

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

H. C. Phillips

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Lutz, FL 33549



Forsaking The Right Way

In every local church there are those who wait to see which way the popular position will go on every debatable issue and, without principle or conviction, they align themselves with the majority side. They willingly switch sides when they find that they unwittingly selected the unpopular position. There is nothing wrong with changing when one learns he is wrong; in fact, it is the only honorable and honest thing to do. But to forsake one's principles just to be on the popular side of a question is hardly the honorable thing to do.

The word of God speaks plainly on the matter of forsaking one's place with Christ to become aligned with Satan, the enemy of Christ, whatever the reason may be. I am speaking of those in the church who turn from the Lord to serve Satan. When Joshua was about ready to lead the people of Israel into the promised land, he told them that they had to choose between serving Jehovah and the idols around them. They answered: "God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods" (Joshua 24: 16). These people elected to serve the Lord, but their recorded history proves beyond question that this was a promise of the mouth and not a determination of the heart.

In addition, Joshua told the Israelites, "If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good" (Joshua 24: 20). Any among the

Israelites who turned to forsake the Lord would receive severe punishment from the Lord.

Peter writes of the false prophets and those that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness. "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities... Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Pet. 2: 10, 14, 15). These had "forsaken the right way," which indicates that they once were in the right way. They had changed their ways to oppose the truth. They had forsaken the principles that motivated them to serve the Lord.

Paul spoke of one who once stood with him in the gospel, but who later forsook him. "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia" (2 Tim. 4: 10). When Paul wrote to Philemon, Demas was one of his "fellow labourers" (verse 24). Demas had forsaken Paul because he had forsaken the way of truth which Paul preached. He did this because he loved the present world instead of the kingdom of Christ.

James says, "know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4: 4). There is no question about where one stands when he loves this present evil world. He is the enemy of God. Paul teaches that we are to walk by the same rule and mind the same thing and to be "... followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: " (Phil 3: 16-18).

All these passages point to three facts: 1) To turn from the Lord is to become His enemy; 2) To forsake the Lord brings the "wages of unrighteousness"; 3) One forsakes the Lord by turning from the "right way" - the way of truth - and becoming a servant of unrighteousness.



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" QUOTE

**"You can't act like a skunk
without someone's getting
wind of it."**

—Lorene Workman

UNQUOTE "

Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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Brooks, Kentucky 40109



Preaching In Norway

It was with mixed emotions that we returned to Bergen, Norway in February for a gospel meeting. The brethren there are trying to have some men to come for meetings who have previously worked in that country. I hope others will be able to arrange to go should they be invited. Going to Bergen with mixed emotions was not new for me. In 1957 I took my six-months-pregnant wife with me to begin the work in the land of the midnight sun. We knew nobody there. We did not know the language. We had nowhere to live except for a week's reservation in a hotel. We did not know how we were going to make contacts with people. But somehow, in the Providence of God, that all worked out.

The work was slow and hard. Then as now, the population was over 90% Lutheran, the state church. Then as now, many bristle at the thought that you have come to evangelize in what they consider a "Christian nation" which sends out missionaries to spiritually darkened areas of the world. They do not consider themselves in that category. Baptizing babies, confirming sixteen year olds, Christmas and Easter observances, weddings, funerals and a place to be buried, is the major religious life of the vast majority of people in that land. They are comfortable with it and do not particularly want to be bothered.

Among the dissenters from the state church, the majority are charismatics. These are as difficult to reach as they are here or in other places. Subjective religionists don't care a hoot about what the Bible says, not if they have to question what they think they have "felt." Some of these will come to hear you once or twice, long enough to see if you agree with what they already think. The Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses are very active there but their persistent door-knocking has served to aggravate the people.

Added to this situation is the fact that immigration laws have changed and it is very difficult, if not impossible, to gain entry to the country to stay for a long term to preach. People can yet enter on an American passport and stay for six weeks as a tourist.

In such soil the old Jerusalem gospel has not flourished as it has in other places. But over the years there have been some found with good and honest hearts. There have been some heartbreaking events which

weakened and all but destroyed what progress had been made. One brother who preached for awhile, left the faith to embrace denominational error. Another native preacher and his wife had serious trouble and they ended up going to the world. Others fell away for various reasons. The church in Bergen lost its meeting place by foreclosure and along with it the furnishings, boxes of tracts, song books, Bibles, Bible class literature and all the files.

In 1980 when Tom and Shirley Bunting and their children came back to Bergen (they had spent two years there in the late 1960's), they had to start all over again. Only this time, it was even harder than it had been for us in 1957, for they had to overcome ill-will which some former members had generated and the shame of the unbusiness-like manner in which the property was lost.

The Buntings have stayed. Their son, Terrell and his wife Karen are there in Bergen with the intention of spending their lives there. They encountered difficulty getting in to stay. If they leave, it will be mighty hard to get anyone else there to replace them.

The Church in Bergen

We found a small group of 8 members. They had worked hard to prepare for the meeting. They could have done more advertising in the newspaper if they only had the funds. They did what they were able to do. Many advertisements were hand-delivered. Two brethren came from the small group near Oslo to be with us the first two days of the meeting. Also a sister and her child from Stavager came for four days. We had seven non-members to attend the meeting, three of these attending two times. The singing was ably led by a faithful Norwegian brother. While most attending understood English, some did not and so the sermons were interpreted. Terrell Bunting did this twice and the rest of the time, Bjorn Ringdal interpreted. Bjorn is a student in the university and hopes to one day be able to support himself and preach in Norway. He was baptized at Southside in Pasadena, Texas while an exchange student there. He is a most impressive young man. A young man, who is also still a student, though married and with one child, is also a member. Another member has been in north Norway for a time but hopes to relocate in Bergen.

The congregation has purchased a building which was once a bakery and has made it into a very nice place to meet. It is in an old and very well-known part of the city and easy for locals and visitors alike to find. Their payments are not much more than the rent they had been paying.

We attempted to locate some people we had known many years ago so the brethren there would have these additional contacts with which to work. We succeeded in finding a few people and managed to get four visitors to the meetings from that. We found two women who were young girls when we lived there and who had attended Bible classes. They came twice.

Needs

It is urgent that the Buntings continue their work. They have shown exceptional patience. The cost of living in Norway is the highest in western Europe. Housing is

especially expensive. Gasoline is \$4. 50 a gallon. Milk is over \$4. 00 a gallon. Eating out, even at McDonald's or Burger King is very costly. A quarter-pounder, fries and soft drink sells for \$9. 50. Wages are high, though many are unemployed and live off the dole of a socialistic state.

Terrell Bunting and wife have two children and expect their third in the late summer. They are losing \$350 a month support by summer. They can ill-afford this. While we were there, Tom Bunting received a letter telling him that he will lose \$200 a month support in three months. They can't afford that loss either. Tom's wife, Shirley, teaches school now in order to help them stay. Some daylight is being seen in the work. If the Buntings have to come home, who could replace them? Who could even get into the country to stay for longer than 6 weeks? They are working under the conviction that "we shall reap if we faint not. " We are all thrilled about the opening opportunities in eastern Europe and other places. But we must not allow the light to go out in Norway. These few members there need the prayerful encouragement of brethren everywhere. The Bunting's need the patient and understanding support of brethren who do not expect the same kind of results as we have seen in some third world countries and a few other fields. If you can help these good brethren, here are their addresses. If you cannot financially help them, could you find the time to write them an encouraging letter?

Thomas Bunting	Terrell Bunting
Adolf Bergsvei 52-D	Bronndalen 89
5030 Landaas	5071 Loddefjord
Norway	Norway

I would also like to encourage brethren from churches which support these men and who are able to do so, to visit Bergen and worship with these brethren. It would do them a world of good. But it would also do the visitors untold good. It would help them to appreciate what they have at home: commodious meetings houses, well-arranged and taught Bible classes at many age levels, abundance of available literature, several good song leaders, elders and deacons, many Christians from which to draw strength and who are just a phone call away, and many other things besides.

Through it all we have to remember that many souls over the years have heard the truth in Norway. Some did obey it and some died in hope. There are some faithful Christians there now. A diligent search is still being made for good and honest hearts. We just must not forget those who have dedicated their lives to the search.

I keep thinking of all those children who came to Bible classes every Sunday for several years. And I think about two 45-year-old women who were so glad to see us and who told us they had not forgotten all they learned. They were proud of the fact that they could so easily locate scriptures during sermons, for we had drilled them as small children on how to find their way around in the Bible. Surely, brethren if has not all be in vain. Please help the sowers of the seed in Norway.

*Special
Issue*

July 1992



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*Rethinking Marriage, Divorce
& Remarriage* (No.4)

Donnie V. Rader

P.O. Box 9
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Must Those Who Have Committed Adultery Separate?

Chapter IX of Jerry Bassett's book is entitled "God's Remedy for the Alien Sinner." The point and conclusion of the chapter is that God does not require separation for those aliens who have divorced and remarried and later decide to obey the gospel.

This principle not only works for the alien sinner but also for the Christian who divorces and remarries contrary to God's law. We are told that when they decide to repent, they do not have to separate.

The question before us is, must those who have committed adultery separate?

Bassett Answers "No"

Bassett makes three points from which he argues his case. (1) God requires repentance for adultery. (2) Adultery does not refer to sexual activity in the second marriage, but to the unscriptural divorce and remarriage. Listen to Bassett. "... the expression 'adulterous marriage' is simply a contradiction of terms... The people we are discussing are not engaging in sexual intercourse with someone else's spouse, but within their own marriage and therefore each with his own spouse. ... However, while these aliens are not committing adultery through sexual activity with their spouses, they have committed adultery by simply divorcing and remarrying (Matthew 19: 9)."

(3) God requires that the couple repent of the divorce and remarriage, but allows them to continue in the present marriage. Jerry writes, "But does the Bible teach that such people must divorce in order to serve God and go to heaven? No! This idea is not taught in God's book. There is no such command in its sacred pages. Neither is there even one example of either Jesus, or one of his apostles, or any New Testament teacher ever so instructing one who desired to obey the gospel. Nor is there so much as a necessary implication that the Lord expects the remarried alien to sunder his marriage" (Bassett, p. 100).

Repentance does not demand that the second marriage cease according to Bassett. "What does this mean for one who has committed adultery by divorcing his mate and remarrying another? It does not mean that he must do penance, that is, pay the penalty of dissolving his present marriage and live celibate for the remain-

der of his life. It means that he must sorrow for the enormity of his sin of divorcing and remarrying, as well as every other thing of which he is guilty" (Bassett, p. 102).

"... will God release the alien sinner from the sins of his past life and give him total forgiveness of the debt thus incurred allowing him to continue in that marriage which he has at the point he obeys the gospel? Yes!" (Bassett, p. 105).

Brother Bassett claims that any instructions to sever a marriage would not harmonize with the instruction of Paul to not divorce (1 Cor. 7: 10-11, 27).

The Bible Answers "Yes"

A careful examination of several principles will help us to see that the Bible answer to our questions is yes.

1. *God requires repentance* for the alien sinner (Acts 2: 38; 17: 30-31 and the erring child of God (Acts 8: 22). To this, brother Bassett would agree. We would disagree as to what that repentance demands.

Repentance involves (or at least produces) a change of life: *ceasing the past sin!* W. E. Vine's definition of repentance says it "involves both a turning from sin and a turning to God" (Vol. III, p. 281). A. T. Robertson says it involves a change of attitude and conduct (*Word Pictures In The New Testament*, Vol. I, p. 24). These definitions harmonize with the text, John's preaching demanded "fruits meet for repentance" (Matt. 3: 8). What Matt. 12: 41 calls *repentance*, Jonah 3: 10 describes as *turning from evil*.

The point is that sin must cease. Whether the sin be idolatry or the sin of adultery, it must cease. If the same practice continues, there has been no repentance.

2. *Adultery refers to unlawful sexual activity and not to the unscriptural divorce and remarriage.* We have already discussed this point in detail in our second article. It will be sufficient here to say that John 8 (where the woman was taken in the very act of adultery) suggests that adultery refers to the unlawful sexual activity and not the unscriptural divorce and remarriage. Was the woman taken in the act of sexual intercourse or in the act of divorcing her husband and remarrying another?

To this, Thayer (p. 417) and others would agree. There is no lexicon or passage that will support this arbitrary definition.

If an act is adultery before repentance, the same act is adultery after repentance (and baptism). If it is unlawful for Jack and Jill to be married before they repent, then the same marriage is unlawful after repentance.

3. *Baptism doesn't wash away the sin of adultery without a cessation of sin.* Jerry Bassett has the concept that the sin of adultery is washed away at Baptism and thus the couple can continue in their present marriage without further sin.

It is true that sin is washed away when one is baptized (Acts 2: 38); 22: 16). However, baptism does not change an unlawful act into a lawful one. Whether it be the sin of adultery or the sin of polygamy, the sin must stop before baptism will wash away the guilt. If the adulterer can continue in his marriage following baptism (and be forgiven), then so can the polygamist

continue with his six wives. If not, why not?

4. *The same principle will work for the homosexual and the polygamist.* If the position that Bassett has presented will work for the adulterer, it will work for the polygamist and the homosexual as well. Let's take the polygamist for example. He is an alien sinner. So, I assume that Bassett's chapter on "God's Remedy For The Alien Sinner" applies to him like any other alien sinner. So, he must repent of his adultery. His adultery is not the sexual relations that he has with his six wives. (In fact, since they are his wives, the sexual relations could not be adultery - if we are to believe Bassett). He should repent of having violated God's moral law which would demand one wife. However, he can continue in his marriage to all six. To demand that he must separate would not harmonize with 1 Cor. 7: 10-11, 27.

Before you conclude that brother Bassett would be inconsistent in dealing with the polygamist, you may be interested in how he has answered that question before. In October 1989 a number of brethren met in Salem, OR to discuss the fellowship implications of the divorce and remarriage question. When brother Bassett was asked what he would do with the South African who had a number of wives, he did not say that he would demand by the scripture that he leave his wives. He was more consistent with his position on the alien in adultery than many brethren would have thought (cf. "Polygamy & Repentance, " Harry R. Osborne, *Gospel Truths*, October 1990).

In the last article we will look at the questions of the guilty party remarrying and fellowship.

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?
(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

Weldon E. Warnock

1021 Welford Dr.
Xenia, OH 45385



Deacons and Jerusalem Elders

QUESTION: *I have a question about the seven men appointed in Acts 6: 1-6. One brother wrote that "these men were selected to relieve the apostles of secular duties" while another brother wrote that "the duties of deacons are to assist the elders." Would you please harmonize these two statements for us, as I believe both are correct. Also, I would appreciate your comments about the absence of elders at the Jerusalem church for a long period of time, or do you think that they were there, but not indicated until further on in the book of Acts?"*

ANSWER: The question the querist proposes about deacons and elders is not a simple one to answer. In regard to Acts 6: 1-6 we observe:

There is no way of knowing for certain that the seven men appointed were deacons in the sense those were in Phil. 1: 1. My persuasion is that they were for the reasons J. W. McGarvey gives in his commentary on Acts. He states, "The title of the office here created is not given, and from this circumstance some scholars have failed to identify it with that of deacon, mentioned in the first chapter of Philippians and the third chapter of First Timothy. But while the name of the office is absent, terms are used which show plainly that the office is the same. If the question had been one about ruling, and the seven had been chosen and appointed to rule, there could certainly be no hesitation about styling them rulers. The case before us is a perfect parallel. The question was about the "daily *diakonian*," and the seven were chosen to *diakonein*; why, then, hesitate to call them *diakonoi*?"

Whether there were elders at that time, the Bible does not say. Churches in Judea had elders (at least some few years later) in Acts 11: 27-30, and Jerusalem being in Judea, the church there evidently had elders also. Elders in the Jerusalem church are mentioned in Acts 15: 2. We read that churches in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch had elders not too long after their establishment (Acts 14: 21-23), and this could have been the case at Jerusalem. However, because the apostles were present at Jerusalem for a period of time after the church began in that city, the Jerusalem church may not

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have had elders as soon as other congregations. The eldership had to be instituted and we do not know the exact time that was done. J. W. McGarvey stated that "the twelve were the only officers in the church" until the appointment of those seven men in Acts 6 (*New Commentary on Acts*, Vol. 1, p. 104). This would mean that the institution of the eldership followed the inauguration of deacons. Of course McGarvey's statement may or may not be true.

Initially, the apostles were directly involved in handling the contributions and distributions for the indigent saints (Acts 4: 34-37). They may have used others in helping them facilitate this task. But as the disciples multiplied, the job became too great, in addition to their preaching, therefore, arrangements were made to select and appoint seven men to be responsible for the service. These men would relieve the apostles of this time-consuming activity so that they could give their time to the preaching of the word. Hence, in Acts 6, those functions of the apostles in Acts 4: 24-27 are taken over by deacons, giving time to the apostles to fulfill the duties to which they were primarily called.

For the deacons at Jerusalem to relieve the apostles, under whom they served, would be similar to deacons assisting elders when, for example, money was sent to the elders of the churches in Judea from Antioch of Syria (Acts 11: 27-30). This is assuming the churches had deacons, but if they were fully organized, as was the church at Philippi (1: 1), then the deacons, functioning in the framework of their role, would have assisted the elders.

My persuasion is that churches should not appoint deacons before having elders. Such a situation may develop into deacons assuming unauthorized oversight. As brother H. E. Phillips said, "Who would direct the deacons in their work?"

A BURNING FIRE

(Jer. 20:9)

Jim Deason

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"Seeking Outside Support"

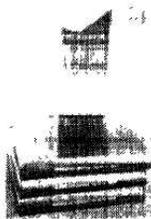
Over the years the Lord has blessed me, as a preacher of the gospel, with the opportunity to worship and work with some churches that could provide me and my family with the security of being able to furnish my full support. But some of the most rewarding work that we have done has been among smaller churches where those resources were not present. In such cases I have always sought and obtained the support needed so that I could devote all my energies to preaching without the burden of a secular job. I know it is scriptural and right to do so because Paul received wages from other churches while laboring in Corinth (2 Cor. 11: 8) and Philippi sent to Paul's need while he labored among the Thessalonians (Phil. 4: 15-16).

The support situation has changed quite a lot over the last few years. Among churches with which I am personally acquainted, although some are growing, money is relatively tight. Perhaps conditions in the various churches just mirror the economy of our times. Churches seem to be focusing their funds on the needs of their own growth and, as long as they are growing, it's hard to argue with their approach. But this has made it more difficult for those who work with small congregations in sometimes difficult areas and who choose to labor without the burden of a secular job to obtain needed "outside" support. It is a time consuming process that can be and often is very difficult, especially for a young man just beginning a life of preaching. Perhaps more thought needs to be given to "making tents" to support our own preaching but that's not within the scope of this article. I want to offer some suggestions that I have found to be helpful in making the process of raising support a little less painful.

BEGIN SEEKING SUPPORT FROM CHURCHES THAT KNOW YOU. At least begin in churches where there is someone who knows and can recommend you. Those who know you will generally be the most interested in your work of preaching. They are pleased to see you at work in the kingdom and they will be the most likely to sacrifice, if need be, for you.

NEXT, SEEK SUPPORT FROM CHURCHES WHO KNOW YOUR CHOSEN FIELD OF LABOR. There are some churches who have chosen to send men to particular areas in which they have special interest. One church I know, in a state where there are few churches,

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made the decision to support only preachers who worked in that state. Someone in the church with which you have chosen to work will probably be able to identify these churches for you and help in putting you in contact with them.

DONT OVERLOOK SMALLER CHURCHES THAT HAVE NO "FULL TIME" PREACHER. One such congregation near me sends out hundreds of dollars in monthly support and I know of several others who do the same. The temptation is to think these churches can't help. The reality is that they are the ones who receive the fewest requests.

BE SURE TO MAKE PERSONAL, FACE TO FACE, CONTACT WITH THESE CHURCHES IF POSSIBLE. Writing letters are necessary and with the aid of a computer practically painless. However, letters are no substitute for personal contact. People who consider supporting you need to see you. It's easier for them to make the decision to support you if they converse with you, hear you preach, and learn first hand of your interest and dedication to the work. It has been estimated that if you raise your support through the writing of letters alone you might have to contact as many as eighty churches or more (I think that number is conservative). However, you can probably contact only one-fourth that number if you make personal visits to churches you know.

AVOID WRITING FORM LETTERS TO CHURCHES YOU DONT KNOW. Form letters, with the possible exception of monthly reports, need to be avoided at all costs. Be personal. If at all possible, avoid writing letters to churches you don't know anything about. I am presently working with a church that cannot provide my full salary yet, we get three or four form letters a month from people we don't know and who don't know us requesting support. I feel under no obligation to answer this type of letter and I think very few churches do. Writing form letters to churches you don't know is an almost impossible way to raise needed support and is, more often than not, an exercise in futility. It has never been very successful for preachers I know.

ONCE YOU'VE RAISED YOUR SUPPORT MAKE REGULAR MONTHLY REPORTS TO THOSE SUPPORTING YOU. Maintaining your support is as important as raising it in the first place. If a church sends you a monthly check they deserve a monthly report of what you are doing. To keep everything honest before all men it is always good to make a full disclosure of your income including, should they request it, the names of other churches supporting you and in what amounts. Report baptisms, restorations, interesting visits and/or classes, and good prospects. A lot could be said about learning to write a good report letter that is honest, not padded, but which presents the positive aspects of your work. Some reports I have read have been filled with so much gloom that surely the churches receiving it would welcome the opportunity to send their support elsewhere (and they likely will)! Brethren are interested in your work and about the only way they have of knowing if their stewardship is being well spent is through the reports you send to them. These reports should indicate

that you are active and, at the same time, encourage them in their own work of supporting the preaching of the gospel.

IT IS ALSO GOOD, WHEN POSSIBLE, TO MAKE YEARLY PERSONAL VISITS. Sometimes this is not practical because of the distances involved but, when possible, personal reports say much more than even monthly letters. Its vitally important to both the preacher and the church to know one another. Remember, keeping support is as important as getting it. You keep support by regular contact with the churches supporting you.

Financial conditions in our country and around the world are hard. When churches have money to use on evangelism in other places they still face difficult decisions. Wanting to be good stewards, they must make decisions on who to support where and how much. Often, especially among large churches, there are several requests from worthy men and only limited funding. Not all can be supported. They will generally choose the man they know the best, who is active and faithfully reports his work, and who is in an area where opportunities are numerous and the possibility of reaching the lost (and churches becoming self-sustaining) is good. In my judgement this is as it should be.

Opportunities to preach the gospel in this country and around the world are increasing. The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. " There is still the need to "beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest" (Matt. 9: 37-38). I pray for the day when every faithful and able worker will have adequate support to meet his needs. But, even so, don't let the difficulty in raising support detour your decision to enter a field of labor where you know your efforts are needed. It may take some time and a lot of diligent effort but, in most cases, you can find the support. The Lord is with

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"Endure Hardness"

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2: 3).

While this exhortation is not reserved exclusively for preachers, it was directed to one, and preachers today need to be willing and able to preach under hard conditions.

Some preachers still do the work of an evangelist under difficult circumstances. Some brethren make sure of that. And, other preachers have chosen to labor in sections of the Lord's vineyard where the work is difficult and presents a daily challenge to their faith.

But some of us preachers must have everything just Goldilocks-right before we can prepare or preach a sermon— not too Papa Bear-hot or hard, and not to Mama bear-cold or soft—but "just right. "

We have grown accustomed to comfortable studies equipped with the latest state-of-the-art aids and amenities. We must have a complete library consisting of all the various reference works and several sets of commentaries (so we can find at least one which reinforces our position).

The study must be temperature controlled for all seasons, complete with executive desk, chair, and enough other furnishings to start a small office-supply business. And we must have uninterrupted hours so we can concentrate on (excuse me, I mean in), our lavish environment.

Once we have "worked up" our sermon outline, we need a comfortable building, pulpit, chalkboard, projector, or some other visual aid in order to deliver our sermon. And we don't want any constructive criticism from the elders or destructive criticism from the brethren. After all the hardship we endured in order to prepare the sermon, the least folks can do is agree with it, and praise us for our extraordinary talents and accomplishments.

Along about here, as in all articles or sermons of this nature, it is time to insert a disclaimer, waiver, or whatever else you want to call it.

I was not born in the "objective mood and kickative case, " and if I were, I've learned a few other moods and cases as I faced the vicissitudes of life. Like Paul, though maybe not to the same degree, I have been abased and I have abounded; I have been both full and hungry; I have had an abundance of this world's goods, and I have

suffered need (Phil. 4: 12).

In meetings and in some local work, I have been so cold or hot that it was difficult to concentrate. I have preached in buildings which were so cold that the brethren rearranged the short pews around the pot-bellied coal stove. In one congregation the janitor always got up right in the middle of my sermon to shake down the ashes and dump more coal into the stove. On the other hand, I have preached both in this country and in the Philippines when it was so hot I couldn't stand a coat or tie, and perspiration saturated nearly every stitch of clothes I had on.

But I have also had nice desks, a place to study, and comfortable buildings in which to preach. I have preached when brethren and non-members wholeheartedly commended the preaching of the gospel, and I have seen people so angry that I thought I was going to have to fight for my physical safety or suffer bodily harm. Don't ask me what I would have done, for I don't know. I'm just glad I didn't have to find out.

When we think of God's servants, the prophets, we remember them in a romantic way—their profound and inspired declarations, their miracles, their triumphs and victories, and their promise of eternal life.

But we sometimes forget that these prophets had to endure famines and pestilences; they journeyed through the countryside in sackcloth or "naked"; they faced the wrath of kings, false prophets, wild beasts, and robbers; they had to lie in uncomfortable positions in order to illustrate a prophecy, or marry a harlot; they not only had to endure the grief of a deceased loved one, but continue prophesying through that grief; and some were threatened, imprisoned, and slain by their own brethren.

And let us never forget that our Lord suffered more than all the rest, and that not for his own sins but for ours.

Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address was not written in a comfortable study or on embossed stationery, nor does it meet the requirements of literary excellence, but its message has outlived the more ponderous and pompous proclamations of more socially correct orators and writers.

And some of the best sermon outlines we have ever used were conceived miles from the comfortable surroundings of a well-equipped office or study, and written down on the back of an envelope or on a brown paper bag. And the quotations were not from some secular or sectarian source, but from the Bible itself.

Let me emphasize again the fact that preachers are not the only ones who are to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. " And even among preachers, hardness may come in some form other than an uncomfortable study, building, or from disgruntled people who cannot endure sound doctrine.

We may have to suffer financial adversity, physical afflictions like Paul's "thorn in the flesh, " or continue to preach the gospel when others would just as soon we would quit.

During the Gulf War some military personnel were introduced to the hard part of "soldiering. " Some had joined the military for educational or monetary opportu-

nities. Some women joined, never thinking that they may have to leave their husbands and children to serve in the sands of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, or Iraq.

Whenever we enlist under the banner of Truth, and begin following the Captain of our salvation, we may have to endure some hardness before we share in the final victory.

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Flee Fornication



Norman E. Sewell

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I feel confident that many articles will be written for bulletins and other publications dealing with the tragedy of "Magic" Johnson testing HIV positive. Certainly he was one of the great stars of the NBA and a hero to a great many people, young and old. Many have praised him for his calm and his courage in announcing to the world that he now carries the AIDS virus, and perhaps this will indeed be helpful to all those women he has been with over the years. If there is one lesson we need to make sure that we learn and that our young people learn from this it is that what caused Magic Johnson to be HIV positive was sin. We need to state clearly that fornication is sin, and that God intended from the beginning that all sexual relations be within the marriage relationship.

Please don't think that I'm especially picking on Magic Johnson. I too appreciate his skills in basketball, but I don't admire his lifestyle. Now that Johnson carries the AIDS virus, we find him and many others preaching "SAFE SEX" in every available media. They preach it on television and the radio; they preach it in the newspapers and magazines. And the message they preach is not one of "flee fornication" as Paul wrote in First Corinthians chapter 6, verse 18. Instead they preach only that you must protect yourself by using a condom so that you too won't be affected by AIDS. AIDS is an awful disease, and hopefully there will be a time when more and better treatments will be available, perhaps even a cure. But the whole world has completely missed the point when we preach only "safe sex" and not "flee fornication." As our children and grandchildren see men like this; as they watch almost any program on television and see people jumping into bed together very casually, what will they think? Will they grow up recognizing clearly that God has some rules about sex that the world does not recognize? Unless we do a lot of perhaps unpleasant but very clear teaching from the word of God the next generations will know little of what God wants and will know only the message of humanism that says to do whatever feels good to you.

This problem is much bigger than whether or not our children and grandchildren are exposed to AIDS. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor

extortioners, will inherit the kingdom of God" (NKJV, 1 Cor. 6: 9-10). In other words, you can't practice these things and still go to heaven! This is the message that needs to be preached, that all sex outside of marriage is sin, and that those who practice such and continue to do so will be lost. It won't be a very popular message because it is completely different from what the world wants, but it is the truth of God.

We need to teach our young people that sex as God intended it is not dirty or ugly. It satisfies a very basic urge that God made within man from the beginning. But it is to be satisfied in marriage. When the Jews asked Jesus about divorcing for any reason He responded by saying, "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19: 4-6). I know the world thinks this is an outdated standard, but this is the way it is supposed to be; one man and one woman becoming "one flesh" in the marriage relationship. But fornication changes that for Paul wrote: "What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh?" (1 Cor. 6: 16). How can a man be "one flesh" with his wife and at the same time be "one flesh" with his neighbor's wife or some woman at work, etc. ? Then in the 7th chapter of First Corinthians, in answering a question the Corinthians asked about marriage

Paul wrote: "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband" (v. 2). It is in the marriage relationship that we satisfy the sexual longings that we have without committing sin. Marriage is not always easy. It is never easy for two people to give up their own independence and pledge that they will live together and work together and love together for the rest of their lives. But it can be a wonderful thing, especially if we are "heirs together of the grace of life" (1 Peter 3: 7) planning not only on spending a lifetime together, but expecting also to be together with all the redeemed in heaven for all of eternity.

One more thought perhaps needs to be expressed here. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians and warned them against fornication he also wrote: "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (NKJV, 1 Cor. 6: 11). Those who have practiced fornication and adultery do not have to go on doing so. You can be forgiven and have the hope of eternal life. If you have already contracted the AIDS virus, being obedient to Jesus through the gospel will not take away AIDS, but it will make possible the salvation of your soul, eternally. Why not determine to turn away from fornication and all your sins right now and turn to the only one who can save you? Why not obey Jesus in all He asks of you? This is more important than anything else you will ever do? And be sure to preach "flee fornication, " not "safe sex. "

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Why Do You Serve God?

David West

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Do you desire the GIFTS or the GIVER? What circumstances in life could destroy your faith? Loss of wealth? Death of loved ones? Poor health? In His wise providence, Jehovah has preserved the account of a man who wrestled successfully with these issues. His name is Job. His story is in the book that bears his name.

What do you know about Job? Most people know he had boils and was patient. But, there is far more to his story. Many believe that Job was written to explain why we suffer. But, Job will disappoint those who study him with this objective. Yes, suffering is a prominent theme in the book. But, it is not the central issue.

Job is about faith. It is the story of a man chosen to experience a devastating trial of his faith. Briefly, in chapters 1-2, heaven's curtain is raised to give us a glimpse behind the scenes. We, as readers, are entrusted with information hidden from the actors. They must play their roles in this drama without insight that could radically affect the nature of their responses. Yet, it is important that they be deprived of it.

Job is the greatest man of his time. Wealthy and influential, he is also godly and righteous. Jehovah is proud of his servant and brags on him to Satan. "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil" (Job 1: 8).

Satan's slanderous response contends that the only reason Job (or anyone else for that matter) serves Jehovah is because they are bribed to do so by gifts (1: 9-10). Take away the gifts and he will curse the Giver (1: 11). God's reputation hangs in the balance. Is He worthy simply because of who He is? Or must He pay us to serve Him?

God accepts this blasphemous challenge. He honors Job by selecting him as His personal representative in this test case. Job's response will either vindicate God or add credence to Satan's insult. For the test to be valid, Job cannot be told of the contest or his role in it.

Satan is given permission to strip Job of his possessions, but not to touch him. One day, servant after servant comes into the presence of Job delivering, with lightning speed and sledgehammer blows, the tragic news of the loss of all his possessions and, worst of all, his ten children. Bankrupt and childless all in the same day, Job falls on his face in grief, not to curse, but to worship. "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord (1: 20-21). Job didn't curse or charge God with wrongdoing. Jehovah's reputation remained intact.

As we are allowed another peek behind heaven's curtain, we find Jehovah again bragging on Job to Satan. "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to ruin him without cause" (2: 3).

Satan is still unconvinced. The first test wasn't tough enough. If only he could attack Job's body, he could prove his charge. That would make Job quit. The enemy is granted permission to take Job's health, but not his life.

Job quickly finds his body racked with excruciating pain. Boils cover him from head to foot. He rejects his wife's urgings to give up on God and be through with Him. He tells her that such talk is foolish. "Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity" (2: 10). Rather than pushing God away, Job clings tighter.

When news of Job's tragic circumstances reaches his friends (Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, and Elihu), they come to comfort him. Their comfort soon degenerates into bitter debate and insult. They contend that God follows strict rules in governing this world. They say that God rewards good behavior and punishes wicked. They are convinced (as are so many of us today) that a man's standing with God can be discerned by observing his physical circumstances. Judging from Job's current plight, it was obvious to them that he was a vile sinner. If he would only confess his sin, God could again bless him.

The central part of the book (chapters 4-34) contains three rounds of debate between Job and three of his friends. It ends in an exasperating stalemate (32: 1). Each, in turn, accuses him of terrible sins. Job steadfastly maintains his innocence. He knows he has done nothing to deserve what he is experiencing.

The fourth friend, Elihu, finally breaks his silence (chapters 32-37) leveling angry accusations at everyone (32: 2-3). He accuses the friends of continuing to condemn Job when they cannot answer his objections. Later, God will say that these men have not spoken the truth about Him as Job has (42: 7-8). (Yet, men today continue to use their arguments in discussions about suffering, as though this is what the Bible teaches about why men suffer!)

Elihu says that Job is so determined to exonerate himself that he is willing to accuse God of wrongdoing (34: 5, 6; 35: 1-3). He contends that there are other purposes for suffering besides punishment of the wicked. Though he comes closer to telling the truth than the others, I do not believe that even he discovered the real lesson God wants us to learn.

The stumblingblock impending the arguments of each of these men was their lack of ALL the facts. They are unaware of the contest. Here is a drama within a drama. Job thinks God is on trial. (Can He justify Himself in the eyes of Job? Can He give good and sufficient reasons for how He is dealing with Job? Can Job continue to believe in God's goodness?)

But, we know there is something bigger going on. When Job shouts, "Why me? What have I done?", we want to shout back, "Nothing! This isn't punishment."

We know that it is really Job who is on trial. The issue is not "why does God allow me to suffer?", but, "what will Job do when he loses every reason to believe in God's goodness?"

Job desperately wants answers to his questions (as do we when faced with suffering). Oh, for his day in court. He would ask hard questions and demand that God answer and explain. We often believe that if God would just appear and tell us "why" we are suffering, we could endure it.

Eventually Jehovah does appear, but not to answer Job's questions. Instead, by means of a science quiz (chapters 38-39), Job becomes convinced that his knowledge of the physical universe is so inadequate that he is certainly in no position to sit in judgment on God or to fairly evaluate how well He is running the moral universe. (If God were to appear to us in the midst of our sufferings, might He not do the same with us?)

The lesson Job needed to learn (as do we) was that man just doesn't have ALL the facts. We are in no position to put God on trial. Job agrees to shut-up. "Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to Thee? I lay my hand on my mouth. Once I have spoken, and I will not answer; even twice, and I will add no more" (40: 3-5).

However, God isn't interested in Job's SILENCE. He wants his TRUST. In chapters 40-41, He tells Job of Behemoth (hippopotamus?) and Leviathan (crocodile?). If Job would not dare challenge these (who are mere creatures), why will he challenge their Maker? God controls the universe and is doing a good job of running it despite what we may sometimes think.

Job is never given an explanation for his suffering. He is never told why these things happened. Yet, he goes away satisfied. He decides that he will continue to serve God despite his circumstances. He will continue to trust Him even when there seems to be no reason to (and perhaps even good reasons not to).

He thus, disproves Satan's slanderous charge, and brings well-deserved glory to the name of the Lord. "I know that Thou canst do all things, and that no purpose of Thine can be thwarted. Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask you, and you instruct Me. I heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees Thee; Therefore, I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes" (42: 2-6).

God is more concerned with Job's trust than his pleasure. We are not here on earth to have fun. We are here to learn to trust God and desire Him above all else (Ps. 73: 25-28). Whenever tragedy comes into our lives, our reaction reveals our motive in serving God. It either shows that our real interest is in Him or that our real interest is in what He gives us.

Is He worthy of our praise and worship even without His gifts? The issue here is bigger than the nature of "suffering." It is the issue of "faith." Your reaction to adversity reveals whether you agree with Job or with Satan. "I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised ... " (Ps. 18: 3). Why do you serve God?

Romans Chapter Seven

Voyd N. Ballard

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Contrary to the idea of some, the seventh chapter of the Roman letter is not describing the child of God. Some try to make the latter part of this chapter describe some kind of a "warfare" in the Christian between the spirit and the flesh. They often quote verse 25 as their proof. However this verse says nothing about such a warfare. Paul speaks of service, and not of fighting. And there is no such thing as serving God with the mind while the body serves sin. No man can serve two masters at the same time. What is said in the latter part of this chapter could not possibly be said of Paul as a Christian and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, nor of any Christian for that matter. Paul is not describing his own state as a Christian, but rather that of the unregenerated person. He uses the present tense to describe his condition before he became a Christian. As a Christian and an Apostle Paul certainly was not:

A SLAVE TO SIN. "CARNAL, SOLD UNDER SIN. " Verse 14

PRACTICING SIN. Verse 15

A CHRISTIAN WITH SIN DWELLING IN HIM. Verse 17

PRACTICING EVIL. Verse 19

A WRETCHED MAN UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH. Verse 24

None of these things could be said of Paul as a Christian. Of himself as a Christian he said: "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and righteously and unblamably we behaved ourselves toward you that believe" (1 Thess. 2: 10).

The entire Roman letter was written to show that the gospel is God's power unto salvation wherein is revealed "the righteousness of God" which is simply God's plan of righteousness; that is His plan of salvation for lost man. In the first five chapters he has fully developed and abundantly proven this proposition, showing that grace now "reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5: 21). In other words the grace of God now reigns through the gospel; that wherever sin abounds, grace abounds so much more under the gospel of Christ. That being the case, some might conclude that the Christian should continue in sin so that grace might abound all the more, but Paul says not so. In chapter six he shows that such a conclusion is false because the child of God is no longer a slave of sin, but is now a "servant of righteousness" (Verse 18). As servants of righteousness we cannot continue in sin nor live in sin, and that being the case we cannot be described as sinners. "What shall we say then? Shall we

continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died in sin, how shall we any longer live therein? (Verses 1 & 2).

The sixth chapter of the Roman letter was written to show that the child of God is dead to sin. That through his obedience to the gospel he has been made free from sin and has become a servant of righteousness. "**Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin ye became the servants of righteousness**" (Verse 16-18). When one hears the gospel and believes it, he is lead to repent of his sins. In repentance he dies to the **love and practice of sin**. Then in baptism he dies to the **guilt and state of sin**. He then is no longer a sinner; but a servant of righteousness. As such he:

IS WALKING IN NEWNESS OF LIFE. Verse 4
HIS OLD SINFUL MAN IS CRUCIFIED AND DESTROYED, Verse 6
IS DEAD TO SIN AND MUST NOT SERVE SIN. Verse 6
BEING DEAD TO SIN IS FREED FROM SIN. Verse 7
HE DOES NOT LET SIN REIGN OR DWELL IN HIM. Verse 12
IS A SERVANT OF GOD, NOT OF THE DEVIL. Verse 22

The person described above is a child of God. The person described in chapter seven is just the opposite; Therefore the description of the person in chapter seven cannot possibly be that of the Christian. The following from Macknight in his Commentary on the Roman Letter is worth serious consideration:

"Because the apostle in this passage uses the first person, I am sold, etc., Augustine in the latter part of his life, and most of the commentators after his time, with many of the moderns, especially the Calvinists, contend that in this, and in what follows, to the end of the chapter, the apostle describes his own state at the time he wrote the epistle, consequently the state of every regenerated person. But most of the ancient Greek commentators, all the Arminians, and some Calvinists, held that though the apostle speaks in the first person, he by no means describes his own state, but the state of an unregenerated sinner awakened, by the operation of law, to a sense of his sin and misery. And this opinion they support by observing that in his writings the apostle often personates others (See Rom. 13: 11, 13). Wherefore to determine the question, the readers must consider to which of the two characters the things written in this chapter best agree; and, in particular, whether the apostle would say of himself, or other regenerated persons, that 'they are carnal, and sold under sin.'"

**Do you study your Bible
with an open mind (Acts 17:11-12)?**

Religion Minus Righteousness Equals Error

Tony Mauck

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He was a womanizer, guzzler and gambler turned revival preacher. He was a smooth talker who could sway his audience despite using offensive language. His motives were misguided. His motivation was his desire for a woman preacher, Sharon Falconer. His name was Elmer Gantry. "Elmer Gantry" was a highly controversial movie made in the early 1960's about corruption in religion. A look behind the scenes of the revival tent revealed Mr. Gantry's blackmail, corrupt speech, occasional drinking and unspeakable seduction of Miss Falconer.

How could such a man pass for a preacher? He had gained knowledge of the Scriptures in Seminary years earlier. He did not begin preaching immediately after Seminary for a reason. Elmer's antics, a tryst with a deacon's daughter, had caused him to be ousted before graduating. Ironically, this deacon's daughter turned prostitute almost ruins Mr. Gantry's influence out of spite.

Several contemporary lessons can be ascertained from such a tale. A religion where truth is absent is foreign to God's approval. As the title of this article suggests, religion minus righteousness equals error. This equation is no less true than $2 + 2 = 4$! To have warm feelings about God and His word are no substitute for the practice of truth both individually and corporately. To be able to move an audience, command respect as a teacher and/or be fervent in religious activity do not insure God's acceptance.

To the religious majority of our day, religion is something which transpires at specially selected times, at certain church-sponsored events. Religion is viewed as nothing more than another compartment in our lives. Religion has little bearing on "non-religious" activities. However, a religion divorced from purity, personal righteousness is not Jesus' religion. The only religion God accepts is one which affects one's manner of life (see Galatians 2: 20). Impenitent liars, gossipers, adulterers, drunkards, thieves and lovers of money cannot please God no matter how much religion they practice or how intense they are about it. The practice of true religion in the sight of God renders "every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10: 5), and compels every person to "keep oneself unstained by the world" (James 1: 27).

In addition, a religion is vain which casts aside *His* terms of pardon and rejects God's pattern for the work and worship of the church. Today, God's terms of admis-

sion into Christ's kingdom (faith, repentance, confession and baptism) are often set aside for a more palatable set of man-made instructions ("just accept Jesus into your heart"). As far as God is concerned, only *the truth* is good enough to save (see John 8: 31, 32)!

Furthermore, in "Elmer Gantry," Miss Falconer to-tally disregarded the teaching of 1 Timothy 2: 11-12, "Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet." This disrespect for God's word has flourished in recent days. Women preachers are being sanctioned in many denominations.

The charge is made that Paul's words are outdated and should be relegated to first century custom. He is even accused of being a chauvinist. Yet, Paul bases his statements on the very beginning of time. "For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression" (1 Timothy 2: 13, 14). This does not mean women are second class citizens in God's kingdom (see Galatians 3: 28). It does not argue that women are less talented or intelligent than men (see Romans 16: 1, 2). It only speaks of distinct roles God has for men and women in His kingdom (see 1 Corinthians 11: 3). If we reject God's instruction here, what will keep us from rejecting other instructions which do not suit our fancy?

Paul's warning to Titus regarding false teachers is still quite applicable today, They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient... But as for you, speak the things which are

fitting for sound doctrine" (Titus 2: 1). Peter's words to Cornelius are just as relevant, "... in every nation the man who fears Him (God) and does what is right, is welcome to Him" (Acts 10: 35). All the religiosity in this world cannot replace a love for and practice of truth! A friend recommended that I analyze "Elmer Gantry" and I'm glad, because it reminded me of this quite significant spiritual truth.

**"Go into all the world
and preach the gospel
to every creature"
(Mark 16:15)**

Do A Friend A Favor
Do you have a friend or relative who could benefit from reading *Searching the Scriptures*? Why not buy a subscription for someone?

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, KY 40109

DEBATE WITH ROMAN CATHOLICS

GREG LITMER of Louisville, Kentucky met Karl Keating, founder of Catholic Answers of San Diego, California in a debate April 3 in Lincoln, Nebraska. This was conducted at Pius X High School gymnasium. Video and audio tapes are available. Mr. Keating affirmed that the Roman Catholic Church is the church Jesus established. Greg Litmer denied this. From 1984 to 1986, Greg Litmer edited a paper entitled "CATHOLICISM EXAMINED." Greg was formerly a Roman Catholic. He now preaches for the Expressway church in Louisville, Kentucky.

The church in Lincoln has about 30 in attendance and meets in a child care center at 31st and "C Streets in Lincoln. For information about tapes, write to: 31st and "C Church of Christ, P. O. Box 30344, Lincoln, NE 68503, or call Lynn Huggins (402) 421-3328; or Larry Rouse (402) 421-2890.

HOLT-BASSETT DEBATE TAPES

The debate between Jack Holt and Jerry Bassett on marriage, divorce and remarriage which took place in February at West Ave. in San Antonio, Texas, is available on four-two hours VHS video tapes for \$30. These are professionally done. Those interested may contact Rick Hubart, 3012 Foxfire Cir., Indianapolis, IN 46214. Phone (317) 328-1776.

DEBATE WITH BAPTISTS

JEFF ASHER met Glen Stacker of the Bible Believers' Baptist Church in debate in Amarillo, Texas on the subjects of salvation by faith only and water baptism as essential to salvation. One night was held in the building of the Baptist Church and the other in the building of the Dumas Drive church of Christ. As a hyper-dispensationalist, Stocker believes water baptism was not for Jews and Gentiles alike. This gave the debate a different twist from some with the Baptists. For information about tapes, call (806)383-4451 or 383-2831. The debate was followed by a gospel meeting with Ron Halbrook at Dumas Dr.

NEW CONGREGATION

Seven Christians have formed a new congregation in Perryton, Texas, 65 miles north of Pampa and 110 miles northeast of Amarillo in the northern panhandle of Texas. Since February 16 they have been meeting in a rented hall. Preachers in the area are helping to encourage these brethren. If you know of brethren in the area who are driving long distances to worship with sound brethren, others who have fallen away, or some who meet with unsound brethren and are willing to study or take a stand, please let these brethren know about them. You may contact: Keeneth Cameron, 1514 Texas St., Perryton, TX 79070 (806) 435-2032, or David Sims, 1526 Cedar, Perryton, TX 59070 (806) 435-9815.

TO PRAGUE, CZECHOSLOVAKIA

STEVEN D. BAXLEY, 1212 Brandon CT., Irving, TX 75060 — In January I made a trip to Prague to see about the work there and found opportunities for the gospel among a people many of whom are ready and waiting for the gospel. 20 Christians are already meeting in Prague (native people), two more in Brno one in Cesky Budejovice. I have been working with Bobby Holmes and the Dallas Ave. congregation in Lancaster, Texas with their elders since last August. I would like to go to Prague around June 1 this year and will need to raise monthly support and one time assistance for travel. I plan to supply regular reports to those who have apart with me in this work. You may contact me at (214) 790-9461 or 647-3782. References are: Bobby Holmes (214) 298-4466; Mark Roberts (409) 727-6497; Al Diestelkamp (011-42-2) 321-9681 (this is in Czechoslovakia); or Jim Smelser (501) 882-3400.

PAUL BROCK, 9 Sunshine Blvd., Deland, FL 32724 — I keep hearing from those who are misinformed about my health condition. I did retire from local work in 1988. I was not incapacitated but did not feel up to all the work I needed to do. We moved back to Ridge Manor, FL where I had lived while preaching at Trilacoochee from 1975 to 1982. After several months of rest, some fill-ins, some meeting work, I began preaching at Cove Bend near Floral City, FL. At the insistence of one of our daughters, we moved back to Deland. I continued to preach at Cove Bend through July, 1991. We felt that 80 miles each way was a little too much for Mrs. Brock and me to travel. I am now serving as one of the elders at N. Blvd. in Deland, teaching classes and preaching some. I am able to preach in meetings, week-end series and fill-in appointments. This is not a solicitation for work, but if I may be of service under the circumstances described here, I will be glad to assist as I can.

GORDON SKINNER, P. O. Box 583, Bradnor, OH 43406 — On January 1st we moved to Bradnor to preach the gospel. They have 35 in attendance. Prospects look promising. We are near Bowling Green where there is a state university. We would be glad to contact students or other individuals you may know in this area. Write me at the above address or call (419) 288-3304.

IN MEMORY OF ELMER LLOYD "BUD" EUBANKS

Gospel preacher "Bud" Eubanks departed this life on October 21, 1991 at the age of 66. As a faithful gospel preacher he devoted his life to the work of the Lord, serving churches in Kansas, Illinois, Colorado and Missouri. He was a motivating force in establishing the Parkcrest church, which has now become Walnut Lawn in Springfield, MO. He was a loving husband, wonderful father and doting grandfather, being guided in these relations by his devotion to the truth of God and by his faith in Christ.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

MEXICO—ENRIQUE CISNEROS REPORTS TWO BAPTIZED in Cananea, Sonora. He said "We feel full of joy and courage in our work. Pray for us and the work in Mexico.

CUBA — RUBEN C. AMADOR and ANTONIO LIRA (from Venezuela) went to Havana, Cuba in January to locate brethren. They are not visited much by brethren from other countries, especially the USA, in recent years. "We found them excited and encouraged by our visit. Angel Perez preaches for the church in Havana and met us at the airport. We met also four other Cuban preachers: Roberto Flores, Jose Antonio Fernandez, Reynaldo Vos and Julio Abreu. There are five established congregations which are recognized by the government. Other churches are meeting in homes and we are not recognized by the government. We heard that there are also other isolated groups of brethren. Opportunities to preach were limited since churches are prohibited to use foreign preachers without prior government approval but two of the churches took the risk and asked us to preach. In Havana we had several classes with the church and young people mainly on the institutional issues. We were impressed with their Bible knowledge and willingness to study. What little Spanish Bible literature had reached them was produced by institutional brethren and their publishing houses. The church at Consolacion del Sur has 75 people. Attendance in the other churches range from 20 to 55. As

far as we know, only three preachers receive support from the USA. We were not able to visit the church at Santiago de Cuba on the southern extreme of the island. They were disappointed and we promised to try to visit them on our next trip.

The work in Cuba began in the mid-1930's when Jose Jimenez and Luis Estevez from Tampa, Florida came to Cuba to preach, establishing over 30 congregations. When Fidel Castro came to power in 1959 he took control of the churches as well. During these years the churches lost their properties and furnishings. Most of the churches disappeared. But the faith of the gospel did not die. Many of these Christians, now cut off from the western world, maintained their own faith in the Bible way and kept the few congregations on a Biblical course. These remaining churches have some deep-rooted problems which may take time to resolve. Many Cubans, including our brethren there, lack the basic needs of life. Far greater is their need for teaching, encouragement, and strength. Their cry for spiritual help must not be ignored.

ITALY — I know of no field where the native preachers are working harder for the promotion of truth than our brethren in Italy. While progress is slower than they like for it to be, they are growing, both in number and in spirit. They are aggressively pressing the claims of truth and opposing the errors which have for so long blinded the minds of those who live under the shadow of the Vatican. Their preaching and writing is bold.

Among these preachers is FRANCESCO FOSCI who preaches south of Rome at Latina. He was trained, mainly by Rodolfo Berdini, and developed out of the church at Aprilia where his own father served as an elder. He gave up his secular job and launched out to establish the work in Latina. They began with 7 and have now grown to 16. Through no fault of his own, nor those who have found it necessary to stop his support, he is this year losing practically all his support. At the age of 44 it will be difficult for him to return to his secular work, which he left in 1985. Even if he could, the work in Latina will suffer. His family will suffer. The editor of this paper has known brother Fosci since 1976. He needs and deserves the help of faithful brethren who are concerned for the continued progress of the truth in Italy. His address is: Francesco Fosci, V. Leopardi 5, 04011 Aprilia (Lt, Italy. Phone (06) 922124.

HUNGARY—Richard Copeland and Jeff Archer have many contacts in Budapest now and a number have visited services there. Some of those they are studying with are opening doors to yet others.

GERMANY — Steve Wallace sends an interesting report of his work in Germany and also of other work going on in Europe and in the former Soviet Union. Many doors are opening and more dedicated brethren are entering these fields. His last report also has this note which amazes me. He said "It seems some brethren in the U. S. are hoping to cash in on the new situation here in Europe. There have been at least two business letters sent out to preachers living in Germany offering opportunities to make **big money** working as an agent for a business 'run by Christians.' (Just when I needed something to do with all this spare time I have on my hands!...) I guess some people must have a rather low estimation of what we are trying to do here. Brethren, stop this foolishness!" Amen, brother Wallace!

SOUTH AFRICA — Paul Williams reports seven more baptisms from work done by several of the brethren in his area. He also reports growing unrest in some quarters posing dangers to the citizenry, including many of the brethren. The prayers of brethren are requested.

PHILIPPINES — Reynaldo O. Ugale reports 19 baptized in 1991 from work which he and others were able to do. In addition to continued efforts to evangelize, they hope to finish a meeting house in Baculod, Cagayan.

Leonito V. Torreliza of Candon, Ilocos Sur reports 17 baptisms for 1991 and establishment of a congregation at Salcedo, 20 kilometers from Candon in a mountainous region. Keith Burnet and Carl McMurray were able to visit brethren in that area in 1991.

PREACHER NEEDED

GLEN ELLYN, ILLINOIS—The church here is looking for a strong, experienced preacher. There are 27 members. We are located about 30 miles west of Chicago. Please contact Joseph Novak (708) 529-2149 or Rick Biederstadt (708) 665-7579.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

WENDELL M. POWELL, 172 Chippendale Dr., Hendersonville, TN 37075. I desire to re-locate sometime this summer of fall. Experience: 20 years full-time and two years part-time. Age: 48. Married with children grown. Write me at the above address or call (615) 822-2594.



SPECIAL ISSUE OF PRECEPTOR

The January, 1992 issue of THE PRECEPTOR is a special edition on "Into All the World." It contains interesting articles from many good brethren who know of, or are involved in the work in various nations of the earth. It would be good for Christians everywhere to obtain a copy and read it. It will do you good. You may write: The Preceptor Magazine, P. O. Box 187, Beaumont, TX 77704. Bundles cost \$20 for 25 copies.

STS SPECIAL OF ROLE OF WOMEN

DONNIE V. RADER is putting together a special edition of STS for July, 1992 on "Women Professing Godliness" (A Study of the Role of Women). The following articles will appear:

"What Is Going On In The Feminist Movement?" — Lewis Willis
"The Impact Of The Feminist Movement Upon God's People" — Donald Townsley

"God's Limitations Upon Women" — Art Ogden

"Living in Subjection" — Dick Blackford

"The Woman Whose Price Is Far Above Rubies" — Bill Hall

"A Tribute To The Housewife" — Donnie V. Rader

"What Women Can Do To Promote The Cause of Christ" — Connie W. Adams

"Questions Often Asked About The Role of Women" — H. E. Phillips

100 copies will sell for \$65, 50 copies for \$40, and orders less than that for \$1 each.

WHAT MAKES A THIEF A THIEF?

In somber tones and with a straight face, the news reporter gave us the bad news of an increase in thefts of dogs in southern Indiana. It was speculated that these were being stolen for resale and then a law officer told us that it was due the hard times in that area. Many Americans survived the great depression and came away with their principles intact. Honorable people just did not steal! We need to stop this non-sense of blaming "the recession," the President, or Congress, or somebody for every crime committed and start recognizing the simple truth that those who steal do so because they are thieves. It is a sin problem, not an economic problem.