local church is autonomous and not interrelated to other congregations in some sort of hierarchy. If it is not truly "of Christ, " I wonder why someone does not write an article about this to publish in the GOSPEL ADVOCATE or FIRM FOUNDATION. Maybe even THE SPIRITUAL SWORD? Our liberal brethren need to understand that the floodgates are wide open and the few feeble voices being heard now and then from a few men with occasional attacks of conscience will not stop this on-rushing torrent.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	385
RESTORATIONS	108

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)