

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. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 1631
Lutz, FL 33549



The Consequences of Procrastination

The term "procrastinate" is defined: "to put off doing something until a future time" - "to defer, postpone." And of course, the word "consequences" simply means that which follows or results from a certain course or action.

The road to hell is paved with good intentions, someone has said. One of the easiest things to do is to plan and promise to do what is right and good, but when the time comes to fulfill the plan, something always happens and we do not get it done. Almost everyone intends to do right, straighten up and repent before he dies, but we always want to wait until tomorrow or some future convenient time.

The young people feel they must "sow their wild oats," because "we live but once." The middle-aged think they must work and make all the money they can while they are in their productive years, because the time will come when they cannot do so. "We must make hay while the sun shines, you know." The aged think they must enjoy a few years of retirement and fun before they settle down to seriously practicing religion. The cycle continues with every generation and every segment of our society. But we do not reckon with the fact that there is a judgment to which every one of us must give an account. This judgment is based upon our language (Matt. 12: 34), upon our deeds done in the body (2 Cor. 5: 10), and upon our works (Rev. 20: 12).

The normal and almost natural schemes devised by

man to defer his responsible and religious conduct to some future time while he imbibes the pleasures of sin for a season are all totally absurd. Men and women die at all ages, and many of them suddenly. Eventually all of us die (Heb. 9: 27). When death overtakes one at any age, his activity on earth ceases, and his intended good is never done. The Lord said, "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh (Matt. 25; 13).

In Luke 12, Jesus spoke a parable stating that a certain rich man increased abundantly from his labors. He planned to pull down his barns and to build greater ones. And having filled these new barns, he would say to himself: "And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12: 19-21).

The man in this parable made a number of fatal mistakes, one of which was to defer or ignore his present duty to God while he made all provisions for his present and future physical needs.

The apostle Paul was called before Felix and Drusilla because they wanted to "hear him concerning the faith in Christ." As the apostle reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix reacted by trembling, no doubt at the realization of the consequences he must pay if he continued to pursue his present course of life. But in this he responded: "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24: 25). Three important facts are to be noted in this verse: Felix listened and understood what Paul said. He understood his course of life was out of harmony with what Paul preached and understood the consequences if he continued, thus he trembled. Finally, he gave the indication that at some "convenient season" he would hear again with a view to changing his life. All evidence indicated that Felix did what most people do today: he procrastinated until it was too late.

The plans to ignore the will of God in one's course of life, with the built-in plan to someday repent and reform, always results in leaving this life without God.

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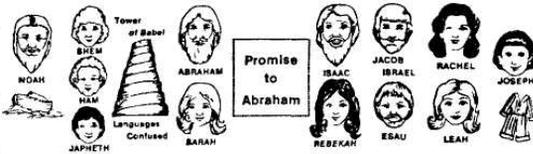
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Editorial

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More Premillennial Compromises

For a long time I have been telling brethren that the premillennial church of Christ and their preachers are denominational in attitude and practice. An article in the June, 1992 WORD AND WORK edited by Alex V. Wilson, documents that beyond doubt. For the benefit of readers in other parts of the country, Louisville was, and yet is, the center of strength for the premillennial churches of Christ. R. H. Boll, who brought this heresy into churches of Christ lived here, preached for the Portland Avenue church where Alex V. Wilson now preaches, and edited WORD AND WORK from this city. There are yet 26 premillennial churches of Christ within a 40 mile radius of Louisville, a few of them fairly large.

They continue to operate Portland Christian School, publish WORD AND WORK, conduct a radio program called "Words of Life" and the news column in WORD AND WORK continually reports activities which they support in several locations over this country and in Japan, Nigeria and the Philippines. They announce and support various denominational dispensationalists who come to town to lecture on prophecy, "the rapture" and related themes.

In February, 1991 we had a nine hour extended discussion with them with five men of the persuasion and with Gene Frost, Paul Earnhart, John Humphries, Guy Roberson and the writer. This was well attended and demonstrated clearly the wide gap between us doctrinally.

Now, Alex V. Wilson announces the following:

"Next October, a gifted preacher, John Guest, will hold a city-wide evangelistic crusade in Louisville. So the churches in our city have been asked to cooperate in backing this effort.

"Leaders in our congregation checked and verified that John Guest believes firmly in the authority of the bible, the deity of Christ, salvation by God's grace through Christ's redeeming death and triumphant resurrection, and the necessity for sinners to be converted. From all reports the evangelist has also proved himself to be a man of moral and financial integrity. So we weighed the pros and cons of supporting this crusade. After prayerful thought and discussion, we decided to participate as a church, though of course it is up to each individual member as to what he or she will do."

What is interesting about this is that John Guest is an

Episcopalian, an Englishman now living in Pennsylvania. In addition to what he is said to believe, it could be added that he also believes in and practices infant baptism. If you think joining hands in support of denominational preachers who teach and practice error on the subject of baptism, is something new with these folks, you are simply mistaken.

Alex V. Wilson was concerned for putting this in historical perspective and so went back to 1956 to the time when Billy Graham, a Baptist who does not teach baptism for the remission of sins, came to Louisville for a crusade. Premillennial churches of Christ endorsed his campaign. Some of the brethren in this area bought a half-page ad in the COURIER-JOURNAL, a daily newspaper, to oppose the Graham crusade and to point out from scripture the error of his teaching. This greatly embarrassed the premillennial folks. R. H. Boll had died a few months before and E. L. Jorgenson was the new editor of WORD AND WORK and speaker on the radio program, "Words of Life." Here is Jorgenson's editorial note before printing the text of his radio address on October 20, 1956.

"The Graham evangelistic crusade in this city is now history. One "Church of Christ" bought costly space in the **Courier-Journal** (our largest daily) to attack the teaching of the evangelist through the public press. The intention was good, no doubt, but the judgment used (as we see it) was bad. The display had many scriptures, all true of course, and many of them well applied; but resentment rose high-that this was done at the opening of the crusade! On every hand members of our free Churches of Christ (for they too wear Christ's dear name) were being asked if they approved the attack, or if those churches were connected with, or represented by, the advertisement. Accordingly, On October 20, as the first half of E. L. Jorgenson's regular radio address on the "Words of Life" radio program the following script was read, and a copy was sent to Mr. Graham. -E. L. J. "

The following is the first part of this script and tells much about the lack of conviction of these who borrowed their millennial speculations from the sectarian world in the first place.

"Just now, and for one more week, our city, or rather the evangelical churches of our city, are engaged in a great union effort to bring the unsaved amongst us to a definite decision for Christ.

"It is indeed a thrilling sight, and a heart-warming experience 'to those that love the Lord' to see the new coliseum at the Fair Grounds filled to overflowing; rank upon rank, thousands on thousands; a veritable sea of faces, all upturned to the man who comes out to speak for God; to speak of faith and repentance; to call the sinful to repentance and surrender, and to call us all to a new and deeper dedication to the person and service of Jesus Christ the Lord.

"The famous evangelist is, of course, a baptized believer-immersed, as he told us; and that he preaches the news of the gospel there can be no doubt-that is, if the gospel is what Paul says it is in 1 Cor. 15: 3-5: namely, 'that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on

the third day according to the scriptures; and that he appeared to Cephas', etc. You see, 'the gospel' is not what we do; it's what He did; it's not what we have done; it's what He has done for us... This gospel, thank God, we hear, in the union evangelistic meetings, and we do greatly rejoice to hear it."

In the remainder of his speech he argued that it would be best to have Graham do his work and then perhaps later he and his brethren could expound the way more accurately to these new converts. He added this near the end of the speech.

"What then, Shall we oppose the whole crusade? Shall we resort to half-page advertisements, to throw cold water on the effort although we know that thousands whom we could never reach will hear, out there, the great fundamentals of faith, repentance, decision for Christ, and confession of Christ - preached in mighty power? No, 'we have not so learned Christ.' In that sort of opposition, you may just 'include me out.'"

No wonder the editor of WORD AND WORK went back to the precedent from E. L. Jorgenson for supporting false teachers. Billy Graham does not believe or preach baptism for the remission of sins. In fact, baptism, period, is conspicuously absent from his messages. Now comes an Episcopalian who baptizes babies and denies the essentially of immersion to preach a denominational message which will deceive the hearts of all who come to hear him. He will say some true things, but he will not preach the whole counsel of God. If he did, then the premillennial churches of Christ would not support him. If he taught the truth on prophecy and fulfillment, on the nature of the present reign of Christ in his kingdom they would not support him. This is what happens when people leave the simplicity of the word of God and become enamored of the intoxicating wines of denominational speculations.

This is a good time to sound a warning to a rising generation of preachers some of whom are overly impressed with the verbal and printed oratory of popular denominational preachers who are either charismatic, Calvinistic or dispensationally oriented. Those who do not understand the basic nature of man, the distinctiveness of the church revealed in the Bible, the gospel plan of salvation and the basic rules of Biblical interpretation are not safe teachers. They may say some good things in very compelling and exciting ways, but they are just not safe teachers. Preachers, look over your libraries. From what well are you drinking to satisfy your thirst for knowledge of the mind of God and for materials that will enhance your ability to "preach the word in season and out of season." "Buy the truth and sell it not" (Prov. 23: 23).



T. G. O'Neal
P.O. Box 723
Bessemer, Alabama 35021

Uncertain Sounds

In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul says "things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they have a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

In context, Paul is showing that in the exercise of spiritual gifts, unless "ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? For ye shall speak into the air." Paul is showing that in order for them to be effective their speech must be distinct. If there is no difference in their speech, it is as if they "speak into the air."

We understand this principle even today in most things. Why do we know when in the woods we are about to step on a rattlesnake? The sound of the rattling of the snake is very distinct from the song of the bird.

Strange Sounds

When we hear a strange sound, one of the first things we want to do is to identify its source. A strange sound on the surface usually says trouble is not far away. A strange sound does not mean all is well.

Paul told the young preacher, Timothy, "continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (2 Tim. 3: 14). Timothy had both heard and learned from the apostle Paul (2 Tim. 2: 2). Those things that he heard of Paul, he was to teach to others. What he had not heard and learned from Paul or the Scriptures, he was not to teach.

However, in the day of Paul and Timothy, there were strange sounds being heard. (1) Some said the resurrection was already past (2 Tim. 2: 18). (2) Others said there was no resurrection, (1 Cor. 15: 12). (3) There were those that said, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15: 1). (4) And there were still others who said "Jesus Christ is not come in the flesh" (1 John 4: 3). Much of the New Testament was written to combat these and other errors that were being taught.

Strange Sounds Today

All of the strange sound did not cease in Paul's day. Today we are hearing sounds just as strange as those mentioned above.

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Over the last several years, there are men whom the people of God have respected and properly honored in love for their work and who have stood in the front of many a battle. Today, some of them are giving out some **uncertain** sounds. What they are preaching and/or writing is as uncertain a sound as the resurrection is past. There was a time when anything they wrote was read with great care and much appreciation. Today it is different. To see where they are going to preach or see their name on an article **makes one hold his breath until he** sees **what they have said**. There was a time when there was never any question about the sound that they would give forth. Today one wonders until they finish speaking or until one finishes their article. Often what they say is "sound speech" (Titus 2: 8). But then there is that sermon or article that gives forth an uncertain sound.

There are other preachers whose sound is not uncertain - it is the certain sound of error, without any question. Whether they know it or not, what they are saying is the same thing the denominational world has said for years, and many times they are saying it in the very language that the denominational world has used. Error is error, whether preached from a denominational pulpit or a pulpit among brethren. Error is not sanctified and made holy because it is preached in a building where the church of Christ meets.

If a man is not going to preach the truth, he should quit preaching and get out of the way of those that will preach the word of God, without addition, subtraction or substitution.

Using the
**SWORD OF
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Ken Green
2212 Jordan Lane, S.W
Huntsville, Alabama 35805



I Am Who I Am

It was a climatic moment when God appeared to Moses and commissioned him to lead His people out of Egypt. Moses first asked, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh" (Exodus 3: 11). God said, "I will certainly be with you" (verse 12).

Moses then said, "Who are You?" "Then Moses said to God, 'Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you, " and they say to me, "What is His name?" what shall I say to them?' "

Moses knew God. He was not an unbeliever. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was part of the heritage that he had learned from his Hebrew parents. But he needed to know more.

"And God said to Moses, I AM WHO I AM. ' And He said, Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, "I AM has sent me to you"" (verse 14).

This divine name has been transliterated into the English as "Jehovah" or "Yahweh. " We find a number of comparable descriptions of our God in the New Testament (Hebrews 13: 8; Revelation 1: 8; and Hebrews 11: 6 where "He is" is the third person equivalent of "I AM."

But in this study I shall direct your attention to seven occasions in the book of John where Jesus identified Himself as "I AM. " We need to perceive that He who hung upon the cross is He who spoke from the burning bush. Such cannot help but give us a deeper sense of the deity and majesty of our Lord.

John 4: 26: "Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am He. " He was addressing the Samaritan woman at the well. She had engaged the Lord in conversation in response to His request for a drink of water, and had quickly found herself in a deep spiritual dialogue. Wishing, perhaps, to postpone a personal decision, she said, " I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). When He comes, He will tell us all things. ' " It was at this point that Jesus identified Himself as "I AM. "

The Pronoun "He" is not in the original text as is indicated by the italics in the KJV and NKJB. The verse might be rendered, "The One speaking to you is I AM. " Here was a word of instruction to a heart honest and good.

John 6: 20: "But He said to them, 'It is I; do not be afraid. "' The disciples were exhausted with toil and anxiety when they saw a figure walking upon the sea. But Jesus spoke to them the exhortation that graced His

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lips so often: "Fear not. "

The passage might be translated, "Be not afraid. I AM. " Here was a word of power to these trembling disciples.

John 8: 24: "... for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins. " Again the pronoun "He" is italicized. It does not appear in the Greek text. Jesus quite literally said, "If you do not believe that I AM..."

He was here speaking to Pharisees. They were religious folks who really did not know God because they thought religion was merely a matter of doing externals. They were looking for the Messiah, but did not recognize Him when He stood before them (verse 13).

Here was a word of rebuke to hard hearted unbelievers.

John 8: 28: "Then Jesus said to them, 'When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He. ... ' Or, "... then you will know that I AM..." He was speaking to the same unbelieving crowd and he foretold that they would be responsible for "lifting Him up, " or crucifying Him. The cross would become the proof of His deity.

But how could this be? Likely many hundreds of thousands had been crucified. There was nothing unique about that. Oh, but the distinctive feature in Christ's crucifixion was that death could not hold Him. He was the only One to come down from the cross and live again.

John 8: 58: "Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM. ' " This is the only reference which is clearly stated by the English.

Abraham died about 1800 B. C. We are not left to speculate as to the reaction of the Jews who heard these words: "Then they took up stones to throw at Him..." (verse 59). They understood the import of what He said. Four hundred years before Moses had been addressed from the burning bush, "I AM!" And four thousand years before, and four trillion years before, Jesus proclaimed, "I AM. "

John 13: 19: "Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He. " In this scene of the last supper, Jesus declared that the Scripture would presently be fulfilled. When that happened, they would know, He stated, that "I AM. "

John 18: 4-8: "Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, 'Whom are you seeking?' They answered Him, 'Jesus of Nazareth. ' Jesus said to them, 'I am He'.. Then - when He said to them 'I am He, ' - they drew back and fell to the ground. Then He asked them again 'Whom are you seeking?' And they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth. ' Jesus answered, 'I have told you that I am He. '"

Three times in this text Jesus said "I AM. " Once more before Israel crucified Him, He let them know that they were arresting "I AM. "

I think that we will not come closer to recognizing the Lord Jesus in all His glory then when we truly begin to comprehend the significance of these statements.

BREAD OF LIFE

"I am the bread of life... so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Jno. 6:35, 57.

Herschel E. Patton
7637 Fleming Hills Dr. S.W.
Huntsville, Ala. 35802



Who Is Jesus That I Should Follow Him?

The importance of following, obeying, or submitting to anyone, or thing, depends on who or what is making a request or demand of us. Does what we are asked to submit ourselves to have the right, power, or ability to seek our submission and fulfill the promises made?

People are invited and urged, in the Bible, by evangelists and individual followers of Jesus to believe in and follow Him. Jesus, himself, said "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11: 28). An affirmative response on our part depends on who he is and his ability to do what he says.

Who Is Jesus?

This question was often raised by the people when Jesus was on earth. When Jesus made his triumphal entry to Jerusalem, with people crying "Blessed is he that commeth in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest... all the city was moved, saying 'who is this?'" (Matt. 21: 6-10). In the city, Jesus cleansed the Temple, healed the blind and lame (12-14), and was asked by the chief priests and elders "By what authority doest thou these things? Who gave thee this authority?" (23-27).

When Jesus healed a man possessed with a devil, blind and dumb, the people were amazed and said "Is not this the son of David? (Matt. 12: 23). The people were rightly identifying him with the promised seed of David (Acts. 2: 29-36).

Jesus was not just an ordinary man, like had appeared at various times before, gained a following, but came to nought (Acts 5: 34-41).

When Jesus asked his chosen disciples "Whom do men say that I the son of man am?" They replied, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist (Herod thought this - Matt. 14: 2); Some Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets" (Matt. 16: 3-14). These, however, were wrong about who Jesus was. When Jesus put the question directly to His chosen disciples Peter rightly answered "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God" (Matt. 16: 16).

Historically, there was a man by the name of Jesus, who was born, lived, attracted a lot of attention, was crucified, buried, and disappeared mysteriously from the tomb in the place and time frame of the New Testament. This is vividly confirmed in history. But, today, as

in that day, many are confused, and at a loss to explain who he REALLY was.

Jesus Claimed To Be Deity

When Jesus healed the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath day, and was criticized, He said "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The Jews then sought to kill him, saying: "He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." Jesus continued to affirm his deity saying, "What things so ever He (God-Father) doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.. .. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will." He further said the Father "hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father" (Jno. 5: 17-23).

In verse 33 Jesus mentioned John the Baptist's witness of him. "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world... I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Spirit. And I saw, and bear record that this is the Son of God" (Jno. 1: 15-34).

Further Evidence That Jesus Is "Son of God"

Prophecy of Jesus and it's fulfillment is proof that He was, indeed, the Son of God.

Prophecy		Fulfillment
Born of a virgin	- Isa. 7: 14	Lk. 1: 26-35
Place of birth	- Mic. 5: 2	Lk. 2: 1-6
Heal	-Isa. 53: 4	Mt. 8: 17
Mocked-scourged	-Isa. 50: 10	Mt. 27: 27-31
Hands/feet pierced	-Ps. 22: 16	Lk. 23: 33
Gall and vinegar	- Ps. 69: 29	Mt. 27: 33
Garments divided	-Ps. 22: 18	Jno. 19: 23
No bones broken	- Ps. 34: 20	Jno. 19: 36
Be raised	-Ps. 16: 10	Acts 2: 23-28

The teaching of Jesus (Mt. 7: 28-29; Jno. 7: 46). His compassion and mercy (Acts 10: 38), and character (Jno. 8: 46; 1 Pet. 2: 22) all show there was more to Jesus than common man. His many miracles were such that brought from men the exclamation "Only God could do such" - "Surely this was the Son of God."

God In The Flesh

When Mary, betrothed bride of Joseph, was found with child of the Holy Spirit (Lk. 1: 30-35), the angel appeared to Joseph and explained the situation, and said "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1: 21). It was further revealed that all this fulfilled the prophecy (Isa. 7: 14) that said "Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, GOD WITH US" (Matt. 1: 19-23).

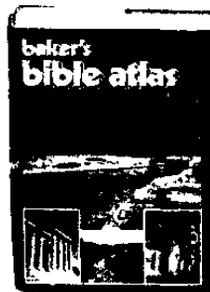
Paul listed as the first point in the "Mystery of Godliness," "God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3: 16). John wrote that the Word that "was in the beginning, and by whom all things were made, was with God and was God... and was made flesh and dwelt

among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth" (Jno. 1: 1-4).

Much has been written of late about the deity and humanity of Jesus. Many fine things have been written on both the deity and humanity of Christ, but after reading an abundance of material written, every writer has declared a belief in the fact Jesus was both God and man while on earth. If anyone denies this, he would be going against the passages already mentioned in this article that affirm Jesus, on earth, was "God manifest in the flesh," and all miracles of Jesus that were performed to convince people that He was "The Christ, the Son of the living God" (Jno. 20: 30-31). On the other hand, if one claimed Jesus, on earth, was not completely human, but had an advantage over us when he suffered or was tempted, this would be in conflict with Heb. 2: 17-18 ". . . Behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted"; "For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4: 15-16). See also, Phil. 2: 7.

Who was Jesus while on earth? He was "God manifested in the flesh." He proved to people here on earth that he was the Son of God by his works, like, miracles, death on the cross and resurrection. He is now glorified, sitting on the right hand of God in heaven, reigning over his people (church-kingdom).

If Jesus was and is all he claimed and proved himself to be, then believing in, coming to, and submitting to His will is man's only hope for salvation and eternal glory (Matt. 7: 21; Heb. 5: 8-9; Rev. 22: 14). This is why all should follow Him. He is, indeed, Bread of Life.



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"A Sore Evil"

According to Solomon, several things can come under the heading of "a sore evil" (cf. Eccl. 5: 13ff).

In our time, I would like for us to consider the sore evil of religious division. Not just division in general, but a particular type of division.

We can never expect unity among denominational churches. The very term personifies division and confusion (Mk. 3: 25; 1 Cor. 14: 33). The entire tree of denominationalism is corrupt, from the tap root upward (Mt. 12: 33; Jas. 3: 11, 12).

As fast as some form of union (not unity), is achieved in human mergers, some resist the merger and maintain their former identity, or start new churches. As long as human organizations employ human methods, the system does not solve the problem of division, but rather begets it.

Unity can, and should, prevail among God's people (Jno. 17: 20, 21; Eph. 4: 1-6). But, it seems that every two or three generations, a spirit of apostasy and digression destroys the peace and unity of even God's people (Judges 2: 10). This evil spirit of division existed in Paul's day (1 Cor. 3: 3; 2 Thes. 2: 3), and continues to exist in our time. Such division not only causes some of God's people to be lost, but it gives the enemy occasion to blaspheme and obscures the identity of "the way of truth" (Rom. 2: 24; 2 Pet. 2: 1, 2).

But, let us suppose that some could seek and find the truth in spite of the major differences that separated the people of God (e. g., Sadducees/Pharisees, instrumental/non-instrumental, institutional/non-institutional, and liberal/conservative).

To further complicate matters, and as if denominationalism and major divisions among God's people were not enough, some seem determined to splinter these already sore divisions into even more confusing and contradictory choices.

The liberal/institutional brethren have their own problems along this line, and none of us have much room to gloat or rejoice over division in the ranks of others.

However, I'm concerned more about those splinter groups among conservative brethren, for in this realm only can I hope to have some degree of influence for good. The more liberal brethren quit listening to the Lord and to me a long time ago, or else they wouldn't be where they are now.

Recently, while I was grieving over a senseless, seemingly unnecessary "split" among conservative brethren in a particular community, I was amazed and depressed to realize how many other such divisions would fall into the same category. And this application pertains only to those cases which would fall within the scope of my knowledge. I'm sure there are others.

What is even more incongruous is the fact that most of these splintered groups are not financially or spiritually able to support themselves. They were not even able to do that before they split, and are now "in debt" even deeper.

Brethren, it is high time for us to stop subsidizing strife, vain glory, and senseless bickering. It is also time for some of those splinter groups to reorganize under the appropriate chapter of spiritual and financial bankruptcy, and learn responsibility.

Don't misunderstand me. I have worked with, and encouraged small congregations which were established because of **doctrinal** differences with liberal brethren. I think my record will bear out this statement, or else I would not even attempt to press the point and advise others. (See "Procrastination On The Plains," either already published, or soon to be published, in **STS**.)

Some of these small congregations have divided simply because of selfishness, a desire for preeminence, or personal disagreements over the most trivial of opinions and issues. Sometimes the problem revolves around a preacher who either does not have enough wisdom or enough love for the cause of Christ to prevent schism in the body of Christ.

As I said before, the number of such congregations is so prevalent and includes so many geographical areas, that it would be folly to accuse me of having one particular congregation in mind. But if the shoe fits, wear it; if it pinches too much, change shoes.

The sore evil of the whole thing is that we have a difficult time converting people to the truth, given the conditions of the religious world in general. Now, even if we succeed in baptizing someone, where shall we advise them to assemble, worship, and discharge their collective duties as Christians?

It was Solomon who talked about these "sore evils," and the vanity and vexation of spirit which comes because of the seemingly incongruous offerings of life under the sun.

And, it will take the combined wisdom of Solomon, and one "greater than Solomon" (Mt. 12: 42), to solve some of the problems which brethren have created.

I just pray that we can get the matter resolved before the head of the church comes back to claim his bride (Eph. 5: 25-27; Rev. 19: 7).

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Can God Count On You?

Norman E. Sewell

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In the letter to the Hebrews we find this admonition, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)" (Heb. 10: 23). The reason I am to "hold fast" is that God is faithful, He can be depended on. Perhaps each of us needs to ask the question, "Can God count on me.?"

Many passages clearly show this aspect of God, that He is faithful. In Hebrews chapter 11, as the writer described the faith of Sarah he wrote: "Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised: (Heb. 11: 11). Sarah counted God as trustworthy and dependable; He would keep His promise to her.

Many of us count 1 Corinthians 10: 13 as among our favorites because of the wonderful promises contained in it. Paul wrote to the Corinthians to warn them about sin by first showing them some of the mistakes made by the Jews. Then he warned them, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are writ-ten for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10: 11-12). Then he gives God's promise. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. " Why does this promise mean so much to us? Because God is faithful! We know from the record of God's dealings with the Jews that he did indeed always keep His word. And thus we know that he will keep His promises to us as well. There will always be a way of escape from temptation so that we are not overcome. When we sin it is because we give in to temptation, not because God has failed us.

Further, in the first letter of John we learn of God's gracious provision for those who walk in the light, for Christians. He promises that "if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1: 7). Then in verse 9 he writes: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. " The fact that Jesus' blood continues to cleanse those who walk in the light and who confess their sins is of great encouragement to every Christian. How awful life would

be if we had no hope of forgiveness when we fail to live as God expects. But God is faithful; we can count on Him to do just what he promises.

Again in the Hebrew letter we find another promise showing God's care for His people. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he that said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13: 5-6).

But the question remains, "Can God count on me?" In Hebrews 10 where we began this study the writer lists several things expected of those who have been forgiven through Jesus' blood, and who count Him as our High Priest. In verse 22 we read: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. " Have you ever heard someone say, "I don't feel close to God"? When we don't feel close to God whose fault is it? The instruction given here and in James chapter 4 is "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (v. 8). How much effort do we give to drawing closer to God? Can God count on you?

Again the Hebrew writer encourages: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering" (Heb. 10: 23). Later in the chapter he wrote: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (v. 35-36). Its easy to become discouraged and want to give up because God's schedule isn't our schedule; but the instruction is to hold fast.

Further the Hebrew writer said: "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works" (Heb. 10: 24). We who have been redeemed are expected to help and encourage each other. We may do this in part by spending time together socially, preferring one another to friends who are of the world. But partly we do this by the time we spend together in worship and study of God's word. Perhaps this is why the very next verse reads: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10: 25). Christians who don't seem to want to worship and study with other Christians have missed the point of these verses; that we can count on God and that he expects to be able to count on us as well. **CAN GOD COUNT ON YOU?**

How do we know if God can count on us? The answer is given simply in Luke chapter 12. Jesus had taught a parable about servants being watchful for the coming of their master. When Peter asked about it Jesus said: "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing" (Lk. 12: 42-43). God counts us faithful in the doing of His will, now. We have no need to look for some "good thing" like the rich young ruler by which we may earn our salvation; it isn't obtained that way. Instead He asks that we be found, "always abounding in the work of the Lord, that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15: 58). God is faithful? Are you?

Preaching The Living Word of the Living God In Order To Produce A Living Faith and Living Hope

Billy Ashworth

2148 Nashville Highway
Columbia, Tennessee 38401-7233

Jesus commanded the apostles, as recorded in Mark 16: 15, 16, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." In Hebrews 4: 12 we read: "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Paul writing to the saints at Rome said: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1: 16, 17). Gal. 2: 20: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." The apostle Peter wrote: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead..." (1 Pet. 1: 3).

The reader must be impressed with the repetitive use of the word **LIVING** in the title of the article which is reflected in the passages of Scripture cited. We do not preach a dead message from a "dead God." The foolish revival of the old cliché by Altizer: "God is dead," is not only blatantly false, but also nonsensical since there is no such thing as dead deity! Only a **LIVING GOD** could reveal a **LIVING** message to produce a **LIVING** faith and a **LIVING** hope!

It is important to notice the command: "Go ye into all the world and **PREACH** the gospel to every creature." This passage contains what is called The Great Commission in contradistinction to the Limited Commission which Jesus gave to the twelve and seventy and limited them to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10: 6; Lk. 10). The Twelve were to preach, "The Kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt. 10: 7). The Seventy were to preach, "The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Lk. 10: 11). Of course, the message was the same in both instances.

But after Pentecost, when the apostles were to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," the message was "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses... Therefore let all the

house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2: 32, 36) J. W. McGarvey, in his commentary of Acts of Apostles, commented on verse 36: "He had made him Lord by causing him to sit on God's own throne, to rule over angels and men; and he made him Christ by causing him to sit on the throne of David according to the promise."

Here we find the apostles beginning to carry out the Great Commission as Jesus directed them in Acts 1: 8; "... ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The message was NOT of a "coming kingdom" but of the kingdom of God's having come with Jesus, the crucified and resurrected Savior, sitting enthroned on the universal throne of dominion-the **KING** over His Kingdom!

At this point, I want to make it clear that I believe the Bible not only tells us **WHAT** to preach, but **HOW** to preach the message. The sermon preached by the apostle Peter as recorded in Acts 2: 14-40, is the finest example one can find of the scriptural way to preach. The arrangement of the sermon, the cogent arguments he made in response to the critics who scoffed: "These men are full of new wine: are unexcelled. Peter appealed to the prophets of the Old Testament and said: "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;..." He gave prophecy after prophecy of these Jews who knew them but failed to understand them, and said: "Him (Jesus of Nazareth)... ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain;..." (Acts 2: 23). Peter was speaking by inspiration of the Holy Spirit the gospel of Christ, God's power to save. He responded to the carping critics, identifying of whom he was speaking and why. He had not been trained in "audience psychology" how to speak so kindly no one would know of whom or what he was saying. He never heard the warning by weak, compromising people, "That kind of preaching will run people off." He had no fear of losing his job as "minister of the gospel" in Jerusalem, but he did fear losing his soul in hell by failing to do what the Lord commanded him to do. He preached for conviction of his audience-not to please them but to save them.

One finds Peter preaching as Paul later commanded Timothy to do: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season: reprove, (convince, NKJ) rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4: 2). Today one hears such warnings as: "You are too negative. Preach Positive." That is the psychology of the world which lives and breathes the positive approach -negatives are out. I do not think Paul meant to advise Timothy to preach two negative sermons for every positive one, but two of the three instructions given above were negative. The apostle Peter used these principles on Pentecost-he reproved, rebuked and exhorted the Jews and convinced them of their heinous crime of having crucified and slain their promised Messiah. Listen as he challenged his audience: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2: 36). The result: "Now when they heard this, they were

cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They were convicted by the Gospel, God's power to save as delivered by a powerful preacher!

Peter did not "run all his audience off" for we know that after Peter told them to "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." that "they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." How many "ran off" because they did not like the sermon, I do not know. But I do know that about three thousand obeyed the gospel the first time they heard it preached by this powerful preacher. But if Peter had been a modern day "Gospel preacher" who is more concerned with giving the people what they want to hear instead of what they MUST hear to be saved, the ones who stayed and applauded him would have gone away lost.

The gospel of Christ is God's power to save. Men have developed awesome weapons capable of destroying this world with all living beings and things in it. Man has also manufactured chemical weapons capable of destroying eight times the entire inhabitants of this world. But man cannot produce anything or anybody capable of saving himself from sin! Only the God who made us in His own image can do that. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16).

God revealed the message (the Gospel) to men who were inspired by the Holy Spirit who spoke it and wrote it down for mankind that we might know what we must do to be saved. The message is God's power to save. But it must be preached to lost, perishing humanity. Lying dormant on the pages of the Bible, the gospel will not save. Faithful preachers of the gospel must preach it (herald it abroad/proclaim it). The gospel is God's power to save. To preach it powerfully is man's part in salvation. I realize that each of us has different dispositions/temperament, but I personally believe the powerful gospel deserves powerful preaching. We need to stand forth with the Sword of the Spirit and preach with all boldness and plainness of speech, persuading men without favor of friend or fear or foe (Acts 4; 29, 31; 2 Cor. 3: 12; 2 Cor. 5: 11).

Baptist Church Baptism

William V. Beasley

3810 W. Red Wind Street
Tucson, Arizona 85741

For a preacher in the church of Christ to attempt to write an article on **Baptist Church Baptism** is, in the eyes of many, suspect. Does he have an axe to grind? Can he/Will he be fair? This article is being presented in concern... concern for souls. If the teachings of the Baptist Church (the book from which I shall quote was published by The American Baptist Publishing Society) are correct then I do **not** understand the New Testament; on the other hand, if I am teaching the truth then Baptists are wrong, still lost, still in their sins.

It is possible, and I fully realize this, that many Baptists do NOT believe what the Baptist Church teaches. I would appreciate hearing from members of the Baptist Church (Yea or Nay). This article is sent forth in **love**... love for God and for souls. If you disagree with what is presented let me know. Dear reader, it does no good to get angry. I am not angry... I am concerned. If you disagree, disagree in love; deal with the passages presented and with the arguments made.

Baptist Dogma

Chapter III of The Standard Manual For Baptist Churches by Edward T. Hiscox is entitled "Church Ordinances," and deals with Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Following this short chapter there is a series of eight notes to more fully explain the Baptist concept of these two subjects. "NOTE 8. - Baptism is not essential to salvation, for our churches utterly repudiate the dogma of 'baptismal regeneration'; but it is essential to obedience, since Christ has commanded it. It is also essential to a public confession of Christ before the world, and to membership in the church which is his body. And no true lover of his Lord will refuse these acts of obedience and tokens of affection" (pp. 20-21). This statement is NOT something I would make up. Honest, I wouldn't do that. To me, this statement is **shocking**. We will, the Lord willing take a closer look at this statement a little later.

What Saith The New Testament?

When Nicodemus asked Jesus concerning being "born anew (again - KJV)," Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3: 5). Being born of water is, as a study of the New testament shows, water baptism (see Mark 16: 16; Acts 2: 38; 22: 16; Romans 6: 3-4; etc.). The apostle Peter, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, tells us that baptism "doth now save you" (1 Peter 3: 20-21).

Questions And Answers

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The Hiscox Statement

"**Baptism is not essential to salvation, for our churches utterly repudiate the dogma of 'baptismal regeneration'...**" We have already shown that Jesus (John 3: 3-5), Ananias (Acts 22: 16) and Peter (Acts 2: 38; 1 Peter 3: 20-21) placed baptism **before** being saved, remission of sins, and the washing away of sins. The second phrase seems to place authority to decide doctrine in the hands of the church ("... for our churches... "). Not so! The church is to follow the teaching of the Christ... and not to decide/determine doctrine. I'm not sure what Mr. Hiscox had in mind when he wrote of "baptismal regeneration." If he means the same thing as do Lutherans ("Therefore we believe in baptismal regeneration, that is, that children who are born in sin are reborn in baptism" - **SENIOR CATECHISM, Luther's Small Catechism in Question and Answer Form** by J. A. Dell, page 176) I would join hands with Mr. Hiscox in not believing in such. If, on the other hand, he is saying that baptism has nothing to do with **regeneration** ("2. a spiritual rebirth or conversion" - Webster) we must cry out, "Not so! Not so! Remember John 3: 33-5. Also consider that we are "baptized into Christ" (Galatians 3: 27) where we are "a new creation" (2 Corinthians 5: 17).

"... **but it (baptism) is essential to obedience, since Christ has commanded it.**" Dear reader, this is SHOCKING. Baptism, we are told, is not essential to salvation but is essential to obedience. That is, any way you cut it, teaching salvation without obedience, but Jesus "became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation" (Hebrews 5: 9). Baptist Friend, which of these two do **you** believe? Mr. Hiscox? The Hebrew writer? Which?

"**It is also essential to a public confession of Christ before the world, and to membership in the church which is his body.**" Mr. Hiscox is teaching salvation without a public confession of Christ, but the rulers in Christ's day on earth were condemned because they refused to confess Him (John 12: 41-42). Read and consider 1 John 4: 2-3. Mr. Hiscox also teaches that one can have salvation without being a member of the church, without being a member of the body of Christ (Ephesians 1: 22-23). Shocking! Mr. Hiscox would have individuals saved outside of the church, outside of the body of Christ, outside of Christ. Baptist Friend, do you so believe?

"**And no true lover of his Lord will refuse these acts of obedience and tokens of affection.**" Mr. Hiscox teaches salvation without baptism, but without baptism one is "no true lover of his Lord," therefore one can (according to Mr. Hiscox and Baptist Church Doctrine) be saved without being a "true lover of his Lord." Yet Paul wrote: "If any man loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema" (1 Corinthians 16: 22). "Anathema" means "devoted to destruction." Baptist reader, do you believe that the man who is "no true lover of His Lord" is saved? Do you believe Mr. Hiscox and Baptist Church Doctrine? Or do you believe that "no true lover of his Lord" is anathema? Do you believe Paul and the Holy Spirit? Which? It can't be both.

Conclusion

In writing an article like this I realize that I open myself up to being disliked... perhaps even hated. But I also know that love has prompted this article, "And I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved the less" (2 Corinthians 12: 15)?

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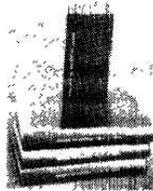
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Philippine Trip 1992

Jerry Parks

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Through the generosity of many, another preaching trip to the Philippines, has been accomplished. Brother John Humphries was my traveling companion again this year. Brother Humphries and I have been working together on such preaching trips since 1986. I could not ask for a better co-laborer in the gospel. John is a veteran of many trips overseas and knows what he is doing. His teaching is rich and powerful and he is an encouragement everywhere he goes. We enjoy our time together but because we can accomplish more by going in different directions, we actually spend very little time together. We simply touch base with one another from time to time to make sure that all is well.

With each trip overseas to the Philippines and other 3rd world countries, it seems to get more and more difficult and takes longer to recuperate. But with each trip, I can see more and more the value of such efforts and especially the need to continue making such trips. I feel confident that we are becoming well adopted to the ways and needs and problems of the Filipino brethren. Each year we meet and become better acquainted with more and more of the brethren. Each year we have opportunity to work with and stay in the homes of those who are striving to preach Christ in that difficult part of the world. Most of the brethren seem comfortable when we're in their presence. The novelty and tension of an American in their midst seems to have subsided. The brethren seem more at ease and willing to concentrate as we conduct Bible classes and give advice in trying to help them solve problems that exist between brethren.

We spent the 1st week together conducting classes at brother Ben Cruz's house in Manila. The national elections which were underway when we arrived, kept us from doing any real traveling till after May 11th. While at Manila, John taught a series of lessons on the book of Daniel and I presented a series of lessons on the 7 churches of Asia.

On May 12th John continued his studies in Manila while I traveled by bus to Hagonoy for a visit with the Agulto family. Two were baptized there. Then the next day I traveled by bus to Tarlac (the Mt. Pinatubo area) where I had an opportunity to conduct classes morning, noon, and evening in the home of brother Dominador Arcega at San Felipe. I spent one week there and 7 more were baptized. I also had opportunity to visit with brethren in 5 other congregations while staying in the home of brother Arcega.

After my stay in Tarlac District I returned to Manila and traveled with brother Ben Cruz to Pampanga District. Ben had converted a man shortly before that time who was from that village. The man returned to his home place and told the others about the pure gospel of Christ. When we arrived, the entire village was eagerly waiting our arrival. Included in that number was a denominational preacher who questioned me for hours after I had finished preaching about the one true church. Consequently, he and a number of the others in the village were baptized when brother Humphries returned to that location the following week. Stories like that make the trip worthwhile, no matter how many discomforts one must endure.

On May 21st I made a quick trip to Olongapo (Subic Bay) to follow up and verify some relief efforts for the Mt. Pinatubo victims. By this time brother Humphries had departed for a one week stay in Malaysia (Borneo) to visit with several newly established congregations. Early on the morning of May 23rd, I flew to Davao City on the Island of Mindanao in the southern most part of the Philippines. While there, I stayed in the homes of brother Juanito Balbin and with brother Joy Notarte. While in that area I traveled to at least 9 remote congregations traversing difficult mountain terrain through Mt. Apo, Davao Del Sur and Digos areas. These trips were made in Joy Notarte's Volkswagon "Bug"

On May 27th I was joined by brother Humphries and we traveled in a Jeepney owned by brother Manibog to Kidapawan in North Cotabato. Halfway there the drive shaft fell apart and we were stranded till we could hitch a ride on another jeepney. We finally arrived at the home of brother Manibog. The next day we visited 5 congregations before returning by Jeepney to Davao. On May 29th we traveled by boat to Samal Island and preached and visited brethren for several hours before returning to the home of brother Notarte to pack for our return flight to Manila.

We arrived in Manila just in time to participate in the wedding of Teresa Cruz who was marrying a young man she personally converted from Catholicism.

In all, there were 25 baptisms that took place while we were on this trip. Many Bible classes for preachers and other interested people were conducted. Several disputes were settled and we were able to provide some much needed financial help to needy saints. That included buying food for drought victims, buying eye glasses, medicine, clothing, as well as repairing fishing boats and other equipment so brethren could once again start making a living. The drought victims living in the Davao Del Sur area have been especially hard hit and are suffering greatly. Their crops are a disaster and they have had to eat the rice that was needed for replanting. Now many are not only suffering from the lack of food and water, but also suffering from disease and sickness that always follows from such a severe drought. They are desperately in need of food and medicine and have no money to purchase such necessities. Filipino brethren from other areas are trying to help, but they need much more. I would be happy to give you the names and addresses of those to contact if you could help.

Once again, I express my appreciation to all those who make such trips possible. If I can supply you with more information about any of these matters, I would be happy to do so.

Gossip's Corrupt Fruit

Tom Moody

P.O. Box 26
Milton, Vermont 05468

"Gossip" is idle talk or rumors about others. The word can also be applied to the person who initiates or repeats idle talk.

Many jokes are made about gossip. Some seem to view gossip as a harmless exercise - an annoyance or nuisance at worst.

Christians should realize that gossip (Slander, tale bearing, being a busy body) is sinful and carries with it the potential of much heartache and devastation. The sinfulness and seriousness of gossip is clearly illustrated by its effects which are listed in a number of scriptures. Jesus made this point by comparing our words to fruit from a tree:

"Either make the tree good, and his fruit good: or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.

O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12: 33-34).

What is gossip's fruit?

1. Gossip makes a fool of the one who practices it. "... he that uttereth slander is a fool: (Proverbs 10: 18).

2. Gossip causes deep wounds.

"The words of a tale bearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly" (Proverbs 26: 22).

3. Gossip will separate close friends.

"A forward man soweth strife: and a whisper separateth chief friends" (Proverbs 16: 28).

4. Gossip brings shame upon the one who spreads it. *"Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself; and*

disclose not a secret to another: lest he that heareth it put thee to shame and thine infamy turn not away" (Proverbs 25: 9-10).

If you are tempted to gossip, work on purifying your heart (evil speech proceeds from the heart, Matthew 15: 18-20). Increase your love for others, and learn to use your speech *"to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers"* (Ephesians 4: 29).

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everyday? (Daniel 6: 10, 13)**

**Do you read
your
Bible
everyday?
(Acts 17: 11)**

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

GROVER STEVENS is now working with the Overland church in Lawrenceburg, Kentucky. A new auditorium has been completed with the older one converted into classrooms. A new record of 121 gathered recently and one was baptized. Jim Ward of San Antonio, Texas was there recently in a very good meeting with record attendance.

TOM WHEELER, Rt. 6, Box 393H, Florence, AL 35633 - Mildred and I are enjoying being a part of the River Bend church which meets a few miles northwest of Florence. Our work here is peaceful and pleasant. Danny Graham was with us in a meeting in May in which, seven were baptized. Mike Waters will be here in September (13-18) in a meeting. I was in a meeting in May in Galena, Indiana. When in this area, please come by and worship with us.

MIKE MILES, 1200 Handel Dr., Virginia Beach, VA 23454 - The Tidewater church is finally moving into its permanent meeting place, on August 9, 1992. Our location is 217 Taxus Street in Chesapeake, Virginia. Form I-64 take Battlefield Blvd. south to Kepsville Road, then left to Dupont Street, then right to Taxus Street. The building is on that corner. We number about 90 at present. If you have family or friends in the area please let us know. My number is 804-427-9677.

DAN WALTERS DROWNED

I recently learned of the tragic death of brother Dan Walters. While on vacation (his first in many years, due to the small size of the church he worked with) in Florida, he drowned in the Gulf waters above Spring Hill. His son was rescued from the undertow and survived. Dan had written for various periodicals and had engaged in several written discussions. I had a copy of his manuscript on the Revelation and found it to be an interesting work. His widow, Anna and son are in need of the prayers of God's people as they decide how to continue their lives without this fine soldier of Christ. Submitted by Ralph Walker, Concord, NC.

(Editor's note: Sister Walters sent us a note also about this tragic news. Services were conducted on June 20, 1992 at the Wise Funeral Home chapel in Bonham, Texas by Darrell Tubb and Earl Dale. He was buried in Moores Chapel Cemetery in Fannin County, Texas. Our hearts go out to Anna and her family.)

PASADENA, TEXAS - The June 24, 1992 bulletin from Southside in Pasadena reports 14 baptized and 10 restored there just recently.

DEBATE IN GULFPORT, MS

Kevin Campbell is to meet Bobby Sparks on Greenville, Texas in a debate September 21, 22, 24 and 25, 1992. The debate will take place in Central Missionary Baptist Church's building at 7: 30 nightly. Propositions the first two nights concern the essentiality of water baptism for salvation. The last two nights deal with whether or not a child of God can so sin as to be lost eternally. For further details call Kevin Campbell at 601-831-4357.

B. G. ECHOLS, 7 Ridgewood Ave., Glen Ridge, NJ 07028 - During the first six months of 1992 we had four adults baptized and eight identified with the church in East Orange, N. J. Most of those identified came from nearby liberal churches.

DAVID MCCLISTER, 6025 Monrovia, Shawnee, Kansas 66216 - In June Rick Billingsley of Middleburg, Florida and I spent 17 days working in Newfoundland, Canada. Rick's brother, Dennis, is stationed at the U. S. Naval facility at Argentina. He and his family were interested in establishing a congregation there and we went to help. Two were baptized and we found a place in the small town of Placentia, Newfoundland (which is only a few miles from the Naval base) where the Christians can meet on a regular basis. We found many who were willing to study with us and left some studies still in progress. Dennis is following up on these and we expect to hear of more baptisms soon. Dennis will be leaving there in October, 1993. Rick and I are already planning to return next summer for more personal evangelism. Our goal is a congregation of native people that can stand with or without families present from the base (the base is scheduled to close in 1997). A start has been made and the potential is good for future growth. A good man is needed to work permanently in this area. Dennis will help to find support for the right man to come. If you are interested, please call Dennis Billingsley (709) 227-2820.

DIVISION HEALED

In January, 1990 a situation that is all too common among brethren occurred in the congregation that meets on Fairmont Blvd. in Rapid City, South Dakota. The congregation was split asunder due, regrettably to circumstances that Paul so capably describes in Gal. 5: 20-21. Seemingly the only way to control the situation was to put distance between some brethren, thus some separated and began another congregation. Also, all too often, the story ends at this point with division continuing to exist between brethren, even though they all claim to love God and desire to worship him eternally "together" around the great white throne. To God's glory, however, the brethren in Rapid City were not satisfied to ignore this division of the Lord's body. They remembered Abraham's admonition to Lot in Gen. 13: 8: "Please let there be no strife between you and me, for we are brothers." They also remembered Paul's warning to the Corinthians to have "no divisions" but to be of "the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1: 10). After considerable prayer, study, meditation, encouragement, and most important, the grace of God, the brethren in Rapid City have been reconciled to God and to each other. Almost two and a half years after the division, the brethren stood tall on their convictions and mustered the courage to say "I have sinned, forgive me." Now there is once again one body of loving saints in Rapid City who assemble at 1302 E. Fairmont Blvd.

MARIETTA, OHIO UPDATE - The congregation meeting at 324 Fourth Street in Marietta began with 11 members present on January

1, 1991. Highest attendance to date has been 38 with an average now of 23. Our numbers are consistent on Sunday and Wednesday evening. We have been helped by many brethren in various ways with most of our encouragement coming from brethren in the Ohio Valley. Several from liberal churches have attended and indicated willingness to study with us. We are searching for property we can afford. Lots are very expensive. A number have helped in teaching and preaching including some of our own number. The support and encouragement we have received has far outweighed the efforts of some here to discredit and discourage us. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 44, Marietta, OH 45750.

J. O. GABBARD, 49 Gabbard Rd., Roundhill, KY 42275-9522 - At the age of 71, I will fulfill a longtime dream by enrolling in Florida College August 24, 1992 to study some things I have wanted to probe into for many years. Though I have a bachelor's degree from a state university, I look forward to some study in Greek, Hebrew and advanced Bible courses. So with a little help from some good friends, including David Key, Earl Robertson, Connie W. Adams, James P. Needham, I have been able to tie up loose ends and look forward to going back to college to study with good, dedicated teachers.

NEW CONGREGATION

CHURCH OF CHRIST, P. O. Box 1332, Noblesville, IN 46060 - On May 3, 1992 a new congregation began meeting in Noblesville, Indiana. We now meet at 1010 South Third. H. L. Collett is the preacher. Beginning with 22 we have grown to an average attendance of about 40. We had a meeting June 14-19 with several area preachers. These were Mike Hale, Mo Hafley, Wayne Chappel, Galen Miller, Boyd Sellers and Ron Daly. Visitors, saints and local people supported the meeting. Average attendance was 48 with a high of 73. We are working at peace to spread the gospel. H. L. Collett is in need of some additional support. His phone number is 317-773-8864.

PREACHERS NEEDED

HODGENVILLE, KENTUCKY - The church here needs a gospel preacher. Attendance averages 65-70. Those interested may call Al Parker (502) 358-9336, or Jim Bickford (502) 358-4088.

GULFPORT, MISSISSIPPI - The Morris Road church needs a scripturally qualified preacher to work with them. They can provide \$850 per month support. For further information please contact Mike Vickery (601) 875-2084 or (601) 392-4757.

HERMISTON, OREGON - The church in Hermiston is looking for a sound gospel preacher. A man on retirement or social security is preferred. We have some additional support. Contact Ray Gossett (503) 567-0741.

CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA - The church meeting at 873 Oakwood Road needs a preacher. The building is conveniently located off three interstate highways and a major corridor highway. Good area for schools. We are a small congregation but will be able to assure full support. Contact Henry Williams (304) 727-2466 or Paul Stewart (304) 345-2391.

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY - The Oak Grove congregation, 9203 Thixton Lane, Louisville, KY 40291 desires a full time preacher. Average attendance is 55. Residence and income of approximately \$1700 per month can be furnished by the congregation. For further information please call Russell Smith at (502) 968-0059 after 6 P. M. or send written inquiries to 9503 Slayton Court, Louisville, KY 40229.

ALBANY, OREGON - The Oak Street church in Albany needs a preacher sometime in the first quarter of 1993. There are about 50 members with a normal attendance of 70 on Sundays. We have all age groups. We are located on the western side of Oregon 30 miles south of Salem and 50 miles north of Eugene. We are about an hour from the Pacific Ocean on the west and one hour from the Cascade Mts. on the east. The city of Albany has about 30,000. To our east is Lebanon with 15,000 and Corvallis to our west with 40,000. There are several "liberal" groups around us. Those interested may contact Chuck Carroll, 1175 11th Ave. S. W., Albany, OR 97321.

FROM AROUND THE WORLD

CANADA- ROY DIESTELKAMP reports from St. Catherines, Ontario

that four were recently baptized there. Chuck Bartlett has now moved to Jordan, Ontario to work with the church there. An effort is planned for the fall to begin a sound work in Buffalo, New York. A strong family is moving there, the man being a school teacher who can also preach. Two families who live in Buffalo have been worshipping in St. Catherines.

ITALY - Randy Harshbarger and James Johnson of Mt. Pleasant, Texas and Robert Harkrider of Orlando, Florida recently visited the work in London and then spent some time in Italy. Brother Johnson is one of the elders at Southside in Mt. Pleasant where Randy Harshbarger preaches. The specific purpose of their trip was to visit with Valerio Marchi and family in Udine, Italy since the church there has been helping to support him in the work for several years. The church in Udine now has 23 members and average attendance of 35. It is composed mostly of younger people but at least two men are working toward being elders someday. The church there pays \$1,000 per month rent for a meeting place downtown. To buy is out of the question. They also help \$700 per month with brother Marchi's support. They are diligent in their efforts. Five times in ten years they have gone door to door in this city of 90,000. Brother Harshbarger also attached a letter about the urgent need of Francesco Fosci at Latina to replace the support he is losing. We had a notice about this recently in STS. Randy made this closing appeal: "Doors are opening in Eastern Europe and we need to send men willing to go. Yet, the men in Italy are there to stay. They speak the language. They speak the language. They know the work. They are dedicated. Help if you can." For further information, contact Randy Harshbarger, P. O. Box 242, Mt. Pleasant, TX 75456-0242.

ITALY - Roberto Tondelli recently reported on renewed efforts of the Roman Catholic Church to restrict teaching contrary to the Catholic faith. In a national daily paper dated June 8, 1992, a Mr. Ratzinger who is head of the Doctrine of Faith Congregation, a Catholic institution also known as the "Holy Office" published the following: (1) "from now on whoever writes articles about the pope or the Catholic Church can run the risk of being denounced and brought before a court if the ecclesiastical authority considers those articles offensive to the Catholic faith; (2) the Vatican intends to control and to restrict the amount of religious information in the media; (3) 'God's people' (Catholics) and Catholic paper sellers should not sell or distribute publications that are contrary to Catholic faith."

CZECHOSLOVAKIA - Al Diestelkamp reports that another 17 have been added to Christ during the last six months and three new congregations have been established. In Prague the past few months there are about 35 in attendance. 45 were present one Sunday morning in May. There are usually several adult visitors. The Jeff Youngs and Bill Bynums have returned to the states. The David Hartells and Wayne Fanchers will go to Prague to work with Mike Morrow, Charlie Brackett and Steven Baxley. There is a need for workers in four other cities where there are now Christians living.

GERMANY - Steve Wallace reports one baptized and one restored at Bitburg and Stuttgart.

CHILE - Carlos A. Capelli of Buenos Aires, Argentina was in Chile for twenty days in June working with five congregations. Four were baptized. There was a full house for meetings in Santiago where the brethren meet in a new building. It is not finished but they are able to use it.

SOUTH AFRICA - Dan Huddleston has recently made four trips to Venda to encourage brethren there. The last trip was with Al Payne of Texas and they spent a month. There are 15 congregations in Venda. Twelve baptisms were reported in the last few weeks.

PHILIPPINES - Alfonso S. Catalan and Ruben C. Gumansing of Siay, Zamboanga del Sur report that in May 11 were baptized, 10 restored and three placed membership from public and private teaching efforts. They also wrote of the prolonged drought which has left many brethren in dire circumstances. We have heard from many brethren in Mindanao about this.

Bert G. Enostacion is now back to his full-time work after recovering from a near fatal accident while he was in a gospel meeting in Ilocos

Norte. He expresses gratitude for the prayers and support given him and his family in this time. Work among college students has resulted in five baptisms. Wayne Mariano, a young man in his late 20's, is working with him in la Union in preaching.

Dominador D. Arcega writes that seven were obedient to the gospel while Jerry Parks of East Alton, Illinois was there for preaching in May.



ADVICE OR DIVINE INSTRUCTION?

It is often said in sermons that Jesus, Paul or Peter "advised" certain things to be done. "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" was not a simple recommendation, it was a divine mandate. Did Peter on Pentecost simply "advise" his hearers to "repent and be baptized" or did he give divine commandment? Was Paul giving Timothy "advice" when he said "Preach the word" or was he setting forth divine instruction on the work of an evangelist? In our current usage of language advice can be accepted or rejected. The same cannot be said for divine revelation. Could it be that one reason our hearers make no response to the preaching they hear is that they do not understand the imperative nature of the message? Let's speak less of inspired men giving advice and more of "thus saith the Lord."

RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOUR IN PUBLIC WORSHIP

The age of accountability is not easy to identify. But one thing is

certain: those old enough to be accountable are also old enough to stay awake during a gospel sermon, old enough not to whisper and talk in the public assembly and old enough not to have to run in and out to the water fountain or rest room repeatedly. They ought to be old enough to stand and sing with the rest when the congregation is asked to do so. They ought to be old enough to know better than to engage in shoving matches, or general horse play while the almighty is being worshipped. And they should be mature enough not to knock older people down as they dart here and there in a crowd after dismissal. One veteran preacher stopped once during his sermon and said "If brother Tom and brother Bill will stop frogging each other on the arm, I will go ahead with my sermon." Nuff said!

NEW CHRISTIANS

It is refreshing to observe the excitement of new Christians. Like the first time my friend, Bob Darnell, served at the Lord's table and earnestly related "what they did to my Lord." You see, he was converted from Judaism. And isn't it a breath of fresh air to hear a new Christian pray and simply pour out his heart to the Lord before he learns to recite all the phrases that older Christians seem to drift into using. And does it not thrill you to catch the awe and excitement of one who is so happy to be freed from that heavy load of sin and to walk in the company of Christians. Have you lost the "joy of your salvation"?

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	372
RESTORATIONS	111
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	